universität wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„The Ones we left out – Claiming space for 'Native' writings and building a world map of Literatures"

verfasst von / submitted by

Ines Patricia Breiner, BA

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2023 / Vienna 2023

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt / degree programme code as it appears on the student record sheet:	UA 066 870
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt / degree programme as it appears on the student record sheet:	Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft
Betreut von / Supervisor:	Ass.-Prof. Dr. Rémi Armand Tchokothe

Foreword

It´s been a long time since I started my studies in comparative literature. A few years went by, I worked, learned, and grew, took some twists and turns and re-learned what I had learned. After some turbulent years, thanks to a pandemic, I am at the end of my master´s degree. Contemplating on a topic to write about in my thesis brought me back to the beginning a few years ago. Why did I start studying comparative literature in the first place? What were my expectations? Something I realized early on, but couldn´t fully understand yet, was how unsatisfied I was. With the literatures I got to read. Don´t get me wrong, I loved a lot of texts I got to deal with. But something was always lacking, I felt. Up until the end of my master´s degree, I couldn´t really grasp what that might be. It only hit me when my supervisor Dr. Rémi Armand Tchokothe started to introduce me to a whole new world, one I never touched upon: African literatures. He also brought with him a new way of dealing with literature and a new way of thinking and re-thinking. I finally realized, what was lacking was a more inclusive and critical approach to literature, to the status quo and how things are done in literary studies. That I wanted to get away from that Western texts I easily could get my hands on.

After realizing that, the next step was easy: I decided to write my thesis about what I had learned, re-learned and un-learned throughout my master's degree. I also wanted to write something I myself would have been glad to read at the beginning of my studies, to better understand how the literary world works and is connected on a global level, which power structures and institutions are play, but it should also give an insight for people outside the literary (academic) field. In a way, my thesis is a journey into the heart of literature, around the world and towards the most marginalized groups there are: indigenous peoples. This being said, I want to put a disclaimer at the beginning of my thesis: While reading, please always be cautious about terminologies and wording. Because I am writing out of a certain socialization, I am also aware that my wording and use of terms is characterized by this socialization. I also have to use certain terms in order to give you, the reader, an understanding and outline of the field I am talking about. This concerns labels about people, historical and literary terms. Please have in mind that many of these used terminologies, methodologies and approaches originate from a Western perspective that don´t take other views into account.

Acknowledgements

Well, of course, my biggest gratitude goes out to my supervisor Ass.-Prof. Dr. Rémi Armand Tchokothe. For his immense patience and understanding during the rather long process of writing this thesis. And even more so for his drive to teach us students not only about literature and how it all is connected throughout the world and humankind, but also about life. To challenge us, our worldviews, and perceptions. To make us struggle in a good way and strive for more, to help us to find ways to “leave the ivory tower”. I´ll forever be grateful to you, for not letting up on us, our learnings and thinkings. It may sound exaggerated to you, but without you I would have never been able to write this thesis and grow so much as a researcher, thinker, writer, human, woman. Thank you for that! And thank you for giving me a deadline when I really needed one!

A big thank you also has to go to my family, my parents and my sister, for still keeping up with me and not give up on supporting me through my studies, my writing process and a few rough times in my life. The same goes for my friends who were supportive and pushy at the same time, which is something I really needed. I am deeply grateful to all of you, for just letting me be me, even if it drove you crazy from time to time. Thank you for all the tips and encouragement you gave me.

Inhaltsverzeichnis

1 Introduction

Where to begin when it comes to talking about World Literature (further abbreviated as WL)? It became somewhat of a common cultural expression, grown out of a small literary circle of European authors, like Johann Wolfgang Goethe, and scholars, into independent research areas of academia and household terms of literary criticism. WL is known in the cultural field of today´s societies, spanning from publications, prizes that impact literary perceptions on a global scale and cultural organizations like the UNESCO granting cities around the world a “UNESCO City of Literature”-status. (cf. Cities of Literature) Classic novels and canon are deeply interwoven concepts within WL as it is known today. Since Johann Wolfgang Goethe[1] at the beginning of the 19th century started to coin the specific term of WL, its perception and how it is applied – especially in academia – changed from the original idea, at least to a certain degree: “I am more and more convinced […] that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men. . . . I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach.” (Damrosch, 2003, p.1)

And it is still ever evolving since globalization and digitization became very influential factors in the literary industry. Preferences and focuses on how literature is seen, read, perceived and researched change as well. As Rebecca Walkowitz argues, an emphasis on the circulation of books seeks to get in the place of two former definitions: “the one that designated literary masterpieces, those books everyone in the world should read; and the one that designated literary underdogs, those books produced outside of Western Europe and the United States.” (Walkowitz, p. 217) While works or, texts were designated in WL

[1] Goethe conceived of world literature as a dynamic process of literary exchange, intercourse, or traffic, exemplified by the international character of his own relations with foreign authors and intellectuals and by the revitalizing movement of mirroring (Spiegelung) brought about by the reception, translation, review, and criticism of literary works in other languages. He writes: There is being formed [bilde] a universal world literature, in which an honorable role is reserved for us Germans. All the nations review our work; they praise, censure, accept, and reject, imitate and distort us, understand or misunderstand us, open or close their hearts to us. All this we must accept with equanimity, since this attitude, taken as a whole, is of great value [Werth] to us. (Cheah, p. 27)

before, it now rather designates a network, as Damrosch proposes in “What is World Literature?” (2014, p. 3), and this network is actually the cause rather than an effect of this specific field. A work can be put in the category of WL because of this network, where several literary systems share a single text. Martin Puchner puts it even further by stating that WL is not written but made. Made by an also made-up marketplace. (cf. Walkowitz, p. 217)

What happened to WL over the decades and how it influenced a lot of different areas in cultural life should be one of this thesis´ examinations. Not to go as far as to say: It shall discover where it went wrong, if it was even implemented the right way, and point out what´s wrong about that practice of the concept of WL altogether. Criticizing certain practices in WL is not the primary focus, but of course, some main areas of criticism will be outlined to give a broader understanding of the issues at hand. I rather want to dispute it´s status quo, meaning I will be dealing with academia and it´s influences on WL, and its connections to languages, translations, genres, education systems, literary institutions and a digitized world. There are enough critical analyses already, which will provide a base for going one step further – to try to establish a new possible way of dealing with a concept of literatures in a globalized world. To build a model – a world map of Literatures – that can be applied to a concept like WL, but which also takes problematic aka exclusive practices of WL into account. Which also uses the possibilities of a digitized and globalized world to move to the outskirts of Western literary awareness. Rather than telling the rest of the world what WL is and what everyone else should read of Western – or Western-influenced – works in order to belong into that system of WL. A key element should also be to establish certain criteria and helping elements on how to choose literary works from all around the world, to fill an (imaginary) map, including as many countries, regions and areas as possible and NOT creating centers and peripheral areas which again manifest a dis-balanced power-structure. That´s what is meant with “building a world map of Literatures”, as the title states. There are plenty of different new terms out there, talking about Global Literatures, World LiteratureS or else. The perception of WL itself also underlies constant changes, and even the term itself is being transformed:

> *Renouncing, then, all political perspectives as too exclusionary, let us return to language, as our disagreements are always in the first place linguistic. Because the concept of Weltliteratur was coined in German (and by what a German!) it has always retained, at least for certain people, the taint of a germanocentrism. Some have proposed alternative terms such as universal literature [littérature universelle], or general literature [littérature générale], or World literature , or мировая литература. There is even at least one Spaniard, Guillermo de Torre, who conflates world literature and comparative literature when he wonders "whether the only field close to that envisaged by Weltliteratur is not comparative literature." For M. Hankiss, on the contrary, comparative literature does not deal with overall literary production, but restricts itself to "research involving more than one national literature." 4 As if things were not complicated enough yet, Mrs. Nieoupokoyeva, of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union, conflates general literature and мировая литература, something that more than one proponent of general literature would contest. Rather than trip over the adjectives clinging to the notion of literature and so in the last analysis turn out just as ridiculous as the various supporters of "proximate power" in the first [of Blaise Pascal's] Provincial Letters, may we candidly admit that the totality of all national literatures simply makes up literature, without adjective? In so far as I have understood the program and the projects of the Gorky Institute for world literature as they have been explained to me by our colleague Anissimov, who at the time was the director of that Institute, the literature in question, мировая литература, to me seems closer to universal literature [littérature universelle], or world literature, than to littérature générale or general literature. (Etiemble, p. 87)*

Establishing a new term isn´t that much of a priority here. The thesis rather focuses on a possible re-shaping of the status-quo, on how the outdated concept of WL can be re-imagined or better, should be re-imagined. One of the main suggestions to do so, is the role and responsibility academic and cultural institutions possess when it comes to opinion making. Instead of assuming a Western-influenced, centralized basic concept as the nonplus-ultra, it lies within the responsibility of such opinion-forming bodies to focus on precisely the opposite: marginalized, invisible (made) literatures that can become more and more important, especially in the context of an increasingly globalized and digitized world. If all those influential, opinion-shaping bodies, such as academic and literary institutions hold so much power, also in an economic sense, they also have to be held accountable for their dealings. Talking and claiming WL without stepping outside one´s own surroundings and not letting anyone else in

(I speak here about people from not Western, and Western-socialized backgrounds), is actually working against the very notion of WL.

The world is becoming more connected and digitized by the day. Concepts of AI, communication tools like social media grow and general technological possibilities arise, also in the literary world. These technological advances enable a new approach to literature and its conservation. Therefore, revolutionizing WL is not only desirable but necessary to do justice to the ever-increasing corpus that is being made available. With that rising of accessibility new issues emerge which will be discussed later. But they influence a lot more than just publication practices and possibilities for authors to spread their writings. Education and language learnings for example depend on new technologies, especially within indigenous communities, which also enables them to revive their cultures and put themselves on a map within the world of literatures: “Preservation of knowledge and revitalization of language are again here entwined and illustrate how storytelling is used as a pedagogical tool in order to weave together language acquisition and cultural knowledge. The circulation of these sources in new settings contributes to a canonization of stories and storytelling.” (Barrett/Cocq, p. 97)

Another argument for increasing the focus on marginalized authors and texts should be that a counterbalance to a more and more globalized- and pro-translational-thinking, that emerges within different writing communities, is needed. Specifically, institutions need to be held accountable for what they implemented, and still implement, or failed to do so. Because, when taking a closer look at WL, the power inequality becomes obvious, as in so many other areas of the arts, but in the world in general. Examples might come from personal experiences in comparative literary studies and from observations of practices around the world, in academia, cultural institutions and influential opinion makers.

As for the first part – “claiming space for ‘Native’ writings” – defining what that term “native” even means is crucial before carrying on with any further explorations of the topic. After a general explanation of the system WL – a historical overview, including the canon, what that means, how and by whom it

is established, and WL today – follows a short summary of critical perspectives on the matter, which should help to point out the problematic side of WL as an institution and how it is applied in today's world. Every one of the six main chapters concludes with a paragraph on chances within the specific area talked about, to look at possible innovations and future developments. A main idea that will come into play at different stages is that of "applied literary studies". There might already be some concepts surrounding this idea, but I think my aim is a little different: It shouldn´t (only) be about enabling literary students to earn practical skills in the cultural world, e.g., in publishing, journalism or literary criticism. The main idea is also not about helping and enriching other scientific fields like medicine through the engagement with literature. But, simply put, to combine ideas of creative writing programs with (comparative) literary studies, to enrich students' knowledge of and, more importantly, their understanding for literatures by trying and practicing different forms of writing themselves. It also takes a more interactive perspective into account when it comes to contemporary writings which would make an encounter with writers themselves possible and be enriching for cultural understanding concerning varying backgrounds from around the world. Applied literary studies should enable an encounter between students, scholars, authors, and artists in general, as well as literary critics and people out of publishing to give a broad overview of the world of literatures. Yes, language and accessibility pose as challenges in this idea and will be taken into account in later chapters.

With these aspects in mind, the "building of a world map of Literatures" commences with six "indigenous" writers: Starting off in North America[2] where everything is going to be about the role that academia plays. Joshua Whitehead serves as a literary example and the starting point for the map. Moving on to Latin America, there comes an example with Liliana Ancalao, from Argentina, who explicitly engages in this chapter's topic: translations and the question of language(s). Moving on over the Pacific to Mongolia it is crucial to talk about literature in general. What is literature, what genres are considered worth of inclusion into the canon as part of WL. The main example is Gombojav Mend-

[2] Though all of these indigenous writers' backgrounds are not reducible to the countries I mention, I want to give a short overview to the reader, what ground, geographically, I am covering with them.

Ooyo (G. Mend-Ooyo), an author whose writings span across many different genres of literary production, prose, short fiction, poetry and also forms of traditional Mongolian long songs, but also underly possible transformations as he doesn´t shy away from re-writing his novels with every new edition. The chapter Oceania/Australia is all about education and it´s influences throughout various stages of people's lives, represented by Māori author Steph Matuku who writes children´s literature and young adult fiction. Engaging the African continent is all about the world of publishing and literary industry, availability and accessibility of literature, or often the lack thereof, talked about through the example of 2021s Nobel Prize in Literature winner Abdulrazak Gurnah, whose win came as a surprise to many.

To conclude the six main chapters, we are looking at Europe with its only officially acknowledged "indigenous" people: the Sámi. Sámi-Swedish writer Linnea Axelsson stands exemplary for traditions, globalization and digitization and WL in all those contexts. Taking all discussion points into account the conclusion looks at the created World map of Literatures not as a finished project, but rather takes it as a starting point with first mentions of authors, works and areas of interest, hopefully for the institution that is WL to be taken as an example to reshape its practices. Possible next steps are established to round up this baseline of work. All the mentioned topics are looked at with specific questions in mind, for example: What is problematic about the given system of WL and of the various sectors, like academia, education etc.? Why is a new, broader term and view on marginalized and (from the canon) excluded literatures needed, to move on from a "single story narrative" as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie paraphrases it in her TedTalk from 2009. And most importantly, after analyzing the status quo: What can these views look like?

This thesis doesn't want to establish a new canon. It uses analysis, learnings during my master's degree, observations and interpretations as its base to work out the concept and modelmaking of a globalized literary field. It suggests a new way of how texts can be selected. Because building a complete canon is impossible, as is already visible within the established Western one – but somehow a collection has to be made, for this work and as common ground for further engagement with literatures from all over the world. Following, a closer

look on terminologies such as “Native” will be taken, to clarify the fields I work in and to give an overview on the term’s usage, establishment and the problematics that come with it.

1.1 Why Native Writings?

As the title states, “Native” writings are going to be the primary literary source for this work. But why should the writings of hugely marginalized peoples be the focus? Exactly because of their marginalization. If the canon – what that is, will be discussed later – consists only of a relatively small, similar shaped corpus of texts, how can a system of WL even be justified? That is the reason why I am taking a step back from the traditional, considered classic, literary consciousness and look at those who are constantly, one might also say desperately, overlooked on a global scale. Of course, there shouldn´t just be one more canon created. The chosen examples should be exactly that – examples. On how a considerate choice in a literary field can be made and especially point out, how many different criteria are interwoven in choosing a text or a canon, what powers are at play behind the scenes of the literary industry and so on.

To make the decision of which authors to include a few criteria were necessary, for example them being “Native/indigenous”, having published within the last ten years and that their works should be available, preferably in English, German or French. Since there aren´t any close text analyses planned, it was also possible to work with the Spanish translations, when it comes to Latin America. Also, a balance in gender representation should be achieved. Considering language obstacles with some of those publications one fair question is to ask why to write about all of this in English. Despite one of the arguments being, that some works that are considered valuable for a WL canon just because they are available in said language, are taking up space from works that would be more eligible, but aren´t available in one of the “big” languages, like English, Spanish, French, German, Mandarin or Russian. One reason, of course, has to be to make it accessible for more people than it would be if written in German. Furthermore, it supports the argument of English´s power at the moment and which influences it actually has got and which it could possess. But the problem of languages, and with it also comes that of translations, will be discussed in

chapter 4.2. about Latin America and Liliana Ancalao´s constant shifting between languages, and identities.

Another important criterion was to choose as many different genres as possible to include more than the common prose/fiction work which makes up most of the contemporary WL canon today, as it is perceived by the broad audience but also as it is applied in so many literary fields, e.g. classical series in publishing or the standardized text canon one studies as a literature student. Therefore, the corpus consists of prose, poetry, traditional forms of storytelling such as Mongolian long songs, oral traditions, young adult literature, extracts of an epos and short fiction. Why it is important to talk about literary traditions and genres will be discussed in chapter 4.3. about Asia.

But basically, the main reason for choosing “Native” authors as primary sources is my personal interest in the matter. Since I have been studying comparative literature for almost seven years now, I discovered, and still do, so many blind spots in my literary consciousness. Of course, an internal canon is unavoidable even in literary studies. But it was the realization of how narrow that internal canon is – I can´t recount how many times I had to engage with Proust, Nabokov, Dostoevsky, Borges, or Joyce. I also don´t want to claim that those authors aren´t entitled to their standing, but there is a pattern recognisable: white, Western, or at least Western-influenced men. No varieties, no diversity and often no recognisable different point of view as far as social standings, understanding of what cultivated and educated means, and living realities. As far as my academic engagement goes, I wanted to shift my focus. My first question was: What kind of literatures and authors do I want to engage with? What is something I have never heard anything about throughout my studies? It became pretty obvious that there are a lot of those I haven´t yet engaged with, and that I won´t be able to read all. But at least I can start with those authors whose realities of life are as far away from my own as it gets.

I considered those literatures of “Native” writers to be exactly what I was looking for: “Indigenous literacy is one integral part of everyday life that rarely sparks the public imagination, and that is generally not seen in public or social media debate, beyond its immediate context.” (Cocq/Sullivan, p. 1) The final push to

stick to my plan of studying “Native” writers came as I was watching an arte-documentary about Canadas literary landscape in 2021, as it was the country´s turn of being the host-country of the Frankfurt book fair in 2021. There I discovered a variety of “Native” writers from different backgrounds, one of those being Joshua Whitehead. From that point on I started putting my feelers out and determined the criteria for choosing authors for this thesis.

1.2 What does “Native” even mean?

Why collectively talking about “Native”? The first intention was to look at “indigenous” authors around the world. Since one for each continent had to be chosen, the difference of “Indigenous” and “Native” was the first disparity that had to be looked at. Taking a broadly used dictionary (Cambridge Dictionary) into account, there is not so much of a difference between these two terms:

Native (one definition): “relating to the first people to live in an area” (Cambridge Dictionary)

Indigenous: “used to refer to, or relating to, the people who originally lived in a place, rather than people who moved there from somewhere else” (Cambridge Dictionary)

Another word, mostly used to describe the Indigenous population of Australia would be aboriginal. The general definition for it rather states: “a member of a race of people who were the first people to live in a country, before any colonists arrived” (Cambridge Dictionary)

But if one looks at a common understanding of those terms (at least in the Westernized world), there seems to be a big difference. “Indigenous” peoples are often very specified groups of peoples, e.g. First Nations in Northern America, Indigenous groups in Latin America, Māori, Aborigines and the like. Hardly anyone would consider various African or Asian peoples as “indigenous”, they are native – yes. Taking the definition from Cambridge Dictionary into account, also an Indian born Englishman can, generations later, be a native of India, because of its colonial history. But the term “indigenous” seems to hold even more special power in its classification. Power or constraint in status and awareness of a human being and a whole people. A power that is again

awarded, or rather imposed on those who haven´t got any saying on how the world sees them. A deeply colonial, Westernized mechanism which I am also a part of.

Maybe not a part of imprinting those terms but at least a part of this socialization and the reproduction of this classification. So why am I talking in these terms in the first place? To mark the literary and cultural field I am dealing with and to help the reader understand in which areas I am doing the research. It is also a way to underline the struggles these peoples had and have to deal with in general perceptions. I don´t want to negate or undermine their experiences. But that being said, I am highly aware of the position I am in and from where I write – Western-socialized, from the centre of Europe with a completely white experience of life, and “Native” and “indigenous” are still terms that are deeply rooted in a concept of othering, like Edward Said, Gayatri C. Spivak and others have theorized.

So, in many ways I am not entitled to speak for the authors I am dealing with, but at least I am able to talk about them and give their work the opportunity to speak for themselves within the given contexts. Moving on with all that in mind, I am going to talk about the individual authors with the terms they themselves use to describe their heritage and backgrounds, and with which they associate themselves, for example Joshua Whitehead is a Two-Spirit, Oji-nêhiyaw member of Peguis First Nation (Treaty 1) (Whitehead, Joshua) and Steph Matuku is a Māori writer, more specifically Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Tama and Te Atiawa (Matuku, Steph). As far as I am able to find their own peoples naming, I am going to use those terms. That is also the reason, terms like “Native” will be written under quotation marks – to point out the generalized version of talking about various experiences and the problematic conceptions that come with it. After establishing the further usage of terms, it is time to take a closer look at the real systemic challenge at hand here that comes with the institution of WL. A short summary and overview of its definitions, establishment, history and developments will be given, as well as an insight into some observations on how it is practiced.

2 The role of a system called “World Literature”

> *World literature promises access to something greater than the sum of its parts. The term operates in relation to, but simultaneously at a distance from, national, regional, and local arrangements of literature. (Venkat Mani, p. 244)*

Taking this statement into consideration, I want to argue that in a more and more connected and globalized world the fascination and the needs for some kind of system that deals with literatures from around the world becomes more meaningful by the day. Research and engagement are getting easier because of new conservation and publishing opportunities. But there already is an existing system called “World Literature”. A system, an institution, research area and power instrument that is allegedly too established to forget about it completely and start anew. Something I would recommend doing, to get rid of pre-determined and elitist structures: starting anew. That would probably be easier than trying to break up existing structures. To ensure equality in the overall process of engaging with literatures from around the world. In reality, it is hard to start a completely new field of literatures from around the world while being out of touch from WL. Another possibility could be to focus research, engagement, publishing and criticism on marginalized authors and literatures as much as possible and, specifically, to shift the attention away from Western and Western-influenced works, in order to support a definition of WL as Hermann Hesse stated it:

> *The first definition of world literature that Hesse offers is the ‘enormous treasure of thoughts, experiences, symbols, fantasies, and desired images, which the past has left in the works of authors and thinkers of numerous peoples’. (Venkat Mani, p. 250)*

The main issues that were discussed by early WL theorists are still at hand in today´s debates as Damrosch states. For example, the question of conceiving the relations between national literatures and a wider framework of regional and world literature? (cf. Damrosch 2014, p. 5) Damrosch´s words[3] from his

[3] To what extent were national and local literatures revivified, or threatened, by the influx of works flowing “downstream” from major metropolitan centers to smaller or peripheral cultures, and from world languages to local languages? Should the study of world literature seek to discover unities across the world’s traditions, or are such cosmopolitan unities little more than projections of great-power values upon politically and economically subordinated cultures? Could literature legitimately live, and be studied, in translation, or only in the original languages?

introduction to “World Literature in Theory” from 2014 show off one very problematic issue at hand that WL possesses: While going back to its origins in the early 19th century and the term´s coinage by Goethe it will be obvious how little some current theorists have moved one from its elitist ideas. That issue is naming and establishing terms. That is where it all starts and goes back to. Discussing WL is only possible, if terms and theoretical frameworks are established, common and general definitions must be made. Obviously. Otherwise, literary criticism, as well as any other field of research, would be meaningless, more so, un-doable. The problem is not with the naming and defining itself, but with the power instrument this process starts to be. Because while using certain terms one always has to look not only to the terms, theories and frameworks themselves, but also ALWAYS to who established them and stands behind those definitions. What institution, agenda or power-structure lays behind it. Especially nowadays where WL is such a broad, established field of research and cultural discourse. Naming and creating terms carry way more power than they are usually accounted for, as aforementioned in the introduction about the term “Native”.

To outline this and other issues at play in its structures, a short examination of WL precedes the main aiming of the thesis – the building of a world map of Literatures. It is not so much a discussion of WL, but a summary of society´s view of WL, what one gets to learn about this institution by searching the internet, reading Wikipedia for example as one of the first pages suggested[4], how cultural institutions portray it and how I, for example, got to learn about it within the university context of literary studies. Another example can be the approach of other schools, especially key institutions such as Harvard´s Institute of World Literature with their open course “Masterpieces of World Literature” – how is WL taught, which retellings are used, how diverse is its

---

And what should be the purview of the overall concept of Weltliteratur, littérature mondiale, or vishwa sahitya: The sum of all the world’s literatures? The smaller set of works that had achieved a readership abroad? Or a further subset of works, the few great classics of each culture? Or perhaps only the classics of ancient Greece and Rome and the major modern Western European powers? How far should oral and folk traditions be brought into the picture? What of popular literature in the nascent world of the bestseller? (Damrosch, 2014, p. 5)

[4] Keeping in mind that depending on where you are in the world search results come with certain specifications, Wikipedia articles are shorter or more detailed for example. But speaking from a Western standpoint, I want to line out, how the general knowledge of WL gets shaped, how it is transported and communicated in cultural discourses.

selected canon etc. This is necessary to give an overview of WL´s perception in society to discuss the issues at hand further.

2.1 Historical overview

> *Goethe established world literature as a philosophical, humanistic ideal, as a mode of transnational arrangement of texts. This ideal, however, was enabled by material instantiations of literature's global pathways: not only publishers, empires, and shipping routes but also libraries. (Venkat Mani, p. 247)*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was the one who helped to establish the term of "Weltliteratur" in the 1820s, even though the term itself was coined some decades before that, by William Jones and Johann Gottfried Herder for example. (cf. Mufti, p. 36) It should be "an era of international exchange and mutual refinement, a cosmopolitan process" (Damrosch, 2014, p. 1). Goethe envisioned the German literary scene to become a vital player on the world stage at that point of time; "Germany would assume a central role as a translator and mediator among cultures, leading an international elite to champion lasting literary values against the vanities of narrow nationalism and the vagaries of popular taste" (Damrosch, 2014, p. 1). He proclaimed that the time of national literature was over and an era of WL at hand. However, Goethe only took into consideration what he perceived as "the world" at that time, meaning he talked about texts and books he could get his hands on, either in their original languages, or in translation – from ancient Greek and Latin texts to Chinese novels. And he also talked about a very specific selection of languages and literatures thereof, such as ancient Greek, Latin, Chinese, French or English, but also Persian or Serbian; while doing so he manifested his ideas of the world, whatever that might mean, again making it a very exclusive area of cultural dialogue (cf. Goethe, p. 15):

> *[…] I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National-literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of World-literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach. But, while we thus value what is foreign, we must not bind ourselves to some particular thing, and regard it as a model. We must not give this value to the Chinese, or the Serbian, or Calderon, or the Nibelungen; but, if we really want a pattern, we must always return to the ancient Greeks, in whose works the beauty of mankind is constantly represented. All the rest*

> *we must look at only historically; appropriating to ourselves what is good, so far as it goes. (Goethe, pp. 19-20)*

In addition, for Goethe there were still only a few specific "participants" to actually practice WL, like the English, French, German or Italian. Aamir R. Mufti argues "that world literature was from its inception a concept and a practice, in a strong sense, of bourgeois society, that is to say, a concept of exchange, and that this fact was first understood by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*, less than two decades after Goethe´s coining of the term." (Mufti, p. 36) They saw it as an important part of the continuous attempt made by the bourgeoisie to create a "world market" that implied and still implies a vital destruction of lived cultural and social forms and practices from all around the world and its diverse societies. According to Goethe, and Marx and Engels as well, the establishment of WL was strongly driven by a new arising world book market, fueled by achievements of the industrial revolution and imperialist trade structures. (cf. Mufti, p. 36) According to the scholars Hugo Meltzl and Samuel Brassai, founders of the comparative literary journal "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature", the at time, in the late 19th century, relatively young discipline of comparative literature should become an embodiment of Goethe´s envisioned WL.

> *The phenomenon of world literature is thus many centuries older than the national literatures that became the basis for most literary study during the past two centuries. Paradoxically, though, it was the rise of the modern nation-state that led to the elaboration of world literature as a concept – and as a problem. With literary production increasingly seen in national terms, scholars and creative writers began thinking directly about international literary relations, and this subject became central to the new discipline of Comparative Literature. (Damrosch, 2014, p. 3)*

Studies and debates around WL were revived in the post-war era, especially in North America, as part of comparative literary studies. Keeping it centered around Roman and Greek classical works and major, modern Western-European literatures. This is where the major players in WL are up to this day sit – US universities and institutions, especially so called Ivy League colleges that are setting the tone for the rest of the world. (cf. Wikipedia, World literature) Over the last decades, and also because of an increasingly globalized world,

studies in WL flourished, still centering around North America and European institutions, which leads to the question of the canon.

2.2 Canon

Talking about literary studies, and WL specifically, always comes with a certain consideration before the very start: Which texts should be looked at? Choosing texts is vital, a so-called canon is crucial to make research possible. But building a canon isn´t an exclusively academia thing. Literary canons, as unintentional they might be, can be found throughout many different areas: School curricula, private libraries and personal reading choices, in media, public libraries, at university, bookstores and so on. Simply put – a canon is a certain collection of texts that was chosen with specific criteria and agendas in place, for a specified audience. Mainstream knowledge about WL also often revolves around the (unofficial, but strongly set) canon of classical texts and authors, such as the Iliad and Odyssey, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe, Tolstoy, Proust, Kafka, Joyce or Borges to name a few.

Originating from the Greek word “kanon”, which translates to “measuring stick/rod” but also “rule” or “guideline”, it was initially used for collecting the definitive books included in the Bible. The word canon was used in a religious context before it got applied to the literary field for accumulation, a collection of texts that were considered to be essential and a basis for literary dialogue. As Ankhi Mukherjee (2017) states in her definition: “Canonicity involves not merely a work’s admission into an elite club, but its induction into ongoing critical dialogue and contestations of literary value. The canon is a set of texts whose value and readability have borne the test of time: it is also the modality that establishes the criteria to be deployed for assessing these texts.” Taking those considerations into account the idea of building a canon makes sense, more precisely is even necessary to make literary discussions possible. Texts in a canon build a common ground for readers, scholars, students, critics and the like because there are already so many texts written, e.g., in Europe alone not to mention the sum of works from around the world. However, and this is the main issue here, a classical canon, especially that in WL is also a huge instrument of power and oppression. It already started with Goethe establishing the term “Weltliteratur” and valuing certain texts and national literatures over

others. There often lies an agenda behind a canon which isn´t a bad thing per se, but can turn into exclusion, repression, censorship and even cultural genocide, as it happened so many times. This aspect will be discussed further in the main chapters.

> *What counts as world literature will be a matter of individual choices and preferences, of time restrictions that govern the business of everyday life, and, naturally, of pecuniary concerns (ibid.: 4, 8). (Venkat Mani, p. 251)*

A canon therefore is almost always necessary in order to make literary and cultural criticism, publishing, libraries and institutions or even readership possible. But it always falls under a certain agenda. As Hermann Hesse proposes in his essay “Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur” a library, which is in fact also a selection, a canon of books, should always be selected by one’s own preferences, not by an outside imposed opinion on what to read. Which is a view more applicable to private reading selections than to public ones, but also carries some truth in it: A general imposed canon can, and often did, lead to an exclusive and restrictive practice of reading, beginning in early educational stages. For example, during colonial rulership the colonisers´ national canon was imposed on colonised regions, and regional literatures and languages, were undermined, extinct and pushed aside at the same time in order to assimilate and get rid of independent, regional or other national identities. Some of those canons can still be found in today’s curricula, in schools in India for example, where more British works are being read in comparison to regional and national literatures from India. (cf. Srilata)

For instance, even if it is involuntarily, an internal canon exists at the comparative literature department in Vienna. Starting a bachelor’s degree should give students insight into the subject they are about to study. So far so good, and of course, therefore a selection of qualified texts to do so is being made, to break it down to a manageable amount that can give a first overview on the subject. It just shouldn´t end with this one selection, it should rather lead on to an even broader understanding of what could be included. The main problem with making a choice is also not THAT it is being made, rather than WHO makes with WHAT agenda in mind. Only with finishing my master’s

degree I got a first overview on how the literary world, more specifically the WL world works. How it really works, not what its ideal is – the still exclusive, mainly Western-oriented and also very powerful construct after Goethe´s ideas. It is not about the texts one has to read during the first years of study, or not entirely. The power-system, or oppressing system, behind WL just gets even more obvious the more one reads the same text over and over again, under different aspects of criticism and research. By same text it is not only said to be the exact same work, but rather an equal text written under similar circumstances by white, Western and Western-civilized men, with a system like WL behind them that deems their literary productions the norm, non-plus ultra, the centre.

2.3 Who did it?

Typing “World literature” or “WL canon” into search engines there are many articles, suggestions, lists and even encyclopaedia entries on works one should read at least once in one´s lifetime, to put it in an overstated way. “100 classics of world literature” and other titles like that one aren´t rare. So, what kind of list of works, and authors, would a big name like Harvard University put out, in an online course about “Masterpieces of World Literature”, a free course anybody can register for? What are the deemed most important works to start with while engaging with WL, since Harvard is also the place of the Institute of World Literature, one of the largest, if not the largest itself, centres for WL? The selection goes as follows: Goethe, the Epic of Gilgamesh, Homer and the Odyssey, the 1001 Nights, the Tale of Genji, the Lusiads, Candide by Voltaire, Lu Xun and Eileen Chang, Borges and his Ficciones, Wole Soyinka, Salman Rushdie and Jhumpa Lahiri, and Orhan Pamuk and My Name is Red. (cf. “Masterpieces of World Literature”)

A broad and inclusive list, for such a short introductory course anybody is able to access, one might say. But the general practice is still not inclusive enough, especially on the level of the “big players” in the game of WL: looking at research focuses and topics of professors around the US, in big schools that also produce a lot of work on WL, a very small amount has African literatures on their plate, for example. There are African and African-American studies everywhere, but where is the connection into comparative literature, into WL made? The Americas are getting more and more representation, as well as

Asia, specifically Southeast-Asia and India. But the main focuses still lie on European and Northern American literature. Academia is one of the first sources that engage with WL, in constant exchange with and depending on the book market, aka the publishing industry. Venkat Mani (p. 239) argues that "most theorists have discussed world literature as a problem of scholarly expertise, reducing it to a largely academic enterprise." Even though it began as a cultural phenomenon that was coined and established by an intellectual elite, WL soon found its way into academic discussion where it still remains as an opinion shaping institution in other areas of cultural practices. Embedding it into institutions such as universities, publishing companies and cultural institutions reinforced WL´s elitist position (cf. Damrosch, 2003, p. 13) by establishing criteria of "worthy" and "unworthy" texts, not as Hesse understood the term: "What counts as world literature for Hesse is the basic tenets of human existence that find aesthetic expression through language." (Venkat Mani, p. 250) Venkat Mani argues further:

> *World literature is characterized by what I call "borrowing privileges." These privileges are defined by access: to basic literacy, to the production and reception of literature as a cultural artifact, to books and other media of public dissemination, and to a specific kind of linguistic and cultural literacy that readers and authors from one part of the world acquire when they gain access to literatures from other parts. (Venkat Mani, p. 241)*

The concept of WL, as Goethe himself envisioned it, was always an exclusive one, with advantages for the more "educated" ones, or at least those who had more access to literary works. "Of course, I am happy that Goethe composed his Diwan; but in order for poetry to be common to all humanity it suffices to consider that the poetic sensibility is in fact equitably distributed throughout the human species." (Etiemble, p. 86) It does not end with general literacy, education, and availability of works, like translation and publication in general, libraries or else. All these factors themselves are subject to selections, agendas and power-structures that came up under similar circumstances as the concept of WL: often out of powerful, elitist, and exclusive circles with inside-out methods, or a centre vs. peripheral thinking. Even though a vivid exchange had

started in the centuries before colonial expansions, as Damrosch claims[5], cultural exchange was often one-sided and more like cultural appropriation, that in many cases helped to nourish power-structures, was used for (anti) propaganda and similar reasons which can be seen throughout history, during the Nazi regime, as a prominent example, but also in imperialistic procedures, in Africa, in Latin America, Asia, Oceania and even Europe. For writers and creative minds those exchanges might just have been inspirations and influences. Only, their works were used, willingly or unwillingly, for different reasons: extinction of national or tribal identities, languages, and oppression, by deeming certain works and languages superior and more important. All these are factors that will be looked at later in the discussion, to broaden the view on the world of literature, on WL, the literary market and its many entanglements.

2.4 WL today

Over the last decades, also thanks to a more and more globalized and digitized world, WL in academia, the book market and cultural industry have experienced a new high of possibilities to engage with one another. “World Literature, as a disciplinary rallying point of literary criticism and the academic humanities, became increasingly prominent from the mid-1990s on.” (Apter, 2013, p. 345) Journals about WL such as “Journal of World Literature” or “World Literature Today” sprout from the ground and the term itself is a common saying in mainstream cultural practice as well.

Polyglotism and cosmopolitanism[6] are vital terms to consider in the debate of WL. This polyglotism is at a new height, giving access to an even wider field of literary production, conservation and availability. Which can be a chance to

[5] The world’s literatures have long been in contact through multiple routes of transmission and influence. Trade routes such as the Silk Road and the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean formed networks of transmission, powerfully seconded by the spread of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. These world religions brought a great deal of literary material in their wake, often introducing literacy itself to formerly oral cultures. The waxing and waning of empires gave further impetus to cross-cultural literary relations, sometimes suppressing local literary traditions and at other times stimulating them in new and creative ways. (Damrosch 2014, p. 3)

[6] Polyglotism usually refers to a person that is able to speak a lot of different languages, or a concept within an organization or institution that works based on several languages and their interactions; Cosmopolitism meaning “citizen of the world” and is a concept already used in ancient Greek philosophies, and describes a thinking of an individual person in relation to the world, everyone is equal in their rights as humans and are influenced by their surroundings, especially meaning that a person moves around a lot, interacts with various cultures and as a result gets their identity shaped by that exchange.

rethink the notion of WL itself. Re-naming won´t do the trick, re-shaping the canon might be a good start, but the world of literature and all it contains might need a different approach altogether. A more mindful approach, because one system, like WL, that is able to deal with ALL the literatures of the world is just a utopia, and the selection of an appropriate canon is always, to a certain degree, a subjective act of choosing. Understanding the term “world” is also a vital part of that discussion, because WL “is a type of world-making activity that enables us to imagine a world”, as Pheng Cheah (p. 26) explains. Therefore, it is an important aspect of cosmopolitanism which is “primarily about viewing oneself as part of a world, a circle of belonging that transcends the limited ties of kinship and country to embrace the whole humanity.” (Cheah, p. 26) In a higher sense, the world is transaction, an exchange that is aiming to bring out a universal humanity, and spiritual intercourse. Rather than abolishing national differences, it takes place and can be found in the mediations, the intervals, crossings and passages between national borders. The world in this case is a certain form of being-with or relating. On the opposite stands the globe as a totality that is a product of processes of the ongoing globalization, it is a bounded object and entity (cf. Cheah, p. 30):

> *When we say "map of the world," we really mean "map of the globe." It is assumed that the spatial diffusion and extensiveness achieved through global media and markets give rise to a sense of belonging to a shared world, when one might argue that such developments lead instead to greater polarization and division of nations and regions. The globe is not the world. This is a necessary premise if the cosmopolitan vocation of world literature can be meaningful today. (Cheah, p. 30)*

Having a talk about the term “world” in WL is therefore one important aspect, as it always stands in relations to other defining terms, such as regional or national. It is set in order to differentiate between entities but also claims to encompass ALL the literature in the world, working out of a made-up definition of that world. Paradoxically, that idea of WL should be considered in a narrower way as the literature of the world – “imaginings and stories of what it means to be part of a world that track and account for contemporary globalization as well as older historical narratives of worldhood. It is also a literature that seeks to be disseminated, read, and received around the world so as to change that world

and the life of a given people within it. One can then speak of world literature in a more precise sense as the literature of the world (double genitive), a literature that is an active process of the world." (Cheah, p. 36) An active process that doesn´t consider the many ways the literary system is interconnected around the world, not only through intertextuality, but also behind the scenes, in its production, marketing and circulation. Literature depictures how authors, how people see and experience the world around them, but they are also always a product of their surroundings which are influenced by way more factors than people tend to see.

René Etiemble in 1974 already argued that literary criticism should admit that the totality of all national literatures simply makes up literature, instead of tripping over the adjectives clinging to the notion of literature we should use it without that defining adjective "world" altogether. (cf. Etiemble, p. 87) Amir Mufti states that a reversible act of going back to national literatures is unimaginable:

> *And yet the ongoing institutionalization of world literature in the academic humanities and in publishing cannot quite dispel a lingering sense of unease about its supposed overcoming of antagonisms and reconciliation and singularity that is too easily achieved. More bluntly put, it is hard not to wonder if all this talk of world literature might not be an intellectual correlate of the happy talk that accompanied globalization over the past couple of decades, until the financial crash and its ongoing global aftermath […]. (Mufti, pp. x-xi)*

Though it is difficult to imagine this reversal it can hardly be seen as a success for WL. Because all these concepts and categories of European, and Western, origin still lie at the core of literature as a global reality, including ways of thinking that are long-established, about the alien, exotic or the other[7]. In addition, European "world" languages, first and foremost English, are apparently the non-plus-ultra when it comes to linguistic domination. (cf. Mufti, pp. xi-xii) Questions he asks concerning this dominance are: "But what is the nature of this space, exactly, and by what means did it get established? How are we to understand its expansion and `success´ worldwide? And what is its relationship

[7] Othering: The term stems from postcolonial theory, indicating a distancing and differentiating to other groups to verify one´s own "normality". It also means that people and groups are being attributed to negative features which distinguishes them from the perceived normative social group. Othering is a constant act of categorization and in the end a distinction between "us" and "them/the others". (cf. Universität zu Köln)

exactly to modes of writing and expressivity that belong to places that are non-Western, `global southern´, or of the `underdeveloped´ world?" (Mufti, pp. xi-xii) There is a lot more at stake when it comes to the question of WL. More than some of the current leading elaborators seem to spot. That is the origins of bourgeois modernity – in other words the culture of the capitalist society – all set within a history of imperial violence on a global scale. The racial and cultural antagonisms of the colonial world still persist into contemporary times, in altered forms, as well as the continuing struggle over the right and also the capability to define contours of human experiences. Today's discourse of WL seems to often show immunity to questions when it comes to problems like these. (cf. Mufti, pp. xi-xii) This presumed immunity exists in both ways of defining WL nowadays, which live in both, academia, and mainstream cultural practices:

> *As anthologies, volumes of critical essays and specialized studies with a world literary focus propagate – some emphasizing networks and systems oriented around Marx's hypothetical of a literary International, others emphasizing a Goethean lineage adjusted to an era of global finance capital – the disciplinary construct that is here designated with upper case has secured its foothold in both the university institution and mainstream publishing. It stands in contrast to lower-case "world literature," which may be considered – a descriptive catchall for the sum of all forms of literary expression in all the world's languages. (Apter, 2013, p. 346)*

2.4.1 How WL is taught

It seems as if WL is such a broad field. One might think that the approaches to teaching it are also varied. The problem, as it appears, is, WL still is often taught the same way, on the same basis such as its coining definition by Goethe and the later discussions implemented by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their monumental work "Das Kommunistische Manifest" (1848). When it comes to more contemporary understanding of the field, the same fundamental texts are there to serve students to gain knowledge in the field with little variation in the selection. Those source texts for example contain David Damrosch´s texts "What is World Literature?" (2003) or "How to read world literature" (2018). Another name coming up on a regular basis would be Pascale Casanova and her work "La republique mondiale des lettres" (1999), or Franco Moretti and his "Conjectures on World Literature" (2000), and Theo D'haen who co-edited "The Routledge Companion to World Literature"(2012)

and authored “World Literature: A Reader” (2013). Dissenting voices coming up might be Emily Apters “The Translation Zone”, René Etiembles “Should we rethink the notion of World Literature?” (1974) or Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and her multiple works such as “Death of a Discipline” (2003). Still, those oppositions are rare, very little variation exists in discourse, criticism and especially in social and educational background of the authors/scholars: European or US-American, and all received their degrees from either prestigious (whatever that means) or at least well-established universities in the Northern hemisphere. And are or were working for so called Ivy League schools or well-known European Universities. That is the base one gets to know as a literary student. A base one easily gets to think of as the norm for dealing with WL.

As stated earlier, the dealt with canon is also very limited, exclusive, and elitist, with hardly any “outsiders” and marginalized authors getting a chance of recognition. That starts with very few women even coming from a Western background up to the neglection of peoples from around the world or an entire continent like Africa. In staying within those chosen borders of teaching and researching WL, the critical examination of its practices is constantly neglected. Students hardly ever learn to see WL in a different light then the one they get presented. I can only speak for how comparative literature, and in its context WL, is being taught and practiced at the University of Vienna. However, something that is striking, not only in comparative literature studies, but humanities in general, is its lack of self-reflection and, with it, self-criticism. To grow and evolve a never-stopping self-reflection should be a necessary practice for every field of study, something that is, seemingly desperately, neglected. Self-reflection meaning a discussion of its own practices, sources, establishment, and discourses, who is included and who is excluded in a discussion. If a certain canon of “classics of WL” is used for teaching, a critical approach to how and why these texts are used should also be made. To make it obvious, that it is only a small selection, and that there is a much bigger variety available, and being neglected in this case. Choosing is necessary for a teachable curriculum, but the choices also need to underly constant re-

evaluation and re-consideration, or at least awareness and critical reflection on inclusion and exclusion.

As well as choices of texts, the choices of practices, staff decisions and the like should be reflected on. For example, here in Vienna, we do have a Tenure Track professorship of WL since 2019, which is occupied by Prof. Dr. Paula Wojcik. Meaning, we do by now have our very own chair for WL at the department of comparative literature. I don´t want to deny Prof. Wojcik her ability to teach and research in the area of WL. However, her majors were German studies and philosophy (cf. Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg Greifswald). That means that she started dealing with WL not as her main field of studies and only at a later point but is by now already occupying a chair for WL. Again, I am not saying, Prof. Wojcik is unfit for the position. I am mentioning this staffing decision in the context of hardly existing self-reflection in our field.

This lack of self-reflection and self-criticism also shows itself when dealing with Harvard's free online course "Masterpieces of World Literature". As it is available on a free online learning platform, participants only have to sign up for it, meaning, that basically everyone around the world with a sufficient knowledge of English, internet access and a laptop or another device can sign up for the course. Participants can earn a Harvard certificate for completing the course by paying 186€. (cf. Harvard University) Which once again shows the power such institutions hold – to be able to demand money and people being willing to pay these sums just to acquire a certificate with the well-known name of Harvard on in, is the ultimate form of power. No one is debating and reflecting on the contents of such a course of "Masterpieces of World Literature". It is just about the name, prestige and reputation of an institution. What are students of the course presented with? A 13-chapter course that gives insight and basic knowledge on WL, the canon and allegedly masterpieces it contains. While taking a first look on the included titles one might think, the course is, for its relatively short extent of 13 chapters, covering a lot of ground. The single chapters contain:

- Goethe and the birth of WL

- The Epic of Gilgamesh
- Homer and the Odyssey
- The 1001 Nights
- The Tale of Genji
- The Lusiads
- Candide
- Lu Xun and Eileen Chang
- Borges and the Ficciones
- Death and the King´s Horseman
- Salman Rushdie and Jhumpa Lahiri
- Orhan Pamuk and My Name is Red
- WL today

(cf. Harvard University)

Taking a closer look at the course's selection, a striking thought comes to mind. All this covering of different areas still only takes place in the scopes of centre-peripheral thinking. First of all, one single title (namely "Death and the King´s Horseman" by Wole Soyinka from Nigeria) is chosen, to represent an entire continent which is often the case with Africa, if it is even included in a discourse. Secondly, all the selected works come from a seemingly "civilised" background, meaning, that still only works of metropolitan areas are being used. Areas that have a high enough standard of literary production, cultural development and circulation that they can be considered appropriate for this kind of WL practice. All measured through Western standards. The areas covered are Europe, the Middle East, South-East/East Asia (with India, China and Japan), if Latin America is in the picture, that is also done through a Westernized view, and as mentioned one single text from Nigeria to stand for the totality of the African continent. Let alone the ratio of male and female authors included: The curriculum of the course includes three female authors. Out of 12 chapters that discuss texts. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues in her text "Death of a Discipline", reconsidering the practices of comparative literature is necessary and reflection on its practices irrevocable in a more and more interconnected world, which also counts for WL:

> *We cannot not try to open up, from the inside, the colonialism of European national language-based Comparative Literature and the Cold War format of Area Studies, and infect history and anthropology with the "other" as producer of knowledge. From the inside, acknowledging complicity. No accusations. No excuses. Rather, learning the protocol of those disciplines, turning them around, laboriously, not only by building institutional bridges but also by persistent curricular interventions. The most difficult thing here is to resist mere appropriation by the dominant. (Spivak, pp. 10-11)*

Being exposed to these topics from the beginning on, as a literature student, isn´t that bad at first. The problem presents itself further down the line, when hardly anything in the dialogue and topics changes. When only the same texts are being discussed. When only the same understanding of WL and its practices is applied. When no critical examination of the practices and the comprehension of WL is made. Which is often the case. There are rare opportunities to really engage in a critical discussion about the area of research that is WL.

The Harvard course "Masterpieces of World Literature" is one example of the influence Ivy League and other prestigious colleges have on WL practices around the world. As well as on the mainstream perception of what WL is. David Damrosch as one of the famous scholars on the topic of WL as well as the head of Harvard´s Institute of World Literature is another key player in today's understanding of the matter. The fact that his collection of literary works from around the world, titled "Around the World in 80 Books" (2022), is available through a major publishing company (a Penguin Random House imprint) in a random Austrian bookstore´s English section, says a lot about his standings. Especially since literary theory isn´t a particular area of interest in the world of mainstream publishing. Which puts Damrosch, and again Harvard University, in a very privileged position of navigating the discourse of WL. Goethe´s initial definition of WL is still very much at play in this discourse.

Practices of WL as in universities around the world spill over not only into mainstream cultural consciousness, but with it also into early literary education, if there is even a spot for that in schools curricula. The influences it has will be discussed in the chapter about Oceania. A good practice example therefor, on how a dialogue about literatures from around the world can be implemented into

education systems, is Words Without Borders. Again, a US based online platform for literatures around the world, but with a different mindset towards institutional power structures in literature: “Words Without Borders is the premier destination for a global literary conversation. Founded in 2003, our mission is to cultivate global awareness by expanding access to international writing and creating a bridge between readers, writers, and translators.” (WWB, Mission) Words Without Borders not only started an online platform for more access and exchange between writers, readers and translators, but also implemented an WWB Campus. Where teachers can sign in to get access to WWBs text resources and more learning materials: “Drawing from Words Without Borders' rich archive of contemporary stories, essays, and poems in translation, Words Without Borders Campus connects students and educators to eye-opening contemporary literature from across the globe. We present this literature alongside multimedia contextual materials, ideas for lessons, and pathways for further exploration. Our goal is to create a virtual learning space without borders, fostering meaningful cross-cultural understandings and inspiring a lifelong interest in international literature.” (WWB Campus, About us) What impact projects like this have in the international literary world will be looked at later on. But first, to conclude with the introductory and theoretical part of this thesis, critical voices and perspectives that WL has to face, will be discussed.

3 What´s the problem? Critical perspectives and beyond

As mentioned before, there are a lot of critical perspectives on the matter of WL. Some base their criticism on certain aspects of WL, others debate the entire eligibility of its system. That criticism ranges from discussions about terminologies, quantity and quality relations, linguistic and language hierarchies, translations, to geographical embeddings, otherings, center-peripheral thinking and many more. Used terminologies expose the power-structures behind WL, originating from literary criticism, spilling over into mainstream publishing.

Taking the example of othering, which basically deems the occidental, Western way of life and experience, education and civilization as the norm and ground from where everything else is explored. Everything outside that hemisphere is

subjected as “the other”, not equal, but often inferior. Establishing superior-inferior constellations made way for a usage out of racism, sexism, or propaganda, for example. Those practices might have been more serious during the 19th and 20th century, but can still be found in today’s cultural spheres, not as obvious and outspoken, but still. Let´s take an example: words such as “exotic” can still be found as paratextual description of novels in mainstream publishing, especially with female readers as target audience. The usage of words like “exotic” promise a more exciting and outstanding position of a book, to make it appealing for buyers who seek for something out of their own socio-economic sphere. The practice of othering is therefor still used as an attraction mechanism while it also solidifies and applies structural power mechanisms in reinforcing the superior-inferior scheme, or, in other words an understanding of a “self” and an “other” as Jüri Talvet points out:

> *Yet my purpose in the following is to concentrate on the relationship between “self” and “other” in the most radical sense, in which the former (“self”) appears as a historical derivate of predominantly male reasoning, representing political-economical-military power-structures, vastly relying on the advances of science and technology, while the latter (“other”), represents the generic otherness (womankind), the ethnical-linguistic “other” (the world’s peripheral and minority nations and nationalities), as well as the racially or socially oppressed and deprived “other”. The common feature of this traditional “other”, with all its sub-species, is that it has not been capable or willing to adapt to the historical “progress” envisaged and planned first and foremost by the Western centres of power. Instead, and to the contrary, that “other” has been an ally of nature in resisting the kind of “progress” of which the essence would be to destroy the natural basis of life on earth, in the name of power ambitions and materialistic greed. (Talvet, p. 10)*

Maintaining power-structures through othering is one point that is being widely discussed through works such as “Orientalism” by Edward Said in 1978, where he not only underlines orientalism as a keyword for a critical examination of colonial and imperial practices. Taking the Western discourse about the Orient as an example for the occidentally established discourse of othering, and with it devaluing, of the Orient to distinguish and privilege its own identity; as well as to justify imperial claimings. Which further accentuates center-peripheral thinking. Something Aamir Mufti also highlights in his work “Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures”:

> *"World literature" came into being (only) when the cultural system of the modern bourgeois West had appropriated and assimilated – that is, "discovered", absorbed, recalibrated, rearranged, revaluated, reclassified, reconstellated, compared, translated, historicized, standardized, disseminated, and, in short, fundamentally transformed – the widely diverse and diffuse writing practices and traditions of the societies and civilizations of the "East," which extended in the Euro-Occidental imagination from the Atlantic shore of North Africa to the littoral of the Sea of Japan. (Mufti, p. 49)*

Even today, where discourses in WL claim to be more inclusive, they can´t really conceal that in fact an asymmetrical arrangement of power is still at play, which also structures WL as a field and an apparatus. As well as Muftis discussion of the idea of a universal library go his questions about who´s assembling it is, under what conditions this happens and to what purpose, also translate into the discussion of WL and how it is practiced in general. Who claims to choose the principles of selection, on how to arrange and organize such canons, topics, libraries? (cf. Mufti, p. 5)

Criticizing the installed power structures and hierarchies within WL as an institution is one point that includes the exact opposite of othering. Scholars question the more and more common homogenization of literature that is specifically, more or less by conscious decision, written for a global audience. Rebecca Walkowitz summarizes that "in recent debates about the new world literature […] it is often assumed that texts are being translated into English and that the process of translation leads to cultural as well as political homogenization. Translation leads to cultural homogenization, the argument goes, because readers will learn fewer languages, and because texts written for translation will tend to avoid vernacular references and linguistic complexity. It leads to political homogenization because the world market requires stories that everyone can share, which means fewer distinctions among political histories and social agents." (Walkowitz, p. 216) The concern being that translation is bad because of what it does to books, which is taking them apart from their original context and the language they are written in. Apparently, translation is even worse because of what it does to authors, which is to encourage them to write for a global audience in mind and ignore those original contexts and languages. (cf. Walkowitz, p. 216) That leads to homogenization in the literary

landscape around the world. Would it also mean, that only texts that are written for a global audience can be considered WL? Contemporary discussions point in that direction as Walkowitz mentioned. Those seemingly new trends in literary production aren´t new though. Taking into consideration that generations of authors under colonial rule were forced to write, read, learn, speak in colonial languages, other than their native tongues and by being influenced through colonial educational systems, grew up writing more likely in a Westernized style that is far removed from their own heritage. The only difference to today's practices is, that it nowadays is voluntarily done by authors; they are also growing up under the influence of a more and more accessible global cultural upbringing. The tendencies here still replicate a power-structure, now moved to the US as the key player and a norm on the world market of cultural production, which again leads to cultural overpowering from the outside of one nation through another. What happened through imperial force before is now being applied through economical ventures. This again leads to destruction of smaller, national or regional cultures and literatures with it. Or it won´t let any reconnection with original heritage happen. WL came out of an era of free-trade ambitions with the consequence of homogenization across borders. René Etiemble pointed at this fact:

> *Still, how could I forget that this Weltliteratur that may well have been the product of a bourgeois conscience during the period of free-trade liberalism has illiberally participated in the denigration or even the systematic destruction of the African, Indian, Amerindian, Madagascan, Indonesian, Vietnamese and other literatures? Like free-trade liberalism, colonialist imperialism constitutes one moment of bourgeois consciousness. The European priests, soldiers, and merchants have in effect replaced Goethe's generous conception with one in which literature is divided between that of the masters and that of the slaves. (Etiemble, pp. 86-87)*

Undermining and overpowering certain literatures always starts with its languages. In which language a text is written very much determines if it is eligible for being part of the WL discourse. Of course, the definition and usage of WL varies, but usually the understanding of WL includes a text being written or translated into at least one "big" world language, such as English, Spanish, French, maybe Russian, German or Chinese. Power-relations of language show a clear picture here, since using language as a main source of control and

oppression was common practice when one power/nation/imperium tried to conquer another. Language was, and is still used, to extinct another “minor” language, with effects that can be seen until this day; taking Spanish and Portuguese as examples that are still the official languages in Latin American countries, and English and French, e.g., remaining Lingua Franca in many African countries after colonial rule stopped. Because language is not only information carrier but also carries human connection, emotion, culture and artistic expression, the extinction of languages is even more disastrous. In other words, language is a major player in the discussion surrounding WL. WL and comparative literature as a discipline often neglect to discuss the concept and power-structure of language, which other areas are affected (e.g. the translation industry and whole educational systems) and especially how WL itself also plays along in this narrative of preserving these power-relations. But making the publication in one “big” world language a condition of considering it eligible for a WL canon automatically limits the chances of so many people around the world, who for example don´t have access to translation and publishing infrastructures that can provide making it accessible outside the language its written in. Even if it´s contents would deserve being read by a wider audience, outside of national or linguistical borders. Which also explains the reign of especially Anglophone and French literature, also Russian, German and Spanish inside the so-called canon of classics of WL.

Languages are key players in the discussion of WL. Languages and their nuances – there is not only ONE English, not only ONE French or Spanish. Plus, the importance of translation is often neglected by mainstream WL discourses. Something many scholars and critics have already pointed out a lot. As Emily Apter argues in her text “The Translation Zone. A New Comparative Literature”:

> *Reversing this history of class injustice has been one of the objectives of this project. A new comparative literature, with the revalued labor of the translator and theories of translation placed center stage, expands centripetally toward a genuinely planetary criticism, extending emphasis on the transference of texts from one language to another, to criticism of the processes of linguistic creolization, the multilingual practices of poets and novelists over a vast range of major and “minor” literatures, and the development of*

> *new languages by marginal groups all over the world. A new comparative literature has prompted me to imagine a field in which philology is linked to globalization, to Guantánomo Bay, to war and peace, to the Internet and "Netlish," and to "other Englishes" spoken worldwide, not to mention the "languages" of cloning and computer simulation. Envisaged as the source of an ambitious mandate for literary and social analysis, translation becomes the name for the ways in which the humanities negotiates past and future technologies of communication, while shifting the parameters by which language itself is culturally and politically transformed. By insisting, too, on learning languages wholly distant from one's native philology, a new comparative literature based on translational pedagogies renews the psychic life of diplomacy, even as it forces an encounter with intractable alterity, with that which will not be subject to translation. (Apter, 2006, pp. 10-11)*

Putting translation at the core of dealing with WL is something René Etiemble already did back in 1974 in his influential work "Should we rethink the notion of World Literature?": "In one sense, this amounts to saying that the world literature of the future, that is to say literature, will merit, even more than does the Weltliteratur of which Goethe dreamed, Mr. Árpád Berczik's reproach that it largely depends upon translations." (Etiemble, p. 93) To point out these notions further, it would be appropriate to say, that the act of translation converts a text in whatever shape and form into WL, not restricting specific languages into which it has to be translated. That, in theory, would be a decent starting point to deal with literatures from around the world. Still, there is a lot to be looked at in that translation process as well, as later chapters will show. As in the entire process of creating literature and talking about it, making it accessible etc., the literary industry is a lot more complex, intertwined and interdependent than visible on the surface.

When talking about translation a whole other discuss emerges: Is literature even translatable? To which degree is the act of translating a re-shaping and re-writing? As it isn´t the work only of its author, literature, is most of the time a collaborative effort of many people, e.g. through publishing, marketing and circulation, reception and criticism etc.; even more so if it is embedded in a global context, as Rebecca Walkowitz points out: "And all literature, too, involves some kind of collaboration, in more visible (editing, publishing, printing, distributing) and less visible (building on previous representations, uses of

language) ways. This is not to detract from the strenuous, often global collaborations that world literature may require, but rather to note that translation makes literature's status as a collaborative, often global enterprise more difficult to miss." (Walkowitz, p. 221) The question about language and translation will be further discussed in chapter 4.2 about Latin America, as well as the topic on literary genres, which is another point of criticism.

What even IS literature? Or is perceived and proclaimed as literature? In WL discourses a very narrow approach to literary genres can be seen, routing in the three big literary entities that are prose, drama and poetry. Showing even more orientation on considered classical approaches to literature that play a major role in the ancient Greek and Latin world, and that are cornerstones for Goethe´s conception of WL to begin with, that has been kept as and adapted into contemporary understandings of WL discourses. What about literary fiction in all shapes and forms, essays and literary non-fiction, and other diverging categories? Also, many literary traditions started off as orally transported, later written down – only then they would it considered literature in the narrow sense. What about solely oral literary traditions, that still aren´t written down? Something, contemporary digitization could help with – to broaden, and preserve, more diverse narratives.

Terminologies are important, and with it, who determines them, since they almost always contain hidden or obvious, power-constructs. As beforementioned, language and translation, literary genres and who specifies them, are vital. So are terms in context of geographics in relation to literature. That starts with the discussion of world-building, and what a world even is. Or even: is there ONE world? The term "world" is used as a category, but its definition is being adapted and borrowed in an un-reflected way: "The category 'world' is borrowed unproblematically from the social sciences, its systemic integration warranted by the universalist categories of economic discourse; even 'literature' is predicated upon a putative universal consensus over form and taste that is deeply problematic in that it marginalizes or excludes orature as well as literature that follows other aesthetic canons and systems of meaning." (Laachir et al., p. 2) In WL the word world is often used in a descriptive mode, as an adjective to literature, to distinguish it from other forms

of literature, that were discussed before, like Pheng Cheah points out: “Recent studies that reconceptualize world literature in a global era […] have failed to grasp the normative aspects of worldhood. They have taken the world for granted and merely attached `world´ as an adjective to qualify the noun `literature,´ most often in order to contrast `world literature´ with merely national literature. (Cheah, p. 30) The argument even goes as far as stating, that WL is just an accumulation of all national literatures, as René Etiemble already argued back in 1974:

> *Rather than trip over the adjectives clinging to the notion of literature may we candidly admit that the totality of all national literatures simply makes up literature, without adjective? Let me add that in order to study this literature without adjective we have at our disposal – independent of works of literary history, sociology or criticism on separate literatures – the comparatist method, which can be subdivided into several sub-disciplines: comparative literary history, comparative sociology of literatures, genre theory, general aesthetics, and general literature […]. (Etiemble, p. 87)*

For him, comparatist methods are the way to deal with literatures from around the world. Which is actually a fair point, if comparatist methods wouldn´t also be too exclusively coined and applied from a Western point of view. With this in mind, the next problem evokes with a sentiment like this. That is, talking about national literatures. Especially in former colonial areas, the question of a nation is by itself problematic to the degree as where does national identity, through culture, language and arts come in? What about all those former colonized countries, whose peoples were put together out of an arbitrary pattern by these colonizing nations, like it happened in Africa on the entire continent. How can one talk about a national literature, if there are so many more points that are needed to be taken into consideration, such as colonial pasts, new colonialism through economic relations, multiple ethnicities within one single nation, and peoples´ territories being ripped apart by new national borders?

There are many more points of literary contact, as Laachir et al. point out in their article “Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies: For a Ground-up and Located Approach to World Literature.”: “To think of comparative or world literature as international relations is not inappropriate, of course, but to think of it as exclusively so elides and obscures all the other kinds, levels and modes of

literary contact both within and outside the nation." (Laachir et al., p. 1) Points of contact, that are relevant for all parties, but also reflect another layer of power-structure, where the West considers contact and exchange as valuable for new artistic output, while they also enforce their influence on former colonized regions, determine the "norm" of cultural and artistic practice through education, language and institutions. The contact usually rather went into one direction and wasn´t an actual exchange. Turning towards the other parties, those points of contact have a far more crucial impact, a direct one – they dictate their own productions, but also make it even harder for them to establish themselves within the West, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak points out: "I have remarked above that borders are easily crossed from metropolitan countries, whereas attempts to enter from the so-called peripheral countries encounter bureaucratic and policed frontiers, altogether more difficult to penetrate." (Spivak, p. 16)

The discussion about what a nation is, is as relevant when discussing WL, as is talking about geographical terminologies in general. The same goes for the already mentioned relation between center and periphery which seems to be omnipresent in a WL discourse. This relationship contains even more power-relations and hierarchical establishments that were introduced by the West: industrial countries vs. third world and developing countries; Orient and Occident/West, to point out some examples. In establishing certain terms to underline relations between two or more parties, another relation is made visible – that of power, because not every party is allowed a seat at the table to establish these terms. Some are signifying, some are the signified as these terms show. Usually, the Northern hemisphere imprints its convictions upon the Southern hemisphere, the West still oppresses the East, and the South. Yes, these statements are put in a generalized manner on purpose. To showcase the absurdity of it. Still, it is common practice, even in seemingly inconspicuous cases, within academia and cultural practices alike. Yes, imperial endeavors played a huge part in connecting the literary world and making exchange possible, but so did common trade, as can be seen through examples such as silk road trades that also transported a lot of cultural exchange – Goethe read Chinese novels as well as Persian poetry. (cf. Goethe, pp. 19-20) The main

problem is the Western, former imperial, especially English supremacy, and everything that comes with it:

> *Again, this is of course not to deny that empires were hugely important in putting distant areas of the globe in contact with each other under particular and asymmetrical conditions of discursive and real power. But empire as an analytical lens seems to work in comparative literature almost exclusively in terms of centre–periphery relations with very clear vectors of 'diffusion' and 'impact'. Comparisons are pursued only between East and West, and any innovation in the colonized non-West, certainly 'literary modernity', becomes necessarily the product of direct colonial influence. What this focus obstructs are the many other types of traffic and 'lateral' literary contacts that empire facilitated but that do not fit within the centre–periphery model. It also mistakenly reinforces the notion that imperial languages such as English worked as autonomous agents, influencing other languages and literatures around them while remaining utterly uninfluenced themselves. (Laachir et al., p. 2)*

While talking about the category "world" as a benchmark for a discourse about literatures on a global scale, one more point that has to be reflected on, comes to mind: the tendency to find all-encompassing and all-defining terminologies that are fit for that discourse on a global scale – to see everything from a macro-perspective that tends to generalize literary relations and productions, while neglecting unique practices and creations: "The fourth problem is the current predilection within world literature for universal categories and simple macro-models that aim to cover the whole world like a single map." (Laachir et al., p. 2)

Ensuing this quote, one main point of criticism must be mentioned: The debate about a possible WL. Or, better put, the question if WL is even possible, if it is a concept people can strive towards. "A library of world literature remains prospective: an idea, an imagination, a dream", B. Venkat Mani states. (2013, p. 255) The same sentiment applies to WL in general. At least, if one wants to put it into categories, analyze and research it, not to mention to read it. Anyways, WL was treated not only as a possibility but sometimes even the necessity of dealing with literatures from around the world. Always coming from the same basis: "Presented thus, world literature is nothing but a celebration of bourgeois and Christian values." (Etiemble, p. 90) Originating from Goethe and his times, followed up by Marx´s and Engels´ ideas, the background of dealing with WL has almost always been the same, even though the approaches and definitions

changed. Debating the mere possibility of WL has constantly been around, especially when the understanding of WL in a qualitative way was criticized e.g. by René Etiemble when he urges towards a new understanding of WL with a more quantitative approach that has WL/literature as a totality in mind (cf. Etiemble). An idea which would need the engagement of philologist and experts on all kinds of national literatures as well as experts that are trained with a comparatist approach towards literature, as he exemplifies:

> *This means that instead of wasting one's time with reading a thousand bad books of which the whole world talks, one will be able to choose from the tens of thousands of great works that are only awaiting our goodwill. Maybe this also means that, while we may continue to educate specialists in the Romance languages, the Germanic languages, or the Slavic languages, or Dravidian, or Sino-Tibetan, or Turkish-Mongolian, or Finno-Ugrian, or Semitic, and many Africanists, we will also educate another type of scholar: people who will know well a Semitic language, a Dravidian language, a Sino-Tibetan language, and a Malay language. These are the people who would be particularly apt to enrich and define more precisely the notion of literature. And let no one object that I am dreaming, that I am wallowing in utopia. In Paris I know a few very gifted students who are beginning to acquire this kind of education. It is they who one day might write this history of literature, and of literatures, that we unfortunately still lack. They are the ones who one day might elaborate a history and theory of literary genres. Our traditional teachings should therefore be complemented with those offered by institutes of literature conceived in such a spirit. They are the people who, building on the work done by scholars of Slavic, Germanic, Chinese, Romance, and Semitic literatures, might try to put together those syntheses of literary history, criticism and aesthetics that still continue to elude us because, owing to a lack of means but also to a lack of foresight and imagination, we continue in our usual groove. (Etiemble, p. 94)*

The debate on how and if WL is even possible includes so many more points of critic and discussions. Since this thesis aims not for mere critic on WL and its system, but rather tries to suggest new approaches towards dealing with literatures from around the world, in times of globalization, digitization and constant migration flows, this chapter should only serve as an introduction into some areas that are already talked about on a larger scale. In the following main chapters, some of those points will be included and build upon again. But first of all, what is meant by "building a world map of literature" shall be explained.

4 Building a world map

> *In short, world literature surfaces as the totality of human aesthetic, experiential, and intellectual expression; then it becomes a mode of informing the reader's aesthetic, experiential, and intellectual expression. (Venkat Mani, pp. 250-251)*

Literature, or even simpler put, telling stories has been part of humanity for centuries. In any shape or form, whether written, painted or orally transported, narrations connect peoples, within their own people and with others, today more and more so with people from all over the world. I think, nowadays there is an even more horizontal exchange of literature then it is vertical, as it used to be looked upon, like in WL practices of intertextuality. More than looking back, people tend to look at each other, made possible through more elevated forms of communication, publishing and exchange. Vertical in this case means a going back in time when dealing with and choosing literature, especially for a WL canon. Exchange happens in a faster paced way; migration is a huge factor in artistic production on a global level. Why is it then, that WL still clings to its original ideas and concepts, that are not only outdated, but have already been established as Western-centered and exclusive, while oppressing literary production around the world? Of course, sharing and making WL accessible and inclusive would also mean to lose power for all those institutions that profit from it, namely academia, cultural and educational institutions, and publishing companies.

To understand how the literary world is working we have to take a closer look at the interconnectedness of various institutions that deal with literature. That might be academia, publishing, educational systems, libraries, cultural institutions like the UNESCO, but also immaterial institutions like language translation or genres. Only during my master's degree did I learn about that interconnectedness at play in the literary world, especially in WL. It's not as simple as to say there's only one factor that determines WL or implemented its system. The problem is that the majority of different factors and players who established that system came from a Western-socialized background. So in talking about WL, we have to take a closer look at as many of those factors as possible to understand how inclusive dealing with literatures from around the

world can be possible for the future. While taking that closer look we also have to step away from it. Because WL is already two implemented into common knowledge, to narrow and exclusive so that overturning it isn´t possible anymore. We have to find new ways to talk about literature in a globalized world because of the very institutionalized and exclusive practice of WL. That is, why my chosen examples of texts and authors aim for contemporary publications – to start from scratch, from the present on, to take a look back and also into the future of literatures from around the world while holding ourselves and our practices accountable and not shy away from looking at serious issues WL has caused in the past. Because there are so many different factors and players within WL and the literary system in general, I want to outline as many different of them as possible, which also denies me from going deeper into only one issue. My main aim is to outline how complicated the connections and how interconnected literature, literary systems, authors, readers, scholars, critics and cultural institutions are.

I am very aware of the circumstances and privileges I am writing from – being a white, middle-European woman, being socialized in a certain way. When choosing sources, I have to be very considerate and cautious about this socialization. That being said, I want to start building a “World Map of Literatures”. As explained earlier this is to be taken very literally, meaning, I am building an imaginary map consisting of literatures, authors, texts and literary institutions and figures from around the world. All of them being part of and playing roles in the world of literature. Of course, for the thesis I had to build my own small canon, if we just see that term as a certain assembly of texts for research purposes. But rather than establishing a new kind of canon (of course, I am working with my own chosen, personal canon here) the thesis should point out parameters after which we in academia can start looking for and choosing literature to engage with. All the examples chosen here should underline those criterions and emphasize on what to consider when talking about literatures of the world.

With that in mind I want to outline my main argument of the thesis. The authors chosen are suitable for the different topics their chapters deal with. Which doesn´t mean that there aren´t any other suitable authors for those topics or

other Indigenous authors out there worthy of being read. But I had to start somewhere. And these authors are exactly that: examples. Examples for a model on how academia, publishing houses, the media, educational curriculums etc. could choose and find texts as diverse as the worlds literary landscapes are. Because my claim is that these institutions don´t only have the opportunity but the obligation to start approaching their choices of texts and authors differently. As technology, digitization and globalization progresses it is even more important to look outside our hemispheres. Rather than keeping on enforcing, in many ways colonial, habits of literary canons, practices and teachings on the rest of the world. It is these institutions´ (academia, literary organizations, publishing houses, media, schools, libraries and many more) responsibility to make a more diverse literary landscape accessible on a global scale. Better put, if an institution of WL wants to justify its existence, then it is its responsibility, I argue, to work with a bottom-up approach – or, as I want to put it, de-centralized thinking. Since the image of center-periphery is embossed in cultural understanding, I want to put it in another way: We must work with an outward-in approach, while being very aware, that this description also imposes an unequal relation. But, this way, it might be more understandable, what I am aiming for here. Looking outwards meant to start with the marginalized groups, not only in literature, but society in general.

Of course, there are many hurdles to engage with those kinds of texts – language is a big one, for example. Anyways, I´d like to make a few suggestions on how we – yes, I am talking about “we” as a collectively responsible institution – can start choosing more diverse and reflected upon texts and authors. On how we can become pro-active rather than passive if we want to take the liberty of talking of WL – whatever this actually means. I´d rather stick to the term of talking about a “World (full) of Literatures”, and literatures from around the world. Instead of forcing our Westernized, white literary curriculums and canons on the rest of the world we should be focusing on making especially those literatures available to more readers. Because they are hardly available due to the circumstances they are written in – be it a “minority language” or because of an insufficient publishing landscape. The argument that a text is considered as WL, if it is written or at least translated

into at least one of the big, widespread languages such as English or French – otherwise it cannot be suitable for the world scale – is outdated and power-enforcing, as has been discussed earlier.

In order to get away from a notion to write and receive literature in a globalized context, meaning writing in a "world literature fashion" as Stephen Owen also proclaims happening in poetry of 3rd world countries – whatever this classification might say about a nation's literary tradition or only our Westernized thoughts of it (cf. Owen, pp. 28-32) – encouraging authors to explore their own cultural roots or what´s left of those is crucial. One doesn´t need a Western-inspired novel from Africa or Asia to be part of WL. To achieve an inclusive canon, a collection of texts as whole as possible when it comes to representation of authors, ethnicities, and languages, looking at those different literatures is key. I allow myself to argue that there´s still enough material for literary scholars to compare and relate to even if there are significantly different literary productions included in a globalized system of literatures. But this is not the main point here. Besides pointing out how WL came into being, what it is today and how it is practiced, the aim should be to find different ways to deal with literatures from around the world. In order to do so, we must take a look on how the literary landscape works, how institutions and various factors are intertwined and what relations exist. After stating those various areas, problems and not so known connections, examples for those specific topics will be made as well as suggestions or examples for better practices, what chances we have at hand and which new possibilities these might bring for dealing with literature.

4.1 Starting the journey: North America

Academia is one of the bigger institutional areas dealing with WL as a system. Since its role in opinion making on a larger scale is a decisive factor, it is the first area to be discussed. If academia, more specifically literary studies[8], wants to claim their significance in WL it has to acknowledge its responsibility towards it as well. Which means that representation already starts on a small scale – with inclusion of Indigenous scholars and/or Indigenous authors into the canon. One example for combining both facets can be Joshua Whitehead.

[8] When talking about academia, in this chapter especially, but in the thesis in general, it usually refers to literary studies and comparative literature within academia, areas that deal with WL.

4.1.1 Joshua Whitehead

> *I figured out that I was gay when I was eight. I liked to stay up late after everyone went to bed and watch Queer as Folk on my kokum's TV. She had a satellite and all the channels, pirated of course. At the time, my mom and I were living with my kokum because my dad had left us – I think he took Loretta Lynn a little too seriously because one day he never did come home after drinking.*[9] *(Whitehead, chap.1)*

Joshua Whitehead is a queer Indigenous writer from Canada. That would be a definition understandable to many. But to introduce him properly it´s better to say that he is a Two-Spirit Oji-nêhiyaw Indigiqueer scholar from Peguis First Nation, he is an Oji Cree otâcimow – a storyteller. (cf. CBC Books) As he proclaims himself an otâcimow, his telling of stories takes various shapes and forms; from poetry, to prose, creative non-fiction and academic writings, always interwoven with his heritage, his community and his exploration of himself, his indigeneity and ancestorial pasts and futures. As Whitehead states we are currently in an era of transition of what and who is being published, and who publishes. (cf. Bookfest Studio 1) Whitehead himself being proof of that change on many levels: He is not only a writer of fiction himself, but an editor and literary scholar as well, currently employed as an assistant professor at the University of Calgary where he wrote his dissertation and focuses on Indigenous literature and culture and creative writing. (cf. CBC Books) His writings often focus on the specific aspect of Two-Spiritedness, which Whitehead owns and implements in his characters as well, most prominent in his novel "Jonny Appleseed" from 2018. When he received a nomination for the Lambda Literary Award in the Trans Poetry category for is debut poetry collection "full metal indigiqueer" he turned down his nomination because he didn´t want his Two-Spiritedness in writing and personally put into a generalized and Western conception of queer- and transness. In his explanation why he turned the nomination down Whitehead states:

> *My gender, sexuality, and my identities supersede Western categorizations of LGBTQ+ because Two-Spirit is a home-calling, it is a home-coming. I note that it may be easy from an outside vantage point to read Two-Spirit as a conflation of feminine and masculine spirits and to easily, although wrongfully, categorize it as trans; I also*

[9] The beginning of Joshua Whitehead´s novel "Jonny Appleseed".

> *note the appropriation of Two-Spirit genealogies by settler queerness to mark it as a reminder that Western conceptions of "queerness" have always lived due in part to the stealing of third, fourth, fifth, and fluid genders from many, although not all, Indigenous worldviews. My work has aimed to remove queer, non-binary, trans, and intersexed Indigeneity from the ethnographic and anthropologic "was" of the Americas' categorizations of Indigenous identities and to place it firmly into the "is" of our contemporary moments […]. (Tiahouse, Whitehead)*

In pointing out this simplified categorization of his poetry he underlines not only a critical practice in the system of literary awards, but in the literary system in general, which is to a great length also reflected in WL: That of homogenizing and simplifying native and Indigenous terms, traditions and practices into categories originating from a Western point of view without understanding or trying to understand the meaning and complexity of those concepts, like for instance Two-Spiritedness in "Native" consciousness. This practice is applied to sociological factors of the literary industry as well as its contents – when it comes to genres for example, or to the contents of a text itself, like political issues etc. Writing against that discourse and acting against it go hand in hand for Joshua Whitehead, who is also applying this practice of his literary writing onto his academic work. He sees his role as an otâcimow in all aspects of his life and work and argues further why he is declining his nomination:

> *I stand by my trans kin fully and I, having lived through the intergenerational trauma of MMIWG2S (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit folx), the Sixties Scoop, day schools, and transracial adoption, know in my heart and spirits that I am not a proper candidate for this award. After much talk with my communities and kin I have come to the conclusion that I must withdraw my name and stories from this wonderful nomination because it is not my space to occupy – occupation being a story I know all too well. And while I am fully aware that Lambda's categorizations do not require storytellers to self identify and instead base their nomination on content, this is not something I feel comfortable with. I need to walk through the world in a good way, to work towards miyopimatisowin, the good life, a good way of living. My stories are not written within a vacuum, I am simply an animated avatar, my stories are communal, reciprocal, gifted, pained, and healing. I need to walk my path as an otâcimow in this light, to be ethical, respectable, and most importantly, to give back to those who have supported, raised, and nurtured my voice – many of whom are trans women. Instead, I dream of the day when award cultures,*

> *especially settler queer award institutions, etch out space for 2SQ capacities and oratories. (Tiahouse, Whitehead)*

If one wants to put it this way, Joshua Whitehead is also already one excellent example of how a new practice of applied literary studies could be implemented. A form of applied literary studies that not only includes learning practices on how to work in literary institutions such as publishing houses or how to work as a critic or a writer yourself. But one that emphasizes a discourse and exchange between different figures in the literary world, for instance scholars, writers and artists in general, critics, editors and readers. While being a scholar himself, teaching his students not only literary history and literary studies with focus on Indigenous literature and culture, but also creative writing from an Indigenous point of view, Joshua Whitehead is a writer himself, always keen on challenging existing images of indigeneity. When talking about literatures from around the world, especially writings from Indigenous and First Nation authors, it is not enough to include their writings into the discourse and a canon but they themselves need to have a seat at the table, as writers, publishers and editors, as readers themselves, but especially as scholars. Which already starts to happen as Laara Fitznor points out: “Increasingly, Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous Allied Scholars (Absolon, 2011; Anthony-Stevens, 2017; Hogue, 2018) are pushing the inclusion of Indigenous writing (albeit primarily in English), Indigenous thinking and Indigenous concepts/words into the dominant ‘English language’ spaces of content and processes of communicating and writing.” (Fitznor, p. 32)

That is something Whitehead is doing and implementing himself, through his own writings and while researching and engaging with other Indigenous authors. A big part in all of his writings is using not only English but centering back on terms and words from his Oji-nêhiyaw language, using forms of storytelling stemming from his community while also exploring contemporary forms of narrating, as he explains, how he wrote his first poetry collection “full metal indigiqueer”:

> *I was very interested in writing using the colloquialisms or the vernacular of the millennial age. I wanted to explore text messages and the digital language we use online. Digital stuff like the 'LOL' or 'BRB' messages we use. I wanted to bring that to the page and see*

> *how that works — what it looks like, how it sounds. So it's about bringing the text message language and how our digital or cybernetic might transform how we think of poetry. (Patrick)*

In order to make Whitehead's efforts, and those of other Indigenous scholars, visible and better known, allyship from other scholars is necessary – to give them a seat at the table as authors and as researchers, to pave their way into visibility, as representatives of their peoples, cultures and languages. Those efforts just recently began to pay off for them, there is still a long way to go, especially in social sciences and cultural studies in general, as in literature studies in particular, all because of a too firm standing that Western systems have, as we will see in the next chapter.

4.1.2 Literary Studies/Academia and Institutions

> *Scholarship in the field emphasizes and scrutinizes the political and institutional aspects of world literature, challenging an understanding of world literature based on "great works and authors." […] Most theorists have discussed world literature as a problem of scholarly expertise, reducing it to a largely academic enterprise. In fact, some of the most heated debates – on topics ranging from the value of translations in world-literary comparisons, to the manifestation of the North-South divide in differential access to literary productions, to the dominance of literary works in English or French within the postcolonial canon – have revolved around the purpose and scope of specific academic disciplines, such as the design and purpose of "national" and "comparative" literature departments. (Venkat Mani, pp. 239-240)*

B. Venkat Mani very precisely outlines one of the main issues at hand when talking about WL: The discussion almost always starts with academia and the role it played and still plays in the shaping of WL. As Goethe started off coining his vision of WL, he worked from his humanistic point of view as a writer, reader and scholar. After his definition, WL was supposed to be a very exclusive enterprise, for educated, preferably Western man who obtained knowledge of a few important languages that he considered relevant:

> *These narratives came to be recognized as Weltliteratur. These works also became the cornerstone for literary comparison, providing an alternative to the national literary arrangement of texts. Goethe established world literature as a philosophical, humanistic ideal, as a mode of transnational arrangement of texts. This ideal, however, was enabled by material instantiations of literature's global pathways: not*

> *only publishers, empires, and shipping routes but also libraries. (Venkat Mani, p. 247)*

Somehow academia still clings to this notion very often, if not in an obvious way, then at least in a subtle manner, by keeping it's circles small and exclusive as I've already pointed out. Dictating which languages are relevant, and which are not, is one of the factors that has a huge impact on WL and its perception. I also already pointed out that academia plays a vital role in establishing the use of terminologies which are often coming from Westernized discourses and always talk from a perspective of a “self” and an “other”. The issue here is not only the power-structure that comes up while using those terms, but also, and that's even bigger an issue, that those terms find their way into common cultural vocabulary, and so do their connotations. Even if not intended, academia has turned out to have massive impact on how societies talk about literature, especially in a global context: Western countries see their literatures as the non plus ultra, so-called third world countries also see those Western literatures as the norm they have to orient their own writings on or at least that´s what they are often being told. Which is also still implanted in many educational systems that were established under colonial rule and haven´t changed a lot, at least when it comes to language and terminologies. Even if not enforced by universities in the first place, these educational systems worked out as advantages for existing and newly established academical institutions because even if for example a university in an African country exists, that university is most likely structured and implemented after Western ideals. But for many people stemming from “developing countries” the idea of going to school either in America or Europe is still more attractive than attending native universities because those schools have a better standing on the global stage considering their scientific impact, are more exclusive and seen as more accomplished. Studying there means to achieve a certain status in society. It's not surprising to see the most cited works on and about WL are coming from either Ivy League colleges and American schools or European universities. Hardly any outsiders get a seat at the table and a saying in academic discourse about WL. As a researcher, you are also only being discussed or even perceived, if you publish with one of the big scientific papers or university publishing companies. Coming from a developing country or being Indigenous in America, one needs to be

studying, or at least after finishing your studies, teaching at one of those big schools in order to gain the perception of colleagues in literary studies. All the big names, even if not born in Europe or the US, like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Edward Said, Aamir Mufti, B. Venkat Mani are or were teaching and researching at big schools in the US. The even bigger names in contemporary WL and comparative literature studies, like David Damrosch, Emily Apter, Martin Puchner, Franco Moretti, Pascale Casanova, René Etiemble etc., who are all constantly being cited and mentioned in mainstream WL discourse[10], are either European or American. Efforts to make WL, and with it comparative literature, more inclusive often backfired and just made the circle of chosen texts exclusive once again even if on a broader scale:

> *Paradoxically, the move to broaden comparative literature to include the whole world ends up dismissing nine tenths of its literary output because if a text or a literature does not circulate 'globally' it must be provincial, not good or modern enough, certainly not 'world literature'. But if to simply state, like Franco Moretti, Pascale Casanova or the Warwick Research Collective, that world literature is 'one and unequal' (Moretti 2000, Casanova 2004, Warwick Research Collective 2015) reinforces rather than questions the paradigms that make it so, what alternative approaches can work better? How can we study and theorize Anglo- and Francophone literatures and literatures in African and Asian languages together, in ways that do not simply reinforce the current privileging of Anglophone and Francophone writing? (Laachir et al., pp. 2-3)*

When talking about privileging, we also need to take a closer look at the links between academia in literary studies and the publishing industry. Not only in university publishing houses but also mainstream publishing. Those highly quoted scholars tend to edit and publish books, monographies and anthologies about WL or collections of classics considered part of the WL canon as well. These books enter the mainstream literary market and with it common cultural consciousness. The more their texts being cited, their research being read and discussed on a global scale, the more influence they gain outside of academia as well, especially if they themselves have connections into mainstream

[10] One only has to take a look at Wikipedia pages on WL, or Weltliteratur, which are also the first results coming up when googling these terms, aka, the first thing people get to read about if they are interested in finding something about WL. Which keeps the privileged and exclusive position those scholars inhabit alive and leaves so many factors out without even mentioning different approaches.

publishing and because they're considered experts in their fields. That is the reason why it's possible for me to go into a random bookshop in Vienna, go into the English language section and find non-fiction books by David Damrosch, for example his “Around the World in 80 Books”, and by Martin Puchner (“Culture. A New World History”, 2023), even if books on cultural and literary studies don't find much representation within those sections. With the opinions they put into their works, with the works they choose to discuss and put into their canon, they reinforce status quo of WL, considered classics within the WL canon, and the discourse in mainstream media about WL. Even if, for example David Damrosch, includes works from outside the Westernized canon, he fails to reflect on the issues underlying the discussion about them. Like I mentioned before, it is not only the choosing of a certain text and the neglection of another, but it's also about the point of view from where we look at it. Scholars might be aware that they are talking about texts from their Westernized point of view, but they're still using the same terminologies and the same concepts they used before. They didn't put in any effort to decolonialize their methodologies in order to better understand a text coming from a completely different background they were socialized in. Decolonizing methodologies is one crucial part off reinventing and reestablishing ways we talk and research literatures from around the world, and with it comes the responsibility to reflect on and, with it, change the terminologies that are being used. By doing so, another factor comes into play, namely granting Indigenous scholars a seat at the table while establishing new practices, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out in her influential work “Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples” from 1999:

> *[…] from the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonization … It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of Indigenous peoples’ claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems for living within our environments. (Smith, p. 1)*

Not only inclusion of Indigenous scholars is an important issue here, but also inclusion of Indigenous communities into the research processes in order to make inclusive and broad research possible. If Western scholars want to deal with Indigenous writings and storytelling, they first of all have to be in touch with those Indigenous communities: “research dealing with Indigenous issues has to estimate from the needs and concerns of Indigenous communities instead of those of an individual researcher or the dominant society.” (Kuokkanen, p. 49) By doing so, many new opportunities and chances might arise.

4.1.3 Chances and changes

Within academia, in literary studies and comparative literature, there are of course always voices that work and write against the establishment and the canon. I'm not indicating new ways of working and researching, but rather want to empathize that there are many possibilities for academia to completely change the discourse about literatures from around the world. For instance, in literary studies it's not that common to go out and do field research or to find ways on how conducted studies could be applied to everyday life and cultural practices. Only if the focus of the study for example lies also within an area interesting for social sciences or psychology and the like, studies tend to have a completely different outline and the results might be used outside of the “ivory tower” that is academia. There are ways to make literary studies more approachable and accessible to people outside this ivory tower. Going outside and doing field research would also bring big benefits for literary studies themselves, and would obviously emphasize on the interconnectedness of the literary world, from cultural institutions and publishing houses, libraries, educational systems and modern media. Because comparative literature, for instance, works as an intersection between different languages and humanities. It rarely touches different connections within literary production and hierarchies, like literary prizes and their agendas. Taking so many more aspects of the literary landscape into account, brings more transparency, understanding and inclusivity into the area of literary production. It is an act of disclosure to monitor who works in academia, who researches in certain areas and who has an impact within scientific publications. Furthermore, it would be more transparent to investigate and disclose who works and holds decision making positions

within literary organizations and institutions. Because it obviously does make a difference if a scholar comes from an elite, Western school or “just” a school from a “developing country”. Which has nothing to do with scientific output, and the legitimacy of a research, the name of the university seems to be more important. This practice is also called positionality, the understanding, that “world” is always the point of view from somewhere, within WL mostly from somewhere in Western countries onto “peripheral” regions:

> *In contrast with the only apparently neutral aerial views of the world literary map, our current project thinks of world literature, or rather of views of world literature, as always necessarily located, either geographically, historically or in terms of particular genre or intellectual debates and philosophical positions. As we asked at a recent collaborative workshop: What worlds do Asian and African writers simultaneously inhabit and create? Far from being a given, ‘world’ is always a view from somewhere, and it is important that we acknowledge this positionality. While ‘world-system’ macro-models assume a universally shared set of literary values and tastes (Casanova), we intend to show through ‘located discussions’ with local scholars, writers and students in situ in Morocco, Ethiopia and India, that location significantly impacts the production of theory and critical discourse. As Sebastian Conrad has pointed out in What is Global History?, it is telling to see who has a stake in global/world literature – typically scholarship located in former empires – and who does not. As Marzagora puts it, we should acknowledge the ‘right to disengage’. (Laachir et al., p. 4)*

Taking this “ground-up” approach already promises different, more inclusive outcomes for research in literary studies; engaging with local scholars, who might not be experts in WL or comparative literature, but in their own cultural areas and languages, and with local communities, gives completely different insights into literary production, challenges they face for example. But also granting scholars from different parts and peoples a seat at the table is vital. Scholars like Joshua Whitehead, who is deeply connected in his community, focuses his research on his own heritage and marginalized groups, and writes literature in order to revive his ancestry to break with one-sided scientific output. Taking a critical approach towards our scientific methods and practices is a first step – questioning and challenging our methodologies, terminologies and the people we engage (with) has to be a constant behavior in order to avoid making

divisions within representation, standing and power in academia and literary institutions even bigger:

> *The project we are currently running argues that we can arrive at a more 'modest, and honest' (Lewis and Widgren) picture of world literature if we: (1) adopt a multilingual approach to archives, texts and genres, and literary tastes; (2) take a 'ground-up' and located approach that seriously considers local production, circulation and theorizations and seeks to understand how 'multilingual locals' actually work (see also Mallette 2005, Ram 2007, Orsini 2010, Rohatgi 2014); (3) think about wider trajectories of circulation, reception and meaning-making through the concept of 'significant geographies' rather than meta-categories such as global and world; and (4) imagine history/time and space not as linear but as multiple, relational and inevitably fragmentary/discontinuous (Massey 2005). (Laachir et al., p. 3)*

There are various examples out there within the literary field, that aim for different approaches, especially when it comes to visibility and representation. "All Ways Black" for example, an initiative by the publishing conglomerate Penguin Random House that "is dedicated to celebrating Black Literature and the infinite ways to be Black. Highlighting creators from every genre, you'll find authors, poets, chefs, and everyone in between." (Penguin Random House) Such big institutions stepping up to display marginalized and minority literatures is a rare case though. Often it is their own communities that make an effort to get the word out there, which fortunately gets easier by the day through technical advances that enable self-publishing for example. Another, slightly bigger platform that wants to improve the visibility of literatures from around the world is the aforementioned Words Without Borders, a platform aiming to connect writers, translators and readers from around the world, where the contributors also include scholars. They want to make literatures from as many different languages and areas as possible accessible, in English, on a global, (still) Western scale. (cf. Words Without Borders) But they are trying to put into being something, that would also be my vision for academia and its role as an opinion-shaping and -making institution: to work on accessibility of literatures from all around the world, to take an active part in its distribution, starting with the smallest, marginalized groups. To work with an "ground-up" approach, exactly the opposite way academia is currently working. Because it seems that what academia sees as WL everybody has to see as WL as well. It imposes

those opinions on the rest of the world, with only taking one of the many worlds out there into consideration: the Western one:

> *What is the relationship between "world literature" and these practices of collecting and reading in New York, Athens, Istanbul, and numerous other sites across the world whose existence is linked to the desire to defamiliarize the everyday structures and practices of neoliberal capitalism? This is neither a trivial nor a merely occasional question – it is, quite simply, one version of the broader question about the politics of world literature today as institution, […]. The people´s library embodies the desire not just for different books – than those enshrined in national curricula or literary cultures or in globalized commercial publishing, for instance – but for different ways of reading, circulating valuing, and evaluating them. (Mufti, pp. 6-7)*

Shouldn´t the aim of WL be to engage with the most distant realities of cultures and literatures and provide a space where every language, every experience and literary form has its place, without a rating system that values one language, e.g., more than the other? Working with and on platforms like Words Without Borders, developing various concepts of methods to conduct research and to engage with local communities, languages, authors and scholars, encouraging and leading exchange between literary institutions, and always assessing those practices would be a first step into a more divers, inclusive world of literary studies. One big part, and problem, in the existing hierarchies of WL is the discourse about language and translations, as we will see in the following chapter.

4.2 Moving south: Latin America

Languages in Latin America – to most people the familiar ones are Spanish and Brazilian, aka Portuguese. Because in most parts of the continent the rich variety of Indigenous languages[11] has been oppressed and eradicated centuries ago by colonial rulership, as it has been in many more regions of the world, in Africa, in Asia, Oceania and even in Europe. Up until today communities struggle to revive and relearn their languages, and their cultures which are irrevocable connected with each other. Speaking of their "Native" tongue here puts a completely different meaning to the word: People have to learn, as adults

[11] Indigenous languages meaning here those languages spoken and native to Indigenous peoples in contrast to colonial languages that erased them.

and under difficult circumstances, what their ancestors´ “Native” tongue is – but it isn´t theirs, it´s only their second, or third, language. Writing in these “Native” tongues becomes even more difficult then, challenges, Liliana Ancalao for example faces her entire life, as a woman, an activist, and a writer.

4.2.1 Liliana Ancalao

I want to start this chapter with a quote from one of Liliana Ancalao´s poems. It is written in her native tongue Mapuzungun. The quote is in it´s original, Mapuzungun, Spanish, translated by Ancalao herself, and in English, translated from Spanish by Seth Michelson:

pu zomo engu mawün

[…]

iñche nütramrakizuamün
nütramwitranentun perkan mew
pepi montulün aimeñ nütamtakuñman
atahualpa ñi mamüll üikülelu
tüfa nütram eluafiñ tüfeichi zomo
wütrungentulu, tüfeichi zomo katrütufingun ñi pu ishim

[…]

las mujeres y la lluvia

[…]

yo a las palabras las pienso
y las rescato del moho que me enturbia
cada vez puedo salvar menos
y las protejo
son la leña prendida de atahualpa
que quisiera entregar a esas mujeres
las derramadas las que atajan sus pájaros

[…]

women and the rain

[…]

i think of words
and save them from the mildew that muddies me
though each time i can save fewer
but i protect them
they’re atahualpa’s lit firewood
that he wanted to give these women
the spilt those who curb their birds

[…]

(Ancalao, Three Poems)

It is even more outstanding, knowing that Liliana Ancalao, born 1961 in Comodoro Rivadavia in the South of Argentina, had to learn her maternal tongue by herself; and she is still learning it to this day. (cf. Words Without Borders, Liliana Ancalao) After facing discrimination and negation of her identity growing up, Ancalao only started her process of cultural reconnection with her heritage. She worked as a research assistant at the Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia, where she completed her studies in the humanities, and as a lecturer at a public school. Up until now Ancalao wrote six poetry collections in Spanish and Mapuzungun, that combine her individual experiences with communal creations. Language plays a vital role in Ancalao´s life, especially since learning Mapuzungun also became a whole lifelong journey to rediscover her heritage and to connect with it. Creating literature, poetry in particular, is her way of reconnecting and remembering, but it's also a form of protest and activism, challenging existing narrations about her people, their culture and also about language and literary genres in general (cf. NPLA) She states:

> *We, the selected authors, are poets, insubordinates, part of a people that problematizes cultural impositions, including literary genres. I prefer to define these texts as writings by people “of great foresight,” borrowing Jaime Huenún’s expression in “Reductions.” That definition can contain every piece in this issue. (Ancalao, Taber)*

And further:

> *Writing in Indigenous languages, adopting the Western grapheme, publishing bilingual texts in the maternal/paternal language and in the imposed language are all revolutionary ways of practicing our contemporaneity, and I refer here to the actions of writers from the various Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala. (Ancalao, Taber)*

Writing poetry came at the same time, in the early 90s, as her being an activist to revive and preserve her people´s heritage. Or it rather came hand in hand. She wrote poetry in order to become a part of the artistic movement, where she read her poetry on "underground stages", because they were denied access to other spaces. At this moment she felt more connected to the young rock musicians than to traditional Argentinian folklore.[12] (cf. NPLA) Writing poetry, especially in her native language Mapuzungun, and reclaiming her heritage go hand in hand as well. Poetry and art in general function differently in order to reach readers, listeners, an audience, because they contribute to knowledge in a different manner. Poetry is a synthesis. For Ancalao, it compromises the whole story into one single work, which not only includes facts and data, but feelings, emotions and humaneness (cf. NPLA): If poetry can be used to touch readers and open up new paths for them, it is because there are other paths that connect us to what is happening beyond mere theory." [13] (NPLA) Ancalao considers herself an "eternal Mapuzungun-student" (NPLA), she will never get enough of learning and discovering the language in its richness. Which is also a hard task to do considering she only knows very few people actually speaking Mapuzungun in her hometown Comodoro Rivadavia. Most of her sources are written, which also poses a challenge for her when she is about to perform one of her poems – she mainly learnt the language from writings. During the Covid-19 pandemic, for 2 years, she took the opportunity of taking an online language class with a Mapuche language school where she also had access to resources and materials of Mapuche by people who have been engaging with the language for years. (cf. NPLA) Since there is so much more material she has access to, her understanding of Mapuzungun has changed and advanced

[12] "Zu dieser Zeit hatte ich bereits angefangen, Poesie zu verfassen mit dem Ziel, Teil der künstlerischen Bewegung zu sein. Ich habe auf den „Underground-Bühnen" Poesie gelesen (lacht), denn andere Räume waren uns versperrt. In jenem Moment fühlte ich mich mehr mit den jungen Rockmusikern als mit der traditionellen argentinischen Folklore verbunden." (NPLA)
[13] " Wenn durch Poesie erreicht werden kann, dass die Lesenden berührt und ihnen neue Wege eröffnet werden, dann weil es andere Wege gibt, die uns mit dem verbinden, was über die reine Theorie hinaus passiert." (NPLA)

again. It shows, first of all, the issue for many Indigenous peoples who want to reclaim their “Native” languages. Many did not grow up with it as their first language, because of oppression and stigmatization thereof:

> *Within our community, the politics of shame wreaked havoc. Mapuzungun became a stigma, the mark of inferiority of those admitted by force to the capitalist system as cheap labor. […] And we entered local schools, bearing our faces and surnames, without any language for which to feel ashamed, with Spanish as our one and only tongue, without history or memory. (Ancalao, 2018, p. 60)*

The process of reclaiming became even more difficult: The old generations, who still spoke the language where silenced and died, sources extinguished with that and even fewer materials were available, because modern technical advances of recording etc. didn´t exist at the time and many Indigenous languages were not written languages. (cf. Ancalao, 2018, p. 60) Even if they were put into written forms, they often were standardized after the most common form, leaving out all the other dialects and nuances those languages have. An issue many Indigenous languages face, as Nancy H. Hornberger and Nicholas Limerick point out in their article “Teachers, Textbooks, and Orthographic Choices in Quechua: Bilingual Intercultural Education in Peru and Ecuador” (2019). Liliana Ancalao is in the process of perfecting her Mapuzungun, which also means, that her skills are ever evolving and she herself is always assessing her ability to express her words, in her translations (cf. NPLA): “I think and write in Spanish and later translate it clumsily into the language that seduces me with its immense, deep blue.” (Ancalao, 2018, p. 61)

Her being an advocate and activist for her heritage, her language and culture come naturally to her, as she says. She advocates for Mapuzungun to be taught as a second language at schools: “The conditions for teaching and learning our language are ever more difficult because as time passes, the elders bearing our knowledge die. The federal government should push a linguistic politics to accelerate and support with resources the process of recovery of our language. A process of recovery to include not only orality but also our adoption of writing and of the creation of methods for teaching and learning our language as a second language.” (Ancalao, 2018, p. 60) In preserving the Mapuche culture, Ancalao attributes a huge role to women, for instance in the shape of a

grandmother, women function as communicators and transmitters of culture. Something one might find in any Indigenous literature. As she says, she herself doesn´t know any female poet who doesn´t refer to her grandmother while in search for that knowledge. In her own poetry, the part of the woman appears as guardian of spirituality and knowledge about her people. When founding their Mapuche-community in the 90s they only were women, which could have been a coincidence Ancalao explains. But she rather thinks it was due to most Mapuche men joining the "Gauchos".[14] (cf. NPLA) To conclude, being a writer, a poet is so much more for Ancalao, it is about healing, herself, her people, reclaiming their culture, heritage and language. She herself constantly shifts and translates between languages, between Mapuzungun and Spanish. But all her work is also about translating culture and understanding:

> *Translating an Indigenous world into a colonial one is a monumental task; it's a task we've been carrying out since long before academics spoke of decolonization. First, we reencounter ourselves (which is akin to decolonizing ourselves). A journey back to the origin implies, among other things, reexamining our cultural history and continuing to ask ourselves which objects, existences, concepts were imposed on our people and which ones were welcomed through exchange with others. (Ancalao, Taber)*

The problem so many writers, and translators, coming from marginalized groups, from Indigenous peoples, face in the literary industry starts with languages. The language they are forced to learn, speak and write, the ones they are not allowed to use or are denied access to and the ones, they were robbed off entirely. What an important role translation plays in this whole institution that is literature is something we will take a closer look at now. And

[14] Ich kenne keine Dichterin, die auf der Suche nach dem Wissen nicht Bezug zu ihrer Großmutter nimmt. Auch in meiner Poesie taucht die Rolle der Frau als Hüterin der Spiritualität und des Wissens über unser Volk auf. Das spiegelt sich in der Schönheit, in der Perfektion und der Vielfalt der Farben ihrer Kunsthandwerke wider. Der ganze Prozess des Handwerks wird durchlaufen, bis zur Fertigstellung einer Decke oder eines Ponchos. Diese Rolle manifestiert sich außerdem in der Zubereitung des Essens, der Medizin und in der spirituellen Hingabe bei religiösen Zeremonien. In meinem Buch Mujeres a la Intemperie erwähne ich mehr als 50 Frauen, die mich auf meinem Weg zurück zu meinen Wurzeln begleitet haben. Frauen, die mir Wissen weitergeben haben. Vielleicht ist es Zufall, aber als wir unsere Mapuche-Gemeinde in den 90ern gegründet haben, waren wir ausschließlich Frauen. Es kann daran liegen, dass sich die meisten männlichen Mapuche in der Stadt den „Gauchos" (berittene Viehhüter, Anm.d.Red.) anschlossen. Das heißt, sie verbargen ihre Mapuche- oder Tehuelche-Wurzeln und übernahmen die Rolle des „Gauchos", des Mannes vom Land. Der Prozess, die maskuline Mapuche-Identität den „Gauchos" unterzuordnen, ist historisch gesehen ein Schleier der verbirgt, was dahinter steckt. (NPLA)

the problems that come with it, as it always is a form of approximation and never a clean, clear and one-to-one translation:

> *It's interesting to stop and dwell on the writing in Spanish, or its translation into English: when a word or phrase in Mapudungun appears, it's due to the difficulty or complexity of its translation, and to the quite probable need for cultural translation. In general, the word or phrase in Mapudungun precedes an essayed approximation that is comprehensible to the Western world, but it is merely that: an approximation. (Ancalao, Taber)*

4.2.2 Translations and the question of Language(s)

> *I'm talking about Puel Mapu and the history of my family, which is the history of so many families, and which explains the loss of our language as mother tongue by the majority of my generation. I'm talking about an ancient language and the ignorance of men who mapped a country over a territory full of names, elements, and meanings, silencing it. I'm talking about what we lost. All of us. (Ancalao, 2018, p. 60)*

The exchange between languages has probably been going on ever since people started to speak. Exchange, interaction and influencing each other is a common phenomenon in the history in every single part of the world. It is also one of the mightiest examples to show, reconstruct and maintain power-structures. If language is an essential part of human interaction, it can easily be used to abuse and control these interactions. Which can be seen throughout colonizing histories. Imposing the colonizers language onto the colonized was common practice and the effects it had can be seen up until today, especially on the African and South American continent. Treating native languages as inferior was imposed onto the colonized, their languages were extinct, forbidden and marginalized. One way of doing this was for example, to rename places in the colonizer's language. Another way would be to implement educational systems whose curricula and organization was entirely based on the colonizers structures and languages. The aftermaths of what can still be seen today in certain cases. Being robbed of one's own language also means to be robbed of one´s own culture, history and heritage. Entire ways of thinking and perceiving the world were erased in order to control people. Not to sound overly dramatic, but that is something WL still replicates up to today and with it its hierarchies concerning language which are substantial to the entire system of WL. Goethe

was already very selective in choosing and putting together his library. Some texts from certain languages are more valuable to him than others. As Damrosch summarizes in “What is World Literature?”, Goethe´s views on the matter portray an imperial self-projection. (cf. Damrosch, 2003, p. 8) Barbara Herrnstein Smith senses a danger that is lurking within such structures that display major-power cosmopolitanism. The System of self-securing of an imperial´s self is not necessarily being “‘corrected’ by cosmopolitanism. Rather, in enlarging its view ‘from China to Peru,’ it may become all the more imperialistic, seeing in every horizon of difference new peripheries of its own centrality, new pathologies through which its own normativity may be defined and must be asserted.” (Herrnstein Smith, p. 54)

> *There is no refusal to translate what we write in Spanish into Mapudungun; many Mapuche writers carry the tremendous wound of not knowing our maternal/paternal language because we were denied that inheritance. Though we also are part of a people that makes great efforts to revitalize it. (Ancalao, Taber)*

Being denied one´s own native language, is an issue deeply connected to imperialist structures that remain until today, in many areas of the world. It is an issue, that is caused by power, economic and political calculations, that deeply effect every part of people´s lives – from the everyday to the artistic, cultural and spiritual. Creating art, and with it literature, Indigenous peoples try to reclaim and campaign for the revival of their heritages. Which often can only happen, as we see with Liliana Ancalao and many more authors from Latin America, with translations and a tedious amount of work they themselves have to put in to even learn their original “Native” language. In many cases, people are only able to write about their history and experiences in a colonial language. A fact, that once again asserts the supremacy of those languages, such as Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, German.

Since these languages are also the ones held most precious within WL, to add value to a piece of literature produced in a foreign, minor language, WL reproduces those imperialistic structures, nowadays under the guise of “cosmopolitanism”. Even if national, regional and minor languages are being reclaimed and re-established, the advancing of English for example continues in parallel, as Aamir Mufti detects:

> *The nationalization of languages over the past two centuries all over the world has been accompanied by the globalization of English. This is only seemingly a paradox, for, as the genealogy I have traced here should have made clear, "English" is the preeminent cultural system for the assimilation of the world´s languages precisely along these lines. Having transformed formerly extensive and dispersed cultures of writing […] into narrowly conceived ethnonational spheres, English seeks everywhere to become the preeminent medium of cosmopolitan exchange. And this global situation is replicated in different forms within individual countries, such as India, in the complex hierarchical relations that have come to be established in the postcolonial decades between globalized English and the so-called regional or vernacular languages […]. (Mufti, p.146)*

There is a common understanding that WL especially functions within and through the English language. Something many authors try to right and work against, especially those coming from the southern hemisphere. One recent example for an attempt to change the dialogue might be by Nobel Prize winner J.M. Coetzee. Who initially wrote his newest publication in English but refuses to publish it in said language up until fall 2023. The first publication was actually made in a Spanish translation in Argentina under the name "El Polaco", a Dutch and German publication followed. He is not only challenging publishing practices as he himself is an important figure of WL, but also moves actors within the literary system into the spotlight that are often overlooked: translators. The plot challenges the question of translatability as well and shows that some things just can't be translated, but also underlines the importance of those crossovers in literature made possible by translation. (cf. Pfister) Yes, English is an important factor of communication in a global context and became even more present in everyday life all around the world within the last decades. Also in the entertainment industry. The problem is that it also became a power tool of controlling cultural output. If we want to start with debating English as pivotal point within WL, we must acknowledge that there isn't only one English. That being said, there's no universal English language into which a translation can happen and in that writing is being done. It also depends on the fact if English is the first language a person speaks or a second or third language learned.

Taking Words Without Borders as an example for navigating within the English language in a context of WL, one might think that it is just another attempt to prove the importance of the English language. Which might not be entirely

wrong. However, one example WWB poses is the importance of creating a platform to connect, exchange and showcase players within the literary system that are the ones getting the least saying in a literary discourse, namely readers, translators and authors themselves. WWB tries to make texts and literary works from around the world available in English that would otherwise never have the chance to be seen out there. Translations, paradoxically, often help those authors and texts to find more acknowledgement within the country they have originally been published in. (cf. WWB) It is not about defending the supremacy of English as a language, but to show appreciation and acknowledgement of any language literature is being produced in: “I put forth the argument that pieces of world literature need also in the first place to be acknowledged in the languages in which they are written, because translation also raises the question of power hierarchies among languages even as it opens new doors for literatures in languages that might otherwise be overlooked.” (Tchokothe, p. 38)

One of the main problems when it comes to publications of literary works still lies within those dialogues determined by academia and cultural institutions situated in the West that deem certain languages more valuable than others and within hierarchies of publishing companies, which will be looked at later on in detail. Still a lot of the world book market runs through “centers” in the West, in particular London, Paris and the US. In reality though, having monolingual societies and nations is more an exception rather than the norm throughout human history, because of migration streams, conquests and economic and cultural exchange. Multilingualism is common throughout the entire world which is also reflected in literary and cultural production. Trying to homogenize human experience through standardizing communication into a single language, robs art of meaning and also minimizes room for interpretations: “Instead, we aim to recover and understand the literary practices and dynamics within multilingual regional societies, in the modern and contemporary as well as earlier periods. Multilingual societies and literary cultures, as quickly becomes obvious when you start looking, have been the norm rather than the exception throughout history in most of the world, and single-language national or quasi-national literary histories have been inappropriate and misleading.” (Laachir et al., p. 3)

Taking a closer look at how the canon for WL is selected, very contradictory decisions are visible. James Joyce´s *Finnegans Wake* is one of those examples that come to mind. The text itself might be arguably deserving of a spot in a canon of literatures from around the world, considering its unique handling of different languages interwoven into one narrative. But it is contradicting – and cynical, to say the least – to consider this book worthwhile of attention in the literary world and deem other multi- or bilingual texts, or even texts in a minority language, unworthy of that attention just because of the fact that they are written in the "wrong" languages. While Joyce is even praised for his exceptional use of words from varying languages that he combines into a whole new language. At least bilingual poems are very common in many different Latin-American literary traditions, or the instant translation of the authors themselves, as we see with Liliana Ancalao. She either writes in Mapuzungun and translates it into Spanish herself, or the other way around. To write in, or even to translate into, a language of Indigenous peoples is an act of activism and advocating against remaining colonialist and oppressive structures, that are deeply implemented within countries of the southern hemisphere: "An unweaving technique must be employed to extricate the colonialist and nationalist modes of silencing that have traditionally woven these Amerindian literatures and languages together. A minor literature homogenizes distinct languages and cultures, and contrasts them against a major literature." (Taber)

Introducing English, and any other colonial language, and its literacy as lingua franca in colonized parts of the world also meant undermining traditional Indigenous worldviews, languages and also modes of socio-political organization. (cf. van Toorn, p. 11) Which is even more severe considering the significance of orality that is often attributed in traditional Indigenous cultures. Van Toorn further elaborates, that "the connection between literacy and cultural 'advancement' is embedded in the English language in terms such as 'illiterate' and 'pre-literate'. Words such as these keep alive the assumption that 'humankind is characterised by `a will to writing´, that writing is a universal cultural goal, and that all cultures are somewhere along the road to writing.' … The autonomous model is thus central to grand, Eurocentric narratives of cultural progress." (van Toorn, p. 9) Having a form of literacy, aka written

language, has been implemented as the norm within imperial contexts all over the world which leaves out orality entirely, also in storytelling contexts. Orality and oral literary traditions as a genre will later be discussed, as will educational systems and what part they play within the systems of literary production and WL. One thing being said in advance about educational systems is that they often neglect to prepare and provide materials and learnings for children to learn their native languages in the first place, or they only get to learn about them in another language; and even if they get to learn them, the level of language skills they're able to achieve is often not sufficient for them to express and create literary works within those languages. If by any rare chance, literary work is produced in a native African language – who is going to publish it? Big publishing companies (run by Western conglomerates) usually focus on works written in e.g., English or French, maybe Kiswahili, if one is lucky, or at least translations into one of those languages; and, what´s even more severe, often lack qualified personnel in editing etc. who have sufficient language skills in African languages. People who write in minor languages are also often editors and critics at the same time, in academia and in literary production – a fact that gets problematic if they are also the ones reviewing their own works.

> *Because a text's network will continue to grow and multiply, as that text is circulated and read in numerous regions and languages, its geography and culture will be dynamic and unpredictable. It is no longer simply a matter of determining, once and for all, the literary culture to which a work belongs. (Walkowitz, p. 217)*

Looking at the history and establishment of WL, all started with translation, if you will. Goethe got his hands on foreign works. Even if he was able to speak and read more than one language, he also had to rely on translated works. Translation makes it possible for literary work to circulate outside its origin surroundings. Especially if we want to engage with literatures from around the world, translation is crucial. It already is in everyday life, as it is in cultural practices. Something that makes WL so desirable has always been, for Goethe and those who came after him, the fact that one deals with various parts of the world, gets an insight into different eras, areas and cultures, as well as peoples. Damrosch names one way of looking at WL as “multiple windows on the world.” (2003, p. 14) “World literature promises access to something greater than the

sum of its parts. The term operates in relation to, but simultaneously at a distance from, national, regional, and local arrangements of literature. It insinuates a mode of knowledge production and organization that is founded on literary comparison on a global scale; it promises to draw relational interferences by crossing traditionally accepted linguistic, national, and regional particularities." (Venkat Mani, p. 244) But those linguistic crossings also come with many agendas and political links, as has been discussed with language in general. One big issue to mention would be the visibility of translators in general, but also the understanding for their craft. That there isn´t just ONE possible translation, one correct and perfect one. Translation styles change over time – from more literal translations to more content related, freer translations. That´s why there are various translations of one classical work for example. Translators transport literary work not only from one language into another, but also transport it into their times and common languages, as daily language use and style change over time. As well as, as mentioned before, there isn´t only one English for example. American and British English translations might use different terms and vocabulary for example. Multiple translations in one particular language are very important in discussing literatures from around the world. Translation is always a transfer of and mediation between cultures. Some things simply cannot be translated, only explained, and described. To finalize the thought: translation is always and only can be an approach, an approximation to an original. (cf. Venkat Mani, p. 252) But it also creates a completely new, independent work of literature, as a translation is always an interpretation of the translator as reader in the first place. A process that also brings with it many opportunities for the future.

4.2.3 Chances and changes

In order to really have an impact on the literary industry, something that, in my opinion, is unavoidable, is to handle literary production as the joint process that it is. Which starts with visibility. Especially when talking about literatures from around the world, so many more actors are being involved in the process of literary production, from the authors themselves to agents, editors, marketing people, translators, and later journalists and critics, as well as booksellers and sales representatives. These interactions and collaborations are hardly visible

to the public, as well as the agenda and politics within the publishing industry. One example that specifically wants to change the dialogue and exchange about literature is the platform Words Without Borders. Because they want to highlight and give space for exchange between authors from various backgrounds, nationalities and languages, readers, translators but also editors and scholars. (cf. WWB, Mission) One crucial part of the work WWB is doing, is the celebration of linguistic diversity and the appreciation of translation. Yes of course, they want to make as many texts from as many different languages available in English, but they always underline the importance of linguistic variety and put minor languages on a world map. WWB shows, that projects like this work. At the moment, only through independent organizations. But it should actually start at the base of literary system, within academia, the publishing industry, within educational systems and cultural dialogue. Especially in academia there's still too little effort to shift focus from big “world” languages towards minor languages and multi- or bilingual literatures, that are actually more common than we admit to see:

> *Third, the single-language, national or quasi-national modern literary histories written under the aegis of nationalist ideologies have partitioned African and Asian Anglo- and Francophone literatures from literatures in local languages, producing mutual blindness and exclusions. […] Everywhere, postcolonial literary theory, the most vocal in theorizing the relationships between Asian and African literatures and the former empire, has focused almost exclusively on writing in English or French and on oppositional literary discourses, thus clearly presenting a highly selective view of Asian and African literatures and often distorting the interpretation of works not directly concerned with reacting against colonialism, or oversimplifying and overgeneralizing literary experiences in both European and Asian/African languages. The division between Anglophone and Francophone and Asian/African languages means that we do not yet have good critical accounts of how literature worked in multilingual colonial societies, while strong models of imperial hegemony obscure the other roles that French and English played or the fact that these languages were not uninfluenced by the colonial encounter. (Laachir et al., p. 2)*

With holding ourselves in academia, in the publishing industry and so on, accountable for our actions and decisions moving forward it is not only about the fact that more translations are needed anymore, and that we should shift our focus on minor languages, but also about taking a close look on who is

actually performing those translations. When Amanda Gorman recited her poem “The Hill We Climb” (2021) at the inauguration of the current president of the United States, Joe Biden, the process of translating said poem in various languages began shortly after. And with it came the debate of who gets to translate it. Many claimed that the translator also should be a woman of color, especially not a white male and also not just a white woman: “In March, news broke that two of Gorman’s selected translators would no longer be working on the project. The Dutch translator, Marieke Lucas Rijneveld, stepped aside after critics questioned why someone with an identity closer to Gorman’s was not selected. Shortly after, Gorman’s Catalan translator, Victor Obiols, was informed his completed translation would not be used, because, as a White man, he `was not suitable to translate it,´ he told Agence France-Presse.” (Bhanoo) There are already many initiatives and projects to change the status quo within the literary industry, in linguistic discussions, within the translation industry on cultural discourse. By starting a debate about who gets to translate who, the entire field of translation is being put into the spotlight which also brought visibility for its process. Only through pressure of the public did publishing companies change that practice, change translators for example. That's possible because authors, especially Indigenous authors, also often act as activists for their languages and cultures, like Liliana Ancaloa. But there's still so much more to be done, talking about it and making it visible as a first step into the right direction. Talking within academia and the literary industry. Self-reflection and self-criticism are always a part of the active deconstructing of the literary system, as is holding ourselves accountable. Which also leads to the question of: What even is literature? Or: What counts as literature? Especially in the context of WL, genres are a crucial part of the discourse what counts as WL and what doesn´t.

4.3 Crossing the Pacific: Asia

Talking about indigeneity in Asia might not be the same discussion as it is on the American continent. Here, the words Indigenous and “Native” can hold a different kind of meaning. Because the author I chose might not seem as Indigenous on the first sight, in general understandings of the term. It's a Mongolian author. Mongolian literature might not be as well-known as for

example Chinese or Japanese literature, it most likely would be seen as a minor literature, but maybe not as an Indigenous one. Taking a closer look into Mongolian literature though, one quickly finds a culture of storytelling and poetry deeply rooted in Indigenous knowledge, thinking, spiritualism and religion – something, that interestingly enough isn´t heavily influenced by Western concepts and ideas of literature, but rather focuses on reviving and preserving their Indigenous, nomadic heritage. Something, Simon Wickhamsmith, scholar and translator of Mongolian literature, explains as follows:

> *This of course is the "Mongolia" that foreigners might want to read about, too, but I believe that by talking about nomadic culture, Mongolian poets are preserving their role as the cultural historians, and that the lack of appetite for more challenging, "edgy," westernized writing is not because Mongolia is not progressive – for it most certainly, and most obviously, is – but because there is a deeper and broader appetite for preservation of the Indigenous culture and worldview than for the vagaries of fashion, especially foreign or globalized fashion. […] So the response is a challenge to globalization: we want to benefit on our terms from globalization, but we do not want our culture to suffer or to lose out or to be melded into a mass of undifferentiated cultures. It seems to me an immensely courageous and radical approach to an issue that has been plaguing the West for some time. (Wilson, pp. 54-55)*

4.3.1 G. Mend-Ooyo

> *To my own son, who'll gain his father's hearth and home, I'll tell the tale of the swallows. But, life is not eternal, I'll be gone, I'll leave the swallows' tale to my children.*
>
> *The story's over. The waters of eternity are still not found, but they'll be found eventually. And what the waters of eternity reveal, please share with these my story's swallows, pursuing their joys over the steppe.[15] (Wilson, p. 53)*

One very influential contemporary Mongolian author is G. Mend-Ooyo[16]. Being born and raised as a son to a family of Mongolian nomadic herders in 1952, G. Mend-Ooyo is now not only a representative of Mongolian nomadic poetry, but an important figure of the Mongolian literary and cultural landscape. As a writer,

[15] The ending of G. Mend-Ooyo´s poem "The swallows" translated by Simon Wickhamsmith.
[16] His full name is Gombojay Mend-Ooyo. Since the Mongolian form of writing names includes the patronymic, in some cases matronymic, name, these are usually only written with their capital letter, like here G. stands for his father's name, Mend-Ooyo is the given name. (cf. Wickhamsmith, p. xvii)

he not only focuses on one genre or form of text. He rather plays with various forms of Mongolian storytelling traditions, including Western-influenced genres like short stories. (cf. G. Mend-Ooyo, Biography) He writes poetry, traditional Mongolian long songs, prose – novel, experimental prose and short fiction – essays and is also a literary scholar, publisher, founder of the influential literary magazine “GUNU”, and since 2005 the president of the Mongolian Academy of Culture and Poetry. (cf. G. Mend-Ooyo, Curriculum Vitae) With translations into more than 30 languages, Mend-Ooyos literary influence goes way beyond Mongolian borders. Which also transports Mongolian literary traditions beyond the nation’s frontiers. He not only represents his country´s heritage outside the nation, but is one of many representatives of a phenomenon, that became even more visible over the last decades, after the political, and with it cultural, influence of the former Soviet Union faded, and Mongolia became a democratic state. The connections and transitions from nomadic lifestyles to urbanized societies increased over the years. Mend-Ooyo is a poetic, literary advocate, and representative of his nomadic roots, while also experiencing and living an urban lifestyle. Those two realities co-exist within Mongolia, but don´t necessarily cancel each other out. (cf Wilson, p. 52) “Mongolian literature reflects these intersecting lifeways as authors draw on themes of mobility and stasis, space and confinement, isolation and social obligation. Mongolia has a rich philosophical, religious, and political history for literature to draw on as well. Elements of Buddhist dogma, shamanic animism, socialist realism, and avant-garde surrealism commingle in tales of transformation and rebirth.” (Hutchins)

The written word, books more specifically weren´t considered practical items in a nomadic lifestyle, where families had to carry their entire livestock all year round. During communist rule, literature in Mongolia fell under rigorous censorship with only a few authors left that were being published. But the literary scene was revived after the democratic revolution, and recollections of their literary and artistic traditions began. A process G. Mend-Ooyo experienced and lived through, though his works themes never really wandered off the topics concerning nomadic life, knowledge and traditions. He also emphasizes the richness and performativity of the Mongolian language, something experienceable on his homepage, where he reads some of his poems in

Mongolian[17] (cf. G. Mend-Oyoo, Home) Oral tradition had, and still has, a huge influence on forms of Mongolian storytelling, as it has in many cultures, but which is also emphasized due to the nomadic herders' lifestyles over centuries. The way poets as part of the nomadic communities learned from each other differs from the occidental way, and still does so until today (cf. Wickham-Smith, p. 3):

> *Such studies seem, in fact, to have been replaced by the writers themselves getting together frequently, either in private homes, in bars, at readings or – as is the case with Mend-Ooyo – in government offices, passing round copious amounts of boiled meat and alcohol, and reciting and discussing both their own poetry and that of their colleagues. In so doing, theirs becomes a more interactive relationship, akin perhaps to the symposium, in which writers learn by listening as much as by doing. This is clearly the traditional way of poetry, clearly how nomadic poets would have learnt, honed and developed their craft, in a manner quite different from the occidental post-enlightenment poet alone and starving, both for nourishment and for company, in his garret. (Wickham-Smith, p. 3)*

Besides being a writer, poet and cultural scholar, G. Mend-Ooyo is known for his work as a calligrapher. Something special within cultures like the Mongolian one, that also had a different writing traditions in the past compared to their contemporary ones – Cyrillic in Mongolia's case – using characters and calligraphy for centuries, it now becomes an even more artistically interesting subject for Mongolian authors to pursue. With writing poems in traditional Mongolian characters, poets also get more and more experimental with their technics and ways of expressing themselves: "They are used to change, and they know the extent to which they can prepare for and deal with it, and the literature reflects this. Also, writing and publishing is a record, it makes things semipermanent, and that level of preservation is very important nowadays, especially with the increasing urbanization of the nomadic society. In calligraphic art, for example, the traditional vertical script is being used in more and more abstract and innovative ways, while the texts are still traditional poems or words with traditional cultural value – heart, wind, sky, Mongolia." (Wilson, pp. 54-55)

[17] http://www.mend-ooyo.mn/

Those nomadic traditions in literature stand representative for Mongolia´s literary landscape, but also symbolize something that is common in literatures all around the world: the constant exchange and interaction of various literatures. Literature travels beyond its borders, has done so over centuries, due to economic exchanges and imperial expansions. Literature always underlay constant change, exchange and adaptation, within national borders and outside, over continents and the world. And a lot of that exchange and interaction took place in an oral manner. Many narrations have been transmitted orally over centuries before they were written down for the first time. Somehow, literary theory tends to neglect the fact that oral storytelling, and orality, performance in general is often a crucial part of a literary tradition. Mongolian literature as an example here wants to cultivate and preserve their rich heritage of literary production, that to a large extend is also implemented in an oral way. Mongolian authors don´t shy away from Western influences, on the contrary, but they don´t let them overrule their own culture and traditions as Simon Wickhamsmith emphasizes:

> *[…] by talking about nomadic culture, Mongolian poets are preserving their role as the cultural historians, and that the lack of appetite for more challenging, "edgy," westernized writing is not because Mongolia is not progressive – for it most certainly, and most obviously, is – but because there is a deeper and broader appetite for preservation of the Indigenous culture and worldview than for the vagaries of fashion, especially foreign or globalized fashion. […] So the response is a challenge to globalization: we want to benefit on our terms from globalization, but we do not want our culture to suffer or to lose out or to be melded into a mass of undifferentiated cultures. It seems to me an immensely courageous and radical approach to an issue that has been plaguing the West for some time. (Wilson, pp. 54-55)*

The debate about what literature even is, which genres and forms of narration are being included and considered literature is a constant and fluctuating one in cultural and literary studies. A debate that too many times stays exclusive and more considerate about Western perceptions of literature. But, as Penny van Toorn puts it, "… there is no such singular thing as 'literacy itself', no single set of reading and writing practices that are inherently and invariably correct, but instead a multitude of ways to practise literacy. Literacy can therefore only be validly examined in context, at particular sites, rather than in abstract general

terms.” (van Toorn, p. 9) A thought, that starts the conversation about literature and literacy anew.

4.3.2 Between cultures: literary genres

What is literature? And: what isn´t? This might probably be the question underlying the whole debate around WL on a regular basis. It isn´t like there hadn´t been numerous attempts to categorize, rate and define what literature is, or should be. Some go as far as to say that everything in a written form is literature. Others are defined much narrower than that: where only a certain form of written narratives are included and deemed “real literature”. For example, Homer´s epics became so-called literature when they were written down. But before that there already had been a very long oral tradition of narrating those tales. So, if we want to look at literature by a majority definition, literature always requires literacy. This point right here is also a basic problem in the discussion of what literature is. Because literacy, written languages, has in many cases been a very Western idea and establishment. So many languages, especially those of Indigenous peoples, didn't have a written language but were imposed to have one or create one for their own languages if they were lucky. In addition to that they also had to adopt languages of their colonizers. Because imposing the colonizers language on the colonized also meant to impose written language after their ideals, coming with the Roman alphabet and leaving hardly any space for other concepts of written documentation. This is something that ran through all different stages of everyday and cultural life for the colonized peoples, it started in schools, on educational levels, artistic expressions, official bureaucracy and so on. Effects that can still be seen up until today: “But […] there is a second approach to writing and literacy, according to which writing‘s impact should be accounted for in relation to the contextual matters such as ideology, institutions and socio-political relations. It is called the ideological model of literacy, according to which writing and literacy are never practised in vacuum and thus literacy is not an autonomous force in history. There are certainly ideologies and particular conceptions of literacy and there are institutions to enforce them.” (Behin, p. 28) Penny van Toorn argues that some scholars in literary studies assume that the impact of writing can be seen as inherent within the nature of an alphabetic

script and “literacy itself” (van Toorn, p. 8). Insufficient accounts of contexts like institutions, ideologies and socio-political relations are made, assumptions like these overlook the effects of specific contexts and circumstances “in which writing and literacy enter Indigenous life-worlds” (van Toorn, p. 9) “A very serious criticism of this model of literacy is that there is the assumption that the movement from orality to literacy is a natural phenomenon on the way to ‘advancement’ van Toorn finds it Eurocentric.” (Behin, p. 28)

The whole idea of literature as we know it today is based on Western conceptions of literacy, narrative forms and textual storytelling. Which is something that can also be seen in the WL canon we know today. Early works included there stem from different forms of textual works and genres. Epics and poetry where early forms of storytelling which can also be seen due to the fact that it has been transported orally before it was written down. Prose fiction as an important form of literary expression came into being much later. One of the earliest examples of a novel as we know it today in the WL canon would be “Don Quijote” by Miguel de Cervantes from 1605. From that point on these three categories – epic, lyric and prose - have been staples and non plus ultra within literary perception. Especially in modern and contemporary literary productions prose, novels and short fiction in particular, have been the forms of literature that are included in the canon the most. These forms, genres if you'd like, are born out of Western traditions of storytelling. With colonization these forms have also been brought to the colonies and were implemented as the desirable way of literary expression in order to be recognized in the literary world. Mariano Siskind titles this phenomenon “the globalization of the novel and the novelization of the global” in his study “Cosmopolitan Desires. Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America”. The implementation of the novel as a global literary form of expression was forced especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, and Siskind explains, works in two directions. The first – “globalization of the novel” – means this, the establishment of the novel from Western, European countries onto the rest of the globalized/colonized world. The second one – “the novelization of the global” – refers to the treatment of the global in this special form of literary expression. Something that is done by individuals, authors within their writings. But the globalization of the novel

universalized the European bourgeoisie and further established literary hierarchies. (cf. Mufti, p. 34)

In order to be relevant for literary discourses on a global stage, in WL, authors from “third world countries” have to adapt to these seemingly globalized forms of storytelling, like in novels from Western traditions. A process that not only completely overlooks and undermines local genres and storytelling, but also standardizes literary artistry, robbing WL of diversity. Etiemble already stated it in 1974, with saying that these standardized forms become the norm also in readers perceptions, when he says that “the reader might conclude that an Asian writer is only acceptable when he has studied at a British public school. If this is not a case of a colonialist spirit I really do not know what these words might mean.” (Etiemble, p. 90) This process solidifies the status and perception of what literature is, and what isn´t, within mainstream consumerism, from where it can hardly be removed. Other forms of literary expression, local and regional approaches to literature are being overpowered by globalized influences. Of course, there are also evaluations of what a “good” novel, of what “high literature” is. There comes a whole other hierarchization of literature as well.

The tendency to only include prose writing in WL discourses has been going on for decades now. When taking a closer look at storytelling history, at the history of humankind one can see, that a lot of literary traditions started off as oral ones, as mentioned before. Then why not include it into the WL canon as well? Because literacy, and with it literary production, also became a form of oppression, controlling and implementation of power for Western power which effects can be seen up until today. Because linguistic homogenization also included the homogenization of literacy. It is an especially cruel form of oppression because it prevents Indigenous peoples from reclaiming their tradition, ethnolinguistic identity and human heritage. (cf. Albury, p. 21) WL also leaves out many more forms of literary production, oral and written ones. For instance, intermedial approaches that become more and more common nowadays. One example: If Shakespeare´s dramatic texts that were written for stage performances, why wouldn´t we also include original screenplays in a canon of WL? And why overlook poetic expressions that are combined with

other artistic expression, like G. Mend-Ooyo and other Mongolian authors try to do it with calligraphy? Or how about poetry and music that are intersected, like in the contemporary Mongolian music scene as elsewhere on the globe: “The importance of the tension between tradition and innovation, which is central to much poetry in Mongolia today, is also vital to the future of music. You should see the documentary Mongolian Bling, which shows how hip-hop in Mongolia is very much Mongolian, and you can see there the way in which Indigenous culture is a definite part of the style.” (Wilson, p. 56) Literary practices, writing and narration is an ever-evolving human experience and form of expression and communication, that underlies constant change and adaptation. Even though “the colonial undermining of oral cultures and the intention to change them systematically is that, although there are losses in oral cultures under colonialism, there are also transformations and adaptations of traditional Indigenous practices.” (Behin, 2019, p. 30) These practices result from “the normal dynamism and exposure to otherness that so-called ‘traditional‘ cultures are accustomed to” (van Toorn, p. 11) “The adaptations and transformations […] are the reason why Indigenous people the world over celebrate the survival of their cultures, though there are times they mourn the losses.” (Behin, 2019, p. 30)

Categorizations always go hand in hand with literary hierarchies. They are to a certain degree necessary to even be able to deal with literature. Categorizations are also very subjective and based on personal preferences, ideologies, socializations and backgrounds, coming either from individuals or institutions. I could put a text into a specific category for example, to classify it and deal with it. I kind of bend it to my own liking and purpose. Another researcher could put the same text into a different category, also changing its place within a hierarchy. That is something that can be seen in a very mundane situation, a bookshop. Some novels might be considered “too mainstream” to be included into WL discussions. Or texts flow in and out of the WL canon, popularity and preferences change over time. Undermining certain styles of texts and narrations re-enforces power structures. An example that came to my attention is the case of a book, a literary study by Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Ph.D., titled “Women Who Run With the Wolves. Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman

Archetype” (1992). As in its original language, English, it was categorized as Non-Fiction, next to other scientific publications within the English section of a local bookstore in Vienna. But the German translation of the book was to be found in a very different category: Within the spirituality and esoteric section. That conveys a completely different message, while also undermining Pinkoly Estés expertise as a literary scholar, to say the least. Perception of texts changes when they enter new cultures and languages through translations. Something that can also be a good sign for the future of a globalized discourse about literature.

4.3.3 Chances and changes

Because a certain form of literature might be more popular in one region of the world, translations can bring a huge benefit to texts that might not be as popular in their original language. It is quite the phenomenon that a text only gets recognition in the area it has been written after it was translated and found some amount of success outside that area. Translations in this sense bring more value to the original as well. Or moving a text abroad might even provide primary readership, as Damrosch argues. (cf. Damrosch, 2003, p. 18) Nowadays, since so much more information is available for the average reader through the internet, cultural translation can happen not only through language but could also be entrusted onto the readers themselves. Almost everything is “google-able”. Therefore, digitization might be one huge advantage for literature from more unknown parts of the “mainstream world”, it might float easier into Western consciousness. That might be necessary for real change to happen in a cultural awareness-making process for those still dominating the field of literature in general and WL specifically.

Some change can already be seen, even if it means hard work for Indigenous and BIPOC people to get into those spaces, because they still don´t get the support and allyship they would need to be represented enough within every area of the literary field. That starts with staffing decisions in institutions and ends with recognition through prizes and awards. Even though these awards hold some problematic aspects as well, which we will see later on. At least more various forms are being recognized, may it be through the rise of poetry, and lyricism getting a stage on social media platforms (Rupi Kaur, Indian-Canadian

poet comes to mind), through poetry slams and the recognition of other genres as literature, besides prose in the form of novels and short stories. Literary non-fiction is on the rise, essays are being read more and more. And even song lyrics are starting to be recognized as literature, as the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Literature to Bob Dylan in 2016 shows. With Louise Glück a poet won it as well in 2020. A rise of especially BIPOC poets can be seen on the literary market in Western countries. Something that often stands not only for poetry, but also activism through the written word, as Liliana Ancalao for example shows, activism for and honouring of their languages, communities, heritage, land and also literary expression in general: “To honor language is to refuse to exploit its potential to deceive and so coexist with contradiction; producing poetry that is oral and written, communal and authorial, sacred and colloquial – juxtaposed elements that threaten Western conceptions of authorship and literature.” (Taber)

The act of poets engaging in readings and performances that can be recorded and archived as videos and audios brings the orality of narrating and storytelling back into mainstream consciousness. Rupi Kaur went on a world tour to perform her poetry, Amanda Gorman was the youngest inauguration poet ever and Liliana Ancalao uses performances to reconnect with her language, while performing herself and listening to others: “I think metaphorically about the souls of written words, but as I have participated in readings in which writers read their texts aloud in their Indigenous languages, I have listened to the souls of their languages in those small gusts, in the breath that emits those words, in the cadence and rhythm of their saying. The sounds of the soul in the language of each poet.” (Ancalao, Taber)

It is about reconnection with Indigenous forms of literature, but globalization and digitization also bring new forms of exchange. Adapting is something Indigenous people always had to do since being under imperial rulership. So much might have been lost. But a lot could also be gained. For the Indigenous peoples and for the rest of the world. They might learn about themselves, and by writing about it they also give us a glimpse into a world we ourselves blocked the access to: “We can learn a lot about Indigenous cultures, and a lot about our own modern and globalized culture, through spiritual ecology, through a

deep and heart-level practical understanding of the connection between human and land, between our own discrete physical body and the broad and interconnected spiritual body of the tribe. Mongolian poets are extremely attuned to this, being traditionally the bard and historian and, in many cases, the shamans, too, so poetry merges with the spiritual in an earthy and deep-historical sense." (Wilson, pp. 52-53) Poets, writers and artists making a way for their heritage so that maybe one day their children can learn about it in school and be proud of where they come from rather than being shamed for it. Because awareness of language and culture already starts in early education where a lot of re-implementing colonial thinking is being done today, rather than unifying and globalizing students from around the world.

4.4 Hopping islands: Oceania

Oceania might be not so familiar to many. Australia – yes, of course, it is an entire continent. But there is more! That´s why it is called Australia and Oceania. There is for example New Zealand, right next to Australia. Or Aotearoa, as it is called in Māori. It is a country that actively shows how to deal with their colonial past and how to fix it, as discussions of officially re-naming New Zealand, as it was called by Dutch cartographers in 1643, back to its Māori name that is Aotearoa, show. (cf. Venuto) Learning Māori is more and more common, not only for Māori children themselves, but also by Pākehā[18] children, white people. Because the government encourages this reconnection and reconciliation with Māori heritage, children´s and young adult literature from and for Māori are becoming more and more important. One example is Steph Matuku, a Māori writer, coming from the Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Tama and Te Atiawa tribes. (cf. Matuku)

4.4.1 Steph Matuku

> *It's so important for me to get Māori kids on the page, which is why my protagonists are always Māori. Because when I was growing up, you just didn't see yourself. (MLT)*

Steph Matuku is a Māori writer of children´s and young adult fiction and playwrights from Aotearoa. More specifically she is Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Tama

[18] Pākehā is the Māori word for white people, Settlers from the Europe.

and Te Atiawa. Her two debut novels “Flight of the Fantail” and “Whetū Toa and the Magician” received positive reactions. She is not only incorporating Māori characters but also writes/translates her books into Māori. Something even more important to reconnect Māori children with their heritage and language. While also publishing them in English which gives Pākehās the opportunity to learn about Māori culture. Since Aotearoa´s history looks similar to other colonized countries, the Māori language and culture was being oppressed and belittled for centuries, missionary schools were established specially to missionize and Westernize Māori people. Later on, the schools even became boarding schools, mandatory institutions for Māori children to attend, and to learn English, to get “civilized”, where speaking Māori sometimes even led to punishment. From the 1980s on Māori-driven education exploded, which also included kōhanga reo – Māori-language preschools, kura kaupapa Māori – Māori-language schools and wānanga – Māori tertiary institutions. (cf. Calman) Especially the kōhanga reo, literarily translates to “language nests”, has sparked international interest and found imitators from other Indigenous peoples overseas, who applied the system where native or at least fluent speakers of an Indigenous language provide education and care for children at a preschool age. (cf. Keane) Despite all the efforts of Māori communities to revive their heritage, and also through receiving more and more support from the rest of the public and even the government, studies still show a literacy gap between Māori and Pākehā students with the former coming out short. Of course, one has to take into account that these studies are still carried out through the understanding of “Eurocentric functional definitions of literacy (i.e., reading, writing, listening and speaking), and that measurement tools used in international studies are developed based on these notions of literacy.” (Sutherland, p. 67) Even though the government wants to implement broader and more inclusive curricula, there still needs to be done a lot more in order to bridge that gap. “A key reason for this could be that the education system continues to perpetuate colonization and assimilation practices that have had significant negative influences on Māori language and Māori student’s opportunities to experience educational success.” (Sutherland, p. 72)

That is why it is even more important to have influential Indigenous writers who write for the mainstream, especially for children and young adults, for them to find representation in their education as well as in mainstream media. There are various examples of new media of minority and endangered languages around the world that try to revive their languages, like in Irish Gaelic or Sámi communities in Europe as well, who publish news and art in their native language for example. There are these efforts in Aotearoa too, like with the Māori Literature Trust. Or at least bilingual publications and more availability of the Māori language in society is provided. But for many Indigenous language communities, in Aotearoa as well as elsewhere, these efforts are just an easy fix rather than a permanent solution, if they want to pursue their Indigenous languages "on neotraditionalist lines to restore a precolonial linguistic culture that did not place any salience on literacy, let alone digitalisation. Indigenous language literacy is, after all, a product of European language values. The Hopi mentioned earlier refuse to codify their language as this would amount to breaching language and cultural protocols. Māori and non-Māori (Albury, 2016a) have claimed that the language `needs to be heard not read´ (p. 305) and that Māori was traditionally an oral language and should be kept as such, void of formative prescriptions and ideologies of purism that often times accompany literacy as a language policy project. It appears, therefore, that traditional Indigenous language ontologies may not necessarily align with economic perspectives on language that have been informed by Western thinking. This can be problematic where language policy agendas refer to a precolonial past. In any case, sociolinguistic evidence is increasing – albeit disappointing to activists – that Indigenous communities often do not desire a high economic status for their heritage languages. Instead, they may see their languages as specifically useful for the performance of culture parallel to the high economic status of the dominant language." (Albury, p. 23) Even though "Kiwis – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous – are proud of the Māori language, they claim it as part of their contemporary New Zealand identity, and they call for more and higher quality Māori language education in schools. It was clear that, in general terms, the youth of New Zealand's postcolonial white majority want to be part of today's Māori language narrative." (Albury, p. 13)

Therefore, a more Māori oriented approach might be a better solution on how to change the schools' curricula. One, that also emphasizes Māori writers rather than sticks to a Western canon, that still influences students and writers alike, as Steph Matuku for example refers to her favorite children´s writers like Enid Blyton, C.S. Lewis and Roald Dahl – reproducing authors she read as a child that stem from a British canon that still impacts Aotearoa´s canon as well. (cf. Christchurch City Libraries) "For the 'superior' Western culture, the 'inferior' primitive culture seems to be an empty container ready to be filled up with the precious belongings of the Western culture." (Behin, p. 30) This was implemented through colonial rulership centuries ago and is still maintained through cultural politics, through choices of canons for schools, by linguistic materials and learning opportunities, and educations dedicated to writing.

4.4.2 Education and it´s influences

Literary education doesn´t stop when school is finished. Some students continue their studies in literatures despite or sometimes because of the experiences made through school reading curricula. Sometimes they are even lucky enough to encounter creative writing and get the chance to dive into their own literary expressions. This can encourage students to even start studies in creative writing, programs especially popular in the US and other English-speaking countries, with methods and tools specifically developed there, out of a standardized entertainment industry that took over the globe, and still does today. The big problem with these creative writing programs? As fun as they might be[19], their supremacy on a global scale and the standardization they tag along undermines and oppresses literary practices from marginalized groups. It starts with the language problem discussed earlier: Not everything is translatable, yes, some practices might be adaptable, but some literary methods or genres don´t work in a certain regional circumstance because there are different capabilities in place, different stages of reading and writing experiences, especially in a foreign language. As scholar, poet and writing

[19]I am myself trained as a writing teacher on basis of methods from US creative writing programs, which means I also have practical experience in teaching but also applying these exercises myself. They can be a good impulse and reference point, are fun to play with, but also tend to enforce a system of oppression on literary production because they stem from a narrow thinking background, that focuses more on unified expression that can be measured and on standardized tools that hardly leave any room for multilingual approaches or literary experiments.

teacher K Srilata from India states in her critique “Teaching creative writing: Notes from IIT Madras” (2021):

> *Creative writing pedagogy in India serves a different constituency, and to model it on the MFA programmes of British or American universities would not quite work. For one thing, my students bring with them varied levels of capabilities. Not all are at ease with English and so, I learn to emphasise the richness of the multilingual imagination and of translation, of reading and writing in the languages one is most at home in. I learn that not all writing prompts and readings work — they are but seeds that may or may not sprout. (Srilata)*

Language systems work differently around the world so one can´t assume a special format of literary text production is successful in and applicable to every living situation. That´s why there is such richness in literary genres. But standardized writing programs, again, enforce certain colonial powers, to put it that way, because they suppress existing forms of storytelling and literary expression by claiming specific forms are more valuable and more desirable than others, e.g., the novel as the highest form of literature or a certain type of poetry (sonnets with Shakespeare as a prominent example and the like). The result of all this is a uniform and standardized mush of literary production with a Westernized core, neglecting individual experiences on a global scale. It also emphasizes a globalized version of literature, written for a global audience with little to now reference to specific cultural phenomena and specifics. All coming from Western ideas.

“Increasing awareness and knowledge of Indigenous language communities with unique contexts, needs and interests make patent the necessity of language specific technologies in accordance to cultural values, worldviews, and appropriate artistic and esthetic practices, and the necessity of adopting decolonizing methodologies in education the teaching of writing.” (Sullivan et. al., p. 216) This starts early on in education, with having parents or grandparents that are still able to pass down an Indigenous language, Indigenous language speakers as teachers and the possibility to study those native languages throughout the educational careers of a child up until the university stage if that is even possible for them.

Writing in said languages comes at a whole other cost – is it even possible to press an oral language into one written form? If already done, as with many Indigenous languages, then it is still hard for children to gain sufficiency in their native languages to a level of literary, and/or academic expression, that they are able to read, write and understand literary texts in their languages and deal with them or even produce them themselves. A lot of literature by Indigenous authors is still written in a colonial language. For many reasons, linguistic sufficiency is one of them. A big reason, because it requires linguistic sufficiency from various people in different areas – in publishing, translation, academia, and literary criticism. As mentioned before, language politics come into play here as well, with governmental decisions concerning languages in which school material is provided and written. Usually, they still choose colonial languages such as English, French and Spanish. With the result that many children aren´t sufficiently fluent in their "Native" language to even express themselves in it, orally and in a written form.

In schools, it starts with the linguistic debate and ends with literature programs. Literary education vanishes more and more from school curricula around the world, and even if, only national literatures are taken into account – one might think, from a Western perspective. But the reality is, that still a lot of former colonies stick to their literary canons that were imposed by their colonizers, making for example students from Australia, Aotearoa, India and other former British colonies read the same novels as their British counterparts, rather than diving into their own literary histories. Of course, one needs to compromise the number of available texts to a readable amount, especially for students, at the university and in school. Courses in schools that have time to deal with literatures are getting more and more limited in many countries around the world. A sad fact, that is also depicted if we take a closer look at UNs "sustainable development goals" – where is art and specifically literature accounted for? (cf. UN Women) Nowhere really, even though the arts are often referred to as essential parts of the human existence.

4.4.3 Chances and changes

> *As witnessed throughout this volume, Indigenous writing and literacies are inevitably interwoven with heritage, colonialism,*

> *globalization processes, and identity production. […] Thus, writing in the Indigenous language is often a political statement that supports communities, cultures, and language revitalizations. This always needs to be considered in research about writing in Indigenous contexts. (Sullivan et. al., p. 215)*

Political statements are something that, sadly, often can only be made by already established authors who can generate a little bit of attention from the West. But there are other ways to do it as well, to encourage children through their educational career, like the project “Untold International” shows. An organization based in Ghana that through “accepting that storytelling unlocks imagination which unlocks innovation, and that Ghanaian plights are resolved by Ghanaian people with Ghanaian solutions, we seek to collaborate with some of the most underprivileged, under-resourced, and underrepresented communities in Ghana to provide literacy education and resources through libraries of primarily African literature, extracurricular literacy education in both English (the official language) and Asante Twi (or other local language), and writing workshops in both languages to facilitate and practice creative and innovative thinking.” (Untold International, Our Vision) They take the bottom-up approach literally and work with people from the communities they want to provide their service to, making it a sustainable and responsible project. Rather than coming in and approaching the local community with solutions they want to implement, they provide access to help the self-fulfillment of the peoples´ potentials: “The purpose of Untold International is primarily to provide resources to Ghanaians living in rural communities who are suffering from lack of access to adequate literacy education, through unbalanced student-teacher ratios, lack of materials, and low prioritization of education. We believe the stories already exist; we simply want to provide the keys to unlock them.” (Untold International, Our Vision) This is an approach that takes into account that it is hardly possible, especially in more rural areas, to apply one single curriculum for an entire country, that may consist of different language groups and peoples. Adapting and customizing curricula, in linguistics, writing and literature on site is more effective and sustainable because it takes local communities directly into account and works with them rather than just imposing one scheme onto them.

However, what can Western systems do to generate more awareness for all the existing literatures out there? One approach would be, as Words Without Borders approaches it, to include the teaching of literatures from around the world into the curriculum. With WWB Campus they provide teaching materials and resources for teachers, lecturers and students tailored for usage in the classroom: “Drawing from Words Without Borders' rich archive of contemporary stories, essays, and poems in translation, Words Without Borders Campus connects students and educators to eye-opening contemporary literature from across the globe. We present this literature alongside multimedia contextual materials, ideas for lessons, and pathways for further exploration. Our goal is to create a virtual learning space without borders, fostering meaningful cross-cultural understandings and inspiring a lifelong interest in international literature.” (cf. WWB Campus, About US) In order to effectively use platforms like WWB Campus, there needs to be more awareness in the educational sector of the importance of literary education as well, to implement more possibilities for students to engage with various backgrounds, especially in multicultural settings, that classrooms in the West often are. And to push a diverse and inxclusive literary education further, not stop with schools but educational programs for adults, communities and institutions as well. There still needs to be more lobbying for the arts and literature in particular, also in politics, international organizations and societies in general, because those are the sectors that really shape and make opinions of the general public. With neglecting literatures, they are also neglecting so much of learnings and knowledge of the human experience, history and connections. That public sectors, politics and institutions play an important role in the world´s literary market will be discussed in the following chapter.

4.5 Facing our ignorance: Africa

Maybe the title of this chapter is provoking. So it should be. As should the entire thesis. Because the whole point is to show the exclusiveness of the literary world, especially in WL. But literature is only one field of many that is used as an example here. My criticism could be applied to a lot of other fields as well: the music and film industries, the arts, cultural and entertainment sectors in general. Yes, I already pointed out that there are blind spots the West has when

looking at the rest of the world. But I dare to say that there isn´t a bigger blind spot than the continent of Africa. Many points of the criticism in former chapters are even more striking in Africa since the entire continent has been exploited, and still is, from the West and the rest of the world, when it comes to resources but also very much so with its identities, languages, cultures and literatures. If taking into account, that Africa was an imperial endeavour for centuries and a continent that was used to be fought over supremacy and resources by the seemingly so “civilized” West, it is not surprising that Abdulrazak Gurnah´s win of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2021 came as a surprise to many, especially in the West. Because this prize, as so many other literary institutions, maintains a carefully curated and build system of power and oppression around the world, which benefits from political and societal developments in the past. It still upholds an image of power that rarely let´s “outsiders” from developing countries in. No wonder then that there are so little African winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature, in comparison to the rest of the world. Institutions like the Nobel Prize still strongly benefit from Europe´s colonial past that brought capitalist modernity into being as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o states: “The capitalist modernity to which it gave birth cannot be divorced from the colonial moment it came into being. There is no region, no culture, no nation today that has not been affected by colonialism and its aftermath. Indeed, modernity can be considered a product of colonialism.” (wa Thiong´g, p. vii)

4.5.1 Abdulrazak Gurnah

> *But writing cannot be just about battling and polemics, however invigorating and comforting that can be. Writing is not about one thing, not about this issue or that, or this concern or another, and since its concern is human life in one way or another, sooner or later cruelty and love and weakness become its subject. I believe that writing also has to show what can be otherwise, what it is that the hard domineering eye cannot see, what makes people, apparently small in stature, feel assured in themselves regardless of the disdain of others. So I found it necessary to write about that as well, and to do so truthfully, so that both the ugliness and the virtue come through, and the human being appears out of the simplification and stereotype. When that works, a kind of beauty comes out of it. (Gurnah, Writing)*

This states Abdulrazak Gurnah in his Nobel Lecture after his win in 2021. A win of a prestigious and globally known literary prize that came as a surprise to many. Maybe because Gurnah wasn´t a figure that was known to a lot of readers outside a certain circle of experts. But I dare to say even more so because the Nobel Prize in general, and the one for Literature in particular, still is an exclusive institution, established and awarded by a heterogeneous group of Westerners that are inscribing into the WL consciousness more than many think. Something that has been criticised for a long time now. The committee has been criticized for being too untransparent and Euro-/Western-centric which can easily be proven right by looking at statistics: Within a period of over 120 years of awarding the Nobel Prize in Literature it has been awarded to authors from outside the European-North American hemisphere 16 times. Only 16 times. Re-enforcing the image of the West as the centre of cultural, and literary production. Re-enforcing the “norm”. (cf. Kaube)

Even if Gurnah is seen as an African writer – because the public perception sometimes might not even differentiate between Africa as a continent and its single countries – coming from Zanzibar, today a part of Tanzania, he can be seen as a diasporic author. Having left his home in 1968 at the age of 20 in order to pursue his academic education in England, and also because of political and civil unrest in his home country. He is still living and writing, and until his retirement also teaching, in England, which puts him in a spot so many authors from the Southern hemisphere occupy that are better known on the world´s literary market, or better said in the West. Namely making them authors of the diaspora, meaning they no longer life and write out of their “Native” country due to political persecutions, civil unrest, pursuings of “better”/Western education or other reasons. (cf. Kaur Boparai, Biographical Note)

Author of several novels, Gurnah almost always touches on the on the topic of migration, specifically that of refugees, and with it the effects of colonialism that last till today. That is also the official motivation for awarding him the Nobel Prize in Literature: “for his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents”. (The Nobel Prize, Gurnah) His writings may already deal with a lot of issues, migrants and refugees from the global South, especially from

Africa, have to face when coming to Western countries. But an even better example for all the issues on the literary market in small, and the human experience in a global context, that are brought up in this thesis, is the author himself. Being born in an East African country, with the mother tongue of Kiswahili he as so many before him sought a Western education at the territory of his country's former colonizer – England, the British Empire. Even back in Zanzibar his education was held in the English language, together with an English curriculum in general. By being a writer, he actively chooses to use the English language for his writings. Although he is constantly aware of the problem that comes with choosing English, created through colonialism, he is also very pleased to write in this particular language:

> *One of those consequences is language. But, you know, there is another way of thinking about this, when it comes to language. Of course, you would imagine that it would be kind of honorable, as it were, to write or to use your own language in writing literature. You heard your previous guest talking about kind of making a decision between Russian and Ukrainian, because it suggests something about where your affiliation is and where your loyalties are. Well, yes, I see that. But there is another issue, which is to do with writing. And these are issues that, it seems to me, can be confused by this question of loyalty. I write in English because I actually find writing in English very comfortable. It's like a kind of gift, in a way, to be able to have this language. I could write in Swahili if I wanted. It's not a problem. So it's a choice, but not really a choice. […] You have to have the whatever it is that makes one into all of these things. And I think, from a point of view of writing, there is such an intimate relationship to the language you write, that I think only you as a writer can know that: which is the language that you can move around in this kind of sinuous way that writing has to do. And anyway, here we are. You know, like I say, this is what happened: colonialism. We were colonized by the British; I learned English. And I found comfort in working in that language. Perhaps if I had been colonized by the French, it might not have happened. Who knows? I often think of the way Derek Walcott put this in his essay, "The Muse of History," when he, too — he's talking about English, although he's talking about the literary tradition of English rather than the language of English, because, of course, most Caribbean people don't have any choice so far as language is concerned, the way, say, somebody like I, like me. But he said, "They can no more take it away from me than I can give it back." So, in a way, this is what's happened. We can't argue about these consequences. But sometimes we can be thankful that there is a benefit of which language shall I write in. I have a choice. (Democracy Now)*

In his writing, literary and academic, Gurnah is in a constant state of awareness towards colonialism and the effects it still has on his home country, on the continent of Africa and people in the diaspora. Language is one of the big problems that is often neglected in the discourse about the colonial experience. Gurnah is also in the rather privileged position to be able to write in Swahili if he wanted to. That is something many people over the African continent aren´t able to do – because of a lack of sufficient (writing) knowledge of their native tongues, where the problem of orality and language literacy come into play again. To choose to write in your native language, as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o chose to do – he went back from writing in English to his first language of Kikuyu – is firstly a rebellious act, an act of activism considering the status of "major languages" – like English, French, Spanish – in comparison to "minor languages". For many Indigenous people it is even impossible to choose to write in any other language than that they were socialized and educated in.

For Gurnah, writing in English brings many advantages, as it does for many other Indigenous writers. One big reason is that it increases the chance to be published in the first place and generate at least some attention on the (world) literary market. What many people fail to see though is that the entire publishing industry, looked at in a global context, and other literary institutions, such as libraries and cultural facilities, are also hugely influenced by (post)colonial factors, that still benefit the West, more than they do the rest of the world. Because of various agendas, often political and transnational ones, economic decisions and connections. Those who benefit the least from a seemingly globalized world are still the ones that were oppressed through colonialism. One major example for this statement? The Nobel Prize in Literature. As grateful and appreciative Abdulrazak Gurnah was after receiving the award – it is still a deeply biased and exclusive literary institution that influences literary perceptions around the world. Of course, it brought great attention and reach for Gurnah, which also transports his writings and the topics he chooses onto a world stage. (cf. Democracy Now) While taking a closer look at the history of the Nobel Prize in Literature the male, European-/Western-oriented and -dominated stance becomes visible. Besides only being awarded 16 times to authors from outside the Northern hemisphere, with 119 laureates in total, it also has been

awarded to women only 17 times – a fact the official website depicts as if it was a commendable achievement to even include women. (The Nobel Prize in Literature) It doesn´t point out a statistic for wins of BIPOC people but taking Abdulrazak Gurnah as an example: Since Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986 he is the first Black African writer to receive the award. As well as he is the first Black writer to be awarded the prize since Toni Morrison in 1993 – 30 years ago. (cf. Democracy Now) Considering the influence the Nobel Prize holds when it comes to opinion making and shaping, the exclusiveness behind the awarding that also benefits the system of WL becomes even more problematic. But it is only one example for the biased world literary market.

4.5.2 Publishers, availability, and access

> *Indigenous, or autonomous, publishing is integral to national identity and development: cultural, social, and economic. Such publishing reflects a people's history and experience, belief systems, and their concomitant expressions through language, writing, and art. In turn, a people's interaction with other cultures is informed by this written identity. Publishing – particularly scholarly works, literary publishing, and books for children – preserves, enhances, and develops one society's culture and its interaction with others. Indigenous and independent publishing in Africa, or elsewhere, is a key component of the (in)visibility of a culture. (Bgoya/Jay, pp. 17-18)*

The publishing market, as so many other parts of the cultural sector, is controlled through the capitalistic system implemented by Western nations. During colonial rulership everything "Native" to one place became assimilated and homogenized. Before that, there had already been a tradition of written words in well-established trading and cultural centres, especially in early civilizations of the Nile valley and Western and coastal Eastern Africa, where in the Middle Ages Islamic study centres and universities were set as well as Christian monasteries in Ethiopia that produced illuminated scripts. (cf. Bgoya/Jay, p. 18) "Printed books became widespread in Africa with the arrival of European missionaries, primarily for purposes of religious conversion, heralding the advent of colonialism. […] With the growth of literacy after independence, publishing developed; predominantly educational publishing by foreign-owned companies keen to develop an untapped market. Books were not

originated within Africa, but from publishing decisions made in the north: ideas, writers, and decisions were not African. Even where they were originated by local branches of foreign companies publishing in European languages, it was the parent companies overseas and not the local branches that had the final decisions on their publication." (Bgoya/Jay, p. 18) Even though certain African regions might have had advanced written traditions and facilities to record and archive them, when "the scramble for Africa" (Bgoya/Jay, p. 18) began, all that existed before was eradicated by European powers. The then established publishing companies were under a central control from those nations with aftermaths still visible today. After independences of many African nations, publishing houses remained under this Western control, now not out of political and imperial pressure but in order to survive out of economic reasons. For independent, Indigenous publishing, a lot has to come into place for it to work. The already discussed linguistic abilities of editorial and authorial staff must be given, as well as economic possibilities, such as printing, marketing, distribution and last but not least even a readership. Because illiteracy in Indigenous languages still is a problem in many African areas and other parts of the world as well.

Initiatives such as the "African Books Collective", established in 1985, are trying to promote independent African publishing, which might get easier thanks to advancements in technologies, such as the internet and e-publishing. "African Books Collective (ABC) is an African owned, worldwide marketing and distribution outlet for books from Africa - scholarly, literature and children's books. We also run the website readafricanbooks.com which profiles the work of African publishers and books." (ABC, Who we are) Even if ABC became a collective of around 140 independent publishers from 24 African countries – they still have to go against global/Western publishing conglomerates such as Penguin Random House or Macmillan Publishers. Especially after independence, in the 1970s and 1980s, independent publishing houses were established in various African countries. But they had to face a lot of difficulties, which often had to do with lack of financial support from their newly founded governments – literature and literary production was not considered valuable:

> *Legislation for development of authors and publishers' rights was inadequate, with weak copyright law and enforcement. Government policies were regressive, for example, imposing duties and taxes on book manufacturing materials – paper primarily, but also other consumables for printing machinery, such as spare parts, inks, dyes, chemicals, films, and plates. In addition, there were insufficient training centers for the staff needed in the publishing and printing industries. Rather, governments favored local publishing by parastatal companies, which they considered to be the way forward for an African publishing industry to counter the dominance of foreign-owned companies. […] low literacy, particularly in the European languages in which publishing was concentrated; weak distribution systems; and the collapse of public libraries, where they existed, all led to the demise of publishing by parastatals and independents. University presses, too, were hit by the lack of funding. (Bgoya/Jay, pp. 19-20)*

The publishing sector here had direct connections to the education sector – as we have seen a few times now that the literary world and its institutions are connected with each other. With outsourcing printing to or still accepting school textbooks from the former colonizers, African nations firstly maintained the dependence on Western nations, and secondly kept on enforcing Western implemented and established education. "Publishing, because it is absolutely essential to the cultural, scientific, and educational life of nations, has an importance beyond its limited economic role. While it may be appropriate to import textiles or even computers, the production of books that directly reflect the culture, history of a nation or people is something that cannot be left to others, . . . It is a vital part of culture and deserves special consideration." (Altbach/Teffera, p. 14)

Publishing influences the education sector, influences cultural awareness and practice, upholds a centre-peripheral thinking, because a lot of mainstream publishing still runs through Western centres, such as London, Paris and New York. In order to be published there, writing, or at least being translated into English or French is crucial. Even then, only very few authors actually get published, apart from coming near an established position as writers on the world literary market. Authors also often specifically choose to rather be published by foreign/Western companies than independent African ones. (cf. Bgoya/Jay, p. 26):

> *Additionally, because education had been colonial and all things of value were thought to emanate from the metropolitan centers in the north, there were psychological and economic reasons for authors to prefer a European publisher. Indeed that has persisted: the lack of citations of articles in African published journals, the lack of confidence in the now global reach of the African publisher, and the importance of publication with a prestigious European or American publisher for tenure in a foreign university all feed the argument for publishing outside Africa. Although the self-interest of the author to have their work widely read is understandable, there remains this unjustifiable presumption in favor of a non-African publisher. Copublication is one route: but while northern publishers are always keen to find markets in Africa for their books, they are rarely receptive to southern proposals for northern copublication. There are instances too of African authors being nurtured by African publishers, who then win prizes or find a opublisher and subsequently publish with them, without reciprocation for the publisher that gave them their start. (Bgoya/Jay, pp. 26-27)*

When looking at numbers of publishing on the world market in relation to population Africa as a continent is drastically underrepresented: "[…] the most recent UNESCO estimates show that Africa's share in the world trade of all cultural goods, including books, is less than 1%; with African books representing less than a third of one percent of global cultural trade. Africa, with 15% of the world's population, produces less than 2% of the world's books." (Bgoya/Jay, pp. 22-23) The lack of representation, especially from and for the African continent, depends on various factors, publishing in literature and academia is one major part. Even if dealt with, support from Western nations easily falls to "charitable work", demeaning the multiplicity of knowledge from African countries. "This has added to the (in)visibility of Africa's own scholarly and literary output on the continent. It is premised that donating British or American books to libraries and educational institutions solves the problem of books and reading. On the contrary, such policies are an inescapable part of the problem because they fail to respect fair practices in relation to Indigenous African publishers and publishing." (Bgoya/Jay, p. 26)

It also influences the composition of libraries, be it public, national, university or private libraries. Libraries, that are institutions of education, literature, exchange, that symbolize general access to knowledge. But that can also become power instruments, symbols of oppression and cultural extinction and

hierarchization. A library, starting centuries ago, has always been, one a centre and archive of knowledge, and second, metaphorically, an ideal for readers, writers and scholars, an accumulation of (infinite) texts. Libraries hold a special place in WL too. Going back to its origins, Goethe also based his idea of WL on his extensive private library, and since then, WL and the library have been inseparable connected. B. Venkat Mani even argues that libraries are an essential part of the creation, establishing and maintaining of WL, a fact that has rather been neglected and overlooked than considered:

> *I make a case for libraries as important transactional sites for world literature. World literature is a construct, and a host of historical, sociopolitical, and cultural factors beyond the university classroom contribute to its construction. I contend that scholars of world literature could and should pay more attention to the "making" of world literature through public and private libraries. […] Libraries matter because world literature is less about ownership and expertise than about access to and familiarity with what is not one's own through the accident of birth and the naturalness of a "mother tongue." World literature is characterized by what I call "borrowing privileges." These privileges are defined by access: to basic literacy, to the production and reception of literature as a cultural artifact, to books and other media of public dissemination, and to a specific kind of linguistic and cultural literacy that readers and authors from one part of the world acquire when they gain access to literatures from other parts. This access does not have to lead to a harmonious dialogue; in fact, often it is born of conflicted circumstances, such as colonialism, political dominance, and financial subjugation, and may well register or enact the conflict in the process of reading. (Venkat Mani, p. 241)*

What has to be taken into account as well is that there are transitions libraries often go through, especially those of national status, from universities and public libraries. Governments and political decisions influence the inventory, as can be seen under dictatorship or extensive censorship. A well-known example would be the rigorous censorship under the Nazi regime. History contains many examples of exercising power through cultural and linguistic destruction, also carried out on libraries. Today, libraries can still be manipulative instruments, especially through categorization new hierarchies are established, that for instance could force a new development towards national literatures. (cf. Venkat Mani, p. 246) The idea of having a complete library of WL might be utopian but through modern technologies and advances in digital formats, archives of

everything that is written, and considered as literature, doesn´t only have to be utopian anymore. Or does it? Because only establishing such an accumulation of literary texts, and neighbouring fields such as film or arts, doesn´t make it an inclusive and all-encompassing institution. Libraries never only were archives – they are meant to be used. Depending on the form of library, by different people. Not everybody had access. And even though the internet would make access easier, it cannot be assumed that digital access is possible for everybody due to lack of devices and even internet connection. WL, literary institutions, productions and circulation always are, to some extent, a privileged enterprise that favours certain languages, forms of writing, backgrounds and hierarchies.

4.5.3 Chances and changes

A lot has changed over the past decades, digitization being one of the biggest and most influential advances, also in the literary field. Publications are being more simplified because of it – theoretically everybody could publish a book as long as a device to do so is available. Which also means less controlling authorities are at play. That grants independent, Indigenous publishing more freedom, reach and opportunities of circulation outside their areas. Materialistic considerations can also be simplified – thinking of storage space, libraries don´t have to have every single book in print anymore, if digitized versions are available. Internet access also gives access to a broader field of people, as seen with language learning for example. Oral traditions can be recorded in their oral forms, written literacy becomes no necessity for Indigenous literary production. Communal exchange is possible online, especially for people with, e.g., the same native language, that are spread over a large area. This also makes a connection of scholars and Indigenous communities easier – exchange of knowledge, inclusion in research, publication process and cultural activities. Social media platforms grant more visibility, ways of advocacy, more awareness beyond borders become possible.

Digitization brings a lot of advantages for WL. For engaging with literatures from around the world. But it can also re-enforce hierarchies of the literary world. Giving even more power and influence on well-established institutions in the West, through algorithms, SEO optimizing and replicating citation numbers for

instance, carrying on the dialogue of a WL canon which overpowers independent, Indigenous voices once again, especially in the mainstream knowledge about WL. Taking Wikipedia for example, probably the easiest and quickest viewed site when one searches for the term WL. On the German version of the site, for the entry under “Weltliteratur”, there is an entire section entitled “Literaturen der Welt” aka literatures of the world which is separated into three categories: languages, countries and regions and ethnicities. For the Western/European parts, there are very detailed entries, differentiating even literature from the Faroe or Catalan language. Whereas there is only one single entry for the entity of African literatures. Just one other indicator of how indifferent and undifferentiated regions from the Southern hemisphere, and the African continent in particular, are viewed from the Western perspective. (cf. Wikipedia, Weltliteratur) It is not as if there wouldn´t be enough African literature out there that could be taken into account. But even if Black authors are considered within the WL discourse, many those writers are from the diaspora. Not actually writing out of African countries. Because of various reasons mentioned above.

In a similar way as various literary prizes, cultural institutions and organizations contribute to public discourse about literature. The UNESCO, a globally known cultural organization by the United Nations, awards the title of World City of Literature, for example, the first one being Edinburgh:

> *UNESCO's City of Literature programme is part of a wider Creative Cities Network which was launched in 2004 and is currently made up of 295 UNESCO Creative Cities globally. Members are drawn from more than 72 countries and cover seven creative fields: Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Music, and Media Arts. The Network was born out of UNESCO's Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity initiative which was created in 2002. The Creative Cities Network’s aim is to "promote the social, economic and cultural development of cities in both the developed and the developing world." The cities in the network promote their local creative scene and conform to UNESCO’s goal of fostering cultural diversity. They recognise past, present and future: a strong cultural heritage, a vibrant and diverse contemporary cultural scene, and aspirations to extend culture to the next generation at home and to other cities in a global partnership. The UNESCO Cities of Literature network of 42 cities represents 6 continents and 28 countries, and a combined population of over 26 million. (Cities of Literature, About Us)*

This gives cities, and literatures, a whole new level of representation and attention, if even an UN organization values them. But as it is the case with the Nobel Prize as well, here also lies a hidden agenda. Or maybe not directly an agenda, but better said the interest of certain nations. Because the UN might seemingly be a union between the majority of world´s nations, but in fact there again are more powerful and influential nations, usually from the West or economical very strong nations in charge. Of course, the awarding of the title "UNESCO City of Literature" is evaluated after certain criteria, that are established through the Western point of view onto culture, literature in particular:

- Quality, quantity and diversity of publishing in the city
- Quality and quantity of educational programmes focusing on domestic or foreign literature at primary, secondary and tertiary levels
- Literature, drama and/or poetry playing an important role in the city
- Hosting literary events and festivals which promote domestic and foreign literature;
- Existence of libraries, bookstores and public or private cultural centres which preserve, promote and disseminate domestic and foreign literature
- Involvement by the publishing sector in translating literary works from diverse national languages and foreign literature
- Active involvement of traditional and new media in promoting literature and strengthening the market for literary products. (Cities of Literature, About Us)

Criteria that can be seen as cynical considering the points mentioned above, why the literary education, publishing sector and access and availability of literature in certain countries and regions aren´t as developed as it might be the case in Western nations. But with a more globalized awareness and approach towards literatures from various parts of the world, these factors might improve also in the Southern hemisphere, if literary infrastructures aren´t only accounted for as physical spaces but also in an online sphere. That traditions, Indigenous heritage, digitization and globalization don´t cancel each other out, can be seen by various projects and approaches by Indigenous authors. In their cases, digitization and technological advancements might even be a huge benefit.

4.6 Not the centre of the earth: Europe

At the end of our journey through the world of literature, and WL, we go back to where we started from. Europe, where it all began, the talks about WL and also the hierarchization of literature. For Goethe for example, some national literatures were more important and valuable than others. (cf. Damrosch, 2003, pp. 12-13) In fact, all the colonial practices, such as linguicide (extinction and oppression of Indigenous languages) and cultural erasure, that happened in former colonies, also happened right here in Europe. The Irish were the first British colony for example, receiving horrible treatment. The same happened to a people even higher up north: the Sámi. Europe´s only official recognized Indigenous people. As the majority of Indigenous peoples all around the world, Sámi also had to endure missionary schools, where they were rigorously stripped of their identities, languages and cultures. (cf. Hanus) Re-discovering their Sámi roots is something several young authors try to do in Norway, Sweden and Finland. One of them is Linnea Axelsson, who brought her examination into an epic form.

4.6.1 Linnea Axelsson

The ruling language
ran over us

Swedish words
impossible to pronounce

–

They pushed in
through our clothes
coated our skin

–

–

The needling gaze

a rain through
all that one loves

–

Dirty were we
living with dogs

half-nomads who
followed after livestock

–

Bread so tough it
made your teeth fall out
baked by our women

–

In the midst of the breeding grounds
he appeared
with the darkening sky

To hold forth
among our
cows in heat

–

He had a message
from the three
countries’ men

Swedes Norwegians
and Finns

–

Far away from
the reindeer’s world several
families had been selected

We had to start forcing
our herds to graze on
strange lands

We were to be driven
from the forests mountains
and lakes

Migration paths and songs
had to be stifled
stricken from memory

(Axelsson/Vogel)

Awarded with the August Prize in 2018, Linnea Axelsson´s epic poem "*Æ*dnan" traces the history of the Sámi people, her people in the 21st century. Born in the province of North Bothnia in Sweden, Axelsson writes in Swedish. (cf. WWB, Linnea Axelsson) Talking explicitly about the horrors Sámi people had to endure – being forced to end their nomadic lifestyle and settle down into a restricted, small area of land, being measured and "anthropologically" examined, classified and afterwards put into correctional/missionary schools. (cf. Hanus) Identifying as Sámi is nowadays a challenging process for many. One reason is that there are various Sámi people spread across four different countries – Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Because of the division through national borders, official numbers of Sámi native speakers are hard to generate. As so many other Indigenous languages the numbers are also ever decreasing:

> *In addition, years of colonialism and assimilation—involving different tactics by the aforementioned governments to oppress the Sámi (for example, forced enrollment of children in boarding schools where Sámi languages were forbidden)—led to many Sámi not only choosing to stop speaking their heritage language, but also to stop identifying as Sámi altogether. Many Sámi have therefore not grown up with the language or culture and are thus unsure whether to identify themselves as such. Naturally, this has led to the tragic reality of our languages: they are disappearing. (Magga)*

There is literature written in Sámi, but very little. One reason again is that there are various Sámi languages that all were oral languages, and when Sámi was shaped into a written language, it got standardized, with different standardized versions in the four countries. So, even if one speaks a Sámi language that doesn´t mean that person is able to understand it in its written form. Even spoken, Sámi people often aren´t able to understand each other, because of

significant differences in their language: “a Sámi from one language group would typically not be able to have a conversation with someone who speaks a language from a neighboring area. Either way, we are still part of the same culture, the same people. At times, these differences can create difficulties when it comes to tackling issues in our community, but it also means that we are a diverse people who are good at adapting to the circumstances around us.” (Magga) Some authors explicitly choose not to write in Sámi. Poet Rönn-Lisa Zakrisson for example argues that she writes in Swedish because the rest of Sweden has to hear and learn more about colonialism that happened in the north of their very own country, not the Sámi people themselves who experienced everything firsthand. (cf. Magga)

For Axelsson, writing is also a possibility to not only criticise and point out experienced trauma that happened over generations. Her writing is not only, and not exclusively politically charged. That factor, Western expectations that writings of Indigenous peoples, also from Africa e.g., always have to be politically charged, is something harmful for Indigenous peoples and their literatures. It is again a classification from Western viewpoints, that neglects the whole spectrum of human experience. Would anyone expect of a British or French author to always and exclusive write politically charged literature? Then why is that expectation often put onto Indigenous artists? Writing for Axelsson, as for so many others, is an important tool to reconnect with her own cultural heritage. She uses everyday objects as touchstones to Sámi culture (cf. Axelsson/Vogel, Throwing Voices) Bringing those everyday objects back into Sámi, and Swedish consciousness helps to bring back memory as well. Axelsson chooses poetry and epics to transmit her thoughts. But Sámi storytelling is characterized by a long oral tradition, as it is the case in many Indigenous communities: “Sámi scholar Harald Gaski defines the Sámi term for literature, `girjjálašvuohta,´ by looking at the Sámi word `girji´ – which best translates to `book´ in English – as `something that has a pattern or something that is written.´ He continues that such a definition is more `inclusive . . . of what Sámi literature can encompass and include, and hence it is quite natural for both joiks (chanted tales) and stories to be included as examples of Sámi literature.´ A narrow definition of literature as confined to prose or poetry would

overlook essential aspects of Sámi culture and history that we include in our understanding." (Magga) The advancement of technological possibilities therefore grants the opportunity to revive those oral traditions and implement them in the Sámi literary experience which also makes an inclusive approach not only to Sámi culture but to literature in general possible.

4.6.2 Traditions, Globalization and Digitalization

> *The Sámi literary landscape started shifting in the 1970s, when Indigenous peoples and other minorities worldwide started a global political movement to demand their rights – a movement the Sámi also participated in. The force of a global movement and the sense that things were starting to shift for Indigenous peoples likely inspired more Sámi to write. It may have also helped stress the importance of our language and sharing our stories and experiences, both among ourselves and with others. (Magga)*

Through those political and human rights movements in the end of the 20th century groundwork for the renewal of Indigenous literatures was laid. An important factor that helped to spread the movement, and helps even more today, are increasingly better technologies of connecting with each other, exchange, communicate and globalize in general – the internet, social media platforms and electronic devices that help to record, write, archive and store literature. Writing has always seen transformation in its practices, from hieroglyphic paintings to stone engravings, papyrus, parchment to paper and now digitized writing on computers. "The accessibility and relative cost efficiency of digital media, often via the World Wide Web, mean that the voices of Indigenous communities can be heard in ways that were rare even twenty years ago. For this reason, we view the connections between digital media and self-representation and revitalization through Indigenous language as indicative of larger shifts in media discourse and the politics of representation." (Barrett/Cocq, p. 90) Through digital processing and storing a lot of data can be saved, in different forms of media as well – audio, video, written, pictures etc. "Along with books, libraries are moving out of physical spaces, becoming institutions of virtual memory." (Venkat Mani, p. 245) In many ways the globalization through digitization especially helps Indigenous people to connect, share, maintain and restore their languages and cultures, without censorship and the difficult process of going through official authorities and the like, when it

comes to publishing, exchanging and consuming. It is often the cheaper and easier accessible version for Indigenous communities: “Digital media has the potential to be a cost effective, more democratic and accessible mode of language learning for Indigenous communities when compared with the costs and infrastructure needed to print books and build courses in established institutions that are often far away from the communities and the speakers themselves.” (Barrett/Cocq, p. 92)

But researchers can use social media as well, to connect with local communities they otherwise wouldn´t have access to. As Outakoski et. al. (p. 167) state, engaging with and building a relationship with local communities is crucial to conduct research that gives meaningful insight, especially when done by non-native, non-Indigenous scholars. If there is still hardly any space and recognition for Indigenous writings, academic and literary, in academia and cultural discourses social media can become a driving force for change and a resource to discover writers overlooked by mainstream opinion formers and discussions. Starting an immediate dialogue becomes possible, between scholars, critics, writers and readers. Online book clubs, blogs and social media channels run by people of those marginalized groups or people who engage with marginalized writings provide a basis to knowledge acquisition for all parties because there is space for texts that would otherwise be overlooked in a canonized environment. Of course, agenda and approach have to be looked at critically. But platforms such as Words Without Borders also make publishing and translation, and therefore access to texts possible that otherwise wouldn´t be considered. It generates a larger pool of research material and broadens literary horizons as well as it decentralizes the literary systems so entrenched in its Western structures. “Ngûgï insists on the need to regard literature as a space for reconsidering established discourses and as a material for global interconnectedness and intercultural communication.” (Tchokothe, p. 31) If literatures start to being seen, read and used this way, digitization and new technologies become driving forces to make this shift possible.

4.6.3 Chances and changes

> *The online production that presents Indigenous languages and culture can be seen as a voice for marginalized communities, but*

> *also as initiatives and efforts towards self-representation and revitalization […] (Barrett/Cocq, p. 89)*

Producing and sharing literature online – written, oral, intermedial and performed – gives Indigenous peoples the opportunity to create their own discourse about literature, outside the Western system. Western terminologies no longer carry the meaning of the norm in literature. Genre boundaries can be overturned, played with and reworked. Which is also vital for the survival and re-discovering of Indigenous cultures. Those activities, Indigenous storytelling traditions are crucial for the strengthening of Indigenous languages, including traditional legends, adaptations, singing and renewals of narrations into contemporary settings. (cf. Barrett/Cocq, pp. 92-93) "In Sápmi […] communities, similarly, oral traditions have been a dominant form of communication. Through the spoken word, storytelling is an artistic mode of communication and a vehicle for transmission of culture, knowledge and languages. Language learning and literacies, thereby, are related to cultural and social constraints as well as genre awareness." (Barrett/Cocq, pp. 92-93)

As with everything else, advances in digitization, technologies and globalization also bare risks and can even re-enforce existing power structures in the literary system. But the advantages for literatures from around the world, talking about them in a globalized context, and the possibilities for Indigenous peoples are undeniable. They get their opportunity to find a place in a (mainstream) canon in literary discourses: "These narratives are based on traditional knowledge, a form of knowledge conveyed principally through stories since its practice has become scarce. Preservation of knowledge and revitalization of language are again here entwined and illustrate how storytelling is used as a pedagogical tool in order to weave together language acquisition and cultural knowledge. The circulation of these sources in new settings contributes to a canonization of stories and storytelling." (Barrett/Cocq, p. 97)

Finishing with a chapter about digitization we come in full circle. More publications of Indigenous literatures benefit all beforementioned areas: in academia within research, community, exchange and available texts. They help to sustain endangered Indigenous languages, translations bring people all over the world together, which enhances consumption which in return also helps to

keep Indigenous cultures alive: “On the level of consumption, however, the digital allows for a global audience that can combine with subtitling to produce an international profile that builds upon a single geographic location. […] This establishment of an audience or supporters outside of the community can help to preserve fragile cultures and languages.” (Barrett/Cocq, p. 105) Online communities can also consist of virtual book clubs, a phenomenon that the Covid-19 pandemic amplified even more. Bookstagram is a common term within social media users, where people use their Instagram accounts to promote and talk about books, various literatures and niche genres for instance. Direct engagement of authors with their readers is possible and a new way of exchange and dialogue between people – scholars, readers, writers, translators, editors and critics – all over the world can be accomplished. Platforms for exchange and connection like Words Without Borders can be established. With more available literature, the educational sector enhances as well, access to Indigenous writings is crucial for Indigenous students to learn and sustain their cultures. Through new forms of recording, the range of literary genres is being expanded through multimedia approaches, writing practices are getting linked to and interplay with orality (cf. Barrett/Cocq, p. 101) And at the end: digitization improves publishing possibilities for Indigenous communities all over the world, lesser fundings are necessary, material production efforts aren´t needed as much, access to literature becomes easier, and libraries move more into virtual spaces. I don´t think physical books, and libraries, will completely disappear. But virtual archives and storage possibilities are way bigger than physical ones. One could almost say that with digitization a WL consisting of all literatures that are written around the world would become possible. The sheer number of it on the other hand would make WL almost impossible, as René Etiemble concludes: “This is one of the contradictions of the world in which we live, in which our students will live: we are at one and the same time filled with information and overwhelmed by its excess. To the point even that at precisely the moment at which world literature finally becomes possible it becomes at the same time almost impossible.” (Etiemble, p. 95)

5 Conclusion

There are already many changes happening, in academia, the publishing industry and mainstream discussions. More diverse voices can be heard and seen. But the problem is still that many of those solution approaches are not sufficient, or are even only superficial to cover up the lack of real involvement of the institutions. What remains completely overlooked is the fact that those existing structures, wordings, approaches and practices are so deeply implemented that a simple cover up and inclusion doesn´t fix it and won´t make an inclusive and diverse field out of WL. As I mentioned, whole languages, terminologies and methodologies have to be reconsidered, revolutionized and changed for good. This process is also nothing we Western socialized, white people can do on our own, it takes indigenous and people of colour, marginalized groups to lead the way, rather than us rethinking and reimplementing a new system. This has to happen at any possible level, in education and educational politics, in language and translation debates, especially in academia, the publishing and entertainment industry, cultural production and literary organizations on regional, national and global levels.

Considering statements made beforehand, about institutionalized developments in WL and canon building, one of the most striking is the overbearing representation of white, Western-socialized opinion leaders, mostly men. Even though a shift in those institutions´ values on a larger scale might take a long time, there are already steps that can be made on a small scale. Using new media, the internet and social media platforms as a resource is one example that can take different shapes. One example is that it becomes a platform for native and Indigenous artists to share their works and engage in cultural exchanges without having to go through institutionalized processes like publishing with a big publishing company and being dependent on those exclusive systems in the literary world.

What do we do with the insights we gained? The title of the thesis states “building a world map of Literatures”. I meant it literally. The building of a world map. But it actually turned out that it became a mapping in three different ways. I wanted to show how connected the world of literature is – all over the globe,

through institutions, academia etc.; publishing interacts with academia and vice versa, Zeitgeist is taken into account, cultural institutions such as literary prizes or organizations like the United Nations influence social perceptions of literature, libraries grant access to education but can also be institutions of oppression and exclusivity. It is a map of the world showing the interconnectedness and interdependency of literary institutions. Second, the world is also connected through literature, as it is a form of communication and cultural tradition – in a vertical and a horizontal way. Vertically, because it connects generations of humans through centuries, so it is a timely connection; horizontally because it also connects one generation over various places, a spatial connection. That´s the map of time and space, showing what has been done, written and transferred in the past, and how one part of the world relates to another because of literary influences and exchanges. Lastly, it should stand as an example for dealing with literatures from around the world. Imagine a world map. No centers and peripheries. But dots in various regions of the world, showing authors and literatures from completely different backgrounds, languages and cultures. That in my opinion is more like it, to look at literatures that way, in a global context, where we in academia for example can work on making them better known, helping to provide and improve publishing and production conditions for those who aren´t part of that privileged Western systems.

“It can be a fascinating point of departure for applied literature because, when no theory or criticism has the last word in literary studies, the definition of ‘literature‘ should be in a state of flux, and this is the view applied literature finds practical.” (Behin, p. 24) I want to finish with saying that I hope I was able to transport my thoughts in a comprehensible way that benefits a better understanding of how the literary world works, how influential, and problematic, WL is, and how much more literatures there are in our world. Maybe we can start to approach literatures from around the world in a different way. Without a centre-periphery thinking, as equals eager to exchange rather than talk over each other’s heads. And I wanted to point out that there is so much more that has to be taken into consideration, especially in literary studies. Because the whole world of literature is somehow connected, and it does matter what we

read and how we read it. Applied literary studies can mean exactly that, at least at the beginning. That we have to leave the ivory tower of academia and get out there, engage, connect and reflect. Reflect on how things have been done and how things could be done in the future.

Sources

Primary sources

Axelsson, Linnea: ÆDNAN. IN: Sinn und Form. Einundsiebzigstes Jahr, 2019, drittes Heft, Mai/Juni. pp. 375-381.

Damrosch, David: Around the World in 80 Books. Pelican Books. London, 2022.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang: Conversations with Eckermann on *Weltliteratur* (1827). IN: World Literature in Theory. Wiley Blackwell, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. Chichester, West Sussex, 2014. pp. 15-21.

Hesse, Hermann: Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur. Reclam, Universalbibliothek. Stuttgart 2016.

Matuku, Steph: Whetū Toa and the Magician. Huia Publishers. Wellington, 2018.

Wickhamsmith, Simon (transl.): Suncranes and other stories. Modern Mongolian Short Fiction. Columbia University Press. New York, 2021.

Whitehead, Joshua: Jonny Appleseed. Arsenal Pulp Press. Vancouver, 2018.

Internet sources

Ancalao, Liliana: Three Poems in Mapuzungun, Spanish, and English. Women and the Rain. World Literature Today, January 2018. URL: https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2018/january/three-poems-mapuzungun-spanish-and-english-liliana-ancalao (last accessed 27.05.2023)

Axelsson, Linnea/Vogel Saskia (transl.): From “Aednan”. Words Without Borders, March 5, 2019. URL: https://wordswithoutborders.org/read/article/2019-03/march-2019-swedish-from-aednan-linnea-axelsson-saskia-vogel/ (last accessed 23.06.2023)

Axelsson, Linnea/Vogel Saskia (transl.): Throwing Voices. Words Without Borders, September 12, 2022. URL: https://wordswithoutborders.org/read/article/2022-09/throwing-voices-linnea-axelsson-saskia-vogel/ (last accessed 23.06.2023)

Gurnah, Abdulrazak: Writing. Nobel Lecture by Abdulrazak Gurnah. Nobel Laureate in Literature 2021. URL: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2021/gurnah/lecture/ (last accessed 21.06.2023)

Secondary sources

Albury, Nathan John: “I’ve Admired Them for Doing so Well”. Where to Now for Indigenous Languages and Literacies? IN: Perspectives on Indigenous Writing and Literacies. Brill. Leiden, Boston, 2019. pp. 13-28.

Albury, Nathan John: Defining Māori language revitalization. A project in folk linguistics. IN: (2016a) Journal of Sociolinguistics, 20(3). pp. 287–311. https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12183

Altbach, Philip G./Teffera, Damtew (eds.): Publishing and Development. A Book of Readings. Bellagio Publishing Network. Oxford, 1998.

Ancalao, Liliana: The Silenced Language. IN: World Literature Today. Volume 92, Number 1, January-February 2018. University of Oklahoma. pp. 59-61 DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/wlt.2018.0203

Apter, Emily: Against World Literature. 2013. IN: World Literature in Theory. Wiley Blackwell, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. Chichester, West Sussex, 2014. pp. 345-362.

Apter, Emily: The Translation Zone. A New Comparative Literature. Princeton University Press. Princeton/Oxford, 2006.

Barrett, James/Cocq, Coppélie: Indigenous Storytelling and Language Learning. Digital Media as a Vehicle for Cultural Transmission and Language Acquisition. IN: Perspectives on Indigenous Writing and Literacies. Brill. Leiden, Boston, 2019. pp. 89-112.

Behin, Bahram: What Is Applied Literature? The Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances. Volume 7, Issue 1. Winter and Spring, 2019. pp. 21-33

Bgoya, Walter/Jay, Mary: Publishing in Africa from Independence to the Present Day. IN: Research in African literatures, Vol. 44, No. 2, Summer 2013. pp. 17-34.

Casanova, Pascale: La Republique Mondiale des Lettres. Éditions du Seuil. Paris, 1999.

Cheah, Pheng: What is a world? On world literature as world-making activity. *Daedalus*, Vol. 137, No. 3, On Cosmopolitanism (Summer, 2008). pp. 26-38

Cocq, Coppélie/Sullivan, Kirk P.H.: Indigenous Writing and Literacies: Perspectives from Five Continents. IN: Perspectives on Indigenous Writing and Literacies. Brill. Leiden, Boston, 2019. pp. 1-10.

Damrosch, David: How to Read World Literature. Second Edition. Wiley Blackwell, John Wiley & Sons Ltd. Oxford, 2018.

Damrosch, David: What is World Literature? Princeton University Press. Princeton, 2003.

Damrosch, David (ed.): World Literature in Theory. Wiley Blackwell, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. Chichester, West Sussex, 2014.

D´haen, Theo (ed.): The Routledge Companion to World Literature. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. Abingdon, 2012.

D´haen, Theo (ed.): World Literature. A Reader. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. London, New York, 2013.

Etiemble, René: Should we rethink the notion of World Literature? 1974. IN: World Literature in Theory. Wiley Blackwell, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. Chichester, West Sussex, 2014. pp. 85-98.

Fitznor, Laara: Indigenous Education. Affirming Indigenous Knowledges and Languages from a Turtle Island Indigenous Scholar's Perspective. Pikiskēwinan (Let Us Voice). IN: Perspectives on Indigenous Writing and Literacies. Studies in Writing, Vol. 37. Brill. Leiden/Boston, 2019. pp. 29–66.

Herrnstein Smith, Barbara: Contingencies of Value. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, 1988.

Hornberger, Nancy H./Limerick, Nicholas: Teachers, Textbooks, and Orthographic Choices in Quechua. Bilingual Intercultural Education in Peru and Ecuador. IN: Perspectives on Indigenous Writing and Literacies. Studies in Writing, Vol. 37. Brill. Leiden/Boston, 2019. pp. 141-164.

Kaur Boparai, Mohineet: The Fiction of Abdulrazak Gurnah. Journeys through Subalternity and Agency. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Newcastle upon Tyne, 2021.

Kuokkanen, Rauna: From Research as Colonialism to Reclaiming Autonomy. Toward a Research Ethics Framework in Sápmi. 2008. IN: J. Porsanger, & L. Andreassen (Eds.), Sáme- ja álgoálbmotdutkama etihkka: seminára raporta, Kárášjohka 23–24.10.2006. [Ethics in Sámi andIndigenous research: reportfrom a seminar in Kárášjohka, Norway, November 23–24, 2006]. (pp. 48–63). Guovdageaidnu [Kautokeino], Norway: Sami Instituhtta [Nordic Sami Institute].

Laachir, K, Marzagora, S and Orsini, F (Laachir et al.): Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies. For a Ground-up and Located Approach to World Literature. Modern Languages Open, 2018(1): art. 19, pp. 1–8. DOI: http://doi.org/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.190

Marx, Karl/Engels, Friedrich: Das Kommunistische Manifest. 5. Auflage. Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung. Wien, 1919.

Moretti, Franco: Conjectures on World Literature. IN: New Left Review, Vol. 1. London, 2000. p.54-67.

Mufti, Aamir R.: Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2016.

Outakoski, Hanna et. al.: Researching Writing Development to Support Language Maintenance and Revitalization. Design and Methodological Challenges. IN: Perspectives on Indigenous Writing and Literacies. Studies in Writing, Vol. 37. Brill. Leiden/Boston, 2019. pp. 165-185.

Owen, Stephen: What Is World Poetry? New Republic. 19 November 1990. pp. 28-32.

Pinkola Estés, Clarissa: Women Who Run With the Wolves. Myths and Stories aof the Wild Woman Archetype. Ballantine Books. New York, 1992.

Said, Edward W.: Orientalism. Vintage Books Edition. New York, 1979.

Siskind, Mariano: Cosmopolitan Desires. Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America. Northwestern University Press. Evanston, Illinois, 2014.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai: Decolonizing methodologies. Research and Indigenous peoples. Zed books. New York, 2004.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty: Death of a Discipline. Columbia University Press. New York, 2003.

Sullivan, Kirk P.H. et. al.: Education is Not Sufficient – Exploring Ways to Support and Research Indigenous Writing and Literacies. IN: Perspectives on Indigenous Writing and Literacies. Studies in Writing, Vol. 37. Brill. Leiden/Boston, 2019. pp. 215-219.

Sutherland, Dean: Literacy Proficiency among Students in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Why the Gap between Māori and Pākehā? IN: Perspectives on Indigenous Writing and Literacies. Studies in Writing, Vol. 37. Brill. Leiden/Boston, 2019. pp. 67-86.

Talvet, Jüri: Comparative Literature, World Literature and Ethical Literary Criticism. Literature's "Infra-Other". INTERLITTERARIA, 2018, 23/1. pp. 6-18. University of Tartu Press, Tartu. DOI: https://doi.org/10.12697/IL.2018.23.1.2 (last accessed 09.05.2023)

Tchokothe, Rémi Armand: Globalectical Swahili literature. IN: Journal of African Cultural Studies. Taylor & Francis, Ltd. March 2015, Vol. 27, No. 1, Special Issue: Literatures in African languages. pp. 30-39

van Toorn, Penny: Writing never arrives naked. Early Aboriginal cultures of writing in Australia. Aboriginal Studies Press. Canberra, 2006.

Venkat Mani, B.: Borrowing Privileges. Libraries and the Institutionalization of World Literature. Modern Language Quarterly 74:2, June 2013. Duke University Press/University of Washington. Doi: 10.1215/00267929-2073007

Wa Thiong´o, Ngũgĩ: Something Torn and New. An African Renaissance. BasicCivitas Books. Philadelphia, 2009.

Wickham-Smith, Simon: Interrelationship of Humans and the Mongol Landscape in G. Mend-Ooyo's Atlan Ovoo. A Study of the Nomadic Culture of Mongolia. The Edwin Mellen Press. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter, 2013.

Internet sources

African Books Collective (ABC): About us. Who we are. URL: https://www.africanbookscollective.com/about-us (last accessed 23.06.2023)

Ancalao, Liliana/Taber, Elisa: Living Words: An Introduction to Five Contemporary Mapuche Texts. Words Without Borders. March 21, 2023. URL: https://wordswithoutborders.org/read/article/2023-03/five-mapuche-texts-living-words-liliana-ancalao-elisa-taber/# (last accessed 28.05.2023)

Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg Greifswald: Dr. Paula Wojcik. URL: https://www.wiko-greifswald.de/fellows/alfried-krupp-fellows-programm/fellows-finden/2017-2018/wojcik-dr-paula/ (last accessed 21.03.2023)

Bhanoo, Sindya: Who should translate Amanda Gorman's work? That question is ricocheting around the translation industry. March 25, 2021. The Washington Post. URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/book-translations-gorman-controversy/2021/03/24/8ea3223e-8cd5-11eb-9423-04079921c915_story.html (last accessed 11.06.2023)

Bookfest Studio 1: CANADA (Mini-Documentaries). Video interview. URL: https://www.buchmesse.de/timetable/session/we-contain-multitudes (last accessed 19.05.2023)

Calman, Ross: 'Māori education – mātauranga'. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand URL: http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/maori-education-matauranga (last accessed 18.06.2023)

Cambridge Dictionary: Aboriginal. URL: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/aboriginal (last accessed 16.06.2022)

Cambridge Dictionary: Indigenous. URL: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/indigenous (last accessed 16.06.2022)

Cambridge Dictionary: Native. URL: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/native (last accessed 16.06.2022)

CBC Books: Joshua Whitehead. URL: https://www.cbc.ca/books/canadareads/joshua-whitehead-1.4820896 (last accessed 19.05.2023)

Christchurch City Libraries: Interview with Steph Matuku. 2018. URL: https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/new-zealand-childrens-authors/steph-matuku/ (last accessed 18.06.2023)

Cities of Literature: About Us. URL: https://www.citiesoflit.com/about-us (last accessed 23.06.2023)

Democracy Now: 2021 Nobel Literature Prize Winner Abdulrazak Gurnah on Colonialism & the Power of Language. Transcript. May 12, 2022. URL: https://www.democracynow.org/2022/5/12/nobel_literature_winner_abdulrazak_gurnah_afterlives (last accessed 23.06.2023)

G. Mend-Ooyo: Biography. URL: http://www.mend-ooyo.mn/biography (last accessed 13.06.2023)

G. Mend-Ooyo: Curriculum Vitae. URL: http://www.mend-ooyo.mn/vitae (last accessed 13.06.2023)

G. Mend-Ooyo: Home. URL: http://www.mend-ooyo.mn/ (last accessed 13.06.2023)

Hanus, Sabine: Die Sámi. u:wiki, Universität Wien. URL: https://wiki.univie.ac.at/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=23658622 (last accessed 23.06.2023)

Harvard University: Masterpieces of World Literature. URL: https://pll.harvard.edu/course/masterpieces-of-world-literature?delta=3 (last accessed 21.02.2023)

Hutchins, KG: Nomads at Home. Words Without Borders. October 1, 2018. URL: https://wordswithoutborders.org/read/article/2018-10/october-2018-mongolia-nomads-at-home-k-g-hutchins/ (last accessed 13.06.2023)

Kaube, Jürgen: Olympischer Herbst der Dichtung. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Feuilleton, 21.08.2021. URL: https://m.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/eine-marbacher-tagung-ueber-den-literaturnobelpreis-17507362.amp.html (last accessed 21.06.2023)

Keane, Basil: 'Ngā rōpū – Māori organisations - Māori educational initiatives'. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand. URL: http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/nga-ropu-maori-organisations/page-4 (last accessed 18.06.2023)

Magga, Mathilde: Sharing Stories. A Brief Introduction to Sámi Literary History. Words Without Borders, October 24, 2022. URL: https://wordswithoutborders.org/read/article/2022-10/sharing-stories-a-brief-introduction-to-sami-literary-history/ (last accessed 23.06.2023)

Māori Literature Trust: Steph Matuku. NGĀTI TAMA, NGĀTI MUTUNGA, TE ATI AWA URL: https://mlt.org.nz/portfolio/steph-matuku/ (last accessed 18.06.2023)

Matuku, Steph: Steph Matuku. Writer. URL: https://stephmatuku.com/ (last accessed 16.06.2022)

Mukherjee, Ankhi: Canonicity. Oxford Bibliographies. Last modified: 25.10.2017 DOI: 10.1093/OBO/9780190221911-0054 (URL: https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0054.xml (last accessed 21.07.2022)

Ngozi Adichie, Chimamanda: The danger of a single story. URL: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story (last accessed 07.06.2022)

NPLA: Ich schreibe, um mich zu erinnern, wer ich bin. URL: https://www.npla.de/thema/kultur-medien/ich-schreibe-um-mich-zu-erinnern-wer-ich-bin/ (last accessed 28.05.2023)

Patrick, Ryan B.: Why Joshua Whitehead wants to recentre Indigenous characters with his cyberpunk-infused poetry. October 13, 2017. URL: https://www.cbc.ca/books/why-joshua-whitehead-wants-to-recentre-indigenous-characters-with-his-cyberpunk-infused-poetry-1.4360505 (last accessed 19.05.2023)

Penguin Random House: All Ways Black. URL: https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/the-read-down/all-ways-black/ (last accessed 23.05.2023)

Pfister, Simone: Mit Sprachvielfalt gegen die Macht des Englischen. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Feuilleton. 03.06.2023. URL: https://m.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/wahre-weltliteratur-der-neue-roman-von-j-m-coetzee-18934248.amp.html (last accessed 04.06.2023)

Srilata, K.: Teaching creative writing: Notes from IIT Madras. The Hindu. 20.02.2021. URL: https://www.thehindu.com/society/teaching-creative-writing-notes-from-iit-madras/article33872612.ece/amp/ (last accessed 22.07.2022)

Taber, Elisa: Ñe’ ẽ: An Introduction to Contemporary Guaraní Poetry. Words Without Borders, July 21, 2020. URL: https://wordswithoutborders.org/read/article/2020-07/july-2020-indigenous-writing-project-guarani-an-introduction-elisa-taber/ (last accessed 04.06.2023)

The Nobel Prize: Abdulrazak Gurnah. Facts. URL: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2021/gurnah/facts/ (last accessed 22.06.2023)

The Nobel Prize in Literature: About the Prize. URL: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/ (last accessed 23.06.2023)

Tiahouse: Joshua Whitehead. Why I’m Withdrawing From My Lambda Literary Award Nomination. May 14, 2018. URL: https://www.tiahouse.ca/joshua-whitehead-why-im-withdrawing-from-my-lambda-literary-award-nomination/ (last accessed 19.05.2023)

Universität zu Köln: Othering. URL: https://vielfalt.uni-koeln.de/antidiskriminierung/glossar-diskriminierung-rassismuskritik/othering#:~:text=Der%20Begriff%20Othering%20(aus%20dem,dem%20Kontext%20der%20postkolonialen%20Theorie. (last accessed 21.06.2023)

Untold International: Our Vision. URL: https://untoldinternational.org/ (last accessed 21.06.2023)

UN Women: Progress on the sustainable development goals. The gender snapshot 2022. URL: https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2022-en_0.pdf (last accessed 21.06.2023)

Venuto, Damien: The Front Page. Is it time to change the name of New Zealand to Aotearoa? New Zealand Herald, September 15, 2022. URL: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/the-front-page-is-it-time-to-change-the-name-of-new-zealand-to-aotearoa/PIJJWSDOAUE3QUCCBXGJZY6J5E/#:~:text=While%20there%20has%20been%20historical,a%20lot%20of%20M%C4%81ori%20want. (last accessed 18.06.2023)

Walkowitz, Rebecca L.: Unimaginable Largeness: Kazuo Ishiguro, Translation, and the New World Literature. *Novel 1*, November 2007; 40 (3). Pp. 216–239. doi: https://doi-org.uaccess.univie.ac.at/10.1215/ddnov.040030216

Whitehead, Joshua: About. URL: https://www.joshuawhitehead.ca/about (last accessed 16.06.2022)

Wikipedia: Weltliteratur. URL: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weltliteratur (last accessed 23.06.2023)

Wikipedia: World literature. URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_literature#:~:text=World%20literature%20is%20used%20to,beyond%20their%20country%20of%20origin. (last accessed 20.02.2023)

Words Without Borders: Mission. URL: https://wordswithoutborders.org/about/mission/ (last accessed 26.04.2023)

Words Without Borders: Linnea Axelsson. URL: https://wordswithoutborders.org/contributors/view/linnea-axelsson/ (last accessed 23.06.2023)

Words Without Borders: Liliana Ancalao. URL: https://wordswithoutborders.org/contributors/view/liliana-ancalao/ (last accessed 27.05.2023)

Words Without Borders Campus: About Us. URL: https://wwb-campus.org/about/ (last accessed 26.04.2023)

Appendix

Abstract

It is not only about criticising the institution that is “World Literature” (Weltliteratur after Johann Wolfgang Goethe), but to challenge the established system, to point out problematic practices and to propose new ways of talking about a world full of Literatures, taking Goethe´s and academia´s ideas (e.g., David Damrosch´s “What is World Literature”, 2003) into consideration. The primary focus lies on writers from the most marginalized peoples around the world: First Nations and Indigenous peoples. The main body of work consists of the building of a world map of Literatures. In every of the six main chapters the focus lies on a different continent with one author as a primary example. But those chapters also have individual emphases on aeras where WL takes part and where systematic changes are needed, such as academia, education, the publishing industry, and translations. With taking the six authors as examples for a new concept based on Goethe´s idea of “Weltliteratur” the choice of secondary sources also focuses on thoughts that challenge the cultural/literary practice in academia and society that are heavily influenced by Western values. This way, the building of a world map of Literatures might inspire change where it is needed, and a representation as diverse as possible can start to grow.

Zusammenfassung

In dieser Arbeit geht es nicht nur darum, die Institution "Weltliteratur" (nach Johann Wolfgang Goethe) zu kritisieren, sondern das etablierte System in Frage zu stellen, auf problematische Praktiken hinzuweisen und neue Wege vorzuschlagen, um über eine Welt voller Literaturen zu sprechen, wobei Goethes und akademische Ideen (z. B. David Damroschs "What is World Literature", 2003) berücksichtigt werden. Das Hauptaugenmerk liegt auf Schriftstellern aus den am meisten marginalisierten Völkern der Welt: First Nations und indigene Völker. Der Hauptteil der Arbeit besteht aus dem Aufbau einer Weltkarte der Literaturen. In jedem der sechs Hauptkapitel liegt der Schwerpunkt auf einem anderen Kontinent mit einem/einer Autor*in als Beispiel. Aber diese Kapitel haben auch einzelne Schwerpunkte auf Bereiche,

in denen WL eine Rolle spielt und in denen systematische Veränderungen notwendig sind, wie z.B. die akademische Welt, die Bildung, das Verlagswesen und die Übersetzungen. Indem diese Autor*innen als Beispiele für ein neues Konzept herangezogen werden, das auf Goethes Idee der "Weltliteratur" basiert, konzentriert sich die Auswahl der Sekundärquellen auch auf Gedanken, die die kulturelle/literarische Praxis in der akademischen Welt und der Gesellschaft, die stark von westlichen Werten geprägt ist, in Frage stellen. Auf diese Weise könnte der Aufbau einer Weltkarte der Literaturen dort, wo es nötig ist, zu Veränderungen anregen, und eine möglichst vielfältige Repräsentation entstehen lassen.