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Introduction

The concept at issue in this book is *Weltliteratur*, or World Literature. Theoretical frameworks usually view the now-famous epistolary exchange between Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and the young Johann Peter Eckermann as the true foundation of the concept, (though earlier promoters of similar ideas, such as August Wilhelm Schlegel can be cited)¹. Goethe wrote this to Eckermann in a well-known letter in 1827: “National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of World Literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach”². Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels as well as Richard Moulton and Erich Auerbach, among many others, also all contributed to the category from their respective historical moments and theoretical perspectives. Marx and Engels, of course, took a materialist point of view that emphasized the expansion of the capitalist economic project and its progressive conquest of the world as a market. Richard Moulton and Erich Auerbach, on the other hand, came from a humanistic philological perspective that, as Jérôme David has put it in his reflections on the different genealogies of World Literature, “derived from the anxious preoccupation with what the literary works *mean*” (2013: 14) and focused very early on the problems of translation and canonization that would become crucial for the conceptual debates of our time.

In the late 1990s, the concept was revitalized; undoubtedly in step with the historical transformations propelled by the contemporary phase of globalization, as well as the expanding bibliography of World Literature itself. New descriptive and normative models were proposed. Pascale Casanova with her *La République Mondiale des Lettres* (1999), Franco Moretti in his explorations of “distant reading” and David Damrosch with his widely discussed *What is World Literature?* (2003) are among the most quoted – and most questioned – researchers of this new theoretical wave, which is rooted in comparative literature studies. More recent publications, such as Emily Apter’s *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (2013), Pheng Cheah’s *What is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (2016), and *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures* (2016) by Aamir Mufti, critically revise the foundational ideas of the

1 See the study on concepts of humanist cosmopolitanism and World Literature around 1800 by Peter Goßens (2011).

2 “Nationalliteratur will jetzt nicht viel sagen, die Epoche der Weltliteratur ist an der Zeit, und jeder muß jetzt dazu wirken, diese Epoche zu beschleunigen” (Eckermann 1968: 205).

concept, without necessarily dismissing the paradigm completely. This is possible because World Literature, by covering a broad and open semantic spectrum, allows for the application of postcolonial approaches. One such approach is embodied, among others, by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who attempts to instrumentalize the concept programmatically in order to broaden the narrow Western canon and the problematic implications of World Literature in favor of an alternative notion of “planetarity”. Localized or regional literary studies, on the other hand, have also made several attempts to question or complement the formulas of World Literature through a critical shifting of the gaze which has focused on Latin America, Africa or Asia. Among these, at least three publications auto-attribute a place of enunciation in Latin America: *América Latina en la “literatura mundial”* (2006), edited by Ignacio Sánchez Prado; *Utopías críticas: la literatura mundial según América Latina* (2012), which was a special edition of the magazine *1616: Anuario de Literatura Comparada*, and *América Latina y la literatura mundial: mercado editorial, redes globales y la invención de un continente* (2015), edited by Gesine Müller and Dunia Gras. The same can be said of the individual works, *Latinoamérica y la literatura mundial* (2013), by Gioconda Marún, *Cosmopolitan Desires. Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America* (2014), by Mariano Siskind, and *Beyond Bolaño: The Global Latin American Novel*, by Héctor Hoyos (2015).

So, far from being a fixed entity, the category manifests itself as a work in progress, a disputed signifier. The debate surrounding and nourishing World Literature is in robust health, and all contributors to this volume have enriched it with valuable hypotheses from different perspectives. Other contributors, for their part, have tried to establish connections between Latin America and other parts of the world beyond the (post)colonial tie: *Moros en la costa. Orientalismo en Latinoamérica* (2008), edited by Silvia Nagy-Zekmi, the volumes *Alternative Orientalisms in Latin America and Beyond* (2007) and *Peripheral Transmodernities: South-to-South Dialogues between the Luso-Hispanic World and “the Orient”* (2012), edited by Ignacio López-Calvo, and *Sur/South: Poetics and Politics of Thinking Latin America/India* (2016), edited by Susanne Klengel and Alexandra Ortiz Wallner, are among them.

As implied by the title, this book delves into this last line of research and collects a group of essays with the aim of exploring possible and effective inter-connections between Latin America and the so-called Global South. However, if it is true that literature can be thought of as part of an apparatus of production with a worldwide reach, it is important not to forget that this system is marked by inequality. As Franco Moretti has noted, this system is “one, and unequal: one literature (*Weltliteratur*, singular, as in Goethe and Marx), or perhaps, better, one world literary system (of inter-related literatures); but a system which is

different from what Goethe and Marx had hoped for, because it's profoundly unequal" (Moretti 2000: 55–56). If we wish not to implicate ourselves in some kind of culturist idealism, then thinking about the system requires an analysis of the geopolitical order and the implied material dimensions, as well as the power-relations at play, as Stefan Helgesson and Pieter Vermeulen argue in their volume *Institutions of World Literature* (2016).

After the Fall of the Wall, capitalism succeeded in securing a position for itself as the whole globe's hegemonic structure. In doing so, it unified material and symbolic markets under operational guidelines that it promoted as universals. While this did dilute the East versus West tension (with its vanishing point in the so-called "Third World"), it at the same time allowed new forms of conflict to take shape. Post- and neo-colonial forms of thought remained entrenched, and were reinforced. In recent years the concept of the "Global South" has gained ground, with the support of researchers such as Boaventura de Sousa Santos and others. It refers to the geopolitical and epistemological fabric that unifies an area of the world – principally, that which was subjected to colonialism – but which may include the South contained within North. These areas have been subjected to the designs of modernity and have displayed a certain degree of insurgence, but also discontinuity and conflict with each other. "The 'Global South'", argue Caroline Levander and Walter Mignolo, "is not an existing entity to be described by different disciplines, but an entity that has been invented in the struggle and conflicts between imperial global domination and emancipatory and decolonial forces that do not acquiesce with global designs" (2011: 3). In this way, the term does not lose its programmatic character, but on the contrary presents itself as a tool aimed at problematizing the hegemonic world order. This means that in the geopolitical and epistemological South, alternative representations that demand visibility can come into being: "[F]rom the perspective of the inhabitants, (and we say consciously inhabitants rather than 'citizens,' regional or global)", Levander and Mignolo go on, "the 'Global South' is the location where new visions of the future are emerging and where the global political and decolonial society is at work" (2011: 3). A demand for visibility – precisely the aim of this contribution to the field.

We propose, therefore, to examine the possibility of "re-mapping" World Literature with a perspective focused on a dynamic and, to use a term coined by Ottmar Ette, "movement-historically" approach to investigate the links and trajectories that interconnect and energize world regions like the Global South, which have been marginalized by most of the recent studies on the topic of World Literature. This is certainly a different perception of *mapping* World Literature as in the case, for example, of Mads Rosendahl Thomsen's book of the same title that grounded (in a very stimulating way, to be sure) its mappings "on using international canonization as an analytical source" (2008: 139). Our

task is admittedly not free of traps, conflicts or paradoxes. As researchers based in many cases at institutions in Europe and the United States, we are aware of our geographic location in the North, yet we insist on a concerted relocation of our gaze. Until recently, China was relegated to a place among countries subjected to colonial relations. Now it has become a global economy that competes with entrenched imperial economic powers. We know that what at first blush can be interpreted as a South/South link usually disguises a direct and unavoidable bridge to the North. We do not attempt to ignore this and claim innocence. However, in the face of this risk, we are still committed to an enlightening and critical debate based on a theory that does not ignore its own programmatic character. Just as the British Empire, in its era, opted to organize the time zones of the world around an axis that took its own location as a central reference point, just as Pascale Casanova decided to locate the hub of literary production in Paris, we have decided, as a starting point, to locate our focus in the geopolitical and epistemological South. A South that, at least hypothetically, can also be conceived as a relatively unified space of aesthetic, economic, and epistemological exchange. What aesthetic forms were exported from Latin America to India? How is Indian literature transformed when it is transposed to planes of Latin American expectations? Is there a market in symbolic goods that, in effect, connects Africa to Latin America? If not, what would the material infrastructure that would permit one look like? What knowledge, awareness, and representations of the world have traveled the Pacific, connecting Asia and Latin America? Do these frameworks permit the categorization of world literatures under other theoretical premises? These, and many other questions in this vein, are the concrete impetus that prompted this book.

The contents of this volume are organized into three parts, three axes of analysis. In the first, “Writing”, Ignacio López-Calvo (Merced) in his article, “Worlding and decolonizing the literary world-system: Asian-Latin American literature as an alternative type of *Weltliteratur*”, draws on a wide range of literary texts of recent Asian-Latin American Literature to propose his idea of an alternative World Literature as writing and reading practices that move beyond the framework of the national and of Eurocentrism, being molded instead by a critical, planetary consciousness. Without ignoring the fact that the chances of reaching the cultural capital of common “highbrow” and/or commercialized texts of World Literature are virtually inexistent for “minor” literary productions due to their lack of translations and circulations, López-Calvo strengthens the idea of taking into account the kind of literatures that steer the worldviews of East and West into engagement with each other in a productive decolonial and cross-cultural encounter, exhibiting a new deterritorialized global sensitivity that goes beyond national and even hemispheric borders.

In his highly critical and self-reflexive article on the exploration of World Literature and the material making “of the world” (including art and criticism), entitled “Global supply chain literature vs. extractivism”, Héctor Hoyos (Stanford) aims to formulate the rudiments of a global corpus of texts, films, and artworks to discuss new forms of parallelisms of goods and cultural productions. Claiming the critical deployment of resources of World Literature to fill the vacuum of storytelling in supply chains, Hoyos draws on a wide range of examples, mostly from Latin America, to illustrate the potential of a materialist approach to World Literature for discussion of the problematic implications of global consumerism and supply chains with their potentially devastating effects.

In her article “Between Latin America and the Arab world: Rodrigo Rey Rosa and Alberto Ruy Sánchez in Morocco”, Tahia Abdel Nasser (Cairo) examines the literary and cultural encounters between Latin America and the Arab world as modelled in the novels of Guatemalan writer Rodrigo Rey Rosa and Mexican author Alberto Ruy Sánchez. While the former, according to her argument, exhibits a series of misunderstandings and misconceptions between Latin America and North Africa, the latter reworks the large tradition of Latin American travel literature and Orientalism to create a shared heritage between Mexico and Morocco tracing the interconnectivity and the cultural and historical proximity of the two countries and continents.

The article by Ignacio Sánchez Prado (St. Louis) entitled “África en la imaginación literaria mexicana. Exotismo, desconexión y los límites materiales de la ‘epistemología del Sur’”, focuses on a group of Mexican narrations with African content to show the limits of any approach based on idealistic cosmopolitanisms. He suggests that these kinds of constructions ignore the lack of material connections between the different nodes of the Global South and leads therefore to epistemological dysphorias and contradictions. Through the examination of his literary corpus, Sánchez Prado observes a mutual illegibility of the literatures of the Global South due to the lack of literary infrastructure, the presence of paradigms such as Orientalism and the colonial gaze in World Literature, the mediation of imperial and publishing centers in the construction of imaginaries of the South, and the impossibility of constructing a literary epistemology without the basis of material connections between literatures. In dialogue with idealistic models of World Literature, he arrives at the conclusion that a material connection would be the condition for a design of a literary cartography for the Global South.

In the article “Rubén Darío: la sutura de los mundos”, Daniel Link (Buenos Aires) examines the literary interventions of Ruben Darío as crucial contributions to a non-hierarchical World Literature. He proposes an approach to Darío that refutes the classical interpretations focused on a Eurocentric set-up in order to present an alternative reading. According to Link, Darío promoted a cultural

program founded on a “becoming” black, Indian, Chinese, Caupolicán or Eulalia and not on our discovery that we belong to one of these categories. In doing so, he not only offered a way of overcoming colonial limitations, but also the Eurocentric perspective. This operation must be read as a disruption of the world literary map of his time, but the strategies he employs render impossible even the idea of a map, which would have to be replaced by that of a network. In his conclusion, Link shows that this graphic (re)definition of the literary and cultural relations is still applicable and could be taken as a counter-model for the hegemonic theories of World Literature.

In his article, “The precarious state of the art: Writing the Global South and critical cosmopolitanism in the works of J.M. Coetzee and Roberto Bolaño”, Benjamin Loy (Cologne) provides a comparative reading of several works of two authors at whose core lies a problematization of an affirmative stance towards (world) literature as a medium of historical affirmation and cosmopolitan positioning, which dovetails with many discourses in the current debates. As Loy seeks to prove, the pessimistic view of the world and of history in Bolaño and Coetzee stems not least from the experiences that many of their “cultivated” (Western) protagonists confront in the marginalized, precarious spaces of the Global South, ranging from South Africa to Mexico. Instead of traditional Western inscribing of meaning, the literary exploration of the fragile realities of life in the Global South is where the recognition of the radical inadequacy of supposedly cosmopolitan and universalist concepts emanates from and what makes necessary new artistic approaches to the multiple material asymmetries in human living conditions in the context of contemporary globalization embodied in the so-called *cosmopolitanism of fragility*.

Under the header “Book Markets”, the second axis focuses on the editorial policies and the links established by the publishing industry. In his text, “Literatura mundial en biblioburro. Un caso procomún de circulación literaria”, César Domínguez (Santiago de Compostela) examines critically one of the key concepts of World Literature studies: circulation as it was introduced for consideration by David Damrosch. He argues from two perspectives – the first positing that the examination of circulation in the current capitalist framework cannot ignore the intervention of big publishing houses and their inherent interests. Yet he suggests in a second move that not all kinds of circulation should be analyzed under the economic paradigm. As an example he presents the interesting case of a roaming library, which circulates on two donkeys in the Colombian department Magdalena: the so called biblioburro. Since the end of 1990s, Luis Soriano, the project manager and librarian, has transported books from around the world to a population with high rates of illiteracy. Domínguez concludes that this case, among hypothetical others, shows that along with the undeniable dimension of

World Literature as product of a globalization from above and as an elitist cosmopolitanism, there are also other concepts of World Literature that escape the economic logic of global and market-driven circulation of books and that are born with the impulse of a globalization from below and a critical cosmopolitanism.

In her article, “El derecho a la literatura (mundial y traducida). Sobre el sueño translitológico de la UNESCO”, Susanne Klengel (Berlin) examines the ambitious translation program known as “UNESCO Collection of Representative Works” as it was presented in its catalog in the year 2000. In the immediate Postwar, UNESCO established a humanistic project in collaboration with publishing houses to promote the translation of literary works from the whole world into other languages. Since its original purpose was to make known the “classics”, it opened a fundamental debate about the Eurocentric perspective that dominated the traditional constructions of canons. This debate then led to a more comprehensive concept, that of “representative works”, which attempted to enshrine the place of works from Latin America and the Arab World. In spite of the authentic aperture that this project brought along, the author concludes that alternative canons cannot be constructed artificially by institutions.

Gesine Müller’s (Cologne) text, “Re-mapping World Literature from Macondo”, provides an analysis of the canonical work of Gabriel García Márquez that serves as a model case for tracing canonization processes in the Global South. Focusing on his best known book *Cien años de soledad*, Müller draws on the work’s reception in the USA (as starting point for his worldwide reception), India, and China, as well as the Arab World and Russia. Within this context, she examines the several stages of his reception in these countries, including the publication of translations. Additionally, she questions to what degree the realm of the aesthetic reveals specific intertextual references between García Márquez and particular authors of the Global South like Salman Rushdie or Mo Yan, who were simultaneously crucial for the promotion of the Colombian author’s work.

Teng Wei (Guangzhou), in her study “Pablo Neruda in contemporary China: Translation between national and international Politics (1949–1979)”, approaches the micro- and macroperspectives of political backgrounds, as well as personal friendships and animosity in relation to the translation history of Pablo Neruda during the Chinese socialist era (1949–1979). In her case study on the Chilean Nobel laureate, she uncovers the various kinds of misreading and rewriting in the process of translation and reception of his work, and discusses the complicated and subtle relationship between translation, ideology and national/international politics to describe the role that national and international politics played in Socialist China’s translation history of Latin American Literature.

In his article, “Por una sociología de las ausencias en la literatura mundial”, Jorge J. Locane (Cologne) offers a critical approach to the concept

of World Literature based on the idea of circulation beyond the national field of emergence. Departing from a perspective that tries to appeal to the difference marked by the geopolitical positioning, his article attempts to open a line of questioning addressed precisely to those literatures which do not circulate, that is to say those that, in the totalistic gaze, belong to the narrow order of the local and which therefore lack value in the world dominion. As a theoretical framework for this non-Eurocentric perspective, he proposes, rather than a Bourdieu-oriented sociology of literature, a reformulation of the sociology of absences, a model originally coined by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. The sociology of absences – according to his argument – would be a useful strategy for assigning visibility to local literatures, which are contextually dependent and for that very reason bear specific cultural, political, and aesthetic traits. These literatures together would give rise to a world cultural landscape capable of being characterized as genuinely diverse. In concrete terms, this use of the sociology of absences would be tasked with revealing and restoring the value of localized publishing, of that which does not transcend, of that which in recent years has been embodied, as a reaction to the emergence of publishing corporations, by small projects known as “independent”. In short, Locane argues for a radical type of bibliodiversity as a programmatic agenda for a sociology of absences in World Literature.

Gustavo Guerrero’s (Paris) article is entitled “La Croix du Sud (1945–1970): génesis y contextos de la primera colección francesa de literatura latinoamericana”. He reconstructs the history of the collection created by Roger Caillois for Gallimard and argues that his implicit aim was to reinforce the direct connections between France and Latin-American countries in the geopolitical reconfiguration that occurred after the Second World War. This also implies a project of symbolic construction of Latin America that was in crisis following the Cuban Revolution and the emergence of critical publishers and editorial projects like Julliard, Maurice Nadeau, François Maspero, Christian Bourgois, Le Seuil, and Robert Lafon. As Guerrero observes in his last point, the translation and publication of peripheral literatures in world cultural centers such as Paris does not necessarily presuppose a process of recognition and rupture of the colonial dependences, but is rather another expression of the symbolic battle for the control of the representation of the world.

The third and final section, entitled “Epistemologies”, is focused on the circulation of knowledge, ideas and concepts. In his article “World literature or Earth literature? Remarks on a distinction” Robert Stockhammer (Munich) offers a terminological discussion to test out the philological and philosophical implications and abilities of these concepts to open different perspectives on the relation of literature and globality. Fusing historical approaches by Goethe, Hegel, and Heidegger with

central contributions to the current debates on World Literature by scholars like Emily Apter, Gayatri Spivak, and David Damrosch, as well as literary texts by Oskar Pastior and Johann Peter Hebel, Stockhammer aims to highlight the fact that any “wholeness”, as implied and often presupposed in the concept of World Literature, has to be constructed. In this sense, the concept of “Earth literature” may offer a gesture of resistance against overly hasty “sense-making” in the context of globalization and current debates on World Literature.

Stefan Helgesson’s (Stockholm) article, “The World-Literary formation of Antonio Candido”, reads the work of the Brazilian literary critic against the backdrop of current theoretical approaches in World Literature to illustrate how Candido consistently combines a supposedly universal but *de facto* Eurocentric conception of literature with a historicizing sensitivity towards the locally grounded ways in which literature evolves, especially in colonial and post-colonial Brazil. Rather than considering this doubleness in his thinking as a contradiction, Helgesson argues that it invites a conceptual-historical analysis of how (world) “literature”, pressured by social conflict, becomes semantically layered.

In his article, “On the concept figure of the Global South, and ecological narrative promises and deceits”, Hermann Herlinghaus (Freiburg) reflects on the challenges that the Global South represents on hermeneutic, conceptual, and ethical levels for the discursive logics of “qualified” criticism in the way it has developed from “normalized” lettered citizenship, or canonical representations in the centers of modernity. Evoking several scenarios taken from contemporary Latin American literature, Herlinghaus aims to investigate cases of “abnormal interpretation” and provides anti-canonical readings and mis-translations of established cultural and literary concepts like “magical realism” or “fantastic writing” to explore the ways in which these categories of interpretation are still suitable for understanding the literary stance of the “Hemispheric South”.

With her article, “Orientalismo y realismo mágico al revés. Juan Rulfo y Salman Rushdie o los desafíos del Sur global para la literatura mundial”, Vittoria Borsò (Düsseldorf) provides an analysis of *Midnight’s Children*, by Salman Rushdie, that goes beyond the simplistic established perspective center-periphery dynamics. She argues that the creative dialogue between Indian and Latin American writers (in particular with Juan Rulfo) has led, on the one hand, to a disarticulation of Orientalism by a mimesis that ironizes its own logic and economy, and which, on the other hand, emphasizes the analogy between Orientalism and magical realism as a projection of Eurocentric exoticism. She also suggests that this connection has given place to an alternative concept of magic, and even of culture and history, which could be (re)defined as the virtual force

inherent in any living being whose potentials are fed and grown by their intuitive and affective relationships with the concrete environment in which they are anchored.

In his article, “Hacia una teoría de la circulación, con énfasis en la circulación de las ideas”, Eduardo Devés (Santiago de Chile) provides a theoretical model centered on the concept of circulation which might also be useful for World Literature studies. He argues that a theory of circulation permits the explanation and understanding of the way in which the human condition is constituted, and how it becomes oppressive for other humans and the natural world, but also how emancipations and equilibria can be developed. This is a way of thinking that aims to go beyond national states, even centers and peripheries in the traditional sense, and instead puts focus on the networking of ideas that connect different locations of the world in both dependant as well as emancipated ways.

To conclude, Ottmar Ette’s (Potsdam) article “TransArea Tangier: The city and the literatures of the world” traces a century-encompassing panorama of the Moroccan city as point of intersection and transit-space for the exchange of not only goods and merchandise, travelers and refugees, but also of those forms and norms of a way of life that has in Tangier for centuries, even millennia, developed and coalesced in a very particular way. In his movement-historically approach, he discusses a variety of texts and authors, ranging from Ibn Battuta’s insights into religious convivence in 14th century, to micronarratives by Roland Barthes and Severo Sarduy, that grasp Tangier as a polylogical place to which a stringent occidental logic of identity and identification can only be applied *ad absurdum*.

The three proposed axes represent, among other possibilities, three entry points into a debate that is beginning to focalize and could lead to considerable findings. This book is the product of an international colloquium that took place in Cologne at the beginning of 2017 as part of the research program of the Consolidator Grant of the European Research Council “Reading Global: Constructions of World Literature and Latin America”. We would like to thank the Global South Studies Centers at the University of Cologne for the cooperation and our project members Yehua Chen, Silja Helber, and Judith Illerhaus for their organizational support, as well as Jordan Lee Schnee and Lee Holt for the proofreading and editorial support. As a result of the meeting, which brought together some of the researchers and specialists who are most involved in this field of analysis and now with the publication of this book, we aim to explore analytical avenues that lead from Latin America to other regions of the Global South and vice-versa. We hope we have met this goal and that this publication will serve to stimulate further investigation in this burgeoning field.

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