

Glocality and its (Dis)contents

The Future of English Language Literatures Studies¹

Abstract

The following reflections on the future of English Language Literatures (ELL) as an academic discipline in the Humanities in the 21st century are directed at two aspects. First, the role they can play as texts of a glocal nature challenging the tendency of an increasingly globalized world to subsume academic research and teaching in tertiary institutions to such economic parameters



*as competition, efficiency and profitability. Second, the possible function of ELL within an institutionalized transnational network to be set up in future and to challenge both, the homogenizing cultural and educational agendas of transglobal corporates and trends towards nationalist reductionism. An analysis of the interplay of global and local cultural forces that have led to investigations into their hybridization or glocalization undertaken in cultural and social studies is followed by comments on constitutive differences between English Literature (EL) and ELL. The paper is rounded off with a discussion of the glocal nature of Shashi Tharoor's novel *Riot* as representative of recent ELL texts and their contribution to what Ulrich Beck has called a "cognitive map."*

Global Challenges and English Literary Studies

WHAT CHALLENGES WILL THE HUMANITIES have to face in the process of global changes? And by challenges I mean questions raised as to their

¹ The title of my paper refers back to Joseph E. Stiglitz's *Globalization and Its Discontents*, New York & London: W.W. Norton 2003, but plays with the double meaning of 'contents' and its relationship to 'glocalization'

content, their organization and their goals vis-à-vis the globalization process that has begun to encompass and affect all spheres of human activities, their economic and fiscal transactions, political rule and social organization but also mankind's cultural activities, and along with them, those processes of self-reflexivity that constitute modernity and the content of the scholarly disciplines of the Humanities. What is at stake here is the ongoing and above all renewed pursuit of our interpretation and of making sense of what Max Weber has called the "double constitution [or composition] of reality": its social, economic, political and cultural conditions on the one hand, and their interpretation on the other, through which we create "images of the world" that guide our actions, "crystallizations of religious and cultural ideas that claim to interpret the world adequately and regulate man's behaviour on the basis of norms and values."²

Now, it would be presumptuous to address myself to the large field of the Humanities in their totality as I am neither an expert in most of its disciplines nor would I venture to reflect here on their future from the more generalized angle of cultural or social history. Rather, I would like to focus on literature and literary studies, or more precisely, on the literatures in English and their academic-institutional organization in the university. To rephrase my question then and to apply a more compact though not necessarily unequivocal term, I want to ask what English literary studies are meant to encompass. How should they be organized, and what objectives are they to pursue and possibly to achieve in the future?

Further and for obvious reasons, my observations will be restricted to the German university scene of the last quarter of the last century with its more or less radical changes of gradually substituting an open and flexible four-year course system and affecting the near total independence of professors as scholars and teachers under the heading of 'university reforms'. It is the perhaps third or fourth agenda drawn up since the early 1970s and after the student revolt against ossified academic structures, but it appears that this time the agency of 'reform' will have to be taken very seriously when compared with past attempts that by hindsight have, with the exception of the early 1970s effected cosmetic rather than radical changes. At the same time, the process of dealing with the proposed measures has certainly always been very time- and energy consuming and more often than not has had negative repercussions on the quality of research and teaching of those academics who had felt that they had to critically co-operate with

2 Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Konflikte zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts*, München: C.H. Beck 2003, 144

the state and university administration in order to maintain their identity and not be overruled by technocratic concerns. Yet, such engagement, it appears, is even more necessary at present because of the much more far-reaching consequences the proposed reform measures will have under the pressure of globalization with its guiding 'values' of economic growth and profit-orientation, national and international competitiveness and ranking; the latter having itself established as a kind of university world cup fought out not at an interval of four years but continuously, alas, without a set of generally agreed-upon rules. This indeed casts doubts on the meaningfulness and sense of the various ranking systems employed.

University scholars and teachers in virtually all disciplines ranging from Economics to Social Studies and the Humanities have been alerted to address globalization and have set out to analyse its agents, to assess its working and, quite generally, to make transparent a process that has been called inevitable while concomitantly it has begun to affect every human being in one way or the other. Among them Masao Miyoshi, Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California in San Diego, may be cited here with his assessment of the changes introduced into the Humanities departments of his and other American universities. In his essay "Globalization', Culture and the University", he draws on his own and his colleagues' experiences and argues that the state has lost power to transnational corporations who have begun to determine university politics. From their point of view, cultural productions are profitable commodities to be marketed, and it is the task of the university to transform their academic programmes accordingly. To serve their purposes, parameters to be introduced, like course enrolment, student-teacher ratio or the number of majors in a department, are to be geared towards a system of ranking which in turn establishes the reputation of a university and the value of its products in a national and international competitive market. Excellence, Miyoshi, says, is to be achieved for the sake of excellence, and professors who once presumably "professed [...] are now merely professionals, entrepreneurs, careerists, and opportunists, as in the corporate world."³

It is a bleak picture he paints. However, I believe it does not describe the situation universities generally find themselves in already, but it certainly

3 Masao Miyoshi, "Globalization', Culture, and the University", eds. Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, *The Cultures of Globalization*, Durham & London: Duke University Press 1998, 247–270; here 267. See also Miyoshi's essay "Ivory Tower in Escrow", eds. Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies*, London and Durham: Duke UP 2002, 19–60

highlights the pressure exerted on them by the prevailing ideology of market economy pursued by transnational corporations. The question then is how can English literary studies resist or redirect and usefully transform this pressure — unless we totally subscribe to it. And such is the trend, unfortunately, experienced by Miyoshi and, I am sure quite a few among us. Can we create a forum that evades the danger of our departments being turned into service stations functioning under industrial management? How can we safeguard, to once more quote Miyoshi, research independent from industrial needs?

Global / Local and Glocalization

I think that we have to look for answers by first understanding one of Weber's "images of the world," that is "nationalism," and here more precisely, nationalism in its present global context. Talking about "Nationalismus und der Nationalstaat heute" ("Nationalism and the Nation State Today)," the German historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler⁴ refers to its creative power that has brought about the nation, which in turn has found its 'housing' in the nation state. Though nationalism, he says, has led — and we could very well add here, continues to lead — to devastating 'achievements,' it has nevertheless proved flexible and has indeed survived. The nation state, on the other hand, has come under serious attack by global processes of transformation⁵ that have led towards the emergence and gradual formation of, for example, new economic regions in South East Asia or on the North American continent, and to an economic-political supra-national structure like the European Union.

Of prime importance for us here are the cultural implications of such new supra-national formations because to be able to function politically they necessarily have to accommodate the diversity of different national cultures whose discrete images of themselves, grown over a long period

4 Wehler, "Nationalismus und der Nationalstaat heute", *op.cit.*, 112–125

5 There are, of course, two camps: those who believe that the nation state will survive and who point at the emergence of new states after the end of the cold war, and their opponents who are convinced that it is unable to survive under the onslaught of globalization. Michael Hart and Antonio Negri (*Empire*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 2001) represent this latter group but hold that the nation state will not survive in its old form [my emphasis] as a juridico-economic structure. They argue that, "the globalization of production and circulation, supported by this supranational juridical scaffolding [e.g., GATT, WTO, IMF, World Bank] supersedes the effectiveness of national juridical structures." (336) On the other hand, Edgar Grande ("Globalisierung und die Zukunft des Nationalstaat", eds. Ulrich Beck and Wolfgang Bonß, *Die Modernisierung der Moderne*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2001, 261-275), joins those who believe in a 'middle path', the possibility of a combination of nation states and transnational collectives co-operating to solve globalization pressure, especially in its economic dimension.

of time and deeply ingrained in the psyche of their people, are resilient and continue to define their respective national identities or ‘images of the world.’ No supra-political unit, no European Union will be able — at least for a long time to come — to abolish, either through democratic or autocratic means, a German, an Italian, a Frenchman or an Englishman’s rootedness in his own national culture. And that is to say that nationalism perceived of as a cultural construct will indeed have to be reckoned with now and in future when we address the problematic of our own scholarly discipline.

However, to return to the nation state, the gradual loss of its sovereignty vested in its prerogatives of managing its own affairs that range from politics, economy and finance to education may go hand in hand with its increasing and eventually total submission to the laws of the global market economy and its regulations, thus leaving little chance for the survival of diverse national cultures. Are there then no prospects of survival? Thus, investigations in cultural studies have given no reason for Miyoshi’s pessimism while we find ourselves indeed and objectively in a position to redefine our tasks. However, we have to remind ourselves of two points. We must distinguish between what a national culture can achieve, qualitatively speaking, by handling the impact of globalization, and how national and supra-national agents of its institutionalization will react. And we must not overlook that as scholars and teachers we are part of the system, tied down by the administrative and fiscal set-up of the university. Where then do our chances lie of constructively responding to globalization?

Cultural studies and cultural practice prove that neither an ‘emptying out’ of the local occurs, a ‘dissolution of cultural identities,’ nor a total submission to the ‘one world of commodities.’ Rather, we observe processes of hybridization or creolization “with respect to cultural forms as ‘the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices.’”⁶ With reference to Roland Robertson⁷ I prefer to use the term ‘glocalization’ instead of creolization because it points at the interplay of global and local factors in an emergent global society⁸ and indicates that combined processes of globalization and localization occur, lending new emphasis to the local, which however is

6 Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “Globalization as Hybridization”, eds. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson, *Global Modernities*, London: SAGE 1995, 45–68. Quoted in Dieter Riemenschneider, “Contemporary Māori Cultural Practice: From Biculturalism towards a Glocal Culture”, *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 18/19 (2001), 139–160

7 Roland Robertson, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity”, eds. Featherstone, Lash, Robertson, *op.cit.*, 25–44

8 Claus Leggewie, *Die Globalisierung und ihre Gegner*, München: C.H. Beck 2003

not identical with its renaissance. Glocalization, in other words, manifests a compulsion to re-localize de-traditionalized traditions within the global context through translocal exchanges, through dialogue and even through conflicts, as Ulrich Beck suggests in his summary of Robertson's position.⁹

Apart from Robertson, I'd also like to mention Arjun Appadurai (1990), Arif Dirlik (1996), Stuart Hall (1991) or Ulf Hannerz (1996) and their contributions to the discourse on glocalization that have influenced my own critical engagement with contemporary Māori cultural practice from Aotearoa / New Zealand, that is, my more recent work on poetry, drama and the novel, painting and film: research revealing the glocal dimension of 'texts' whose specificity results precisely from the creative response of the local to the global with both being embedded in the process of globalization.¹⁰ This entails though the need to look more closely at the exact meaning of 'local', 'global' and 'glocal'. The first, 'local', I think, can be grasped quite easily when we remind ourselves of, for example, handed-down traditional Māori beliefs, customs, rituals and quite generally, cultural and literary practices. 'Global', on the other hand, is a much more diffuse term because in its most generalized form it includes any idea, any human practice introduced from the outside world into a culture that is primarily perceived in local terms. My use here is restricted to signifying cultural ideas and forms practiced elsewhere outside the realm of the Māori locality, although eventually I cannot circumscribe it in its entirety — at least not here and now. As to the 'glocal' nature of cultural products, it is necessary to keep in mind differing local cultural specificities. In other words, the glocality of contemporary Māori poems in Robert Sullivan's *Star Waka* (1999) differs from, let us say, the Caribbean Derek Walcott's *Omeros* (1990) because of their discrete local references and contextuality.

9 Ulrich Beck, *Was ist Globalisierung?*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1998, 85–87. See also Thomas L. Friedman's proposal of "multiple filters to prevent [...] cultures from being erased by the homogenizing pull and push of global capitalism." (Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, New York: Random House, Anchor Book Edition 2000; ed. 2003, 204). Talking about the most important filter, the ability to "glocalize", that is, absorbing influences that "naturally fit into [a culture and to] resist those things that are truly alien," (295) I feel that Friedman's argument is too narrowly tied into a binary opposition between global and local, or in his own words "a culture and other strong cultures", the one and the alien that encounter each other.

10 For example, "Of Warriors, a Whale Rider, and Venetians: Contemporary Māori Films", eds. Anke Bartels and Dirk Wiemann, *Global Fragments: (Dis)-Orientation in the New World Order*, Amsterdam/New York, NY: Rodopi 2007, 139–151

English Literature and English Language Literatures

After these brief and indeed very general comments on the complex network of globalization and national transformation, national culture and cultural glocalization, I would like to look at its implications and its bearing on our own engagement as scholars and teachers of English literature — or to be more correct, of English literatures in their plurality since we cannot really speak any longer of one unified, let alone monolithic corpus of English literature but only of a multiplicity of English language literatures in a world-wide modern context. This does not, of course, mean to be blind to a literary tradition from England that has preceded the emergence of English language literatures on almost every continent, but it compels us, to begin with, to distinguish among different cultural traditions from which they have emerged and to whose formations they continue to contribute. The essential difference between the one — I would like to call EL — and the others — ELL — I believe, lies in their differing degrees of glocalization. English literature (EL), embedded in a local-national culture that has been challenged more basically only after the arrival of millions of immigrants to Britain since the mid-20th century and by their literary production, has only recently begun to develop towards a glocal literature. English language literatures (ELL), on the other hand, have by their very foundation as colonial literatures been shaped by specific localities. In the case of the so-called settler colonies/cultures of Australia, Canada or New Zealand these included initially mainly the physical factors of new geographical surroundings combined with the experience of otherness and migration. With African or Asian writing, on the other hand, specific historically grown cultural contexts accounted for distinct differences to EL right from the beginning. Here, incidentally, I would go further than postcolonial theorizing has suggested, by not perceiving of these literatures as postcolonial since such conceptualisation reduces the multiple cultural interplay between the local and the global to a dialectic and primarily politically-engendered exchange between colonizer and colonized, centre and margin. It may be true that in their initial stages English language literatures conformed more clearly to the postcolonial paradigm but at their latest stages and with the appearance of globalizing processes their distinctive features as ‘glocal’ can no longer be overlooked.

If these methodological considerations are tenable, objectives and methods of researching and teaching English language literatures as glocal texts will have to differ to some extent from those of English literature — excepting perhaps, as indicated, its latest phase. Although one can of

course argue that cultural products have always been hybrid and, as Claus Leggewie reasons, “the emergence of a global culture is just another grade of ‘hybridization’ of in any case ‘hybrid’ cultures,”¹¹ I disagree because the grade of hybridization is not just a matter of form but one of content, as a randomly chosen example will illustrate. Arnold Wesker’s *Trilogy* (1960) certainly incorporates global features such as the resistance to fascism, a critical engagement with international Marxism and a concern with global solidarity against capitalism, but the cultural conflict Wesker’s figures experience is an aesthetically conceived representation of internal (English) social differentiation rather than one perceived as a clash of the local and the global. On the other hand, Witi Ihimaera, the Māori playwright’s *Woman Far Walking* (2000) clearly dramatizes this juxtaposition by drawing together Māori historical-psychological experiences — their colonization — and modern self-reflexivity derived from globally practiced thinking on history and nation-building on the one hand and psychology on the other.¹² Similarly and as to its dramatic form, *The Wesker Trilogy* is firmly rooted in contemporaneous European (or Western) naturalist-realist conventions whereas *Woman Far Walking* incorporates features derived from Māori dramatic acting on the *marae*, music and dancing, as well as dramatic and dramaturgical devices from the globally practiced art of epic theatre. Ihimaera’s colleague Roma Potiki’s plea that “Māori theatre must deal honestly with what has happened and is happening to Māori people — the joy and the hell that we, as survivors of the damage of colonialism, have learnt to live with and live through,” but that it should also realize that “it is not a rigid form [because] Māori are living within a social context that is global,”¹³ illustrates the modern self-reflexivity I have spoken of.

This example must suffice to demonstrate the basic constitutive differences between EL and ELL that have to be taken into consideration in our pursuit of English Literary Studies. While the former has been much more concerned with the aesthetic representation of an imagined national community — incidentally also pursued in Australian, Canadian and New Zealand creative writing from the middle of the 20th century onwards — ELLs’ concerns, for example in Anglophone African, Caribbean or Indian

11 Leggewie, *op.cit.*, 41

12 For details refer to my “Māori Contemporary Theatre — Witi Ihimaera: *Woman Far Walking* (2000)”, eds. Hans-Ulrich Mohr and Kerstin Mächler, *Extending the Code: New Forms of Dramatic and Theatrical Expression*, Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag 2004, 211–223

13 Roma Potiki, “Confirming Identity and Telling the Stories: A Woman’s Perspective on Māori Theatre”, eds. Rosemary Du Plessis, Phillida Bunkle, *Feminist Voices: Women’s Studies Texts for Aotearoa / New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press 1992, 153–162; here 162

English literature, have circled more around their hyphenated cultural nature and status.

Contextual Universalism: Shashi Tharoor's Novel "Riot"

Let me focus now on the potential contributions of English Language Literatures towards a study programme and research projects that could shape teaching and scholarly pursuits on a global scale, relating university departments across national boundaries to a sort of supra-national or transcultural educational unit that reflects the general political trend towards such structures as mentioned above, that may assist us in understanding transcultural conflicts and contribute towards setting up programmes of global studies to come to grips with the multidimensionality of glocal life and actions.¹⁴ Naturally, I do not want to be misunderstood here as a utopian dreamer who conveniently and for argument's sake effaces the powerful efficacy of globalism as the neo-liberal ideology of market dominance. Yet I believe that the glocal nature of English Language Literatures offers us one referential frame to understand how globalism works and could be responded to by opening windows for intercultural communication and co-operation with the final aim of creating a cognitive map that will lead us to a global civil society.¹⁵

Ulrich Beck's model of "intercultural critique"¹⁶ might be helpful here. Commenting upon the two mutually exclusive epistemological camps of the universalists and the contextualists (or relativists), he proposes "contextual universalism" as an epistemological foundation from where we can set out, first to inquire into the 'truth' of one's own culture, setting up individual norms valid only for ourselves, but secondly, allows to be critiqued by others: "Contextual universalism means", he says, "[that] one has to open up what one holds holiest to the critique of others", which philosophically, morally and politically is a step taken from certainty to truth on the terrain of universalisms.¹⁷

14 Beck, *op.cit.*, 1998, 231

15 Wehler, *op.cit.*, 80–89

16 Beck, *op.cit.*, 1998, 141–149

17 *Ibid.*, 149. Beck rejects both 'universalist universalism' and 'universal contextualism', because they claim universal validity either of perceived norms and 'truths' or of their absolute relativity. 'Contextual universalism' on the other hand, is based on the assumption that non-interference with another culture is impossible. To quote an example: "contextual universalism" does not prevent us from accepting the violation of human rights in a culture different from ours but it is wary of super-imposing our version of these rights. Instead it asks us to understand those rights as they are perceived from the angle of the other culture and then enter into a dialogue about how to realize the validity of human rights per se." (148)

The random sample of an Indian English novel wonderfully illustrates this model and shows how an ELL text disturbingly intervenes in the kind of global discourse on culture exemplified by Samuel Huntington's untenable thesis of an 'intercultural war' in his controversial book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). While he — and he is not alone, of course — conceives of cultures as essentialist units, bound to a definite territory and being the result of local processes of learning, with each group, society or nation having its own and differing culture that has neither changed over the centuries nor is it going to do so, I identify with a concept of culture as a dynamic, open-border, translocal process of learning that, incidentally, by no means is lacking in internal contradictions.¹⁸

Shashi Tharoor's novel *Riot* (2001) thematizes the political development in India since the early 1990s with its broadly advertised trend of the BJP and other right-wing parties and movements towards purifying the country's culture of 'foreign' elements in order to establish *Hindutva* or *Ram Raj*: the supreme rule of Hinduism in all spheres of life — from which, as I was told, education at all levels has not been exempted, as the re-writing of text books or the re-organization of courses testify. Tharoor's story centres on such attempts in connection with the rebuilding of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya after the destruction of the Babri Masjid built by the Moghuls on the supposed site of Ram's birth. In the town of Zalilgarh Hindus agitate for the collection of tiles to contribute to this religious task. Yet their efforts to enforce, even by violent means, the truth of their religious convictions are not only controlled and kept in check by the local District Commissioner and the police but are subtly questioned in a parallel narrative strand. Here, a young American woman is engaged with field work studying Indian women's self-help groups and actively supports the policy of birth control, much against the resistance of men who consider her activities as interfering with their culture. The connecting link between the chain of public events and her personal narrative, namely the extra-marital relationship between her and the D.C., interests us only marginally here though its failure attracts some attention to culturally differing perceptions of the man-woman relationship. However, this aspect so central in the earlier Indian English novel beset by the cultural problematic of the East-West encounter, for example in Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) or Balachandra Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* (1958), has been replaced in *Riot* by interrogating the definition of culture as such.

¹⁸ See Dieter Senghaas, *Zivilisierung wider Willen*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1998, 140; Beck, *op.cit.*, 1998, 118

Remarkable here is its very thematic and narrative foregrounding. The story is not told by a first person narrator as in Rao's novel or through the consciousness of Rajan's protagonist but constructed from a number of different perspectives like letters and diary entries, newspaper reports and interviews, political speeches, memories and reflections and finally, through realistically presented scenic action and dialogue from the narrator's point of view. Such a range of different versions of the events does not permit us to gain insight into what really happened in the town or to the main actors but conceals the truth that lies hidden in the web of public and personal views and convictions conveyed to the reader. We are not told why the American woman is murdered and by whom. Nor whether the establishment of *Hindutva*, to which a specific understanding of the man-woman relationship as well as the rejection of birth control measures are intimately linked, finds the support of all sections of the Hindu population, including its intellectual elite and, last but not least, of the narrator himself. Or finally, whether globally promoted ideas of the equality of men and women, of birth control and the establishment of NGOs like women's self-help groups represent the truth. What *Riot* however achieves is to convey its textual glocality both in content and form, the one by bringing together local and global views and convictions that demonstrate that the exegesis of cultural sources is not so much motivated by their defenders' belief in their 'truth' but by considerations of power politics. Formally, the novel's multi-perspectivism relates it to one of the globally practiced post-modern narrative strategies that *ipso facto* negates the truth claim of the 'grand récit', replacing it by fragmentary narrations with their provisional claims of the truth. Nonetheless, I would not equate the uncertainty of truth in Tharoor's novel with postmodernism's radical scepticism but would relate it to Beck's notion of "universal contextualism", that is to say, to the text's invitation to the reader to intervene in the discourse on globalism by acknowledging the glocality of culture.

The Challenge of English Language Literatures

If this and other examples of English Language Literatures then permit us to speak of their glocality, which in turn offers us the possibility of restructuring our literary studies, two questions remain to be answered. Which role would English literature *qua* national literature play here? And will agencies of globalism with their threat of economic control and cultural homogenization not feel called upon to counteract a discursive practice and its possible institutionalization that threatens to subvert its own strategies?

My own experience has not given me reason to believe that the introduction of ELL studies has threatened the existence of EL studies at all — nor has it, regrettably, proved relevant to the methodological discourse on literary studies. One of the reasons for this is to be found in the traditional framework of academic independence that grants an appointed and tenured professor near total freedom of research and teaching that has served my purpose of introducing and establishing ELL studies and besides has encouraged me to support similar efforts at other German universities. After a quarter of a century the co-operation of colleagues has resulted in creating a national network of ELL study programmes whose degree of institutionalization naturally differs from one university to the other, but it functions and has certainly also survived because it has never threatened EL studies ‘proper’ by questioning its role.¹⁹ It is perhaps needless to add that I would have wished EL studies to reflect on its research and teaching objectives and to perhaps co-operate with ELL studies by developing strategies of dealing with globalism. Yet, apart from a few instances of personal commitment this has not been the case.

The need to do so, however, may soon become more pressing when German state and university education policy will more clearly join the march begun already elsewhere, for example in New Zealand where I notice a high degree of delight on the part of university vice-chancellors and quite a few heads of departments to be ranked highly in the national competition for academic gold medals, hopefully in all disciplines. Needless to say that not each and every academic, for example at Auckland University, has joined the choir of jubilation sung recently on the pages of the university’s official organ, *News*, and celebrating that the university has “emerged as the country’s leading research university on ‘virtually any measure’ in the Performance Based Research Fund assessment.”²⁰ Here, it would be necessary to go into details of research projects to assess on what grounds excellence has been acknowledged and financially rewarded, apart from also analyzing those parameters of assessment that have formed the basis for national comparison. In this context it strikes one as somewhat paradoxical that New Zealand’s vice-chancellors objected to the Tertiary Education Commission’s original plan of comparatively assessing New Zealand and British universities as being untenable since differing systems

19 One should also mention the various learned societies that have been set up in the wake of ELL studies, for example the German Association for the Study of the New Literatures (ASNEL) founded in 1989, or the international Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS), founded as early as in 1964

20 *The University of Auckland News* 34, 4 (May 2004), 3

would be confined on the Procrustean bed. Still, whatever opposition generally as well as under specific circumstances may exist among academics concerned, their voices are neither heard nor listened to or they have fallen silent for whatever reasons.

The assessment fever, as we all know, has spread like the Spanish influenza and has also infected German academics who fight it by inoculating themselves, or by filling in questionnaires and submitting reports on their research and teaching activities that are to be assessed and graded by outsiders. It appears that there is no way out for the education sector to counter market requirements but submit itself to its objectives and regulations. An enforced choice compounded by the response of national and supra-national corporations to a survey that chances to find a job are small for graduates in the Humanities. According to the weekly *Der Spiegel*, 63% of them replied that they would not employ German and Romance literature or history graduates. English literature graduates, one would assume, would fare slightly better because of their language qualifications. A market requirement that has already led towards a split between cultural and literary studies programmes and language teaching in the university and even to the departmentalization of language studies in separate language schools.

Where do we go from here then, short of resigning ourselves to a global trend of serving the research needs of the industry or, alternatively, of constructing more or less utopian models of survival? Suggestions offered in English and German publications on globalization and its educational implications I have consulted have either — and perhaps out of sheer necessity — restricted themselves to a description of the *status quo* or suggested measures that would require governments to rethink their policy. Ulrich Beck devotes the last part of his book *Was ist Globalisierung?* [*What is Globalization?*] to “Antworten auf Globalisierung” [“Responses to Globalization”]²¹ where he briefly discusses such counter measures as international co-operation, the transnational state, the new orientation of education policy, new cultural-political-economic objectives, a social contract against exclusion and Europe. Though all of them bear the mark of self-reflexivity and are grounded in a realistic assessment of present-day economic, political and cultural conditions, they do not, and indeed cannot go beyond expressing desiderata, hopes, expectations and suggestions clothed in the grammatical garment of the subjunctive mode. Nor do Hans-Ulrich Wehler’s sceptical remarks, expressed in the indicative mode,

21 Beck, *op.cit.*, 1998, 217–268

that the nation state is incapable of dealing with globalization, multinational corporations and war lords in dissolving states, refrain from eventually also using the subjunctive mode when he pleads that “the power bearers of globalization should be subjected to an internationally valid system of rules that would [my emphasis] legally control and expropriate arbitrarily appropriated rights.”²² And whether Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s conclusion in their voluminous and ambitious study *Empire* (2001) is more than wishful thinking that the multitude must organize itself, act politically and confront the repressive operations of the Empire, remains an open question. It is difficult though to imagine that the multitude becomes an active political subject even under such favourable global conditions as the complete deterritorialization of communication, of education and culture and in spite of, as the authors maintain, this ‘new proletariat’ having already begun to articulate itself through NGOs. In the end both writers are forced to admit, “[t]he only event that we are still awaiting is the construction, or rather the insurgence, of a powerful organization,” and to concede, “we do not have any models to offer for this event. Only the multitude through its practical experimentation will offer models and determine when and how the possible becomes real.”²³

As far as the future of ELL studies goes as a discipline of the Humanities, I believe that the project outlined above deserves serious attention because it will help in setting up the cognitive map Ulrich Beck envisages. Institutionalized within a framework of transnationally co-operating departments, it will create possibilities of challenging political and cultural practices, both of narrowly conceived national, if not to say nationalist culture studies and of globally promoted homogenizing trends of an economically determined and defined education policy: by foregrounding the increasing glocalization of societies and cultures and the concomitant need for people to obtain full rights of citizenship.²⁴

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