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Who's on the Syllabus?

World Literature According to the US Pedagogical Canon

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Abstract

This article examines changes in the teaching of modern and contemporary literature in the United States. As university students become more socioeconomically and ethnically diverse, and as universities claim to be offering a more global curriculum, what are students really learning? What kinds of non-Western modern and contemporary writers find their way into the classroom? To answer these questions, we examine how much *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, *The Longman Anthology of World Literature*, and *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature* have changed over time with respect to their content and presentation. We then use a unique database of course syllabi to analyze the extent to which the non-Western authors included in these anthologies find their way more broadly into university classrooms. Getting included in anthologies, texts, and course syllabi is extremely powerful. It determines the parameters of the pedagogical canon – a shared common ground that generations of students will learn and continue to reference collectively throughout their lifetimes.

Keywords

world literature – anthologies – comparative literature – curriculum – globalization – canon

1 Introduction

Long before the days of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and “virtual” course readers that allow students to access all of their course materials online, students made the required trip to the university bookstore at the beginning of each semester. For us, this was a moment of excitement and seemingly endless possibility. A new, uncharted intellectual journey lay ahead. Books, stacked high in neat rows, with their smooth, shiny covers and gluey smell, would be our passports. Especially appealing were literary anthologies – thick, heavy tomes, with paper so thin you had to turn the pages gently so as not to tear them. Their ambitious titles and sheer weight promised those who dared to open them that they could master English or World Literature in just one semester.

The power of anthologies and textbooks like them has not diminished. They determine the parameters of what we call a pedagogical canon – a shared common ground that generations of students will learn and continue to reference collectively throughout their lifetimes. Getting included in one of these texts is an important mechanism of scale shifting. The anthology anoints not only through its weight and breadth but also by defining the content of a particular literary field for that student cohort.

In this article, we examine changes in the modern and contemporary literary pedagogical canon as a window onto scale shifting. As university students throughout Europe and the United States become more and more socioeconomically diverse, are they also being taught a more diverse curriculum? What kinds of non-Western modern and contemporary writers who have clearly “made it” beyond their nation or region of origin find their way into teaching materials used in US universities? Does scale shifting within the global literary field translate into pedagogy and how far do these changes go? To answer these questions, we look at how much the three principle world literature anthologies used throughout colleges and universities in the US – *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, *The Longman Anthology of World Literature*, and *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature* – have changed over time with respect to their content and presentation. How has the proportion of western to non-western writers shifted? What, if anything, has changed about the ways in which the content is framed and explained in the introductions and prefaces that might encourage a more global approach to literature? Using a unique database of course syllabi, we then analyze how many of the non-Western authors included in these anthologies find their way more broadly into university classrooms. Does inclusion in what often serves as a general education or introductory text translate into greater representation across the curriculum?

2 Methods

To document the global expansion of the pedagogical canon of literature, we adopted a mixed methods approach. We analyzed the content of world literature anthologies over time. We then analyzed syllabi using the Open Syllabus Explorer. We complemented these strategies by conducting interviews with anthology editors and publishers. Here we briefly describe each of the research strategies we used.

We examined three leading English language anthologies of world literature: Norton, Longman, and Bedford, which represent the most influential compilations of world literature in the US textbook market. They are widely used for survey courses, including those offered by many universities to satisfy general education distribution requirements in the humanities for non-majors. That means that the students who use these texts range from prospective majors taking an introduction to the field to students who are unlikely to go beyond this one course in world literature. The *Norton Anthology of World Literature* calls itself “the most trusted and widely used anthology of world literature” (Norton) and has a much longer history than its competitors. While our interviewees could not or would not share precise market data, it is clear that Norton is the leader in the U.S. field. Some estimated that it accounts for at least three-quarters of anthology adoptions for world literature courses; Bedford and Longman follow far behind. None of these anthologies are widely used outside the United States.

It was not our goal to evaluate these texts individually but rather to ask what kind of pedagogical canon they create when taken as a whole. To that end, we carried out quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the modern and contemporary era¹ selections from available editions of each title.² We qualitatively analyzed the editors’ prefaces and introductory sections in each collection to understand how they framed the meaning and purpose of world literature, as well as how they described the process by which they selected which works to include as editions changed over time. We then catalogued their contents to ascertain what comprises the modern and contemporary ped-

1 Which we define as since 1900.

2 The specific editions included in our content analysis are *Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, 4th ed. (1979), 5th ed. (1985), and 7th ed. (1999); *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Shorter 2nd ed. (2009), Shorter 3rd ed. (2013); *The Longman Anthology of World Literature*, Vol. F: The Twentieth Century (2004) and Compact ed. (2008); *Western Literature in a World Context* (Bedford, 1995); and *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature* (2003).

agogical canon of world literature, identifying the nationality at birth of all writers represented and coding them as either Western or non-Western.³

This allowed us to assess the extent to which scale shifting is reflected in and driven forward by anthologies. We then turned to how much anthology content affects what happens more broadly in the classroom – how inclusion in a literary anthology spills over into the wider curriculum. To do this, we used data from the Open Syllabus Explorer which allows us to assess the relative frequency of Western and Non-Western writers' inclusion on course syllabi. Open Syllabus "is a non-profit research organization that collects and analyzes millions of syllabi to support novel teaching and learning applications" (Open Syllabus). Researchers can search a database of over 1 million syllabi, used predominantly during the past decade of teaching in the US and culled for the database primarily by scraping publicly-accessible university websites. After identifying which writers appeared across two or three of the anthologies we catalogued, we used the syllabus database to determine how many of their texts were assigned, how many syllabi included their texts, and how these world literature texts compared in frequency to other texts in the database.

Finally, to further understand the processes of canon formation and the influence pedagogical materials have on the meaning of world literature, we conducted informational interviews with five editors and publishers who worked on the Norton Anthology to explore their understanding of their role in canon creation through anthologizing literary works.⁴ Our conversations, which took place in person and by phone, lasted between 30 to 90 minutes. We explored the themes we identified through our qualitative analysis of the anthologies, discussed editors' thinking about anthology content and structure, and the economic and institutional constraints at work in the publishing market that shape their editorial choices.

3 Of course, Western and non-western are conceptual constructs that do not map onto geographical boundaries. Specifically, we coded Europe, North America, and Australia as Western, and all other areas as non-Western. Thus, the Western/non-Western distinction indicates proximity to centers of power, as in a world systems approach. Though there are, of course, many differences among Western nations, the countries and regions that we classify as Western share in common that they do not have a twentieth century history of colonization by European nations. Nationality is also complicated by migration. We have coded writers by their nationality at birth; more than a few adopted other nationalities later in life, which we comment on later in this paper.

4 The general editor of the Longman Anthology declined to be interviewed for this study and we were unable to reach any of faculty involved in working on Bedford.

3 Some Brief Comments on Scale Shifting

Our focus on pedagogy brings to light that scale shifting involves several processes that do not automatically come together. The first step occurs when literary works are translated into Western languages or when more and more authors write in English, their adopted language, rather than their mother tongue. The second step takes place when these texts are recognized by critics, prize juries and academics in contexts other than the writers' context of origin. The third happens when works get included in pedagogical materials – either in literary anthologies or in the broader curriculum so they are imparted to the next generation. All three steps do not always occur nor do they happen in an orderly sequence.

Analyzing scale shifting this way, as a series of steps and with an eye toward pedagogy, also brings into sharper focus a different set of actors who may or may not be critical in some of the cases profiled in this special volume, including professors, editors, administrators and, to some extent, students. These actors re-codify or codify among a broader public what has already been codified by publishing houses, prize committees, and critics. Clearly, however, these processes are linked. The anthologies we analyze contribute to the emergence of a global literary field in two ways. They further the dissemination of scholarly debates about world literature that have developed over the last 30 years to a wider audience. They also use this discourse as a point of departure for compiling a list of recognized global writers, a form of global ranking. When this filters down, as our findings show, it may contribute to more global reading habits. It may also encourage publishers to be more inclusive and less risk averse about what they publish, thereby making it easier in the future for writers to circulate in the United States.

4 What is World Literature?

For a vast number of college-educated Americans, literature anthologies have powerfully shaped what they think of when they hear “literature.” Anthologies have canonizing power or the ability to define what constitutes “world literature” because they are often the primary (or only) contact many Americans may have with the non-western language texts included inside their covers. In this section, we draw on our qualitative analysis of the prefaces and introductory sections of anthologies to think about how these pedagogical materials define world literature and what these definitions communicate about the relationship between global, regional, and national fields of power. World literature

anthologies show a clear evolution of how leading scholars have defined the field for generations of students. Three paradigms are discernible in changing descriptions of world literature: we call these the West is World Paradigm, the West and the Rest Paradigm, and the Global Integration Paradigm. These paradigms have created different structures of possibility for global writers to scale up, out, and down into regional, national, transnational, and global fields.

4.1 *West Is World Paradigm*

As implied by our label, the original paradigm for introducing US students to world literature limited its scope only to the Western world. Norton first published *World Masterpieces: Literature of Western Culture since the Renaissance* in 1956. After three editions, the book was renamed *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces* in 1979. In the two-page preface, the *World Masterpieces* editors outline three principles “which [they] believe to be sound” (Mack et al. *World Masterpieces*, 3rd ed. xvii), in identifying masterpieces for inclusion in the anthology: (1) variety, (2) the communicative power of literature, and (3) the necessity of successful translation to English. In spite of the title change, however, the anthology continued to focus almost exclusively on works from the Western tradition. As the preface explained, the scope of the anthology was intentionally limited:

The literatures of the Far East have been omitted, on the ground that the principal aim of a course in world literature is to bring American students into living contact with their own Western tradition, and that this aim cannot be adequately realized in a single course if they must also be introduced to a very different tradition, one requiring extended treatment to be correctly understood.

MACK et al. *World Masterpieces*, 3rd ed. xvii

Instructors who wanted a broader view were directed to a companion title, *Masterpieces of the Orient*, edited by G.L. Anderson, to “incorporate Eastern literatures into their courses” (Mack et al. *World Masterpieces*, 3rd ed. xvii).

Under this paradigm, pedagogical canons in the US introduced students to literature as a Western product. To consider literatures of cultures outside the West, students would have to take a specialty course, which framed non-Western literature as having regional, rather than global, significance. Indeed, in spite of the 1979 edition’s “particularly enriched” representation of twentieth century literature by adding new “major modern writers” (Mack et al. *Norton*, 4th ed. xiii), the 20 modern writers represented in this edition included only one writer who was not European or American, the Argentinian Jorge Luis

Borges (who grew up and was educated in Europe). The West is World Paradigm reflected power fields that left no room for non-Western writers to “scale up” to a global reach and little room to “scale out” horizontally to other audiences. It also limited scaling possibilities for some Western authors as well, narrowing the scope of particular genres to only those writing in English. As general editor Maynard Mack explained in the preface to the 1979 edition, “We have always held that lyric poetry loses too much in translation to warrant extensive treatment in either a survey anthology or survey course” (Mack et al. *Norton*, 4th ed. xiv). Because editors deemed that it was too difficult to translate lyric poems into English, they did not include them within the parameters of world literature, thereby circumscribing both “world” literature’s points of origin and its form.

4.2 *West and the Rest Paradigm*

By the 1990s, introductory literature anthologies began expanding beyond their earlier limited focus on the western world by including representation of various regional literatures. Though this newer paradigm still saw Western literature as central to its purpose, it also sought to place that literature within a larger context of other literary traditions. It was in this era that the *Bedford Anthology of World Literature* entered the market. It grew out of a team-taught, multicultural “great books” course at the University of New Mexico (taught by Gary Harrison, David M. Johnson, Patricia Clark Smith, John F. Crawford, and Paul Davis). The first edition, published in 1995 as *Western Literature in a World Context*, defined world literature as including the “rich literary traditions of Asia, India, the Middle East, and the Americas as well as from the masterpieces of the Western world” (Davis et al. v). In the updated and expanded 2003 edition, retitled *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature*, the editors described their task as trying “to assemble a broad selection of the world’s literatures,” (Davis et al. viii) by including updated European texts, a more diverse array of American writers, and works from non-Western traditions.

Similarly, in response to heightened globalization and concomitant changes in curricular goals, by the early 2000s, Norton created two separate anthologies of world literature and Western literature respectively. By changing its title to *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, editors wanted to signal a significant shift: for the first time, *world* indicated a “global reach,” including “important works from Asia and Africa, central Asia and India, the Near East, Europe, and North and South America – all presented in the light of their own literary traditions, as a shared heritage of generations of readers in many countries and as part of a network of cultural and literary relationships whose scope is still being discovered” (Lawall et al. xv). Thus, adding to the “authentic masters” of

European literature that comprised *World Masterpieces*, the new *World Literature* anthology revises historical eras with the addition of sections on Native American and Europe in the New World, Vernacular Literature in China, and The Rise of Popular Arts in Premodern Japan (Lawall et.al. vii–viii).

The West and the Rest Paradigm shifts the definition of world literature primarily by *enlarging and expanding* the canon, rather than thorough epistemological reconsideration of the canon's meaning. As the Bedford editors explained:

The study and teaching of world literature have changed significantly in the past twenty to thirty years. Formerly, most world literature courses consisted of masterpieces of Western literature, while the literary traditions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America were virtually ignored. The movement to broaden the canon to more accurately represent our world – and to better represent oral and marginalized traditions in the West – has greatly increased the number of texts taught in world literature courses today.

DAVIS et al. *Bedford* v

This paradigm moves toward creating a more global education system, marking a way-station on a longer, more complicated journey toward a globalized world. It reflects a growing recognition that introductory students in the US need exposure to literary traditions other than their own and need to understand those traditions on their own terms. The focus, however, is still to understand the West in global context. In short, this paradigm represents world literature as a way to access multiple national or regional fields, rather than as a true global field that constitutes a sphere of specialized practice operating on a transcontinental scale (Buchholz). The paradigm therefore introduces scope only for shifting scale horizontally between fields: some writers are recognized by those outside their region as having regional importance. They therefore get included under an umbrella of “world literature” as it is packaged for US students.

4.3 *Global Integration Paradigm*

The Global Integration Paradigm presents world literature not just as an expanded canon that represents many areas of the globe, but rather as a unified and unifying entity of global significance. World literature gets redefined in response to strong institutional pressures to prove the continuing relevance and necessity of the humanities. Its redefinition also arises from a world in which the education sector, and what gets taught within it, is much more glob-

alized. In 2011, over 183 million students were enrolled in programs outside their countries of origin (UNESCO, n.d., in Healey and Michael 370). These programs grow out of the perceived need among parents, students, and administrators alike to prepare students to compete successfully in a global labor market and to feel some sense of responsibility to the global community. The Global Integration Paradigm is integral to the field's twenty-first century purpose of "prepar[ing] young people for a global future ... through deep and meaningful exploration of world literature" (Puchner et al. xxiii). The aim is to produce a shared literary canon that creates global citizens by introducing them to a specific set of works and by steeping them in the values that underlie them.

Exemplifying the newer Global Integration Paradigm, the Longman anthology joined the market in 2004 with a distinctive view on the "changing shape of world literature" (Damrosch and Pike xxvii). Piloted by editors David Damrosch and David L. Pike, the anthology was selected with an eye toward globalization and intercultural exchange; the editors hope the anthology will help readers navigate "the world's literary heritage" (Damrosch and Pike xxvii). It presents an expanded canon of new literary material that is increasingly available – both the latest literature circulating globally on the Internet and because older worlds of classical traditions from around the globe are more readily available. However, Longman's editors anticipate the critique that a new approach to world literature is merely about adding diversity: "nothing is included here, though, simply to make a point: whether world-renowned or recently rediscovered, these are compelling works to read" (Damrosch and Pike xix). Actively resisting the Rest and the West Paradigm, they explain that the anthology is "inclusive in principle and yet carefully selective in practice, avoiding tokenism and also its inverse, the piling up of an unmanageable array of heterogeneous material" (Damrosch and Pike xix). Instead, they outline world literature in a way that establishes it as an autonomous global field with its own practices and logics.

Though Norton's second edition described its older historical works in ways that match the West and the Rest Paradigm, it described works of the twentieth century as "demonstrably part of a new global consciousness" and claimed that "separation in the modern world is no longer a possibility" (Lawall et al. xvi). Only a few years later an entirely new editorial team for the third edition of *The Norton Anthology of World Literature* would go much further, moving all of world literature – not just the twentieth century – into the Global Integration Paradigm. World literature, they explained, is "grounded in the history of the world, but it is also the history of imagining this world; it is a history not just of what happened, but also of how humans imagined their place in the midst of history." (Puchner et al. xxiii) The Preface grew from a length of three pages

in the second edition to seven pages in the third edition, offering an elaborate explanation of world literature's guiding themes.

The editors reinterpreted older stylistic movements as having global significance and global reach, explaining, for example, that a "new section, 'Realism across the Globe,' traces perhaps the first truly global artistic movement, one that found expression in France, Britain, Russia, Brazil, and Japan" (Puchner et al. xx). In other words, realism did not just emerge in the English-speaking West but also developed elsewhere and, to varying degrees, these iterations evolved in conversation with each other. One important guiding theme is "contact and culture," which the editors describe as the "central fact of world literature." Contact was not just something that happened between fully formed cultures, but something that made these cultures possible in the first place (Puchner et al. xix). Thus global literature is not just an updated representation of the world's cultural diversity, but rather a powerful force that has shaped the history and formation of cultures and the literatures that this cultural diversity produces.

The Longman Anthology of World Literature, Compact Edition, edited by Damrosch and Pike (2008) similarly pushes themes of intercultural exchange and globalization, praising the opportunities they present "for cross-cultural understanding, as well as new kinds of tensions, miscommunication, and uncertainties" (Damrosch and Pike xxvii). A particular principle of place informs their selection criteria and analysis: "Works of world literature engage in a double conversation: with their culture of origin and with the varied contexts into which they travel away from home" (Damrosch and Pike xxvii). By defining world literature as writing engaged in a double conversation, they are signaling a new paradigm that understands world literature as reflecting multiple fields and scales and the multi-directional encounters that take place between them. The Global Integration Paradigm of world literature thus offers new points of contact between regional, national, transnational, and global fields. At these points of intersection, writers can move from one field to another by scaling up, down, or out and sometimes by working within more than one field simultaneously.

In the Global Integration Paradigm, translation becomes an opportunity rather than a barrier, serving as the most important point of contact between power fields. Damrosch et al. define world literature as "works that gain in translation," and that "gain in resonance as they move out into new contexts, new conjunctions" (Damrosch et al. xx). Similarly, Norton's 2013 editorial board reversed prior editors' stance on translation, asserting that translation expands rather than contracts the boundaries of world literature: "While purists sometimes insist on studying literature only in the original language, a dogma that radically shrinks what one can read, world literature not only relies on trans-

lation but actually thrives on it" (Puchner et al. xix). In this understanding, translation to a global *lingua franca* serves its own aesthetic and ideal function: translation can, in fact, enhance literature's suitability for a global canon "not so much by mirroring and reflecting an unchanged meaning, as by refracting it, in a prismatic process that can add new highlights and reveal new facets in a classic text" (Damrosch et al. xxi). By enabling worldwide circulation, the process of translation is, in fact, constitutive of global literature.

Consistent with its attention to multiple fields simultaneously, the Global Integration Paradigm signals that there are two different experiences of reading and understanding – one in the original language that is strongly linked to the context in which it is written and the other which, through the act of translation, necessarily connects to crosscutting themes and literary devices through the shared use of English. Indeed, in the new paradigm, translation itself is a form of art. "We have sought out compelling translations for all our foreign-language works, and periodically we offer our readers the opportunity to think directly about the issue of translation. Sometimes we offer distinctively different translations of differing works from a single author or source." (Damrosch and Pike xxx). This view of translation not only redefines its boundaries but also invites readers to entertain epistemological questions about the definition of world literature. In response to this more sympathetic view, some recent anthologies expand the boundaries of world literature to include "distinct kinds of literature, even very different ideas as to what should be called 'literature' at all" (Damrosch and Pike xxvii). The new kinds of writing that make up Globally Integrated world literature include lyric poetry, drama, manifestos, oral traditions such as folk tales and slave stories, creation myths, wisdom literature, and religious texts (Puchner et al. xxii).

To sum up, a Global Integration Paradigm for thinking about world literature means the pedagogical canon supports new possibilities for writers to shift scales between regional, national, transnational, and global literary fields. Writers from outside the West can be presented to students as significant, not just as representing their own local literary fields, but also as constituting something inherently new – a unifying field of world literature at the global scale. These writers are not merely added, in a kind of literary affirmative action, to a Western canon to be recognized around the world but, instead, contribute works that circulate within an autonomous global literary field. Translation is a tool that (selectively) opens points of contact with other literary fields and encourages an epistemic re-consideration of what kinds of writing constitute world literature.

TABLE 1 Western regions and countries represented in world literature anthologies

Western region	# of writers	Specific countries represented
Europe	52	Austria, Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain
North America	37	Canada, US
Australia	2	Australia (one is from an indigenous people group)
Total	89	

5 Who is World Literature?

Given how the Global Integration Paradigm redefines world literature, who is included? Because global literature is an autonomous literary field with its own logics, it is not the case that all writers in the world are global. Particular writers and works successfully navigate the points of contact and exchange between the global and other literary fields. So who are the writers that characterize the global literary field, as taught in the new Global Integration Paradigm? Can we discern any commonalities about what it takes to gain recognition at this particular scale?

5.1 *Who's in the Textbook?*

We catalogued and analyzed the modern authors included in the most recent editions of the Norton, Bedford, and Longman anthologies.⁵ The modern era volumes/sections of the three anthologies that we analyzed contain a total of 175 authors. In keeping with the editors' expressed principles, this pedagogical canon is quite integrated: Western and non-Western writers are equally represented in these combined volumes, with 49.7% of modern writers Western and 50.3% non-Western. Tables 1 and 2 show the world regions and specific countries represented by modern writers included in the world literature anthologies we surveyed. Our analysis reveals that the editorial selections do

⁵ The volumes and editions we catalogued for this analysis are: *Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Shorter 3rd ed., Vol. 2 (2013), *The Longman Anthology of World Literature*, Volume F (2004), and *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature*, Volume 6 (2003). We catalogued all modern/contemporary writers (1900–present).

TABLE 2 Non-Western regions and countries represented in world literature anthologies

Non-Western region	# of writers	Specific countries represented
Africa	24	Algeria, Botswana, Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda
East Asia	17	China, Japan, Taiwan
Western Asia	13	Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey
South Asia	12	India, Bangladesh
Latin America	12	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru
Caribbean	6	Haiti, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Martinique, Cuba, Antigua, Jamaica
Total	86	

indeed reflect the ideals of contact and culture that characterize the Global Integration Paradigm.

This stands in stark contrast to global representation in some other fields of cultural production. For example, in a related analysis, we found that non-Western artists make up only 23% of modern and contemporary artists included in current art history textbooks (Levitt and Rutherford 2019). However, it is important to note that the *balanced* representation of writers in world literature anthologies is not *representative*. Although Western and non-Western modern writers are represented almost equally in world literature textbooks, their representation in this canon of world literature is not proportional to global population: Europe and North America make up about 15% of the world's population but contribute just over half of the writers recognized in this pedagogical canon of world literature. Asia, in contrast, constitutes 60 percent of the world's population but contributes only 24% of the world's literature in the anthologies in our study. (See Table 3)

In order to assess the consistency between the various anthologies analyzed, we coded each author to determine how many anthologies he or she appeared in. This allowed us to evaluate how much editors agree about the importance of particular authors for world literature as well as what works form the core of the pedagogical canon. Of the 175 authors included in the editions of the three textbooks we analyzed, 126 of them appeared in a single anthology; 23 appeared in

TABLE 3 Population and world literature representation by global region

Region	Population (in Millions) ^a	World population share ^b	Share of world literature representation
Asia	4,504	59.7 %	24 %
Africa	1,256	16.6 %	14 %
Europe	742	9.8 %	30 %
Latin America & Caribbean	645	8.6 %	10 %
North America	361	4.8 %	21 %
Oceania	40	0.5 %	1 %

a <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-region/>.

b <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-region/>.

two anthologies; and 26 appeared in all three. A closer look at which authors are featured in all three books provides some sense of what we might call the “central pedagogical canon” of world literature. (See Table 5) Of these 26 authors, 11 are European and 3 are North American. The remaining 12 come from countries we coded as Non-Western. The selections suggest that the editors are committed to including literature from a wide range of countries: Only Ireland and the US have more than one author in this list; the remaining 20 writers each originate from different countries.

But in this global world, classifying belonging is never simple. A closer look shows that several canonized modern writers who were born elsewhere later studied, worked in, or became citizens of the UK or US. In fact, this points us toward a significant finding: modern-era writers who were included in more than one world literature anthology were 5 times as likely to have citizenship ties to more than one country than writers upon whom there was less editorial consensus. We might say that textbook editors agree that global migration is a key source of world literature in the modern era. Furthermore, in terms of scale shifting and gaining greater recognition on the global stage, migration to cultural power centers matters more than migration elsewhere. In fact, if we consider only American writers of global literature, we see that they have been strongly influenced by diasporic movements. As the Bedford editors explained, they selected “American writers who have had significant contact with world culture and who have influenced or defined who we are as Americans,” (Davis et al. *Bedford* viii). Slightly more than two-thirds (N = 25) of the US authors in these world literature anthologies are racial/ethnic minorities in the US. (See Table 5)

TABLE 4 Modern writers included in all three anthologies

Author	Nationality
Achebe, Chinua	Nigeria
Akhmatova, Anna	Russia
Baldwin, James	US
Beckett, Samuel	Ireland
Borges, Jorge Luis	Argentina
Brecht, Bertolt	Germany
Celan, Paul	Romania/Germany/France
Conrad, Joseph	Poland/England
Darwish, Mahmoud	Palestine
Eliot, TS	US/England
Joyce, James	Ireland
Kafka, Franz	Austria/Hungary/Czech Republic
Lorca, Federico Garcia	Spain
Mahfouz, Naguib	Egypt
Marquez, Gabriel Garcia	Colombia
Naipaul, V.S.	Trinidad/UK
Neruda, Pablo	Chile
Paz, Octavio	Mexico
Rilke, Rainer Maria	Austria
Rushdie, Salman	India/UK/US
Senghor, Leopold Sedar	Senegal
Silko, Leslie Marmon	US/Native American
Walcott, Derek	St. Lucia
Woolf, Virginia	England
Xun, Lu	China
Yeats, William Butler	Ireland

5.2 *Who's on the Syllabus?*

The Norton, Longman, and Bedford Anthologies clearly play a major role in anointing particular authors and particular works. But to what extent is there a ripple effect on the rest of the curriculum? Do these authors and works get taught beyond the anthology in different types and levels of courses? To assess the breadth of writers' inclusion in classrooms, we analyzed data from The Syllabus Project. We examined the extent to which the work of the writers who appeared in more than one of the anthologies we catalogued is assigned,

TABLE 5 US writers by racial & ethnic group

Racial/ethnic group	# of US writers included in world literature anthologies
Black/African-American/Afro-Caribbean	12
White/European American	11
Native American	9
Hispanic/Latinx	2
Asian-American	2

how many syllabi included their texts, and how their writings compared in frequency to other texts in the database. Our sample included 22 Western writers and 27 Non-Western writers. We examined the total number of texts by and about the writers, the number of syllabi on which the top 5 most-assigned texts by each writer appeared, and the database ranking of the most-assigned text by or about each author.⁶

Although we found that Western and Non-Western writers have balanced representation in world literature anthologies, we cannot say the same about their representation in the broader curriculum as reflected by the Open Syllabus Project. The Open Syllabus Project assigns each text a teaching score (0–100), representing its percentile rank among citations in the total collection. This metric is a numerical indicator of the relative frequency with which a particular work is taught. Comparing these rankings is one way to get a sense of the relative canonical “importance” a text carries. The Syllabus Explorer tool’s filters did not allow us to reliably limit our analysis only to literature courses. The teaching score is relative to *all* other texts across the entire curriculum represented in the database. This allows us to think beyond a single discipline and examine whether pedagogical inclusion in US university curricula provides scaling opportunities for Non-Western writers.

Though there is substantial variation within each group, there is also a clear overall picture. Both the mean and median teaching scores are considerably higher for Western writers. For the most-assigned text of Western and non-Western authors, the range of teaching scores is similar: 2.5 to 98.2 for Western

6 In the search results for six writers, the most-assigned text in the database is a secondary text about the writer. Four of these are non-Western writers and two are Western writers. We have included these secondary texts in our analysis as the most-assigned text for these writers.

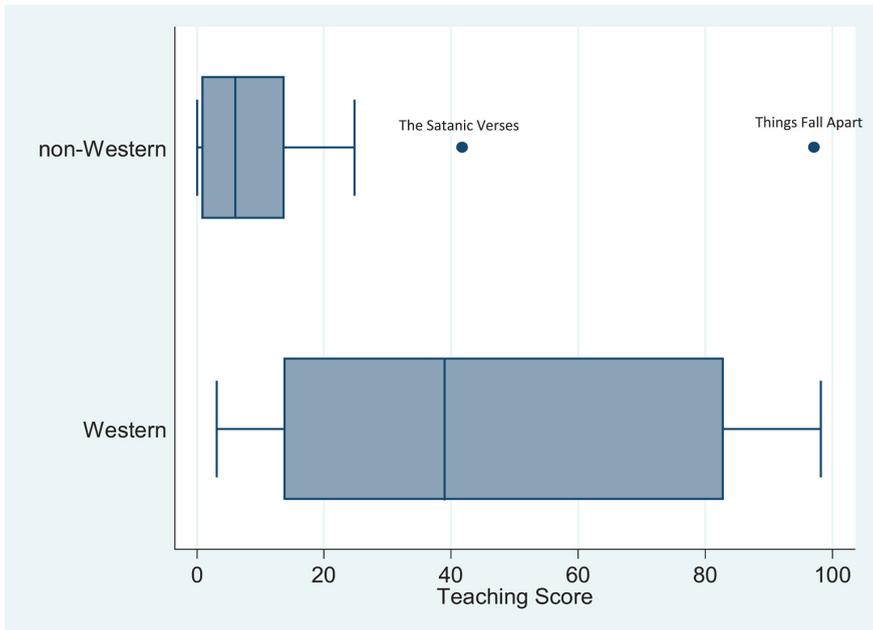


FIGURE 1 Distribution of teaching scores for most-assigned text of author, Western vs. non-Western

texts and \circ (no texts assigned) to 97.1 for non-Western texts. Despite comparable ranges, the median teaching score for Western texts is substantially higher than the median for non-Western texts: 39 versus 8.9. Only three non-Western texts have teaching scores greater than the Western median: Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* ($ts=41.7$), Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* ($ts=45.1$), and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* ($ts=97.1$). The remaining 24 non-Western texts all have teaching scores less than 25. In contrast, 15 of the 22 Western texts have teaching scores *greater than* 25. (See Figure 1) Even limiting our analysis only to the Non-Western writers who appeared in *all three* anthologies – that is, those who have arguably been the *most* canonized – the median teaching score for Non-Western writers in the syllabus database reaches only 12.8 for their most-assigned texts.

Could there simply be more variability as to which texts by Non-Western writers are taught? To look beyond the most popular work of each writer, we compared the 5 most frequently taught titles by or about each writer. A total of 26,107 syllabi in the database include one of the top 5 most-assigned texts by or about the Western writers queried. By contrast, only 6,970 syllabi in the database include one of the top 5 most-assigned texts by or about the Non-Western writers queried. Although it is not possible to tell how repre-

sentative the syllabi in the database are, it is striking that in this collection of over 1 million college and university courses, Western literary writers are more than 3 times as likely to be on the syllabus as Non-Western literary writers.

6 Who Decides and Why?

In her examination of multiculturalism in English departments, Bryson (2005) argues for the need to consider the relationship between abstract and grounded culture. Changing ideas about what world literature means largely originate in the abstract culture of scholarly discourse. Selecting writers for inclusion in an anthology begins to ground those ideas in material culture. Whether those texts are actually read by students is further grounded in the practices of pedagogical cultures. To understand more fully how and why pedagogical canons change, we must understand how teaching practices are grounded in the institutional constraints and economic realities of higher education.

Clearly, anthology editors act as gatekeepers, defining for an educated public what world literature is and who fits that definition. But these editors, though powerful actors, are also constrained by institutional and market forces they do not create. First of all, content creators and their agents influence anthology content by deciding whether work may be included at what the publisher considers a reasonable royalty rate (Levitt and Rutherford 2019). Second, users strongly influence content. According to Pete Simon, a Vice President at Norton who manages the *Norton Anthology of World Literature* (NAWL) from the publisher's side, instructors' preferences matter deeply. Their responses to the intensive, sophisticated market research that Norton conducts about what they want and actually use strongly circumscribe the scope and breadth of the changes editors can make. Some instructors will refuse to continue using an anthology if certain authors or works are dropped. Others are not comfortable teaching about genres or time periods they do not know. "We take our cues from teachers," Simon said.

We have noticed that during the period since 1990–2017 that more professors have shifted toward global courses even among those who still have a strong preference for the western literary tradition. There has been a migration away from western to the more global and they are forcing the hand of the rest of the folks.

SIMON

But just how “global” these courses actually become varies considerably. Some instructors charge willingly into unknown territory, excited about learning about new works and introducing them to their students. They see their task, as do some editors and administrators, as luring students imaginatively into a world that is foreign to them. Martin Puchner, the Bryon and Anita Wein Professor of Drama and of English and Comparative Literature at Harvard University and the current general editor of the *NAWL*, explained:

When I go to places like northern Alabama, I find it very moving to realize that this is how many students encounter the world. They haven’t traveled much. They don’t have passports. They haven’t left the United States. I want them to come in contact with the world. I don’t care that much about the particular texts. Literature is just a great way to do this because it is unmediated ... you encounter a different voice, a different time, a different part of world, that you have to grapple with.

PUCHNER, interview

Others are convinced or prodded into changing by the changing demographics of US university students. If a student is not directly interested in work from Asia, they might be convinced to reconsider if an instructor connects that work to the Asian-American experience. This is what Vice President for Global Strategy and Deputy Provost for International Affairs at Yale University, Pericles Lewis, who is also the principal editor of the *NAWL*’s Modern and Contemporary volume, describes as creating a global canon specifically for American students:

We are thinking about the American situation. So we increased the numbers of African-American writers and Latino writers and also include Arabic or Asian, because we know a good number of people in US come from those areas. We are also thinking of the children of immigrants too.

LEWIS

Either way, making decisions about what qualifies as world literature based on the needs and preferences of US audiences has its dangers. Should anthologies and curricular materials canonize writers who are distinctively global in character, or should the pedagogy of world literature revolve more around works that are already canonized in their own countries? Wiebke Denecke, Associate Professor of East Asian Literatures and Comparative Literatures and another member of the *NAWL* editorial team, believes that the anthology should also emphasize works that have reception histories in their own contexts and are

taught in the places where they were written. Otherwise, the editors risk substituting American aesthetic criteria for those of other areas of the world they wish to represent, such as selecting works to please Korean-American students that are not actually important in Korea.

Lewis described his editorial process as follows: Before he began, Norton provided him with extensive user data about which works are taught most frequently. Project managers also told him that he could not include works that were prohibitively expensive – that is why, for example, Wallace Stevens got left out. He had to find English translations that did not go over certain page limits. His solution was to include mostly poetry written in English, to use more translations of prose, and to include full works rather than excerpts, meaning there is a preference for short stories or short novels. The first thing that you look for, he said, is a story that will be really interesting to students. A work should be fairly realistic, about an average, young person who students can relate to, that includes a strong sense of the context in which it was written. “It should be something,” said Lewis, “that reflects the time and place and context so that students can learn something from that.” (Lewis). But the goal is not just to expose students to new places so they will begin to locate themselves there. Most importantly, it is to expose them to good literature written by good authors.

I want them to read good examples of good language. Chinua Achebe is so canonical because he writes in a way that allows readers to understand what it was like to be an African person experiencing the forces of colonialism ... I would like to give students access to best literature from across the world written in the 20th century and to help them understand lives that are very different from their own.

LEWIS

Canons, believes Lewis, bring people together. Once you have read a book that is in the canon, you can talk to other people who have read that book. You have a common reference point. But, Lewis goes on, the NAWL editors want to expand that canon.

We are trying to provide a version of a canon that is broad and democratic, that is inclusive, not elitist. We are trying to provide all the info that is necessary so a first year student can read and learn a lot about literature and the world without needing additional tools beyond a dictionary.

LEWIS

General Editor Puchner also had an ambitious vision when he took over. He wanted nothing short of redefining world literature, not as a showcase of the world but as works that create worlds and engage with existing ones. Rather than impose a single conception of literature, he sees the current editorial team curating texts that are not about a whole “but of a conjunction, a story about literature and the world”, that acknowledges the relationship between world literature and the world market and different understandings of literariness (Puchner, *Teaching* 258).

But the team encountered clear economic and substantive limits to the implementation of their vision. As the well-known retailing mantra goes, “the customer is always right.” Publishers pay close attention to the results of their market research. They often find that instructors are uncomfortable or unwilling to make too many changes to their established classroom routines. One reason is that anthologies are more likely to be used at second- and third-tier southeastern universities than in Ivy League schools or small liberal arts colleges. Lower-division introductory and survey courses in these institutions are increasingly taught by a contingent labor force of adjunct instructors, whose employment structure makes departures from traditional pedagogy and content unlikely. There is little incentive or time to be innovative. There are often strong bureaucratic hurdles to changing the title of a course let alone changing its content, even if an instructor is willing to do so (Lauter 2010). In many of these places, Puchner came to realize, “many instructors are overworked and underpaid. They feel overwhelmed by the idea of teaching new aspects of world literature and they have somehow built for themselves a syllabus that works” (Puchner, interview) Therefore, if a new edition changes four out of the eight texts that they use, some instructors find it too demanding. They may even stop assigning the Anthology if their favorite text disappears. At the same time, the US government requires that a certain percentage of new material be included to justify the publication of a new edition. Thus begins the balancing act between economic constraints, instructor preference, and editors’ intellectual vision.

Not only are abstract culture and grounded culture dependent upon on each other, but a global literary field is shaped by day-to-day practices in distant contexts. To truly understand the operations of a global literary field, we must not only examine the evaluation metrics employed by relatively powerful gatekeepers, but also the ways that those elements of abstract culture depend upon enactment in mundane, daily practices. An aspiring author’s writing practices Lebanon, Thailand, or Chile must be understood alongside the teaching practices of an adjunct instructor in Laredo, Texas or Springfield, Missouri or Valdosta, Georgia. Though powerful arbiters such as anthology edi-

tors may make visible the connections between these places, editors are also constrained by the institutional realities that shape daily life in each location.

7 Conclusion

Between 2006 and 2015, the number of international branch campuses (IBCs) in the world increased by 43 percent (Becker). Over three quarters of mature IBCs were founded by institutions in the US, the UK, Russia, France, and Australia, and “half of all IBCs under development worldwide in 2017 were being planned by institutions based in the US and UK” (Merola 1). One of the leaders in the field of global education, New York University, promises that it prepares “students for lives in a diverse world” which can only be done “when the outside world is not held at bay.” It is a “Global Network University” that is both “in and of the city” and “in and of the world,” including portal campuses and academic programs on every continent except Antarctica which allow students to complete their major requirements wherever they are (NYU).

This is where the theoretical questions about scale shifting between literary fields that animate this special volume intersect with our analyses of the teaching of world literature. Throughout the Global North, there is a drive toward preparing students to work in and contribute to communities that extend beyond their own. These efforts are potential drivers of one step in scale shifting. Some works that have been anointed by editors, critics and prize juries as part of a new global literary canon are then selected to be part of a global literary pedagogical canon. Our analysis sheds light on why and how far these changes migrate into other parts of the university curriculum.

Our findings suggest that the anthologies we looked at are crucial in driving forward this second step of scale shifting – of moving beyond inclusion in the “critical” canon to the pedagogical one. They impart a more global understanding of literature to a specific group of students in the United States. This, however, does not seem to translate into wider coverage of these authors in the curriculum as a whole. The canon is more inclusive but its reach still has a way to go.

The market for the anthologies we analyze is almost entirely US-based. We do not know whether similar pedagogical agendas are salient in other classrooms and what kinds of curricular innovations are being developed in response. Preliminary fieldwork in Argentina and Lebanon about how artists and writers from these countries circulate in the global art world suggests that professors are more preoccupied with ensuring that students read, period, than

with exposing them to a more diverse group of texts. They want them to master classical and contemporary works from their own part of the world. The teaching of world literature, then, may be the privilege of the few countries that have already confidently claimed their space in the global literary field. Only those nations that feel recognized and secure turn their attention to others – the luxury of the powerful to redirect its gaze. The fact that the humanities in general is beleaguered throughout the world and, in many cases, fighting to prove its relevance, makes it that much more difficult to expand the boundaries of literary belonging beyond the nation.

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