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## **Comparative Literature into World Literature: Scholarship and Politics in the Contemporary Era**

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[O]ur philological home is the earth[.]  
—Erich Auerbach, “Philology and *Weltliteratur*,” 1952

[N]ot just American house, but the world house.  
—Representative John Lewis, CBS This Morning, June 3, 2020

Literature helps worlding the world[.]  
—Bertrand Westphal, *Metacritic*, June 2020

Disciplines from literary-cultural criticism and cybernetics to environmental studies and economics have been undergoing of late a spectacular and complex reorientation, the result of which is the incremental if still contentious recentering of entire fields, epistemologies, methodologies, and vocabularies on “world” and its prefixed and suffixed brethren. The planet’s ensemble of animate and inanimate existence—the world seen as a largely integrated and finite whole—has thus over the past few decades swam into scholars’ ken, challenging and reframing their basic inquiries. Picking up the gauntlet of the world-as-world, today’s humanities and sciences, we argue, are accordingly becoming themselves “worlded,” participating in the transdisciplinary fostering of a veritable world discourse. This means pursuing basically two objectives, usually at the same time. One is describing and theorizing the world, more exactly, attempting new, or with a new urgency, such descriptions and theorizations in response to the contemporary crises of the surrounding, empirical world itself; the other is deploying such

descriptions and theorizations to rethink the work done across disciplines. This discourse's conceptual sphere comprises and activates, on one side, "world" and the semantic cluster derived from this word's use as a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb, and on the other side, "planet," "earth," "globe," and other cognate terms that designate, depending on context, use, and user, realities equivalent to or distinct from "world" entirely or in part.

Such terminological developments speak and have been instrumental, we also contend, to an entire, spectacular *paradigm shift*—to a reframing of intellectual problematics across cognitive and geopolitical areas. This has been a change largely prompted by a novel, holistic or world-systemic view of realities heretofore treated, comparatively speaking, predominantly as unrelated, location-bound or, better yet, location-limited occurrences. It has become more and more obvious, in hindsight, that even the quintessential cultural location of modernity, national territory, complete with the symmetrically national culture presumed to flourish inside its area, is de facto a "transareal" formation. That is, this space, national as it is, proves on closer inspection inconceivable outside transnational and often planetary exchanges and dis-locations—otherwise put, largely Romantic, putative signatures of home, domestic place, and sovereignty such as "national" literature and culture are "out of place" and out of that particular place, as Ottmar Ette, Horst Nitschack, and others have abundantly demonstrated over the past decades.<sup>1</sup> While the birth of this novel view, vision, or, more exactly, world vision can be traced throughout cultural history and across traditions Western and non-Western, its proliferation abruptly intensifies, takes on recognizably contemporary features, and becomes in fact a hallmark of the contemporary in the humanities, the arts, and beyond after the end of the Cold War and especially during the last twenty-odd years. Not so much an end of history à la Francis Fukuyama, the late 1980s-1990s interval did bring about the crisis if not the complete demise of

a scholarly mindset dominated by a world *en miettes*, as the French would say, in fragments, and therefore dealt with “piece by piece.”

The correspondent growth into prominence of a competing world paradigm, to wit, the advent of the world-as-world, of the world as one or, more likely, of a world transiting visibly, demonstrably, and faster than ever before to a one-world condition following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ever-accelerating economic, informational, and cultural integration spurred by the Internet and other early-1990s hi-tech breakthroughs, could be neither inhibited nor obfuscated by the geopolitical backdrop over and against which such integration has taken place. This background—the real world itself—has been paradoxically marked by world-centrifugal actions and reactions such as resurgent nationalisms, fundamentalisms, interethnic strife, tribalism, Brexitism and other populist-isolationist-protectionist flareups, as well as by one economic, ecological, and pandemiological debacle after another. These do go to show that the focus on “integration” and on the multifaceted move in practice and thought toward “oneness,” toward planetary “interconnectedness,” should in no way be construed as turning a blind eye to the resilient and sometimes deepening asymmetries and inequalities between North and South, rich and poor, men and women, queer and straight, inhuman and human, sentient and non-sentient, and so forth. Undeniable as they are, such disjunctions, conflicts, disasters, and the more cloistered or seemingly cloistered places experiencing them have become, however, themselves increasingly world-systemic, “worlded” in the sense that, for better or worse, they find it ever-more difficult to opt out of the circuitries and transits of the world as system. The most significant and consequential of these developments are systemic on a world scale, and so they hurt nowadays not only local communities and isolated zones and habitats of human and non-human existence inside or across nation-states; our planet’s smallest quarters and “remotest”

corners—remote with respect to what, one might ask—are affected, for they are willy-nilly part of bigger worlds and of the worldly totality subtending those. Vice versa, the entire world is impacted by actually or seemingly region-specific, “outlying” events and emergencies, from tropical deforestation and the melting of ice caps to the 2007 Wall Street crash, the rise of non-statal terror actors, and the viral outbreak du jour. The COVID-19 pandemic itself is, biologically, socioculturally, and otherwise, the flipside of the endemic, much like the contemporary age, the age of the world, is the reverse, and the “sublation,” of the era of a *discrete* world—two faces and stages of the same historical and geocultural dialectic.

As in the *Handbook*'s other essay titles, the gerund in mine indexes a disciplinary project as well as an ongoing process. Both are fairly recent. They are, in fact, epistemological marks of the contemporary. The discipline they have been affecting is, in this case, comparative literature; worlding, the process I am referring to, and on which this volume's introduction expounds in greater detail, has been steadily overhauling this particular corner of the humanities, as it has others, since the early 1990s. What is more, not only did the worlding of comparative literature get underway after the Berlin Wall's fall—itsself *the* worlding event of the last decades—but this latest metamorphosis of comparatism is highly characteristic of the post-Cold War-era, especially of the new millennium. Part and parcel of changes reaching far beyond the ivory towers, the transformation is as geopolitically intelligible as other phenomena, less academic yet isomorphic with this shift and so largely attuned to the logic of accelerating world-scale transnationalism, from capital mobility, neoliberal consolidation of world markets, outsourcing, migration, weakening of national sovereignty, growing ecumenic awareness, and cosmopolitan

lifestyles, to Internet data exchange, the social-media, simultaneous publishing, the pandemic du jour, and other aspects of late globalization's mixed-bag symptomatology.

What has been happening to comparative literature in this unprecedented environment is not exactly tantamount to a superseding of the field by World Literature. The latter shares and should be expected to further hone at least some of the former's tools, skills, and concerns, including multilingual expertise and ability to work in the original idiom instead of relying merely on translations, let alone on English translations solely, no matter how pivotal those are to both World Literature as a scholarly domain and to world literature as a literary production arena and, generally speaking, object of World Literature.<sup>2</sup> But, on the whole, the worlding of comparative literature can be seen as yielding or, better yet, as bringing back and updating, in response to cultural, economic, and cognitive pressures by the historically unmatched global mutations of the Cold War's aftermath, the World Literature model of understanding and analyzing literary practices and their sociocultural underpinnings and ramifications.

This model is not entirely new, then. On one side of modernity, its roots push all the way back into the dawn of rhetoric, Biblical studies, philology, and, later on, into the infancy of comparative literature, to which—*nota bene*—early-mid-1800s visionary glosses by German thinkers on *Weltliteratur* have been indisputably foundational. While the term itself is not Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's coinage, some of the epoch's most famous and trailblazing considerations on the subject were. Made by him mainly between 1825 and 1832, they were recorded chiefly in Johann Peter Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, known in the Anglophone world as *Conversations with Eckermann*.<sup>3</sup> Goethe's observations were followed by a no less celebrated paragraph in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's 1848 *Communist Manifesto*.<sup>4</sup> Invoked ritualistically by the participants in our time's

World Literature debates, these assertions articulate a *Weltliteratur* notion loosely but constantly in overt opposition to what Marx and Engels castigate as *nationale Einseitigkeit und Beschränktheit*—“national one-sidedness and narrowness” (or “parochialism”).<sup>5</sup> Of course, it has become de rigueur to point up the notion’s vagueness and contradictions. But if it has been front and center to World Literature’s comeback, that is due to a conceptual core not only sufficiently recognizable by us today but also speaking to our post-1989 world condition. For, shaping this decisively—and thus essentially defining what World Literature was and is—are driving forces and traits not unlike those giving birth to Goethe, Marx, and Engels’s “bourgeois” era. The difference lies principally in their updated technological accoutrements and in the bigger scale of intensity and extensiveness on which they are playing out at present. In the main, those agents and attributes consisted for Goethe, Marx, and others two hundred years ago, as they do now for their followers,<sup>6</sup> of increasingly worldwide circulation, cultural “intercourse” (Goethe’s word), mutual influence, reception, and translation of literary material, which were and are all made possible by, and in turn reinforce, the socioeconomic connectivity Marx and Engels already noticed “everywhere.”<sup>7</sup> At any rate, neither Goethe nor his heirs would deem World Literature a mechanically summative, uniform and uniformity-inducing literary warehouse.

On the side of modernity closer to us, World Literatures has been cross-fertilized and often challenged by new developments in the literary humanities and social sciences. On this account too, the World Literature idea by and large predates the worlding of comparative literature. But what I designate by World Literature in these pages is *post-Cold War* World Literature or the contemporary stage of the time-honored discipline—not its birth but its *rebirth* in a specific and specifically redefining geohistorical context. In it, Goethe’s well-known 1827 imperative prophecy “the age of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its

approach” sounds, however, truer and, to some at least, more urgent than ever.<sup>8</sup> The return of a familiar intellectual tradition in the “World Literature turn” does not take anything away from the magnitude of what we have been witnessing for thirty-odd years, and whether this revival displaces, sublates, or updates comparative literature, the worlding in play here is momentous; we are witnessing, I contend, nothing less than a *Paradigmenwechsel*.

In what follows, I review this shift by addressing succinctly a range of intertwined topics. Some of them pertain to the epistemological apparatus of World Literature, viz., to what the latter is and means as an intellectual pursuit these days; to what World Literature does concretely or how it produces knowledge as it grapples with its intimidatingly voluminous and multifaceted object; to how World Literature has come about, or, again, how it has come back, why, and in reaction to what; and to what the disciplinary implications of its resurgence have been within as well as around it. Broached toward the end of my contribution are prevailing ontological and ethical-political issues prompting interrogations such as: What kind of “world” do we have in “World Literature”? Is that world the same as the one the discipline aspires or should aspire to? How does that world concept tie into cognate yet distinct notions such “earth,” “globe,” and “planet”? What do world, worlding, planet, and planetarization do that globe and globalization cannot or would not do? While some of the answers my intervention provides attest to an emerging consensus, others may satisfy fewer readers. I assume this disparity, but I would also point out that it is not unrelated to the internal dynamic of a still unsettled inquiry terrain whose fluidity invites, especially at this stage, discrepant stabilizing attempts and, with them, disputes ranging from substantial to the usual turf skirmishes.

It is unlikely, though, that diverging World Literature models and applications will eventually align. Nor should they, I suggest. As David Damrosch, twenty-first-century World

Literature's leading authority, and others have emphasized, the very territory in question lends itself inherently to multiple ways of mapping and reading its expressive topography, all of them a function of the cartographer-reader's particular self-positioning in this restless space. This is as much as saying that defining and, more importantly, doing World Literature are a markedly personal venture. This cognitive foray is more "perspectival," more "anamorphic"—and thereby more contentious<sup>9</sup>—than other interpretive exploits insofar as it reflects, and in effect *requires*, what Erich Auerbach termed *Ansatzpunkt* in his famous 1952 article "Philologie der Weltliteratur."<sup>10</sup> A "point of departure" or "handle, as it were, by which the subject can be seized," an *Ansatzpunkt*, he explained, "must be the election of a firmly circumscribed, easily comprehensible set of phenomena whose interpretation is a radiation out from them and which orders and interprets a greater region than they themselves occupy."<sup>11</sup> What Auerbach delineates here is a "world philologist's" *individual* "entry point." At once distinct from and germane to it is World Literature's own, *disciplinary* access to world literature. For, through its very name and genealogy, World Literature lays bare its overall ethnocultural-historical *Ansatzpunkt* and, by the same token, double bind. They will both remain a prerequisite to *and* a check on World Literature scholarship until, as Thomas O. Beebee writes, "the next step in world literature"—"the activation of a [genuinely] world literary theory and world literary criticism"—has been completed so as to allow for enough *Ansatzpunkte* susceptible to "order" the variegated world literary archive into constellations of meaning and form less beholden to World Literature's *Weltliteratur* pedigree and to Western inheritance more broadly.<sup>12</sup>

While today's World Literature critics and theorists are struggling to nuance the disciplinary vantage point that, in Goethe's *Weltliteratur* vision itself, could not but shrink ethnocentrically the acumen and scope of Auerbachian "intuition," the same critics would do



well to acknowledge that World Literature will always be, explicitly or implicitly, a necessarily collective undertaking in which—and because—unescapably partial insights must balance and complement each other. An apparently paradoxical glue of World Literature as a discipline, this limited purview and, bound up with it, the variety of entry points, directions, coverages, and foci ought not only to be owned up to but also leveraged as a premise to build. The “limitation” here is a blessing in disguise. For one thing, it is not quantitative; it does not stem, as Franco Moretti and others have complained, from how little one can read compared to the daunting world literature output. For another, and more notably still, it is not at all a shortcoming either, something one must yet, alas, cannot “overcome.”<sup>13</sup> Deriving from the very nature of what we are dealing with, from what World Literature’s object structurally amounts to, the partiality is, I maintain, productive or can be harnessed to positive, deontological work. If approached properly, this very ontology of world literature can serve as an ethical foundation and driver of World Literature itself, as another starting point for the worlding and coming together of the field and its students themselves around a subject matter that intrinsically calls on them to do just that—work together, “correct” and “supplement” each other, and learn from one another’s “syntheses” while collating them, step by step, into the ever-in-progress, forever tentative, ineludibly mosaic-like World Literature panorama of world literature.

A trope, a theme, an author, or a larger corpus of a certain era, the *Ansatzpunkt* represents the passageway between the World Literature critic’s initial intuition and his or her intended “synthesis.” As Jérôme David observes in his jestingly Eckermannian rollcall of Goethean revenants rubbing shoulders in the intellectual high drama of World Literature rediviva, intuition is here quasi synonymous to Gianbattista Vico’s *ingenium*.<sup>14</sup> When approached “ingeniously,” a text, set of texts, or *figura* opens a window into the much ampler literary ensemble whose survey

is the synthetic account the critic should ultimately produce. To get there, one brings to fruition one's original insight, whose fundamental thrust is, as Auerbach put it, "coadunatory" and whose movement he described as "centrifugal radiation."<sup>15</sup> Starting small and following his or her *ingenium* across the gradually unearthed lattice of associations as far as possible, Auerbach's World Literature student reconstitutes the network of relationships in which his or her textual point of departure is enmeshed as a genetic location of other texts, as an echo of other originating works whose own seeds had been sown by other works before them, as a crossroads of diachronic and synchronic literary-cultural encounters, and so forth. This is what World Literature roughly involves, what it basically *does* qua reading protocol. As such, this is also a key "metadisciplinary" *Ansatzpunkt* of sorts, the locus where a World Literature definition might and, to my mind, should begin. More specifically: this World Literature point or feature is the reading mechanics Auerbach's mathematical and geometrical metaphors help us picture and the discipline's today proponents theorize and practice. Thus, not only is World Literature a mode of reading; World Literature is, first and foremost, a *reading of, and programmatically for, the temporal and spatial, symbolic and material network or networks* across which work X or motif Y has been engendered and which in turn it has enlarged or modified by interfacing with, resonating in, or spawning other similar entities.<sup>16</sup>

Coming to grips with World Literature as a comparative concept and activity entails, then, a sound grasp of the network's parameters and of what it takes to canvas it. While network itself is something new neither as a concept nor as a cultural reality, post-Cold War World Literature's predilect reading networks are. In worlding the two-century-old discipline of comparative literature, World Literature sets out to piece together in its various projects literary and cultural-economic, human and non-human webs of "radiation" that, characteristically, are

*themselves worlded* in the sense that they are no longer hemmed in or organized spacewise predominantly, not to say exclusively, around national scalarity and timewise only or chiefly around period, nationhood's historical correspondent.<sup>17</sup> Deep-time and deep-space interpretations of American classics like Henry David Thoreau by Wai Chee Dimock's, environmental criticism by Ursula K. Heise, and Alexander Beecroft's explorations of literary macrosystems have rescaled their investigations not to do away with the "national" or the "local" but to refocus them sub- and transnationally, enriching them, in fact, as concepts *and* realities by remapping the site-specific, the idiomatic, the national, and their literary "allegories" as intersections, shades, and encodings of geocultural actors, units, and systems both smaller and bigger than those circumscribed by national territory.<sup>18</sup> On this account, it is not hard to see why neocosmopolitan studies, global studies, Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory, Manuel Castells's "world network society," and systems and network theories in general have been particularly seminal to World Literature. They have laid out persuasive rationales for national archives' affiliations not just with other national patrimonies—comparative literature's traditional bread and butter, as we shall note momentarily—but with different cultural actors, spaces, energies, and trajectories. The difference is of structure and span. More and more "worldly" every day, the new players, sites, and channels of literary production, reproduction, and consumption are less and less reiterations and surrogates of the national matrix and taxonomies while reaching, in the same vein, ever more boldly beyond the national, the regional, the continental, and even the hemispherical. Furthermore, what they produce and make available to reading is not only a contemporary literature itself increasingly worlded and the vast, intricate circuitries that bring it about. Once its participants, rules, and outcomes have been clarified, their very play also flaunts ways to read—to "network-read"—the literature of past ages in and with the world.

No less fruitful have been the theoretical suggestions supplied by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's rhizome, and for good reason. World-network reading, World Literature's signature endeavor, foregrounds both genetically (in terms of how literature and culture come about) and analytically (in terms of how this production can be traced back to its "origins" and made sense of) not so much the upward movement of what Ulrich Beck and others have named "methodological nationalism," the tree-like vertical springing and blossoming of a literature solidly, immutably, and exemplarily rooted in the homeland's soil, but a more horizontal, drifting and diffusive motion.<sup>19</sup> The rhizome fosters a less centered, multidirectional vagrancy and proliferation of vegetative matter—a wholly different horticultural and germinative metaphoric altogether. The rhizome's developmental principle is not embodied in the "cognitive metaphor" of the tree trunk and its sedentary and solitary growth inside the national hothouse—"nation[-]states cling to . . . trees and branches," conjectures Moretti<sup>20</sup>—but in the lateral and hybridizing dissemination and cross-pollination of all manner of plant life outgrowing the proverbial Voltairean gardens. Moretti's "tree" and "wave" are evolutionary and distributive genre schemes that both illustrate and simplify this luxuriant dynamic a great deal. The coral reef, the Internet, the Borgesian Aleph and Babel library, the virus and, more broadly, culture as a fundamentally contagious phenomenology are, alongside the rhizome, among the alternatives that have been offered up, with varying degrees of success, to make more palpable the turn away from a nationalist-exceptionalist paradigm of *rooted*, geographically discrete, linguistically monolithic, and ethnoculturally "representative" literature to a worlded model of *routed* and de facto continuously *rerouted*, "impure" texts and textual material.<sup>21</sup>

All in all, it would be fair to say that comparative literature, including comparative in its "multicultural phase," was based on the former, and that it was, as such, an extension and a

hierarchically organized agglutination of modern, largely Herderian national literary historiographies. Thus itself nationally “rooted,” comparative literature was bound to be and in some comparatist quarters still is a “rigged,” *lopsided inter-nationalism*, with the nation-state’s territorially defined literature serving as its basic unit of analysis and the French, British, German, and, after World War II, American literary nationalisms directing, out of their disproportionately authoritative urban centers of prestige and cultural legitimation, a comparative traffic from which they stood and stand to benefit, as Pascale Casanova has demonstrated.<sup>22</sup> It is from the same capitals of cultural capital and primarily from Paris and its Sorbonne hotbed of comparatism that benchmarks of “universality” have been, with a supreme paradox, arrogantly extrapolated and reinforced by *littérature universelle*—to this very day, comparative literature’s other name in France, Francophone countries, and other places around the world where French comparatism has reproduced itself as “modernized” comparative literature discourse and institutions such as academic departments, curricula, degrees, and journals.

Has post-Cold War World Literature tolled the death knell of the “French idiosyncrasy” aka the “universal” and of “universal literature” in comparatism?<sup>23</sup> Whether this has occurred or not, the transcendental lure and the resilience of the universal are not to be underestimated inside national literary histories either. The “natural” access or ascent to an otherwise quite “provincial” universality has been the white lie told by *littérature universelle* throughout modernity, as well as the promise comparative literature qua universal literature has been making to “lesser” (“peripheral,” “smaller,” “unknown”) national literatures. No wonder the worlding of comparative literature, particularly in the context of runaway globalization, has also worried scholars devoted “solely” to the study of national literatures (as if the *Beschräntheit* of focus were warranted, or affordable, in the twenty-first century—we saw that Marx and Engels found it

out place in the mid-nineteenth century already). Where Moretti's tree vision "allowed comparative philology to solve that great puzzle which was also perhaps the first world-system of culture: Indo-European" and has enabled the Italian critic himself to trace the novel's world itineraries, the tree cared for—and often planted—by post-Romantic literary historiography bears witness not only to the segregated horticultural ethos portrayed above but also to an equally ingrown epistemology.<sup>24</sup> Both perceive World Literature as a menace, and one must be said that World Literature does threaten, or critique rather, the old ways of literary history.

This critique is constructive and long overdue. Besides individual contributions by scholars, its venues have been existing or redesigned academic programs, as well as newly minted publications such as Brill's *Journal of World Literature* and, above all, Bloomsbury's Literatures as World Literature series edited by Beebee. The single most impactful initiative of this kind, it has brought out since its 2016 inauguration with *German Literature as World Literature*, edited by Beebee himself, a good number of pathbreaking books. These include *American Literature as World Literature* (2018), *Romanian Literature as World Literature* (2018), *Francophone Literature as World Literature* (2020), *Modern Indian Literature as World Literature* (2021), *Roberto Bolaño as World Literature* (2017), *Surrealism as World Literature* (2017), *Crime Fiction as World Literature* (2017), and *Philosophy as World Literature* (2020), to list but a few. Outside the series have come out, also from Bloomsbury, monographs like Lucas Thompson's *Global Wallace: David Foster Wallace and World Literature* (2017).

These titles are relevant in and of themselves. What they tell us is that the worlding of foci, methodologies, and vocabularies is making inroads, beyond comparative and national literature scholarship, into adjacent literary research areas traditionally cohering around nationhood and whose Herderian-Hegelian brief has been the production of narratives of national

identity's coming into its own through an "organic evolution" of a country's arts.<sup>25</sup> Alongside a sizeable amount of volumes and articles published elsewhere, the Bloomsbury books on Francophone, Indian, Brazilian, African, and other literatures indicate that such a zone is postcolonial analysis. In fact, in few places is today's tectonics of disciplinary realignments more ostensible and more passionately disputed than along the border between postcolonial studies and World Literature. Well established and still informing plenty of job descriptions, the former remains indebted to the nationalist model of culture and consequently plies a largely *monorelational* reading informed by antinomies such as metropolis-colony, empire-postimperial nation, master-slave, hegemony-resistance, center-periphery. World Literature's renaissance cannot but resurvey, complicate, and otherwise encroach on postcolonial studies' geographical fief and methodology by focusing an admittedly more complex, *polyrelational* and multidirectional ensemble of links, nodes, and network centers. A new world formation, this aggregate cuts across former and extant empires and the hypernationalisms underwriting them and upgrades its investigations for geocultural units such as the interregional, the cross-indigenous, the "Global South," and the world as a whole. The nation-state crisis and the rise of non-statal entities such as TNCs, NGOs, as well as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt's "multitudes" are phenomena partly parallel to this disciplinary opposition, as they account, also in part, for postcolonialism's misgivings as a field whose critical gauges and conceptual grids have been put to test by the new world order of late globalization. "From the ex-colony to the world" has been the direction followed by World Literature critics, and, in certain cases, by poets and novelists known as postcolonial themselves; not only that, but some of these writers have also pointed out that *decolonization* runs in the same direction while adjudications of postcoloniality risk perpetuating colonial, exotic, and self-marginalizing status. This very claim

has been made by the contributors to the 2007 *Pour une littérature-monde* manifesto coedited by Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud, a book—if not a movement—whose vision of literature and the contemporary world hews closely to World Literature’s.<sup>26</sup>

Recognizing and welcoming the similitudes, the editors of *Francophone Literature as World Literature* insist in the introduction to their essay collection that, “[a]t the same time, . . . the World Literature-inflected reading model should be no license for sidelining past and present tensions and culturally granular realities, which less historically and politically attuned theorizations and applications of revived Goethean *Weltliteratur* to Francophone and other literary patrimonies have sometimes short-shrifted” (22). The opening modifier of the quoted sentence—one formulated by World Literature advocates also active in other fields, including postcolonialism—bodes well for a future of mutual exigency and inspiration when postcolonial and World Literature scholars alike will be more amenable to dialogue and self-revision. To be sure, nationalist tunnel vision makes for a serious epistemological handicap; there is something deeply *beschränkt* about limning ethnicity, nationality, nationhood, and the nation (before, after, and, as in Indigenous studies, outside self-determining statehood) as pre- or un-worlded enclaves. On the other hand, even though “De-enclaving”—*désenclavement*, writes David<sup>27</sup>—is exactly what World Literature has been calling for all along, such efforts have been sometimes perceived as insufficient. Biased or not, the perception can be discouraged by the interpretive respect World Literature must continue to display for the “granular realities” of world literature. After all, one can be myopic, critically speaking, irrespective of scalarity. Where the national literature and postcolonial critic may fail to make out the forest, the World Literature scholar risks missing, if not the botanic fiction of the stand-alone tree, then plant life at a more molecular level. Not only are both scales—and others in between them—required in various ratios



regardless of field, but, as I have argued at length elsewhere, the micro- and macro-optical must work together like the two arms of a scissors.<sup>28</sup>

What makes this collaboration particularly important in World Literature is the discipline's built-in "abstraction regime."<sup>29</sup> Guiding the critic across world networks with an inquisitive knack unmatched by other academic pursuits, the regime is not to be disavowed. Here as in cognate "macroscopic" areas such as oceanic and hemispheric studies, its proclivities, however, must be finetuned contextually lest the network photos they help develop get, as some have warned, too grandiose and aerial to reveal much of cultural, historical, or political value.<sup>30</sup> Attention to a literary culture's small print and to what that print intimates between its lines stylistically and otherwise will always hold a major role in World Literature projects no matter how large the distances, surfaces, and data they handle, and "distant," "surface," and quantitative (Big Data) reading are no substitute and so far have offered no plausible rationales for dispensing with close engagement with texts *qua* texts, if not with close reading per se.

In line with these caveats, it bears accentuating that, since World Literature's object is not a totality, neither are the webs whose stories World Literature tells. As I have specified, these narratives *span* worlds; they do not *cover* those worlds exhaustively. More likely, they are ways of crossing such worlds and "angles" on them rather than complete worlds themselves, and they can always be retold by resetting their focus. To reiterate, one must reckon with a certain incompleteness of perspective or approach. At the same time, one must be aware of the complexity of the task at hand, and some of the most exciting work in World Literature so far has been mindful of the intricate co-articulations of the intertextual and the intercultural in the world-networked forging and absorption of the world's literature. Due to World Literature practitioners' keenness on the culturally "thick" texture of the webs in which the textual and the

aesthetic serve as carriers and conduits for class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, ability, and faith, and where, conversely, such identity vectors and sociohistorical formations undergird literary representations, cultural studies may well get a new lease on life as World Literary and Cultural Studies.

Furthermore, neither culture nor culture understood anthropocentrically is the only sphere in which World Literature tracks literary processes. Deeply impacted by animal studies, new materialism, ecocriticism (“with” and “without” nature), the Anthropocene as a novel critical category, the latest avatars of trans-, in-, and post-humanism, as well as the twenty-first-century headway of informatics and the digital humanities, World Literature has of late refined and expanded its network conceptualizations beyond the human, the animate, and the sentient. It has become obvious to those pushing the twenty-first-century comparative literature agenda that an authentically worlded discipline must be interdisciplinary, and, further, that interdisciplinarity must mean owning up to what “worlded” truly denotes or ought to denote today, namely, a world of worlds or network of networks where literary and biocultural webs underlay, overlay, and are entangled with others outside the conventional sites, forms, and definitions of rationality, expression, life, and existence. This realization has driven the inter- and cross-domain impetus of World Literature textual and cultural analysis into the inter-species realm and, past it, into an even “flatter,” more egalitarian ontology, now also home to thing-like, inorganic existents.

The world expands a writer like Franz Kafka, for example, traverses and organizes into what I have called the “Kafka network” bring together that which can be viewed as a spaced-out, vastly heterogeneous Kafka family of kindred if distanced spirits that encompasses and is in turn enhanced and elucidated by the presence of human and nonhuman “Kafkians” in it.<sup>31</sup> These are agents of the Kafkaesque, and their job is to *world* Kafka. Productive as well as reproductive,

they both bring his work into the world and propagate it across continents. One category or network of Kafkian actors comprises Kafka himself, his “precursors”—in the strong sense of the term but also in the T. S. Eliotian sense rehearsed by Jorge Luis Borges in his 1951 essay “Kafka and His Precursors”—and Kafka’s heirs as well. Worth mentioning under the same heading are authors and entire bodies of work (such as Hasidic tales) who rehearse Kafkaesque themes or make references to Kafka and his oeuvre but also writers who, more obliquely, force us to consider Kafka as their “precursor.” These are legion, from Bruno Schulz and Max Blecher to Philip Roth, Cynthia Ozick, Jonathan Safran Foer, and Nicole Krauss, in whose 2017 novel *Forest Dark* a Zionist Kafka is imagined making *Aliyah*, and further away, to J. M. Coetzee, Haruki Murakami, Latin America’s magical realists, and Romania’s greatest Blecherian, Mircea Cărtărescu. Intertwined with this cluster of human entities is the other, nonhuman Kafkian family. As Foer and, before him, Walter Benjamin proposed, this includes animals and, as I would add also under Benjamin’s tutelage, the most “forgotten” among the Kafkian and non-Kafkian family members: inanimate yet far from “dead” things. A reasonably comprehensive account of the “worlded Kafka”—of what the world means in his work and vice versa—cannot ignore the continuum of human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic modes of being, as the skyrocketing popularity of Kafka’s Odradek among “flat ontology” critics goes to show.<sup>32</sup>

On still another level, such an account must chart the roaming of the Kafkaesque outside the storyworld ecologies, across the non-fictional world’s commercial, cultural, and linguistic systems of publication, editing, distribution, translation, promotion, institutional legitimation and canonization, education, censorship, piracy, and so forth. Key to world literature as a “first-order” phenomenon is a worlded, *geo-sociology of success* by which works “gain,” as Damrosch and others have cogently observed by echoing another Goethean insight, while they go places,

are reissued, translated, interpreted, rewritten, performed, adapted to other media, and otherwise recirculated.<sup>33</sup> As one can see, though, world literature as a “primary” corpus dealt with by World Literature *features substantial second-order components*. These are elements of the “meta” kind like processing, reprinting, reworking, translation, and reading. The latter is, of course, a cardinal disciplinary attribute of World Literature; as for translation, it is a field and a profession complete with its own set of competencies, talents, and venues. Nonetheless, they both are, these days more than ever before, also implicated in world literature genetically, *before* it becomes subject to transmission, selection, recycling, marketing, audience response, and other “sociological” protocols. A dazzling array of second-order scenarios ranging from instantaneous, multi-locational release, simultaneous, actual or simulated, translations, reviewing, and other types of publication-related commentary and promotion to more sophisticated perusal, writing, and rewriting of academic and literary kind already embed the sociological, or the geosociological, rather, into the poetics of world literature.

In other words, reading, translation, and related operations usually associated with literary *remaking* participate in the making of world literature *tout court*. They are a matter of poesis or *origination*. This means that translation is more than about what an original work “gains” or “loses” in its ulterior translation and more than about how rendition of “originals” into “foreign” languages enriches or, as Emily Apter has contended, impoverishes and levels out the world’s literary landscape.<sup>34</sup> The point is not so much what happens to literature once it has been produced and *subsequently* reproduced in another idiom through translation or whether it is translatable or untranslatable—incidentally, it is both. The point is that world literature and, in all actuality, more and more any sort of literature nowadays are effectively “born translated” one way or the other, and so are arguably many authors themselves, who write in tongues of adoption

or in more than one language, who reside, permanently or not, in adoptive countries, and who have multiple associations, affiliations, and loyalties not only linguistically but also culturally, politically, religiously, and even ethno-racially; the point is that translation and other categories of reproduction do not come after but during production, for they are crucial steps of originating procedures.<sup>35</sup> The broader and more significant point still, apropos of the “origination” of world literature “originals,” a point ever-more pertinent to all literature after postmodernism and especially after its more worlded post-Cold War transmogrifications, concerns the very practice and understanding of originality, of what makes a work original and ultimately valuable in our world—namely, not putatively static, cloistered origins, trees bearing “new” fruit, as noted earlier, inside their fenced-in national arboretums, but de- and transterritorial ramifications and cross-fertilization, the spectacle itself of textual material’s vagrancy, multiplication, alteration, and transformation. With world literature, originality, creation, and significance have not been decoupled from place and location. Instead, what this entire genetic motility suggests, and what it practically accomplishes, is a way of connecting all these sites and of setting them in motion. It is this motion itself that engenders the work and *by the same movement*—quite literally—redefines originality as derivation and drift (*dérive* in French) that close the gap between “original” and “copy,” central “origin” and “imitative” periphery, call and response, self and other, “worlded” and (yet) “unworlded.” More than anything else, World Literature is, it seems to me, all about grasping the evolving cultural ontology of these gaps—in plainer English, about how distances that keep apart morph into distances that draw closer, correlate, and world the world’s writings by inscribing them into expansive circuits and cycles of creation and recreation, for, to paraphrase a truism Fredric Jameson does not shy away from, distance “separates as much as it unites.”<sup>36</sup> The discipline reports on this dynamic, the forces involved, and the outcomes, and

it bears stressing apropos of the latter that those who promote the retooling of comparative literature as World Literature see neither the worlding of literary production itself nor the worlding of comparatism as having equalizing and stereotyping consequences. Goethe's vision itself was not cumulative but relational, and for those following in his footsteps today, World Literature is even less the grand total of works produced by each national literature or, more selectively, just the canonical *crème de la crème* of this production ("world masterpieces").

On the formal side of World Literature inquiries, however, things look more interesting. Apart from translation, which has been emerging as a genre in and of itself, no longer dependent on "originals," critics have identified literary formations, aesthetic categories, morphologies, techniques, and enterprises—some woolier than others—that appear to mobilize world-literary energies and capture the worlding mechanics of our world more genuinely than better established forms: "world poetry"; "World Bank Literature"; "world-system literature"; *littérature mondiale*; "comparison literature"; "transcultural narrative"; the "planetary poem;" "the post-9/11 novel;" the "cosmopolitan," "world," "global," "transnational," "international," and "geopolitical novel"; and "electronic literature as world literature."<sup>37</sup> This is an incomplete list, but the literary developments on it are considered largely positive, unlike, say, the "world fiction" varieties Casanova enumerates in her own, flip inventory. What the French critic called, in English and quite disparagingly, "world fiction" can be recognized, according to her, formally (in some kind of "exotic" and "light," accessible literary formula such as travel writing), sociologically (writing for a particular, "inter-" or "denationalized" jet-setters and other superficially cosmopolitan readers), or as a new, world market-oriented author category ("world authors" like Salman Rushdie, Umberto Eco, and Dan Brown, all presumably adroit, thought Casanova, at catering to this privileged public).<sup>38</sup>

Whether they are comfortable under such rubrics or not, authors as distinct as Murakami, David Mitchell, Emily St. John Mandel, Mohsin Hamid, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Yoko Tawada, and Jhumpa Lahiri show clearly that the intervals and discrepancies across which the world itinerancy, generation, and regeneration of literary works, themes, and structures unfold do not vanish once these processes have been completed. Distances, the physical world's spatial wounds, do not disappear magically, nor do the world's socioeconomic fractures and disparities heal as if by literary or academic fiat. Much like world literature itself, World Literature is not a passport to utopia, not by a long shot, and any attempt to portray it as comparative literature's latest failure to face the world consequences of "combined and uneven development," as the Trotskyite mantra has it, is disingenuous.<sup>39</sup> What is not, however, is living up to the responsibility coming with this awareness and asking what kind of world the world in World Literature is or should be. What sort of world are comparatists mapping and projecting after the worlding of comparative studies?

The usual answers drag us into another contested problematic: globalization. What gets lost in the shuffle, though, is the degree to which the hegemonic rhetoric of "globe" and "globalism," irrespective of its pro- or anti-neoliberal inflections, already construes the world's worlding in a certain way, thus ending up, ironically enough, further homogenizing the world, making it into a conquerable and commodifiable place rather than providing for its remaking. In this rhetoric, globalization is uniformly treated, approvingly or not, as the only worlding scenario or as the only sort of globalization imaginable. Yet "globe" is neither "world" nor all the world can be; it is the mainstream discourse of globalization that often gives the ideological illusion of this equivalence. This discourse tends to naturalize itself as the default modality and thus *globalize* itself over, and at the expense of, other kinds of talking about and behaving in the

world. This is why we forget that “world,” “globe,” “planet,” and “earth” are not synonymous and therefore cannot be used interchangeably. The distinctions among them supply the conceptual steppingstone to critical action about and in the world. When *represented* as “globe,” assumed to be one in most accounts of globalization, “world” is not an open biocultural system, our natural environment/ground (the “earth”), or our cosmic address (“Earth”), but a mundane whole that flaunts its totality. The global world purports to be a well-rounded, integrated existentially and politically definitive, closed system, a teleology enforced from centers of power by feedback loops, symmetries, and give-and-take across a web of links overlapping with the world itself. The world worlds into globe or goes global once the infinite and multitudinous potentiality of worldly ontology has been repurposed materially and conceptually as domains of the one, the circular, the repetitive, and the selfsame.

Topologically, both the empirical world and the globe are measurable, even though the world remains a resilient trope and space of the variegated, mysterious, and illimitable and thus considerably more complex structurally than the globe. The difference between them does not lie in volume, scope, or geometry but in ontology, culture, and politics. Redolent of the “centering” and “smoothing” technology of control, command, and monitoring that went into its making, the globe is a controlled system and a containment fantasy, a disciplined panopticon and a limit. It is a terminus to what the world and those in it can be. The globe is or rather becomes, *through the very rhetoric presuming to critique it*, a multitude, a multiplicity, and a potentiality shrunk down to numbers. The world and the globe are both immensities; both boggle the mind quantitatively. But, unlike the world and insofar as it results from relationally totalizing reinscriptions of the world, the globe is no longer an open-ended boundlessness, a project. Once it has been brought under the regime of rational calculability as globe, largely on economic, administrative, and



technological grounds—whether through neoimperial geopolitics and unification of financial markets or through rhetorical overadjudication—“world” is reduced ontologically and does not function as an endless realm of qualitative leaps, as a playground of being any more. This ontological reduction has left its imprint on the entire paradigm of globality.

I have argued previously and repeat here that “planet” can be an alternative to this paradigm.<sup>40</sup> A terminological hub of the alternate model of planetarity, “planet” has been central to scholars’ recent efforts to project a world increasingly at odds with the mainstream definitions of “globe.” Granted, there are many overlaps between the two. In some ways, “planet” is a subset of “global,” and, if there is something like planetary studies these days, it would not have been possible without the explosion of global studies in the early 1990s. And yet the world in “planet” is a different kettle of fish, and, I submit, it is *this* world model that World Literature must envisage. For “planet” is not an accomplished oneness, a structured, coherently administered, and quantifiable geopolitical expanse. Therefore, this system is characterized, both geoculturally and epistemologically, by manifoldness, open-endedness, and sociocultural and political potentialities. Both in world literature and in the surrounding world itself, there are plenty of elements to suggest that the planet is not a finite, closed system properly speaking. Its finitude is only spatial, and it begins to reveal itself as such to humans gradually, from space or on the ground, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other than that, its system is mutating, and its architecture and meaning do remain exceptionally complex, topoculturally shifty and slippery, hard to pin down analytically. Neither an attained *ad quem* nor a teleology, the planet is a *soft system*, actually, reveling in its boundlessness: young, evolving and expanding, at once strong and vulnerable; a world but not *the* world, it is a “webbed interrelatedness” covering most of the world but not coterminous with it.<sup>41</sup>

If it is a *world-system*, the planet is so under the aegis of the toposystemic “relativity” Wallerstein draws attention to through the spelling of his celebrated catchphrase. As he tells us, “we are talking not about systems, economies, empires of the (whole) world, but about systems, economies, empires that are a world (but quite possibly, and indeed usually, not encompassing the entire globe).”<sup>42</sup> The planet, then, is not a globality. Therefore, it cannot be a totality either, at least in a monistic sense. Ontologically and philosophically, it is not coextensive with our existential and cognitional gamut as humans, with all we can be and envisage, let alone that the *human world* is one way of mapping the world of worlds, one exercise in cartographic rationality. Again, the planet does not span the entire world understood as geophysical earth, which is only the planet’s cosmic background, physical foundation, and natural stage. As a world-system, the planet looks, stresses Wallerstein, like a “spatial/temporal zone which cuts across many political and cultural units.”<sup>43</sup> The planetary system is, then, partially systemic in its extensity and loosely systematic in its intensity or functioning. Because it is not a totalist whole, the planet geomodel can be, geographically, culturally, and philosophically, many worlds or parts of worlds, “nested” inside each other rather than hierarchically (“vertically”) organized, and it can be so in one place no matter how small. Thus, this spatial deployment of the planetary entails a geometry quite different from the global. Correspondingly, the individual committed to a planetary *Weltanschauung* may see himself or herself, not unlike the Greek and Roman Stoics, as participating in a *number of worlds and world orders* while physically located in a particular *polis* or community. The planet functions as a geodiscursive projection across, astride, and sometimes against the one fixed on modern world maps by the spatiality of the nation-state and the global. In fact, spearheading as it does a cultural-imaginary remapping of the empirical world, the planetary messes deliberately with official cartography by rearranging the topographic

and geopolitical distribution of space on our road atlases, maps, and GPSs so as to challenge the worldviews of such neatly delineated spatial encodings and representation regimes.

In 1999, four years prior to the publication of *Death of a Discipline*, a milestone in “new” comparative literature, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak had already acknowledged her uneasiness with the world-leveling, universalist legacy of Western rationalism whether in economic globalism or in cultural analysis. On that occasion, she proposed “us[ing] the planetary—if such a thing could be used!—to control globalization interruptively, to locate the imperative in the indefinite radical alterity of the other space of [the] planet[,] to deflect the rational imperative of capitalist globalization.”<sup>44</sup> In her view, life on the planet must be “lived as the call of the wholly other.”<sup>45</sup> In my view, so must be read the literature of the world—of a planet-like world—also, and, at the end of the day, this is what World Literature’s network-reading is called on to do: read both *descriptively* and *prescriptively*, or normatively; read the world’s *literature* but also read for that literature’s *world*, more to the point, for the *other* world or worlds literature conjures up as it responds to the call of the world around us. My sense is that a worlded comparative literature—a comparative literature awakened to the planet—is better prepared to answer that call. I also think that this answer is urgent at a time resurgent populism threatens to drown the world’s calls in a rhetoric of walls, chauvinist exclusion, and segregation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the collective volume *Trans\*Chile: Un acercamiento transareal*, ed. Ottmar Ette and Horst Nitschack (Madrid, Spain: Iberoamericana, 2010), especially Nitschack’s opening piece “La literatura chilena fuera de lugar (1973-2008),” 11-12, *passim*. A similarly systematic if somewhat different case, tied more directly into the recent arguments and vocabularies of

“worlding,” has been made across another essay collection, *Romanian Literature as World Literature*, ed. Mircea Martin, Christian Moraru, and Andrei Terian (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2018). A more in-depth theorization of this problem provides in this book Moraru and Terian’s “Introduction: The Worlds of National Literature and the Geopolitics of Reading,” 1-31.

<sup>2</sup> I distinguish, then, between the discipline of “World Literature,” on the one hand, and, on the other, “world literature” seized as the *world’s* literature, the output of the world’s writers. The different spellings—uppercase initials for the former and lowercase for the latter—are here conventions designed to reinforce this basic distinction.

<sup>3</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Some Passages Pertaining to the Concept of World Literature,” in *Comparative Literature: The Early Years. An Anthology of Essays*, ed. Hans-Joachim Schulz and Philip H. Rhein (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 1-11.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in *The Communist Manifesto: New Interpretations*, ed. Mark Cowling, including, in full, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, trans. Terrell Carver (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1998), 16–17.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Marx [and] Friedrich Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (London, UK: J. E. Burghard, 1848), 466.

<sup>6</sup> “My claim,” David Damrosch avers in *What Is World Literature?*, “is that world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike” ([Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003,] 5).

<sup>7</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 16-17.

<sup>8</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Conversations with Eckermann on *Weltliteratur*,” in *World Literature in Theory*, ed. David Damrosch (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 19-20.

<sup>9</sup> On the controversies spurred by World Literature as a discipline, also see Robert T. Tally Jr.’s article “World Literature and Its Discontents,” *English Language and Literature* 60, no. 3 (2014): 401-419.

<sup>10</sup> Erich Auerbach’s article “Philologie der Weltliteratur” was translated into English first by Maire Said and Edward Said. Their translation came out under the title “Philology and *Weltliteratur*” in *The Centennial Review* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1969): 1-17. The other, more recent rendition into English, in which *Weltliteratur* becomes “world literature,” is by Jane O. Newman and has been included in Erich Auerbach, *Time, History, and Literature: Selected Essays of Erich Auerbach*, ed. and with an introduction by James I. Porter, trans. Jane O. Newman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 253-265.

<sup>11</sup> Auerbach, “Philology and *Weltliteratur*,” trans. Maire Said and Edward Said, *The Centennial Review* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1969): 14.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Beebee. “What the World Thinks about Literature,” in *Futures of Comparative Literature: ACLA State of the Discipline Report*, ed. Ursula K. Heise, with Dudley Andrew, Alexander Beecroft, Jessica Berman, David Damrosch, Guillermina De Ferrari, César Domínguez, Barbara Harlow, and Eric Hayot (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 61. Also see Chen Bar-Itzhak’s forthcoming article, “Intellectual Captivity: Literary Theory, World Literature, and the Ethics of Interpretation” (*Journal of World Literature*, 2020).

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, Franco Moretti’s essay “Conjectures on World Literature,” in *Distant Reading* (New York, NY: Verso, 2013), 45.

<sup>14</sup> Jérôme David, *Spectres de Goethe. Les métamorphoses de la "littérature mondiale"* (Paris, France: Les Prairies Ordinaires, 2011), 182.

<sup>15</sup> Auerbach, "Philology and *Weltliteratur*," 11, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Eric Hayot and Susan Stanford Friedman are some of the critics who have drawn parallels between nation and period as they have criticized literary studies' excessive privileging of both. See, on this problem, Hayot's "Literary History after Literary Dominance," *MLQ* 80, no. 4 (December 2019): 485 and Friedman's "Alternatives to Periodization: Literary History, Modernism, and the 'New' Temporalities," *MLQ* 80, no. 4 (December 2019): 395.

<sup>18</sup> Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Ursula K. Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008); Alexander Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (London, UK: Verso, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> One place where Ulrich Beck theorizes "methodological nationalism" is "Cosmopolitan Sociology: Outline of a Paradigm Shift," an essay included in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Maria Rovisco and Magdalena Nowicka (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 18.

<sup>20</sup> Moretti, *Distant Reading*, 59-60.

<sup>21</sup> On World Literature, virology, and epidemiology, see my essays "Contagion, Contamination, and Don DeLillo's Post-Cold War World-System: Steps toward a Haptical Theory of Culture," in *Contagion: Health, Fear, Sovereignty*, edited by Bruce Magnusson and Zahi Zalloua (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2012), 123-148, and "Is There a World Literature? Old

Literary Forms and New Cultural Formations,” *Euphorion*, vol. 28, no. 3 (September 2017): 84-87.

<sup>22</sup> See Pascale Casanova’s *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> David, *Spectres de Goethe*, 38.

<sup>24</sup> Moretti, *Distant Reading*, 59-60.

<sup>25</sup> Critics who have advocated and made explicit references to the “worlding” of American literature and of the study thereof include Rachel Adams, Susan Gillman, Kirsten Silva, Rob Wilson, Jason Arthur, and Leerom Medovoi. I make my own case in “*Weltliterature? American Literature after Territorialism: Manifesto for a Twenty-First-Century Critical Agenda*,” in *American Literature as World Literature*, ed. Jeffrey R. Di Leo (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2018), 127-147.

<sup>26</sup> Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud, eds., *Pour une littérature-monde* (Paris, France: Gallimard, 2007). The book was followed by *Je est un autre. Pour une identité-monde* (Paris, France: Gallimard, 2010), also edited by Le Bris and Rouaud.

<sup>27</sup> David, *Spectres de Goethe*, 78.

<sup>28</sup> On the “macro”-“micro” interplay, see: Christian Moraru, *Reading for the Planet: Toward a Geomethodology* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015), and “Decompressing Culture: Three Steps toward a Geomethodology,” in *The Planetary Turn: Relationality and Geoaesthetics in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 211–244.

<sup>29</sup> David, *Spectres de Goethe*, 26.

<sup>30</sup> For a critique of the epistemological shortcomings of aerial and satellite representations of the planet's culture, see Philip Leonard, *Orbital Poetics: Literature, Theory, World* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2019).

<sup>31</sup> See my article "Crossing the Kafka Network: Schulz, Blecher, Foer, and the Repositioning of the Human," in *Echinox* 34 (2018): 101-116.

<sup>32</sup> On this subject, see Ian Thomas Fleishman, "The Rustle of the Anthropocene: Kafka's Odradek as Ecocritical Icon," in *The Germanic Review* 92, no. 1 (January-March 2017), p. 44. In his essay, Fleishman critiques ecocriticism and new materialist interpretations by Timothy Morton, Jane Bennett, and J. Hillis Miller.

<sup>33</sup> Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, 288.

<sup>34</sup> For Emily Apter's critique of the translatability of world literature and other kinds of discourse, see her book *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London, UK: Verso, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> Rebecca Walkowitz has made a powerful case for the genetic, literally creative role of translation in *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> Fredric Jameson, "The Aesthetic of Singularity," *New left Review* 92 (March-April 2015), 132.

<sup>37</sup> See Joseph Tabbi's article "Electronic Literature as World Literature; or, The Universality of Writing under Constraint." *Poetics Today* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 17-50.

<sup>38</sup> See Pascale Casanova's short article "World Fiction," *Revue de littérature générale*, no. 2 (1996): 42-45

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of the issue, see WReC: Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool



University Press, 2015).

<sup>40</sup> I have put forth this argument in a series of books and articles. See especially *Reading for the Planet* and “‘World,’ ‘Globe,’ ‘Planet’: Comparative Literature, Planetary Studies, and Cultural Debt after the Global Turn,” in *Futures of Comparative Literature*, ed. Ursula K. Heise, with Dudley Andrew et al., 124-133. Here and elsewhere, I also discuss the scholarship behind what Amy J. Elias and I have called “the planetary turn.” Scholars who have also insisted on the distinctions among “globe,” “world,” and “earth” and have theorized “world” and “planet” as globe alternates include Masao Miyoshi, Pheng Cheah, Eric Hayot, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, to name but a few. As is well known, Spivak draws a direct link between “planet” and comparative literature in *Death of a Discipline* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003). Also see: Pheng Cheah, “What Is a World? On World Literature as World-Making Activity,” in *Daedalus* 137. 3 (2008): 26-38; *What Is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Eric Hayot, *On Literary Worlds* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> Mary Lou Emery, “Caribbean Modernism: Plantation to Planetary,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 49.

<sup>42</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 16-17.

<sup>43</sup> Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis*, 17.

<sup>44</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2011), 348.

<sup>45</sup> Spivak, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, 349.