



## Into Our Labours: Work and its Representation in World-Literary Perspective

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### CHAPTER

## One The Ground Beneath Our Feet: Positions and Position-Takings in World-Literary Studies

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### Abstract

A theoretical chapter, laying the ground for the analysis to follow in chapters 2 and 3. Searching for a method that would enable historical and formal literary analysis to be conjoined, I survey the existing positions in world literary studies, laying out my own arguments for an approach that understands world literature as the literature of the modern world-system. I begin by assessing the achievements of such theorists as Schwarz, Jameson, Moretti, Casanova, and Williams, and engage critically with the work of contemporary scholars in modernist, postcolonial and translation studies – Orsini, Kristal, Friedman, Apter, Damrosch, and Cheah – who refute the premise of a world-system or who fail to grasp the ‘world’ in ‘world literature’ in systemic terms. I conclude by considering Gramsci’s ideas about translatability.

**Keywords:** Literary form as the abstract of social relations, Combined and uneven development, World-literature, Capitalist social relations and the experience of work, Totality and system, Unthinking modernism’s Eurocentrism, Translation and translatability

**Subject:** Literary Theory and Cultural Studies

Fredric Jameson begins the long concluding chapter of his 1991 volume, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, by distinguishing between taste, analysis and evaluation. He passes over the first of these notions fairly quickly, proposing that even though it “would seem to correspond to what used to be nobly and philosophically designated as “aesthetic judgment” – as with Immanuel Kant, for instance – *taste* today is generally understood as a matter of merely personal likes and dislikes.<sup>1</sup> Considerably more important to Jameson are *analysis* and *evaluation*, which he presents as the non-identical twins of any specifically Marxist literary criticism. As he defines them, these two forms of critical practice are mutually enriching if not quite mutually entailing. *Analysis* involves the conjoining of formal and historical enquiry in an attempt to elucidate

Apter's philosophical arguments about the status of the translation as anti-capitalist deowned property do not jibe with basic features of the material organisation of the publishing industry and the intellectual-property regime on which it depends. It would be easy to dismiss my concerns as arising from the fact that my methodological tendencies differ from Apter's (she is not a cultural materialist or sociologist). But I would argue that in *Against World Literature* the lack of engagement with material realities of the production of culture is actually a problem for the analysis. There are features of the organisation of the World Literature industry that invalidate her arguments about the anticapitalist implications of our recognition of the untranslatable.<sup>58</sup>

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The idea of the World Anglophone brings the question of translation squarely into the frame, since what is referenced by the term is not only literature that has been *written in English* but also literature that has been *translated into English*. Here there is a need, very obviously, for work that comes at the problem by looking, empirically and in detail, at what is entailed by the status of English as the globally hegemonic language. This is not finally a question of what does or does not get translated, or indeed of whether translation between different languages and cultures is even possible. It is more significantly a matter of the arguably advancing marginalisation of literature itself within the wider fields of cultural production; of the contemporary restructuring of intellectual labour (material and immaterial) within the cultural industries; of the challenges that are posed to domestic literary production in cultures and societies throughout the world that find themselves incorporated willy-nilly into a US-centred Anglophone cultural economy; and so on.<sup>59</sup>

However, some contributors to the current debate would be inclined to reject the idea of a worldly Anglophony outright, because it seems in principle to propose that it is possible to grasp the concept of world literature on the basis of, and through means of, translation (into English) – and this they do not believe or accept. Their argument is that the true lexical and cultural significance of any given literary work is only transmissible to readers who encounter it in its original language.<sup>60</sup> I disagree with this, and think on the contrary that it is necessary to insist on the quite manifest feasibility of translation while also offering the strongest defence possible of its epistemological value, by way of combating the fetishism of language that is so ingrained a feature of comparative literature in its currently institutionalised form.<sup>61</sup> One necessary aspect of this defence is presented deftly by Michael Beard, who, reflecting on his experience as co-editor of the Syracuse University Press book series, *Middle East Literature in Translation*, as well as of the journal, *Middle Eastern Literatures*, writes as follows:

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There are still academics suspicious of translations on the premise that an important book must be read in the original language. I hear this more often than I'd like to. It's hard to reply to because it sounds stupidly right until you think about it: if we limit ourselves to the languages in which we specialize we would be pretty dull scholars. For that matter the writers whose books we teach have themselves been engaged, importantly, with translated works. The Persian translation of Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (*Sad sâl- e tanhâ'i*) was an important text for Iranian writers. Readers of Shahrnush Parsipur's *Women without Men* would find it useful to know what Márquez sounds like in Persian. When Pamuk describes the aesthetics of city life, one of his pivot points is a 1934 essay by the great Japanese writer Junichiro Tanizaki, 'In Praise of Darkness'. Specialists in Pamuk's language won't understand Pamuk without being aware of his own experience with translation.<sup>62</sup>

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As Mark Polizzotti has argued in *Sympathy for the Traitor: A Translator's Manifesto*, it is only if we cling to an idealist fantasy of translation as a kind of zero-sum game, in which an original text is somehow reincarnated as itself in another language, that we are led to lament what is 'lost' in translation. Abandon that fantasy – the ideal for which it strives is in any event 'unattainable', as Polizzotti points out<sup>63</sup> – and it becomes possible to pull translation away from the mystification that attends its theorisation by scholars who, claiming to

champion it, instead succeed only in hypostatizing it through their presentation of it as the corollary of similarly hypostatized ‘creative works’. ‘The conviction of translation’s impossibility’, as Polizzotti writes,

rests on a monolithic conception of how we read a work of literature, which logically leads one to conclude that a work’s single, inalterable reading cannot be reproduced accurately in another language and culture. The reality, however, is that reading, even within a single culture, is by nature a subjective and active process ... If we think of the source text not as a defined, monolithic whole that can never be replicated adequately, but rather as a zone of energy, always in flux, endlessly prone to different assimilations and interpretations, then we begin to understand better the work of translation, which, like any communicative act, shows itself to be not only possible but dynamic. (8)<sup>64</sup>

p. 38 Reading itself is always a translational exercise: in the process of reading, meaning travels from abstract potentiality to concrete experience, or, put differently, is invented in the space between text and reader. All literary works are, by definition, radically contextual: in reading and, more elaborately, ↪ analysing them, we are obliged to reconstruct their initial *situations*. This is an intricate intellectual exercise – intricate, that is to say, and difficult, but by no means impossible – that calls for fine-grained and comprehensive specification: literary, historical, literary-historical, sociological, philosophical, ideological, linguistic etc. Language is involved here, obviously, but it would be absurd to argue that language was the only thing involved, or even the most important. As Raymond Williams put it some thirty years ago, ‘You cannot understand an intellectual or artistic project without also understanding its formation’ (*Politics of Modernism*, 151–152). The key for Williams was to try to discover or retrieve the set of social relations and practices, collectively engaged and not always documented, of which any particular social formation is made, and from which its range of intellectual and artistic projects arises. The radical implication here is that every literary work is not only a social product, but the textual precipitate of a set of practices much wider than itself, and sometimes hidden or masked in and through the process of its transformation into literature. In order to make sense of a given work, we must look to its formation; to understand the formation, we must look to its process.

Consider, for example, the Old English elegy, ‘The Wanderer’, which begins with the *eard-stapa* (wanderer) himself speaking as follows:

Oft him anhaga are gebideð,  
metudes miltse, þeah þe he modcearig  
geond lagulade longe sceolde  
hreran mid hondum hrimcealde sæ,  
wadan wræclastas. Wyrð bið ful aræd!<sup>65</sup>

p. 39 To have these words translated into modern English<sup>66</sup> is not remotely to be put in a position from which their meaning can be understood. How, for instance, is one to explain the mood of this poem – the wanderer’s anxiety, his longing and resignation, his exilic feeling that he cannot unburden himself of his sorrow to anyone? If it is true of any literary work that language is its means of expression, it is nevertheless also true that analysis must proceed well beyond language – on the one side, to something approaching idiolect, since what matters is not what language a given writer writes in but the singular use that he or she makes of this language; while on the other side, analysis must work to recover or reconstruct habitus, history, location, biography, ideology, ↪ mood – all of which require skills and methods quite different from the formal ability to read a text in the language in which it was originally composed.<sup>67</sup> ‘Languages’, as Polizzotti puts it,

are not just collections of definitions and grammatical rules but instead are conditioned by a host of other factors – history, culture, usage, literary tradition, politics, chance occurrence, even something as inane as the latest celebrity scandal – and all of these factors cause words and phrases to have their own resonance, their own subtext, which moreover evolves over time. (6)

The idea that literary works are untranslatable fetishises language and abstracts literature from the world. It hypostatizes language as the master-key to literary understanding, and thereby mis-identifies translation – the rendition of a literary work from source into target language – as an appropriative act, which, when superimposed furthermore onto a postcolonialist or decolonial understanding of North–South relations, begins to take on the malign aspect of an *expropriative* one. As often with the concept of representation in recent cultural theory, so also with the concept of translation (especially into English) in certain quarters of comparative literature or translation studies today: translation looms not only as fraught and difficult, but as latently imperialistic. Hence, arguably, the felt need, among critics like Apter, to assert untranslatability as the one remaining form of literary practice capable of withstanding the levelling effects of the world Anglophone.<sup>68</sup>

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There are some 1,500–2,000 languages spoken in Africa and somewhat more than this – around 2,300 – in Asia. Even in Europe, the number of ‘official’ languages (two dozen or so) is dwarfed by the 200+ autochthonous languages. Merely to identify this sprawling diversity is to recognise that if what is required for comparative literary scholarship is the formal ability to read works in their language of composition, then the idea of comparative literary studies on a world scale is simply inconceivable. But if what we are seeking to compare is not only (or even primarily) linguistically mediated forms of cultural expression, but literary representations of *situations* (sociological, phenomenological etc.) which exceed language and have their sources in forces and relations of production at the level of the world-system, then the question of what might be lost in translation loses much of its urgency. We ought to be advocating instead for a scholarly practice premised on recognition and appreciation of the work of others. Every literary scholar relies on the work of innumerable others. Works are written, published, disseminated, read, reviewed, then translated, published again, disseminated, read, reviewed again – all before the individual scholar ever come across them. My strategy in writing this book has been to read whatever I can get my hands on and to bear in mind that literary scholarship is never an individual enterprise, but is instead *constitutively* collaborative. I have read the works of Turgenev, Chekhov, Gorky, Tolstoy, for instance – several translations exist of most of the works I am considering – and then I have asked Russian-speaking colleagues to assist me with the passages I am most interested in. I have done the same thing where works composed in Bengali, Arabic, Korean and Polish are concerned. Where I have not been able to find colleagues with native fluency to assist me in deciphering key passages, I have tried to consult different English-language translations, or, failing this, translations into the languages that I *can* read, while also hoping in general that most translations are to be trusted rather than viewed with scepticism and disavowed. My conviction is that this approach, which relies on the hard work of all of the other people who lie behind my own reception of a given work, is to be preferred over that of a solitary scholar, walled up in her or his study, reading only the limited number of works that s/he is able to read in their languages of composition, and poring over these suspiciously, hawk-eyed, ever on the lookout for evidence of linguistic domestication or bowdlerisation or unreliability.

It is not enough to know French, obviously, to be able to work with Jean Racine, Marguerite Duras or Frantz Fanon. The inverse also applies: it is not the case that *not to know* French is *not to be able* to work with them. As Michael Allan has pointed out in a suggestive commentary on the ‘problem of address in world literature’, translation (between languages, but more often between situations) often serves as the means of production/means of recovery<sup>69</sup> of meanings that are strictly invisible to or inaccessible by readers who come to the texts in question from the cultural *inside*, as it were. Allan begins his essay by focusing on Fanon’s 1959 essay, ‘*Sur la culture nationale*’ (and on Jean-Paul Sartre’s preface to *Les Damnés de la terre*, in which Fanon’s essay was subsequently published). ‘How might we, in turn, read Fanon’s text as readers outside of the particular historical moment of the text’s articulated project?’ he asks. His investigation leads him to challenge ‘the prevailing assumption that national readers better understand the address of a national text that speaks from and within a culturally intelligible frame’. Critics who voice this dominant assumption, he argues,

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tend to skirt the full potential of the nonnational reader or, perhaps more precisely, the reader who is not addressed explicitly by a literary work. More important, however, this reader is at the heart of

what gets termed world literature – that most delicate field within which reading and addressing never quite align. And it is this nonnational reader who, intentionally or not, pulls national literature apart at its seams, taking the urgency of a historical situation and reading it otherwise.<sup>70</sup>

‘Translation is the key mechanism, dynamic and metaphor in the theory and practice of world literature’, Ruth Bush has written, in a discussion of the status of African texts in the wider contexts of *Francophonie* and the world Anglophone.<sup>71</sup> *Externally* – that is to say, where translation is thought about as a specific form of cultural practice – it seems obvious to Bush (and to me) that ‘[w]hat is still required is sustained engagement with specifically sociological tools and methods’ (513). Here she cites Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro:

Transcending a merely inter-textual problematic that is centred on the relation between an original and its translation leads to a series of specifically sociological questions about the stakes and functions of translations, their agencies and agents, the space in which they are situated and the constraints, both political and economic, that circumscribe them.<sup>72</sup>

But it seems to me that critical practice needs to look beyond language *internally* also – that is, where questions of literary meaning are concerned. Think, for example, of what the reader of the following passage, from Ivan Vladislavić’s *Portrait with Keys*, is obliged to learn, to interpret, to make familiar, in order to approach an understanding of what he or she is reading. And this despite the fact that, for the Anglophone reader, no formal translation (as between languages) is required:

A stoep in Good Hope Street. The deep-blue garden walls hold a precise measure of the twilight still. The smell of grass is quenching after a summer day, the dusk lays a cool hand on the back of your neck. We are talking, my friends and I, with our bare feet propped on the wall of the stoep, our cane chairs creaking. We have been talking and laughing for hours, putting our predicaments in their place, finding ways to keep our balance in a tide of change. We could fetch fresh beer glasses from the door of the fridge, but these warm ones, stickily finger-printed and smelling of yeast, suit this satiated conversation better. We speak the same language. This is our climate. We have grown up in this air, this light, and we grasp it on the skin, where it grasps us. We know this earth, ↪ this grass, this polished red stone with the soles of our feet. We will never be ourselves anywhere else. Happier, perhaps, healthier, less burdened, more secure. But we will never be closer to who we are than this.<sup>73</sup>

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I believe that I have felt the feeling described in this passage. I grew up in South Africa myself, at much the same time as Vladislavić, and in somewhat similar circumstances. What is at issue in the passage is not only a matter of setting – a warm summer evening, animated conversation between friends and intimates, twilight stealing over the walls of a suburban middle or lower-middle class home, bare feet placed against the cool walls of a verandah, chair tilted far backwards for balance – but, more significantly, of affect. What is conveyed in a flash of consciousness, *through* but not *in* the language, is something like a structure of feeling: that through this casual placing of your bare feet against the wall of the stoep, you suddenly experience yourself as grounded, *at home*, in an environment which you ‘grasp ... on the skin, where it grasps [you]’ in turn. The placing of the feet is both a gesture of belonging and an index of interpellation; it is an ordinary act, but also one which is very deeply scripted, socially, along lines of race, class, sex, gender, nation, generation.

But if I understand what Vladislavić is getting at here, is it primarily because his text is to me a ‘national text that speaks from and within a culturally intelligible frame’? ‘We speak the same language’, the author writes, and it is obvious that he is not talking about English, or even South African English, but of wider forms of social communication, at least as intimate and deeply scored as language. The same thing might then be said about Denis Hirson’s *I Remember King Kong (The Boxer)*, whose every fragment begins with the words, ‘I remember ...’<sup>74</sup> What is remembered in these fragments is sometimes idiosyncratic and ungeneralisable: ‘I remember that when I hear students say they were swotting I thought of flies’ (35); sometimes reflective of a white South African child’s upbringing in Johannesburg in the 1950s: ‘I remember maids sitting on the back

lawn with their legs straight out in front of them polishing the silverware with Silvo' (90); and sometimes culturally unspecific, such that it could have come from anywhere in the 'globalised' Anglosphere: 'I remember the attraction of sleek, low-cut Adidas football boots' (59). The fragments then come together in the work overall to give a portrait, not only of the narrator's childhood, but of the everyday life of white English South Africans in the apartheid era more generally.

p. 43 But I would prefer to think that what is required of analysis here is *translation*, and that this is true of all reading contexts. I mean translation of a particular kind, something closer to what Antonio Gramsci called *translatability* than what is conventionally understood by the word translation.<sup>75</sup> Gramsci, who was trained as a linguist, never lingered long on the routine idea of translation as the encoding of meaning into a new language. *Translatability* was what interested him, and it was a political activity that involved pirating, modularisation, appropriation, refunctioning – not in the restricted and technical sense in which those operations are commonly understood in translation studies, but as the movement from *theory* to *practice*. A very clear example of what I am thinking of here is provided by Nigel Gibson, who refers to Steve Biko as the foremost *translator* of Frantz Fanon's thought in Africa.<sup>76</sup> Those interested in *translatability* need to consider what it is that might make a text not only intelligible to, but capable of resounding inside the heads of, audiences in another culture, another time and place. This is the search for *experiential* rather than *linguistic* equivalents. Works have *translatability* only when different groups have 'a "basically" identical cultural expression, even if its language is historically different', Gramsci wrote.<sup>77</sup>

p. 44 Gramsci's concept of *translatability* downplays the emphases on aesthetic genius and the uniqueness and incommensurability of literary language, which have been – and remain – central to the prevailing forms of comparativism in literary scholarship. It also obviates anxiety that the transportation of cultural forms or paradigmatic discourses from one language to another either devalues the source language or appears as a degraded copy in the target language. What the Gramscian concept seeks to highlight are the conditions that have to be in place for effective transposition or transference – from one particular semio-ideological system to another – to take place. What is at issue here is not a 'translation zone',<sup>78</sup> but a *social cartography of translatability*. The geography of *translatability* is the cultural topography of the capitalist world-system, its geoculture.<sup>79</sup> We recall that the rationale for Gramsci's speculations lay in his understanding that events in Lenin's Russia – no matter how significant their prestige for Marxist theory might be – could neither parthenogenetically create revolution in Italy, nor be taken as a fixed template there. The ratios of the interaction between countryside and city in the two nations might have been comparable, but they were different, not least insofar as Italy had a much more extensively industrialised north, constituting a greater fraction of the entire country, than was the case with Russia. In these circumstances, what Gramsci thought was required was the translation, not of Balzac into Italian, nor even of Marx's writing into Italian, but of Marxist theory – structured by its unique combination of French politics, German philosophy and British economics – into *Italian conditions*, in the interests of making it usable by Italian people. A turn from translation studies, cemented by philological concerns, to *translatability* studies, grounded in the history of social relations, might in these terms provide a new perspective on literary history and enable world-literature to take shape not as a body of works, nor even, ultimately, as a world-literary system, but as a political project.<sup>80</sup>

If the 'default' understanding of world literature as simply a basket containing all of the literatures in the world is clearly unsustainable, many of the alternative formulations have not taken us very much further forward. David Damrosch's elegant but anodyne definition has been influential, but it is very obviously dematerialising. Paying no attention whatsoever to the idea of *world*, Damrosch conceives of world literature in idealist terms as the corpus of literary works that (for any number of reasons) 'circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language'.<sup>81</sup> He then refers to works that have been read – not necessarily widely, but elsewhere than where they were composed: 'A work enters into world literature by a double process', he writes: 'first, by being read as literature; second, by circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin' (6). This understanding fails notably to trouble established assumptions as to the

p. 45 indispensability of cultural insiderism;<sup>82</sup> and, notwithstanding Damrosch's ↪ apparent ecumenism about translation and literary comparativism, it also leaves him suggesting that the epistemological gains of a narrowly focused 'specialisation' cannot remotely be matched by a more widely focused 'generalisation', which is prone to generate 'broad, but often reductive, overviews' (26; see also 111, 287–288).

Pheng Cheah's recent attempt to develop a 'normative theory of world literature' seems at first blush to have something more substantial to offer, but this impression flatters chiefly to deceive.<sup>83</sup> Already gesturing, in his opening pages, to the idea of cosmopolitanism that he will develop more fully later on, Cheah presents world literature as writing that does not merely document or record the factuality of the world, or the diverse ways in which it is experienced, but that participates actively in its constitution. He offers a general critique of transnational theories of world literature, as well as of theories that come at world literature through the lens of 'globalisation'. Critical writings in these idioms 'map flows of literary exchange across national boundaries and through global circuits', he argues: 'They define the world in terms of the circulation of commodities, that is, as the expression, field, and product of transnational market exchange. The world is a spatial category, determined solely in terms of extension' (5). Transnationalist scholarship is unable to reckon with literature as a world-making enterprise as well as a world-disclosing one, according to Cheah. It 'places ... literature in a reactive position. Instead of exploring what literature can contribute to an understanding of the world and its possible role in remaking the world in contemporary globalization ... [it focuses] on the implications of global circulation for the study of literature' (5).

Let me state in passing that I am not convinced that in the critical work conducted under the rubrics of transnationalism and globalisation, the idea of 'world' is indeed defined as one-sidedly as Cheah says it is.<sup>84</sup>  
p. 46 His own ↪ ambition, however, is to explore the contradiction between the civic universalism that capitalist development makes possible (for the first time) and the narrow chauvinisms, exclusivisms and particularisms of the actually existing capitalist world order, and also to consider the role that world literature plays in exposing (and working to overcome) this contradiction: hence his emphases on 'the normative force that literature can exert in the world' and 'the ethico-political horizon it opens up for the existing world' (5 – I think he must mean 'can open up for the existing world' here: the second phrase should presumably match the mood already established in the first – 'can exert').

To my eyes, the over-riding problem in *What Is a World?* is that its construction of 'world' remains so abstract and elusive. Over the course of his book, in fact, 'world' finds itself being eclipsed ever more definitively by a reverently Heideggerian notion of 'worlding'. Two things might be said about Cheah's use of this latter concept. The first is that it is exasperatingly woolly. There are lots of passages like this in the book:

Understanding world literature in terms of literature's connection to worlding and the coming of time points to immanent resources for resisting capitalist globalization. Capitalist accumulation needs and takes time. Capital is augmented by rational technologies and calculations that appropriate and manage time for the maximal extraction of surplus value. But capital can neither give itself time nor destroy it and, moreover, does not want to destroy it. This means that an irreducible principle of real messianic hope is always structural to capitalist globalization. The persistence of time is infrastructural to capital and cannot be destroyed. As an enactment of the opening of worlds by the coming of time, world literature points to something that will always exceed and disrupt capital. (11)

One might have forgiven the bombast and the grandiloquence if what was being said turned out to be splendidly illuminating despite this. Alas, behind Cheah's fronts of brass are revealed feet of clay.<sup>85</sup> If I  
p. 47 understand what he is ↪ saying in this passage, it is that capitalism quantifies time, and tries to stretch or (more typically) reduce it; but there is another temporal horizon – tied to the ontology of human being – that is forever inaccessible to capitalist temporalisation, and that comments critically on it. This makes sense, to be sure, although it is far from representing an original insight. The Adornian understanding that modernism is at war with modernity already includes all of the salient aspects of Cheah's labouring formulation, for instance,

and makes clear in the process that this is how Marxist critics at large have tended to understand modernism since at least the 1920s.

The second point to make is that in the *démarche* from ‘world’ to ‘worlding’ in *What Is a World?* the former concept finds itself being not simply supplemented but *supplanted* by the latter. I am tempted to resort to shorthand here and say that there is too much *Sein und Zeit* and not enough *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtein* in Cheah’s book. (I am thinking of Lucien Goldmann’s suggestion that Heidegger’s text is best understood as an idealist recoding of Lukács’s.)<sup>86</sup> But the serious point behind this flippancy is that Cheah’s embrace of a Heideggerian lexicon and battery of concepts acts quite centrally to obfuscate and mystify both ‘globalisation’ itself as a social phenomenon, and the registration of it in literature. Where Cheah does address the ‘world-destroying consequences of various modalities of capitalist globalization’ (16), his arguments tend (rather ironically) to sound just like those of the transnational and globalisation-theory critical brigade that he had begun his book by disavowing. Hence the commentaries on Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* and Nuruddin Farah’s *Gifts*, for instance: there is little in these that cannot also be found in the scholarship of Cheah’s ‘transnationalist’ and ‘globalist’ rivals (whose work is quite often more incisive, deeper and more comprehensive than his). The analysis of Ninotchka Rosca’s *State of War* is more compelling, not least because this is a novelist who has received comparatively little critical attention hitherto – especially when compared with the attention lavished on Ghosh and Farah. But, elsewhere, Cheah tends to bracket ‘world’ in its actuality (not to say, systematicity) and to offer the neutralising, euphemising blandishments of ‘worlding’ instead.<sup>87</sup> I use the terms ‘neutralising’ and ‘euphemising’ advisedly, for I have in mind Pierre Bourdieu’s searing (and indispensable) indictment of Heidegger’s political ontology: ‘it creates a political stance but gives it a purely philosophical expression’.<sup>88</sup> Bourdieu writes that

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The verbal somersault which allows escape from historicism by asserting the essential historicity of the existing, and by inscribing history and temporality within Being, that is, within the ahistorical and the eternal, is the paradigm of all the philosophical strategies of the conservative revolution in philosophical matters. These strategies are always grounded in a radical overcoming which allows everything to be preserved behind the appearance of everything changing ... (62–63)

So, too, I would suggest, with the slippage from ‘world’ to ‘worlding’ in *What Is a World?* The vaunted criticality of the analysis is belied by the rampant idealism of its understanding of what the world really is.

The ‘unique selling point’ (USP) of Cheah’s book consists in the proposal that because the novels he studies ‘are interested in alternative temporalities, they traffic with the opening of worlds by the gift of time in their intense preoccupation with questions of narrativity and time. They thereby foreground the fact that the force of worlding is immanent to and subtends globalization’ (17). I have been re-reading John Berger’s *Pig Earth*<sup>89</sup> as I have been thinking about *What Is a World?* No doubt a direct comparison of the two authors is unfair and even invidious: Berger is a writer and critical thinker of the first water, after all, where Cheah – like myself – is ‘only’ a journeyman academic. But I cannot help reflecting on the fact that where Cheah has the force of worlding being immanent to and subtending globalisation, Berger produces sentences like: ‘Peasant life is a life committed completely to survival’ (xi); and ‘No class has been or is more economically conscious than the peasantry’ (xii). Surely more than a change of emphasis is at issue in Berger’s pellucid concreteness (which, indeed, we might even think about as a necessary form of conceptual fundamentalism!). What is a world? Well, my own conviction is that if we want to answer this question, we cannot afford to dematerialise institutions, social forces and social relations – the modern capitalist world-system itself, in fact – in the act of grasping them conceptually and intellectually. A ‘materialist conception of history’, as Friedrich Engels put it in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*,

starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into

classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced and how the products are exchanged.<sup>90</sup>

I think that we would be well advised never to allow ourselves to fall behind or to retreat from this conception, however we chose to proceed.

## Notes

- 1 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 298. Further references to this book will be cited internally. Jameson adds that ‘the change in codes and the barometrical fall in lexical dignity is at least one index of the displacement of traditional aesthetics and the transformation of the cultural sphere in modern times’. Pierre Bourdieu’s *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) is then the exemplary counterweight to the contemporary common-sense understanding of taste as personal opinion, since it demonstrates that the social determination of taste is very deeply structured indeed.
- 2 See, for instance, Edmond Cros, *Theory and Practice of Sociocriticism*, trans. Jerome Schwartz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Edmond Cros, ‘Towards a Sociocritical Theory of the Text’, *Sociocriticism* 26.1&2 (2011): 31–47; Richard Godden, *Fictions of Labor: William Faulkner and the South’s Long Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Richard Godden, *William Faulkner: An Economy of Complex Words* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Ruth Jennison, *The Zukofsky Era: Modernity, Margins, and the Avant-Garde* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).
- 3 Nicholas Brown, *Utopian Generations: The Political Horizon of Twentieth-Century Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
- 4 Theodor W. Adorno, ‘On Dickens’ *The Old Curiosity Shop*’, in Rolf Tiedemann, ed., *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 171.
- 5 Roberto Schwarz, ‘The Importing of the Novel to Brazil and its Contradictions in the Work of Alencar’, in *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture*, trans. and ed. John Gledson (London: Verso Books, 1992), 53. Further references to this essay will be cited internally.
- 6 I must thank my Warwick colleague (and Warwick Research Collective collaborator), Paulo de Medeiros, for his translations from the Portuguese and for helping me to think through the meaning of Schwarz’s concepts.
- 7 Roberto Schwarz, ‘National Adequation and Critical Originality’, trans. R. Kelly Washbourne and Neil Larsen, *Cultural Critique* 49 (2001): 25. Further references to this essay will be cited internally. Schwarz’s use of the concept of ‘articulation’ is subtle and complex, operating on both temporal and spatial axes, and allowing him to describe the determinate ‘set’ or disposition of compound social and cultural modes and formations. The concept’s prehistory is typically traced to Antonio Gramsci, although Schwarz refers us to its various mobilisations across the range of the Marxist literature. In Anglophone social and cultural theory, the concept has been used most notably to discuss social structures marked by the fusion or yoking together of different or differentiable instances: so one reads of the ‘articulation’ of modes of production, for instance, or of race, class and gender as being socially ‘articulated’. The work of Stuart Hall has been central here. See, for instance, his essay, ‘Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance’, reprinted in David Morley, ed., *Essential Essays*, vol. 1, *Foundations of Cultural Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 172–221. For discussions of Hall’s idea of ‘articulation’, see Jennifer Daryl Slack, ‘The Theory and Method of Articulation in Cultural Studies’, in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds, *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), 112–127; and John Clarke, ‘Stuart Hall and the Theory and Practice of Articulation’, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 36.2 (2015): 275–286.
- 8 Roberto Schwarz, ‘Objective Form: Reflections on the Dialectic of Roguery’, trans. John Gledson, *Two Girls and Other Essays* (London: Verso Books, 2012), 10.
- 9 This assessment is advanced in the course of a 1999 interview conducted with Afonso Fávero, Airton Paschoa, Francisco Mariutti and Marcos Falleiros. Schwarz makes the point in this interview that Lucien Goldmann’s genetic structuralism – understood as an attempt to historicise structuralist concepts and methods – was just one of many Marxist efforts over the years to account for the sociality of literary form. In response to one of his interlocutors (Falleiros), who has spoken of the Goldmannian idea of ‘structural homology’, Schwarz states that ‘I think it would be [wrong] ... to associate it with Goldmann alone, though the term may be tied to his theorizations. The effort to link the ordering of the aesthetic world to the real historical orderings is the very basis of materialist criticism with a structural slant. It’s in Marx, Lukács, in the members of the Frankfurt School, and, moreover, in António Cândido and, through him, in the work of several Brazilian

- critics of succeeding generations. One might say that Goldmann, competing in the sphere of French structuralism, which was antihistorical, has tried to do better with Marxist instruments, which are historical, [than what] the structuralists were also doing in their way'. Schwarz, 'Resolving Doubts with Roberto Schwarz: An Interview', with Afonso Fávero, Airtton Paschoa, Francisco Mariutti and Marcos Falleiros, trans. R. Kelly Washbourne, *Cultural Critique* 48 (2001): 167. Further references to this interview will be cited internally.
- 10 This argument has much in common with the critique of 'the formal method' in Russia advanced by M.M. Bakhtin and P.N. Medvedev in their classic 1928 text, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, trans. Albert J. Wehrle (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).
- 11 'De cortico a cortiço', Candido's essay on *O cortiço*, has not to the best of my knowledge been translated into English. However, a sampling of Candido's work has appeared in English as *On Literature and Society*, trans. Howard S. Becker (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). An English translation of Azevedo's novel, entitled *The Slum*, was published in 1999, trans. David H. Rosenthal (New York: Oxford University Press). Zola's *L'Assommoir* has been translated into English on a number of occasions: see, for instance, the translation by Margaret Mauldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- 12 'For example,' Schwarz continues, 'Cândido observes that the level of differentiation achieved by French society had separated the worlds of labor and wealth, so that a novelist like Zola, striving for a cyclical work, could treat them in separate works; while the stage of primitive accumulation in Brazil led Azevedo, the local naturalist – however inspired by *L'Assommoir* – to contrive a plot in which exploiter and exploited live at close quarters, a plot, as it happens, with certain aesthetic advantages thanks to its spontaneous highlighting of class polarization' (19). In another statement from more or less the same time, Schwarz observes that 'Based on the analysis of the main character and on the rhythm of its action, Antônio Cândido could characterize a particular type of work unique to the Brazilian transition from slave labor to free labor. It is a brutal and animalized form, from which the relative European dignification of labor is absent, or even in which the elimination of labor is present, by the proslavery order. It is correlative of a modality also unique to very primitive economic accumulation, which determines the course of the novel and is characteristic of the country ... The comparisons are then established: with Zola's novel, in which, as Antônio Cândido explains, the distance that separates the world of labor from the world of property in France suggested a different organization of materials ... If we understand Brazilian literature as a system, the comparisons with the representation of poverty in Machado de Assis are possible, as they are with the reconsideration of sloth in Mario de Andrade, with brutalism in *São Bernardo*, with the Oswaldian utopia, and so on: the internal comparisons making up the system, the external ones marking their differences' ('Resolving', 158–159).
- 13 A helpful contextualisation of Schwarz and Candido is provided by Maria Elisa Cevasco in her essay, 'The São Paulo Fraction: The Lineaments of a Cultural Formation', *Mediations* 28.1 (2014): 75–104. See also Cevasco's review article on the English translation of Schwarz's *Two Girls and Other Essays* in *Historical Materialism* 22.1 (2014): 148–165; and her discussion of Schwarz in relation to Fredric Jameson in 'The Political Unconscious of Globalization: Notes from the Periphery', in Sean Homer and Douglas Kellner, eds, *Fredric Jameson: A Critical Reader* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 94–111.
- 14 Franco Moretti, 'Conjectures on World Literature', *New Left Review* 1 (2000): 56. Further references to this essay will be cited internally. We might reference Édouard Glissant in this context also. Although some contemporary commentators have been critical of what they perceive to be a slide towards an idealist conception of globalism in Glissant's late work, my own sense is that there is a clear distinction drawn in this work between *mondialisation* and his preferred concept, *mondialité*. In these terms, as Saskia Schabio has pointed out, 'Glissant's conception of world literature shares with Moretti's notion of a world literary system an emphasis on the inequality of the globe ... In Glissant's sense, literature is world literature to the extent that it registers oppression and unevenness'. Saskia Schabio, "'What Sense of Disquiet?'" Novelization, Creolization, World Literature', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48.5 (2012): 552.
- 15 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 226. Further references to this book will be cited internally.
- 16 The reference here is to Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).
- 17 See Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, trans. Howard Eiland, Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingstone and Harry Zohn (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007).
- 18 David Cunningham, "'Very Abstract and Terribly Concrete": Capitalism and *The Theory of the Novel*', *Novel* 42.2 (2009): 312.
- 19 Francis Mulhern, 'Introduction', Schwarz, *Two Girls*, xi–xii.
- 20 Walter D. Mignolo is often cited as the leading theorist of the 'decolonial' turn. See his *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000) and *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); and Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018). For a summary statement, see Walter D. Mignolo, 'Epistemic Disobedience and the Decolonial Option: A Manifesto',

- Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1.2 (2011): 44–66. A compelling critique of Mignolo’s work is offered by Scott Michaelsen and Scott Cutler Shershow, ‘Rethinking Border Thinking’, *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106.1 (2007): 39–60.
- 21 Michael Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution* (Chicago: Haymarket Press, 2010). Trotsky’s inaugural formulation of a ‘law’ of combined and uneven development is to be found in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, trans. Max Eastman (London: Sphere Books, 1967).
- 22 Roberto Schwarz, *A Master on the Periphery of Capitalism: Machado de Assis*, trans. John Gledson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 17, 3. Further references to this book will be cited internally. The commentary here on *A Master* is taken from WReC (Warwick Research Collective), *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 63–65.
- 23 See Daniel Hartley’s discussion of Alencar and Machado, which also interestingly brings Thomas Hardy into the frame: ‘Combined and Uneven Styles in the Modern World-System: Stylistic Ideology in José de Alencar, Machado de Assis and Thomas Hardy’, *European Journal of English Studies* 20.3 (2016): 222–235.
- 24 I must thank Ranka Primorac (University of Southampton) for urging me to read Krleža, of whom (to my shame) I had not previously heard. Among the works of this important and massively influential Croatian writer and politico-intellectual to have been translated into English are the novels, *The Banquet in Blitva*, trans. Edward Dennis Goy and Jasna Levinger-Goy (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004), *On the Edge of Reason*, trans. Zora Depolo (New York: New Directions, 1995) and *The Return of Philip Latinowitz*, trans. Zora Depolo (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995), the short-story collection, *The Cricket beneath the Waterfall, and Other Stories*, various translators, ed. Branko Lenski (New York: Vanguard Press, 1972), and the non-fictional *Harbors Rich in Ships: Selected Revolutionary Writings*, trans. Željko Cipriš (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2017). For an interesting study of Krleža, see Ralph Bogert, *The Writer as Naysayer: Miroslav Krleža and the Aesthetic of Interwar Central Europe* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1991).
- 25 Raymond Williams, ‘Notes on English Prose 1780–1950’, *Writing in Society* (London: Verso Books, 1991), 91.
- 26 A whole library of works could be cited here; but see especially Samir Amin, *Global History: A View from the South* (Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2010); Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2015); Jean-François Bayart, *Global Subjects: A Political Critique of Globalization* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2007); John Coatsworth, Juan Cole, Michael P. Hanagan et al., *Global Connections: Politics, Exchange, and Social Life in World History*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso Books, 2002); Jack Goody, *Capitalism and Modernity: The Great Debate* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2004); Harry Harootunian, *Marx After Marx: History and Time in the Expansion of Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso Books, 2002); Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development* (see n. 21, above); Jason W. Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (London: Verso Books, 2015); Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Kenneth Pomerantz, *The Great Divergence: Europe, China, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Derek Sayer, *Capitalism and Modernity: An Excursus on Marx and Weber* (London: Routledge, 1991); and Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).
- 27 I have already cited Benjamin’s writings on Baudelaire. But see also Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty and Thomas Y. Levin, eds, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2008).
- For Henri Lefebvre’s work on cities, modernity and everyday life, see *Introduction to Modernity: Twelve Preludes September 1959–May 1961*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso Books, 1995); *Writings on Cities*, trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 2, *Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*, trans. John Moore and Gregory Elliott (London: Verso Books, 2007); *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 3, *From Modernity to Modernism (Towards a Metaphilosophy of Daily Life)*, trans. John Moore and Gregory Elliott (London: Verso Books, 2007).
- See also Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982); T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989); David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Susan Buck-Morss, ‘Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin’s Artwork Essay Reconsidered’, *October* 62 (1992): 3–41; Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); Miriam Hansen, ‘Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: “The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology”’, *New German Critique* 40 (1987): 179–

224; Miriam Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

A caveat concerning Williams must be entered here, however. Notwithstanding his identification of Dickens's writing as urban in its innermost dimensions, he was severely critical of the tendency, among self-consciously modernist writers and scholars of literary modernism alike, to associate the literary registration of modernity exclusively with metropolitan experience. See his critique of the hegemonising universalism of 'metropolitan perceptions' in the relevant essays of his posthumously published *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso Books, 1989). Further references to this book will be cited internally.

- 28 In the social scientific (and especially the Marxian) literature, a formal distinction between 'work' and 'labour' is often noted. Work is the more expansive category, referring anthropologically and trans-historically to all of the forms of activity through which human beings reproduce themselves socially. Labour is then reserved for more historically delimited forms of work under specific relations of production (hence as involving alienation and exploitation, for instance). See the discussion in Olivier Frayssé, 'Work and Labour as Metonymy and Metaphor', *triple C (Communication, Capitalism & Critique)* 12.2 (2014) and the essays collected in Ana C. Dinerstein and Michael Neary, eds, *The Labour Debate: An Investigation into the Theory and Reality of Capitalist Work* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002). In this book, however, I shall sidestep these technical distinctions for the most part and use the terms 'work' and 'labour' broadly synonymously.
- 29 Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, vol. 1, *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974); *The Capitalist World-Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); *The Modern World-System*, vol. 2, *Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1750* (New York: Academic Press, 1980); *The Modern World-System*, vol. 3, *The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730–1840s* (New York: Academic Press, 1989); *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
- 30 These are chapter headings in the third volume of *The Modern World-System*.
- 31 See Pablo Upamanyu Mukherjee, 'Introduction: Victorian World Literatures', *Yearbook of English Studies* 41.2 (2011): 1–19; Regenia Gagnier, 'Introduction: Victorian Studies, World Literatures, and Globalisation', *Critical Quarterly* 55.1 (2013): 1–8; Regenia Gagnier, *Literatures of Liberalization: Global Circulation and the Long Nineteenth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
- 32 I should make clear that my focus is directed not to working-class literature, as such, but to the representation of work in literature. Where working-class literature is concerned, a vast number of significant studies might be referenced, among them Roberto del Valle Alcalá, *British Working-Class Fiction: Narratives of Refusal and the Struggle against Work* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of the American Left in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso Books, 1997); Barbara Foley, *Radical Representations: Politics and Form in U.S. Proletarian Fiction, 1929–1941* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993); Pamela Fox, *Class Fictions: Shame and Resistance in the British Working-Class Novel, 1890–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994); John Goodridge and Bridget Keegan, eds, *A History of British Working Class Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Laura Hapke, *Labor's Text: The Worker in American Fiction* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001); Ian Haywood, *Working Class Fiction from Chartism to Trainspotting* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996); H. Gustav Klaus and Stephen Knight, eds, *British Industrial Fictions* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000); James F. Murphy, *The Proletarian Moment: The Controversy over Leftism in Literature* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Phil O'Brien, *The Working Class and Twenty-First-Century British Fiction: Deindustrialisation, Demonisation, Resistance* (London: Routledge, 2019); Sonali Perera, *No Country: Working-Class Writing in the Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Paula Rabinowitz, *Labor and Desire: Women's Revolutionary Fiction in Depression America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); and Janet Zandy, *Hands: Physical Labor, Class, and Cultural Work* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004). I must thank the anonymous reader of my manuscript for drawing the work of John Lennon and Magnus Nilsson to my attention. See their edited two-volume *Working-Class Literature[s]: Historical and International Perspectives* (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2017–20).
- 33 'Structure of feeling' is of course Raymond Williams's term, used throughout his career. For a classical early statement, see *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), esp. 57–88. The idea of 'grammar of identity' is derived from Stephen Clingman's book, *The Grammar of Identity: Transnational Fiction and the Nature of the Boundary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- 34 Meredith Tax, *Rivington Street* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1982), 5.
- 35 This process continues in the contemporary circumstances of capitalist globalisation, in which – as Raymond Williams pointed out as long ago as 1973, in the concluding chapters of *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press) – the relation between country and city is actively over-determined by that between core, semi-periphery and periphery in the world-system. In her contribution to *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, a volume edited by Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, Saskia Sassen discusses the contemporary forms through

- which multitudes of ‘Third World’ women are incorporated into the world-economy, moving from country to city and rural ‘backwater’ to ‘global city’, on pathways that very seldom empower them. ‘[G]lobal cities have become places where large numbers of low-paid women and immigrants get incorporated into strategic economic sectors’, she writes. ‘Some are incorporated directly as low-wage clerical and service workers, such as janitors and repairmen. For others, the process is less direct, operating instead through the consumption practices of high-income professionals, who employ maids and nannies and who patronize expensive restaurants and shops staffed by low-wage workers. Traditionally, employment in growth sectors has been a source of workers’ empowerment; this new pattern undermines that linkage, producing a class of workers who are isolated, dispersed, and effectively invisible’. Saskia Sassen, ‘Global Cities and Survival Circuits’, in Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds, *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (London: Granta Books, 2003), 255.
- 36 For one interesting take on this question, see Stephan Guth, ‘The Modern School and Global Modernity: The Example of an Egyptian Ghost Story of the mid-1920s (Mamūd āhir Lāshīn, Qi at’ ifrīt)’, *Middle Eastern Literatures* 10.3 (2007): 231–250.
- 37 Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M.B. De Bevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), xi.
- 38 Carlos Antonio Aguirre Rojas, ‘Introduction: Immanuel Wallerstein and the Critical “World-Systems Analysis” Perspective’, in Immanuel Wallerstein, Charles Lemert and Carlos Antonio Aguirre Rojas, *Uncertain Worlds: World-Systems in Changing Times* (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), ix.
- 39 See Rémy Herrera’s observation, in a commentary on Samir Amin, that ‘[o]ne of Samir Amin’s major scientific contributions is that he shows that capitalism, as a really existing *world system*, is something completely different from the capitalist mode of production functioning on a global scale’. Rémy Herrera, ‘Samir Amin, Militant Theoretician’, *Socialism and Democracy* 33.1 (2019): 3. It might be worth noting that while the usage of the categories of world and totality in Wallerstein, Amin and their colleagues is geospatially inflected, for such classical theorists in the dialectical Marxist tradition as Georg Lukács and Karl Korsch, this was not always the case. See Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971); Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, trans. Fred Halliday (London: New Left Books, 1970).
- 40 For an example of the latter, see the stated brief of the ‘Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies’ project, led by Francesca Orsini and based at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London: to explore ‘the numerous, often fractured, and non-overlapping worlds of literature’. CCLPS (Centre for Cultural, Literary and Postcolonial Studies): [www.soas.ac.uk/cclps/research/multilingual-locals-and-significant-geographies/](http://www.soas.ac.uk/cclps/research/multilingual-locals-and-significant-geographies/)(unpag.).
- 41 The standard references here include Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols., trans. Siân Reynolds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); and Jacques Le Goff, ed., *The Medieval World*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (London: Collins & Brown, 1990).
- 42 See, for instance, Wai Chee Dimock, ‘Genre and World System: Epic and Novel on Four Continents’, *Narrative* 14.1 (2006): 85–101; Stefan Helgesson, ‘General Introduction: The Cosmopolitan and the Vernacular in Interaction’, in Stefan Helgesson, Annika Mörte Alling, Yvonne Lindqvist and Helena Wulff, eds, *World Literatures: Exploring the Cosmopolitan–Vernacular Exchange* (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 1–11; Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920–1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010); Francesca Orsini, ‘The Multilingual Local in World Literature’, *Comparative Literature* 67.4 (2015): 345–374; Karen Laura Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).
- 43 Social scientific scholarship on the ‘Indian Ocean World’ has been well established for decades. Among the more significant recent publications, see Edward A. Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Rene J. Barendse, *The Arabian Seas: The Indian Ocean World of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2015); Philippe Beaujard, *The Worlds of the Indian Ocean: A Global History*, vol. 1, *From the Fourth Millennium BCE to the Sixth Century CE*; vol. 2, *From the Seventh Century to the Fifteenth Century CE*, translation edited by Tamara Loring, Frances Meadows and Andromeda Tait (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); H.V. Bowen, Elizabeth Mancke and John G. Reid, eds, *Britain’s Oceanic Empire: British Expansion in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, 1650–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Gwyn Campbell, *Africa and the Indian Ocean World from Early Times to circa 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers and Joseph C. Miller, eds, *Women and Slavery*, vol. 1, *Africa, the Indian Ocean World, and the Medieval North Atlantic* (Athens, GA: Ohio University Press, 2007); Elizabeth A. Lambourn, *Abraham’s Luggage: A Social Life of Things in the Medieval Indian Ocean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); and Michael N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge, 2003). A Palgrave series in ‘Indian Ocean World Studies’ was inaugurated in 2013, seeking to feature new work in history, environmental studies, anthropology, sociology, political science, geography, economics, law, and labour and gender studies. Publications in the series to date have included Sara Keller, ed., *Knowledge and the Indian Ocean: Intangible Networks of Western India and Beyond* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Ravi Palat, *The Making of an Indian Ocean World-Economy, 1250–*

1650: Princes, Paddy Fields, and Bazaars (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Michael N. Pearson, ed., *Trade, Circulation, and Flow in the Indian Ocean World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Angela Schottenhammer, ed., *Early Global Interconnectivity across the Indian Ocean World*, vol. 1, *Commercial Structures and Exchanges* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); and Steven Serels and Gwyn Campbell, eds, *Currencies of the Indian Ocean World* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

The 'cultural turn' in Indian Ocean studies is a distinctly more recent development, with critics perhaps following the path trodden by such acclaimed novelists as Amitav Ghosh, Abdulrazak Gurnah and M.G. Vassanji. See, for instance, Shanti Moorthy and Ashraf Jamal, eds, *Indian Ocean Studies: Cultural, Social, and Political Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

Isabel Hofmeyr has emerged as perhaps the most important theorist in the new Indian Ocean cultural studies. See her articles, 'The Black Atlantic Meets the Indian Ocean: Forging New Paradigms of Transnationalism for the Global South – Literary and Cultural Perspectives', *Social Dynamics* 33.2 (2007): 3–32; 'Universalizing the Indian Ocean', *PMLA* 125.3 (2010): 721–729; and 'The Complicating Sea: The Indian Ocean as Method', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32.2 (2012): 584–590.

44 Karima Laachir, Sara Marzagora and Francesca Orsini, 'Significant Geographies: In Lieu of World Literature', *Journal of World Literature* 3 (2018): 292. Further references to this article will be cited internally. See also Kate Wallis, 'Exchanges in Nairobi and Lagos: Mapping Literary Networks and World Literary Space', *Research in African Literatures* 49.1 (2018): 163–186. 'The theory of literary networks', Wallis writes, 'in drawing attention to the role played by transcontinental connections and local publishers in the global movement and circulation of African literature, a role often not visible in current scholarship, offers a methodology that can also bring a more genuinely "worldly" approach to world literature or accounts of a world literary space. However, framing this through Appadurai's concept of "-scapes" allows me to take account of the pervasive structure of "the modern capitalist world-system" and the ways in which this underlies the production of African literature, without what African literature means and how it enters the world becoming solely defined by this – as it is for the Warwick Research Collective' (181).

45 I am reminded here of Gillian Rose's impassioned restatement of the relevance of dialectical theory in her book, *Dialectic of Nihilism: Post-Structuralism and Law* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984). Concerned to 'retrieve and rediscover a tradition which has been tendentiously and meretriciously "deconstructed"' by post-structuralist critics (1), Rose insists – and I invite Laachir, Marzagora and Orsini to take note – that 'Hegelian and Marxist dialectic does not seek to legitimize the phantasy of historical completion with the imprimatur of supra-historical, absolute method, but focuses relentlessly on the historical production and reproduction of those illusory contraries which other systems of scientific thought naturalize, absolutize or deny. Dialectical history is multiple and complex, not as its critics would have it, unitary and simply progressive ...' (3).

46 See also Harsha Ram, who attempts to mediate between the versions of 'world-systems theory currently practiced in the study of global modernisms' and 'the networks model of literary production'. Harsha Ram, 'The Scale of Global Modernisms: Imperial, National, Regional, Local', *PMLA* 131.5 (2016): 1373. Ram's essay, which focuses primarily on the south Caucasus, is full of information that was new to me, certainly. But he argues that in order to understand the complexities of urban modernism in the city of Tiflis (today Tbilisi), it is necessary to invent a new form of what he calls 'scalar thinking, capable of mapping hierarchical cartographies of power as well as tracing the networks that link local and transregional histories' (1382). I find nothing in the essay that convinces me of this necessity, however: for nothing that Ram says is not readily assimilable to an approach to modernism in terms of combined and uneven development.

47 Let me also note in passing that, in suggesting that 'the "world-system" model' is disposed to treat areas such as North India, the Horn of Africa and the Maghreb 'simply ... as ... peripheries or semi-peripheries in a relationship of dependence [on] and subordination [to]' core formations, Laachir, Marzagora and Orsini betray their ignorance of what peripherality (and, even more, semi-peripherality) actually entails in world-system theory. A necessary corrective can be found in Christopher Chase-Dunn's 'A World-System Perspective on *Dependency and Development in Latin America*', *Latin American Research Review* 17.1 (1982): 166–171 – a paper that, focusing on Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto's elaboration in *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (trans. Marjory Mattingly Urquidí [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979]), offers a critique of sociological accounts whose emphasis on colonial relations (hence, 'dependence and subordination') tends to obscure the world-systemic processes of (capitalist) development. Thanks to my Warwick colleagues (and Warwick Research Collective collaborators), Pablo Mukherjee and Stephen Shapiro, for discussing with me the differences between world-system perspectives and those issuing from dependency theory or the various theories of 'coloniality'. See the discussion of core, periphery and semi-periphery in Sharae Deckard and Stephen Shapiro, 'World-Culture and the Neoliberal World-System: An Introduction', the introduction to their edited volume, *World Literature, Neoliberalism, and the Culture of Discontent* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), esp. 9–11; and the relevant pages of Shapiro's *Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008).

- 48 Efraín Kristal, 'Considering Coldly ... A Response to Franco Moretti', *New Left Review* 15 (2002): 73–74.
- 49 Franco Moretti, 'More Conjectures', *New Left Review* 20 (2003): 75–77.
- 50 Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Cultural Parataxis and Transnational Landscapes of Reading: Towards a Locational Modernist Studies', in Astradrur Eysteinnsson and Vivian Liska, eds, *Modernism*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007), 36. See also Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Planetary: Musing Modernist Studies', *Modernism/Modernity* 17.3 (2010): 471–499. Further references to these two essays will be cited internally. The two essays are substantially incorporated into *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity across Time*, a monograph that appeared in 2015 (New York: Columbia University Press). See also the essays collected in Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel, eds, *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), including the contribution by Friedman on E.M. Forster and Arundhati Roy (245–261). Doyle and Winkiel's 'Introduction' to this volume advances an argument about modernism that is very similar to Friedman's. Cf. their reference to 'diverse modernisms formed against and through each other, proximate or distant, and constituted by their locations in the world' (1). See also Laura Doyle, 'Notes Toward a Dialectical Method: Modernities, Modernisms, and the Crossings of Empire', *Literature Compass* 7.3 (2010): 195–213.
- 51 Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso Books, 2002). See Mark DiGiacomo's discussion of the tensions between received modernist studies and African literature, which proposes that 'the most fruitful way to put modernist and African literary studies into conversation might be to embrace Friedman's open-ended approach to intercultural traffic while maintaining a single historical framework. Fredric Jameson's "singular modernity" provides a useful temporal frame for helping us to see African art and literature as coeval with work from the global North. Modernity here means, in effect, global capitalism'. Mark DiGiacomo, 'The Assertion of Coevalness: African Literature and Modernist Studies', *Modernism/Modernity* 24.2 (2017): 248.
- 52 Akshya Saxena, 'A Worldly Anglophony: Empire and Englishes', *Interventions* 20.3 (2018): 317–318. See also Rebecca L. Walkowitz's response to the essays by Saxena et al. in this special issue of *Interventions*, in which she states that 'recognizing the theoretical questions opened up by the Anglophone can help us rethink the concept of language in literary studies', adding that the idea of the World Anglophone 'can be an important catalyst for fresh questions about the organization of our intellectual work, in particular the organization of our work around the unit of the single language'. Rebecca L. Walkowitz, 'Response: World Anglophone Is a Theory', *Interventions* 20.3 (2018): 362, 363.
- 53 Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London: Verso Books, 2013), 83. Peter Hitchcock offers an interesting (and early) critique of what he calls 'the emerging tendency to see English as simply a global conspiracy' in a wide-ranging essay, 'Decolonizing (the) English', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.3 (2001): 749–771 (751).
- 54 'World Lite: What is Global Literature?', Editorial, *n+1* 17 (2013): <https://nplusonemag.com/issue-17/the-intellectual-situation/world-lite/>.<sup>↗</sup>
- 55 Sarah Brouillette, 'On Some Recent Worrying over World Literature's Commodity Status', *Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies*, SOAS University of London (14 July 2017): <http://mulosige.soas.ac.uk/world-literature-recent-worrying/>.<sup>↗</sup>
- 56 Fredric Jameson, 'Globalization as a Philosophical Issue', *Valences of the Dialectic* (London: Verso Books, 2010), 443.
- 57 For my criticisms of Ahmad and Chibber, see Neil Lazarus, 'Postcolonialism and the Dilemma of Nationalism: Aijaz Ahmad's Critique of Third-Worldism', *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 2.3 (1993): 373–400; and Neil Lazarus, 'Vive Chibber and the Spectre of Postcolonial Theory', *Race & Class* 57.3 (2016): 88–106.
- 58 Sarah Brouillette, 'Wither Production?', *Historical Materialism* 23.4 (2015): 203. See also the fierce critique of Apter in Lawrence Venuti, 'Hijacking Translation: How Comp Lit Continues to Suppress Translated Texts', *Boundary 2* 43.2 (2016): 179–204.
- 59 For work on these and related topics, see, for instance, Timothy Brennan, 'Intellectual Labor', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 108.2 (2009): 395–415; Sarah Brouillette, 'Academic Labor, the Aesthetics of Management, and the Promise of Autonomous Work', *nonsite.org* issue #9 (1 May 2013): <http://nonsite.org/article/academic-labor-the-aesthetics-of-management/>.<sup>↗</sup> Sarah Brouillette, *UNESCO and the Fate of the Literary* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019); Sarah Brouillette, Mathias Nilges and Emilio Sauri, eds, *Literature and the Global Contemporary* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Pascale Casanova, 'What Is a Dominant Language? Giacomo Leopardi: Theoretician of Linguistic Inequality', trans. Marlon Jones, *New Literary History* 44.3 (2013): 379–399; Abram de Swaan, 'The Emergent World Language System: An Introduction', *International Political Science Review* 14.3 (1993): 219–226; Wendy Griswold, *Regionalism and the Reading Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Eva Hemmungs Wirtén, *No Trespassing: Authorship, Intellectual Property Rights, and the Boundaries of Globalisation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Gisèle Sapiro, 'The Literary Field between the State and the Market', *Poetics* 31.5–6 (2003): 441–461; and Stephen Shapiro, 'Intellectual Labor Power, Cultural Capital, and the Value of Prestige', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 108.2 (2009): 249–264.
- 60 For statements of this position, see Apter, *Against World Literature*; and Nicholas Harrison, 'World Literature: What Gets Lost in Translation?', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 49.3 (2014): 411–426.
- 61 In speaking of comparative literature 'in its currently institutionalised form', I am referring to the discipline as it has

- developed and as it continues to be practised (not uniformly, of course, but in the main) in the United States. The history of this development has often been rehearsed: a post-Second World War initiative, bound up within Cold War discourse, concerned with the external projection of hegemonising American values and authority, and tracking between the ideological parameters of anti-communism and anti-anti-communism, before being dispersed and reconfigured (though not necessarily transformed or altered in its essential gestures) in the winds of change that began to blow through literary studies generally in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and that have belatedly pushed comparativists to examine the constitutive Eurocentrism of their discipline. (For a recent commentary, see Ali Behdad, 'What Can American Studies and Comparative Literature Learn from Each Other?', *American Literary History* 24.3 [2012]: 608–617.) We might distinguish, in these terms, between (US-style) 'Comp. Lit.' and the more diffuse forms of 'comparative literary studies' practised elsewhere. For while these latter are often methodologically deeply conservative and (in European institutions, at least – in Poland, Hungary and Romania, and not only in France, Germany and Italy) often unreconstructedly Eurocentric, their emphases are rather different from those observable in the American-based scholarship.
- 62 Michael Beard, 'Tell Me Something I Don't Know', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32.3 (2012): 558–559.
- 63 Mark Polizzotti, *Sympathy for the Traitor: A Translator's Manifesto* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018), 5. Further references to this book will be cited internally.
- 64 Cf. Rebecca C. Johnson, who develops a similar general understanding in an essay on Khalil al-Khuri's 1859 novel, *Wayy, idhan lastu bi-ifranji* (*Alas, I Am Not a Foreigner*), often described as the first Arabic novel, to think not only about translation but about the novel and modernity themselves as translational projects. 'Translation appears in this novel as a vanishing semblance', Johnson writes, but the realisation 'that there can be no equivalence in translation ... is seized as a pedagogic opportunity by the narrator in order to redefine modernity as "adaptation" and skeptical critique, as the incorporation and comment on European literature. The [genre of the] novel, that is, does not "arrive" in Arabic through the transparent medium of translation but is produced self-consciously through translation as a thick practice ... Understanding the Arabic novel as an import means understanding it not as a form that is translated but as one that is formed in and by translation, where circulation provokes not only contestations of meaning but also transformations in form ... One can understand not only the Arabic novel but the genre as a whole as grounded in translation: it is formed between languages and, within even a single language, between registers, voices and "stylizations of speech" [Bakhtin]. Instead of an exception, the Arabic novel becomes an acute lens for seeing the constitutive role of translation in all novels. We might then write the long history of the novel as a history in translation – formed through contact with nonnovelistic genres, extraliterary materials, and foreign languages and forms – where translation functions as a node of connection and disconnection'. Rebecca C. Johnson, 'Importing the Novel: The Arabic Novel in and as Translation', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 48.2 (2015): 254–255.
- 65 Anon., 'The Wanderer', *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. Julia Reidhead (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012), 117.
- 66 The poem has been translated thousands of times, of course. Here is Robert E. Diamond's rendition, as published in his *Old English: Grammar and Reader* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1970): 'Often the solitary dweller awaits favour for himself, the mercy of the Lord, although he, anxious in spirit, has long been obliged to stir with his hands (i.e., row?) the ice-cold (lit. frost-cold) sea over the path of the waters, to travel the paths of exile. Fate is utterly inexorable (lit. resolute)' (151).
- 67 Cf. the distinction drawn between 'cultural' and 'linguistic' training in Susan Sniader Lanser's essay, 'Compared to What? Global Feminism, Comparatism, and the Master's Tools', in Margaret R. Higonnet, ed. *Borderwork: Feminist Engagements with Comparative Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 295.
- 68 For a telling critique of Apter's argument here, see Gauti Kristmannsson, 'Theory, World Literature, and the Problem of Untranslatability', in Suzanne Jill Levine and Katie Lateef-Jan, eds, *Untranslatability Goes Global* (London: Routledge, 2018), 128–139.
- 69 Means of production, means of recovery? It depends on your assumptions about textual ontology.
- 70 Michael Allan, 'Reading with One Eye, Speaking with One Tongue: On the Problem of Address in World Literature', *Comparative Literature Studies* 44.1–2 (2007): 3.
- 71 Ruth Bush, 'Le Monde s'effondre? Translating Anglophone African Literature in the World Republic of Letters', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48.5 (2012): 512.
- 72 Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro, 'Outline for a Sociology of Translation: Current Issues and Future Prospects', in Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari, eds, *Constructing a Sociology of Translation* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007), 95; cited in Bush, 'Le Monde s'effondre?', 513.
- 73 Ivan Vladislavić, *Portrait with Keys: The City of Johannesburg Unlocked* (London: Portobello Books, 2007), 98.
- 74 Denis Hirson, *I Remember King Kong (The Boxer)* (Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana Media, 2007).
- 75 Parts of the discussion of Gramsci below are taken from my article, co-written with Stephen Shapiro, 'Translatability, Combined Unevenness and World Literature in Antonio Gramsci', *Mediations: Journal of the Marxist Literary Group* 32.1

- (2018): 1–36.
- 76 Nigel C. Gibson, 'Upright and Free: Fanon in South Africa, from Biko to the Shackdwellers' Movement (*Abahlali baseMjondolo*)', *Social Identities* 14.6 (2008): 683–715. See also Kathryn Batchelor, 'Introduction: *Histoire Croisée*, Microhistory and Translation History', in Kathryn Batchelor and Sue-Ann Harding, eds, *Translating Frantz Fanon across Continents and Languages* (London: Routledge, 2017), 1–16; and Nergis Ertürk and Özge Serin, 'Marxism, Communism, and Translation: An Introduction', *Boundary2* 43.3 (2016): 1–26.
- 77 Antonio Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. Derek Boothman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 307.
- 78 Reference here is to Emily Apter's *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
- 79 See, for example, the discussion in Charles Forsdick's essay, 'Translation in the Caribbean, the Caribbean in Translation'. Responding to recent suggestions in the critical literature that Caribbean culture is constitutively 'translational', Forsdick importantly notes that this is true only if we 'Caribbeanise' our idea of translation at the same time, conceptualising it as 'a lens that highlights tensions associated with the processes of conquest, naming, and resistance that underpin the colonial history of the region', *Small Axe* 48 (2015): 148.
- 80 Cf. the analysis in Peter Ives, 'Gramsci and "Global English"', *Rethinking Marxism* 31.1 (2019): 58–71. See also Dermot Ryan, 'Marx's "Universal Passport"; or, Critique as a Practice of Translation', *Boundary 2* 43.3 (2016): 105–129.
- 81 David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 4.
- 82 See the critique of Damrosch in Ottmar Ette, 'Toward a Polylogical Philology of the Literatures of the World', trans. Agnes Bethke, *Modern Language Quarterly* 77.2 (2016): 143–173. Ette suggests that Damrosch's definition of world literature involves a 'territorialization [that] constantly reconnects a literary work to a place, language, or society of origin; it assumes that there is an origin that defines the literary work (or its author) in national terms. In reality, such an origin is not always easy to determine. Does it really make sense to answer the question of whether a piece of literature belongs to world literature by determining its original culture in the case of, say, the *Shijing*, the Bible, Leo Africanus, Vladimir Nabokov, or Melinda Nadj Abonji? Would it not be far more convincing to look for cultural spaces of motion, fields of tension, and vectorial pathways?' (163). See also Paulo de Medeiros, 'Blindness, Invisibility, and the Negative Inheritance of World Literature', *Modern Language Quarterly* 74.2 (2013): 277–292.
- 83 Pheng Cheah, *What Is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 5. Further references to this book will be cited internally.
- 84 Certainly, Cheah's critique comes nowhere near to hitting its mark with respect to such significant studies as Eleni Coundouriotis, *The People's Right to the Novel: War Fiction in the Postcolony* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014); Max Haiven, *Cultures of Financialization: Fictitious Capital in Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Peter Hitchcock, *The Long Space: Transnationalism and Postcolonial Form* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Jahan Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Joseph R. Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007); and Jennifer Wenzel, *Bulletproof: Afterlives of Anticolonial Prophecy in South Africa and Beyond* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).  
Not a single one of these critics is cited by Cheah, incidentally, which leads one to believe that he is arguing blind, on the basis of abstraction and ideal-typification rather than of formal engagement with the work of his peers and competitors. What comes across from this lack of engagement is unfortunate: the appearance of an Olympian disdain or lack of respect for scholars with whom he disagrees.
- 85 The counterpointing here of 'fronts of brass, and feet of clay' is derived, as readers versed in the Romantics will surely recognise, from Byron's 'Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte', *Selected Poems*, ed. Susan J. Wolfson and Peter J. Manning (London: Penguin, 2005), 308.
- 86 Lucien Goldmann, *Lukács and Heidegger: Towards a New Philosophy*, trans. William Q. Boelhower (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).
- 87 For very different, materialistic mobilisations of 'worlding', see the work of Mukherjee and Gagnier, cited above (n. 31). These seek to ground the worlding of capitalist social relations in terms of the tendential over-determination of all aspects of social life by capital: the capitalisation of experience, both extensively (across space) and intensively (the colonisation of the life-world).
- 88 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*, trans. Peter Collier (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), 6.
- 89 John Berger, *Pig Earth* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999).
- 90 Frederick Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*: [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/index.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/index.htm) (26–27).<sup>↗</sup>