Essais / Review Articles

Worlding World Literature

THE TERM “WORLDING” has three birthfathers, or rather two fathers and one mother. Chronologically the first is Martin Heidegger, who in “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1935), following the German phenomenological tradition, argued that a work of art never “is” but only “becomes,” or “comes into being,” in its actualization by a spectator, a listener, or a reader. In its actualization a work of art creates a world contingent upon the circumstances of actualization. The concrete circumstances of actualization—the “world”—thus determine what “world” emerges from such actualization. In fact, this “world” has no concrete shape before its emergence in actualization. As Heidegger himself puts it in what at first sounds like a rather cryptic statement, but which I hope will now make sense: “world worlds.” The “world” a literary work of art “makes,” then, changes with the latter’s being read or interpreted, each reading being at the same time an act of interpretation. This is true whether on the level of the individual or, more importantly for what interests us here, on the level of the collective, as expressed in criticism and literary historiography. Edward Said, without mentioning Heidegger, and in much more straightforward language, actually says much the same thing as Heidegger when in “The World, The Text, and the Critic” (1983) he insists that “texts have ways of existing that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society—in short, they are in the world, and hence wordly” (35). Hence, he argues, even at their very emergence texts are “objects whose interpretation—by virtue of the exactness of their situation in the world—*has already commenced*” (39). Every time a text is actualized, by its being read or performed, another interpretation arises attuned to its new circumstantiality. Critics, as professional readers, “embody in writing those processes and actual conditions in the *present* by means of which art and writing bear significance” (53). Gayatri

Spivak, finally, and specifically referencing Heidegger as her source, in “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” (1985), so to speak actualizes Said’s insight in showing up “the ‘worlding’ of what is today ‘the Third World’ by what has become a cult text of feminism: *Jane Eyre*” (244). Said and Spivak, of course, put “worlding” specifically in the service of what came to be known as postcolonialism. Doing so, they created a “world” made different and marked by de-colonization, the decline of the former European colonial powers, and the rise of neo-colonialism. Another way of putting this is to say that postcolonialism is a reading of the world occasioned by particular geopolitical circumstances while at the same time bringing into being the “world” of postcolonialism. What I want to argue in what follows is that the same thing holds for the “world” of world literature. In other word, I will argue that discussions on world literature have always already been exercises in “worlding,” and that the recent contributions to the discussion are no exception.

Goethe’s “invention” of *Weltliteratur* in the late 1820s both arises from and helps shaping a post-Napoleonic world marked by the acceleration of international communication among European intellectuals, but also by the continuing division of the German “nation” in numerous small kingdoms, principalities, duchies, and counties. It is precisely the latter that leads Goethe to search for the higher aggregate of a “world literature” in which Germans, and the German language, should play a decisive role. Ironically, Goethe’s *Weltliteratur* was used as a foil by the early proponents of a German national literature, while at the same time serving as part of the emerging discipline of comparative literature, itself only made possible by the rise of national literatures as objects for comparison. Yet, for the longest time, world literature remained at best a minor interest among comparatists. This started to change in the 1990s, largely due, I would argue, to two related events of geopolitical reach. One was the end of the Cold War, with as iconic date the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, but actually covering the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. The other was the spread of what we have commonly come to call “globalization.” The latter term has been mostly used in the realm of economics and trade, but in its most general definition, as for instance offered by Roland Robertson in 1992, for whom globalization signals “the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole,” it also applies to culture (PAGE?). A strengthening factor for, and to my mind in fact an agent in the latter undoubtedly has been the emer-

gence and spread of the internet, to a large extent achieving that ultimate time/space compression David Harvey in 1989 saw as the distinguishing characteristic of what he called the condition of postmodernity. An early sign of renewed interest in world literature on a par with the “globalized” world of the 1990s is to be found in a 1994 collective volume edited by Sarah Lawall, *Reading World Literature: Theory, History, Practice*. Towards the end of the millennium, there followed more systemic attempts to encompass the “global world” of literature: Pascal Casanova’s *La Littérature mondiale des lettres* (1999), translated as *The World Republic of Letters* in 2004, and Franco Moretti’s “Conjectures on World Literature” in 2000, and now collected, together with Moretti’s subsequent writings on world literature in *Distant Reading* (2013). However different in method, both were attempts to read at least the literature of modernity, in Casanova’s case as of the sixteenth and in Moretti’s as of the late eighteenth century, as “ripple-out” effects from European literature, and particularly from what they see as the two great centres of literary culture in modernity, viz. Paris and London. However revolutionary or even upsetting their works might otherwise be methodologically, in this particular sense Casanova and Moretti were continuing in the hallowed tradition of world literature studies throughout the late nineteenth and the whole twentieth century. This tradition saw world literature as largely synonymous with European or more generally Western literature, as is also evident from the anthologies used for teaching world literature courses in United States undergraduate curricula until the mid-1990s. This view, of course, ran parallel to the importance generally conceded to Europe and the West also in terms of politics and economics until the very last decades of the twentieth century.

At first it seemed as if with the end of the Cold War the world had become united under the aegis of late capitalism, which laid the ground for the economic globalization I mentioned earlier. It also led Francis Fukuyama to posit, in retrospect quite erroneously, “The End of History.” And it encouraged the theories of Casanova and Moretti as exponents of such a “technical” take on world literature emanating, as did economic globalization, at least in the then view of things, from Europe or by extension the Western world. Soon, however, such certainties were shattered by the dramatic events of 9/11 and what in general we could call the return of history in some extreme version of what Samuel P. Huntington in a notorious 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs* had labelled “The Clash of Civi-

lizations.” Interestingly, this dramatic shift in how the world looked in the very early stage of the third millennium occasioned practitioners of comparative and world literature in the United States to return to some works that issued directly from another troubled time, viz. the 1930s and World War II, but expanded to take in the world. One of the first, if not the very first, to reflect on what it meant to be “doing” world literature in the twenty-first century and after 9/11, was Edward Said. To do so, Said turned to Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, written in Istanbul while WWII was raging, and published in 1947 in German and in 1953 in English. In fact, Said’s career had started with Auerbach, as in 1969, Said, together with his wife, Maire, had translated Auerbach’s 1952 essay “Philologie der Weltliteratur” as “Philology and World Literature.” It is in this essay that Auerbach, in words that recall Goethe’s most famous statement on world literature, proclaims that “our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation” (Auerbach 2013: 73). Said shared a history of exile with Auerbach who as a Jew had to seek refuge from Nazi Germany in Turkey in 1935, the very year of Said’s birth in Palestine. In Istanbul, Auerbach became Professor of Romance Philology as successor to Leo Spitzer, who had moved to Istanbul for the same reason already in 1933. In 2003, the year of his death, Said provided an “Introduction” to a new edition of *Mimesis*. That introduction was republished in 2004 as part of what in effect would be Said’s posthumous *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*. *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* contains the revised versions of three lectures Said gave in January 2000 at Columbia University in an annual series of lectures on aspects of American culture. In his “Preface” to the book Said stipulates that in 2003 he expanded and revised his original lectures, adding a fourth lecture on Auerbach’s “humanist masterpiece” *Mimesis* (Said, 2003: xv) and that later on he added yet another lecture on “The Public Role of Writers and Intellectuals.” All changes, he insists, were made because of the “terrible events of 9/11” (Said 2003: xvii). The destruction of the twin towers in New York led to a “changed political atmosphere” in the US and beyond, he argues, which sets “America” against the world, and the “West” versus “Islam.” Yet, and with what I can only see as a submerged reference to Goethe’s ideas on world literature, he contends that “far more than they fight, cultures coexist and interact fruitfully with each other” (Said 2003: xvi). “It is to this idea of humanistic

culture as coexistence and sharing that these pages are meant to contribute" Said continues (Said 2003: xvi).

Like Said's *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Emily Apter's 2006 *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* "was shaped by the traumatic experience of September 11, 2001" (Apter 2006: vii). The cause for these terrible events she finds in a lack of understanding, particularly in the United States, of foreign cultures, brought about by a lack of knowledge of foreign languages, and particularly those of the Islamic world. For antecedents to her "new comparative literature," she turns to Auerbach's contemporary Leo Spitzer, best known among comparatists for his 1948 *Linguistics and Literary History: Essays in Stylistics*. Spitzer spent only three years in Istanbul, from when he fled Cologne in 1933. In 1936 he moved to the United States, as would Auerbach after WWII. There, their works served as laying out a specific methodology underpinning the proper Comparative Literature way of studying literature, that is to say in the original language, and backed by knowledge of the classical languages, but likewise as encompassing the domain of Goethean world literature as coinciding with European literature. From interviews with Spitzer's students in Istanbul, however, Apter argues that Spitzer's Istanbul "seminar also acted as a laboratory for working through what a philological curriculum in literary studies should look like when applied to non-European languages and literatures" (Apter 2006: 55). Therefore, Apter credits Spitzer with "inventing" comparative literature in its modern guise during his stay in Istanbul. "In retrospect," she concludes, "Spitzer's invention of comparative literature in Istanbul transformed philology into something recognizable today as the psychic life of transnational humanism" (Apter 2006: 64). Such transnational humanism is what Said recognizes in how Auerbach, at the end of *Mimesis*, stresses that each form of understanding is also a form of self-understanding at a particular time and in a particular place. This, for Said, is to world oneself as a humanist critic: "it means situating critique at the very heart of humanism, critique as a form of democratic freedom and as a continuous practice of questioning and of accumulating knowledge that is open to, rather than in denial of, the constituent historical realities of the post-Cold War world, its early colonial formation, and the frighteningly global reach of the last remaining superpower of today" (Said 2003: 47). To use Dipesh Chakrabarty's term, this comes down to a Europe, or by extension a Western "world," "provincializing" itself by universalizing

its critical method. This, by the way, is an idea that not only applies to literature—it is also what Rodolphe Gasché's argues has been the case with European philosophy. In his *Europe, or the Infinite Task: A Study of a Philosophical Concept* (2009), discussing Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jan Patočka, and Jacques Derrida, Gasché argues that the philosophical task of Europe is to dis-solve itself by turning its own bedrock principle of universalism into the world's property, with "Europe" thus de-exceptionalizing itself. The same idea, albeit put less polemically and categorically than with Said or Apter, but rather elaborated pragmatically, lies at the root of David Damrosch's *What is World Literature?* (2003), and of the *Longman Anthology of World Literature* (2004) for which he served as the main editor.

It is the universalizing drive behind the concept of world literature as implemented in ventures such as the Longman and other anthologies, such as the Norton, or at least the way it is being perceived, though, that has called forth some very strong resistance. In his 1952 "Philology and World Literature" Auerbach warned that the rapid process of concentration after WWII of power in only a few superpowers risked reducing man to "existence in a standardized world, to a single literary culture, only a few literary languages, and perhaps even a single literary language. And herewith the notion of *Weltliteratur* would be at once realized and destroyed" (Auerbach 2013: 66). The single culture and the single language Auerbach has in mind are clearly Anglo-American. Gayatri Spivak in *Death of a Discipline* (2003) sounded a similar alarm with respect to the practice of world literature as presently promoted from the US, teaching the world's literatures via exclusively English-language anthologies aimed at American undergraduates. Instead of making such undergraduates more receptive to the world outside of the US, Spivak implied, they turned all of the world into an extension of the US. In other words, and to fall back on the terminology I have been emphasizing throughout, such anthologies, and such a conception of world literature again "worlds" the world outside of the US in the image of what suits the US, just as European literature "worlded" the world of colonialism and imperialism when Europe ruled the world. The foregoing developments, along with most others involving the renewed prominence of world literature in literary studies, have been addressed in three volumes that appeared in 2012: the collective volumes *World Literature: A Reader*, edited by Theo D'haen, César Domínguez, and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen and *The Routledge*

Companion to World Literature, edited by Theo D'haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir, and my monograph *Routledge Concise History of World Literature*. Since then, however, there have appeared a number of significant new interventions.

Emily Apter, like Spivak, objects to a world literature that presents the entire world as transparently accessible in translation, an assumption she sees underlying the endeavours of Damrosch and the like. In *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (2013) she focuses on those terms and concepts that resist translation and that therefore preclude that one should talk of one "world literature." Most often such terms and concepts have to do with what Apter calls philosophical, or perhaps by extension cultural, "lodestones": concepts central or essential to a specific culture but for which there exists no real equivalent, or at best only a remotely or relatively approximate one, or even only a paraphrase, in another culture. As Apter herself hints on pages 8–9 of *Against World Literature*, the term "world" in world literature itself already poses the question of un/translatability, its definition varying considerably from one culture to another, to the point of complete lack of coverage of the source by the target term at the furthest extremes. If, as the title of her book suggests, Apter is "against world literature" it is because the inevitable mistranslations she sees as resulting from present attempts to catch the world's literatures under the umbrella of one world literature in practice means bending the non-Western to the Western. Let me add immediately that Apter's stance on the untranslatability of certain terms and concepts is heavily contested, a.o. by ZHANG Longxi in his "Crossroads, Distant Killing, and Translation: On the Ethics and Politics of Comparison" (2013). Even apart from such critiques, though, I am much more optimistic than Apter about the possibilities of "doing" world literature more equitably than she seems to think possible.

For this, I turn to what the Spanish comparatist César Domínguez in his *Literatura europea comparada* (2013) calls a "eurocentrismo metodológico," where the "centrismo" runs along the lines of the Slovak comparatist and literary theoretician Dionyz Durišin's concept of a supranational space united by a set of in this case literary phenomena, yet without attributing to these phenomena more than a purely heuristic value. On the level of the centrismo itself this might actually come close to Spivak's call in *Death of a Discipline* for a renewed investment in area studies, with attention being paid to the detailed study of an area's

languages, cultures and literatures. Apter's concept of the untranslatable might serve as a useful instrument when it comes to establishing the faultline between a "European" literature and other centrisms, whether geographically near or far, and both synchronically and diachronically. A comparative world literature, then, would consist of juxtaposing and relating to one another this and other centrisms without hierarchically prejudicing one or the other. "European" literature thus comes to stand not as the focus from which to study the world's literatures, and hence the central perspective on world literature, but as an object for how it relates to the literatures of the "world." In other words, a world literature as here advocated would "world" European literature from a non-Eurocentric (in the classical definition) perspective. But studying the literature of any other centrisms from a world literature point of view requires the same openness, the same non-centric approach. That, by the way, is what an international team of scholars is now trying to do with a new world history of literature to be published in, it is hoped, two years' time (Petersson and D'haen 2011)

A centrisms that at first may not appear as such, but that in fact goes back on the earliest moves to counter Eurocentrism is the postcolonial. Homi Bhabha already in 1994, in the "Introduction" to his *The Location of Culture* (1994), proposed that "where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees—these border and frontier conditions – may be the terrains of world literature" (Bhabha 1994: 12). Such a statement rings truer than ever, also for us here in Europe, I think, in today's world of massive migrations due to conditions of war, famine, and demographic and economic disruptions and inequalities. Most recently, Pheng Cheah has picked up on this suggestion with his *What is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (2016), a title that to me suggests a deliberate take on David Damrosch's *What is World Literature?* Using Michelle Cliff's Clare Savage novels, set in Jamaica, Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, set in Bangladesh, and Nuruddin Farah's *Gifts*, set in Somalia, as examples, Cheah argues that postcolonial literature resists the West's worlding of the rest of the world by refusing to go along with the uni-temporality of globalization as Western imposition. Specifically, Cheah argues, "these novels are examples of literature that seeks to have a worldly causality in contemporary globalization ... the source of lit-

erature's worldly force is the heterotemporality of precolonial oral traditions that have survived the violence of slavery, folk practices, subaltern rituals and practices of survival, religious ethics, and even the geological time of the landscape" (13). The postcolonial novels he discusses, Cheah maintains, "employ formal means to revive non-Western temporalities in the present that can aid in worlding the world otherwise." Put differently, "they generate alternative cartographies that enable a postcolonial people or a collective group to foster relations of solidarity and build a shared world in which self-determination is achieved" (17). I see Cheah here as basically updating Said's thesis, in *Culture and Imperialism*, of postcolonial literature as a literature of resistance.

The idea of different temporalities applying in different locales around the globe has been invoked repeatedly with regard to Latin America. Suffice it to think of the works of a.o. Enrique Dussel, Walter Dignolo, and Aníbal Quijano, especially with respect to issues of Modernity and Post-Modernity. In the field of literature this has led to reflections on the relationship of Latin American literatures to "Western" genres such as Realism, Modernism and Postmodernism. Magical realism as "invented" by Alejo Carpentier in the 1949 preface to *El reino de este mundo* in essence hinges upon differences in temporality between Europe and Latin America. Of course, the idea of heterotemporality also looms large in the emerging field of "chronopolitics" as part of geopolitics. For Mariano Siskind in *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America* (2014) this translates into "the tension between the desire to join the global order of modernism [what Latin American writers think of as the "cosmopolitan" world literature practiced in metropolitan Europe or North America] and the anxiety provoked by the experience of exclusion and the anticipation of the exclusion to come" (18) which he sees as constitutive of Latin American literature since 1870. Héctor Hoyos in *Beyond Bolaño: The Global Latin American Novel* (2015) unabashedly "worlds" Latin American literature as what Auerbach would have called (1952) an *Ansatz* or "entry" into world literature. Hoyos uses Jorge Luis Borges's "Aleph" as an example of a "global" story, in the sense that it is part of world literature, and a story about "globalization," in the sense that the object the Aleph is "one of the points in space that contain all points," the equivalent in physics, we might say, of Borges's equally "global" and globally famous "Library of Babel." "Fiction can conjure globality, as the Aleph demonstrates," Hoyos argues. He continues: "This

occurs in other Latin American works, many of which benefit from a strong tradition of negotiating particularity and universality, specificity and generality, all within complex transactions among national, regional, and global realms. In this way, world literature has much to learn from contemporary Latin American fiction" (31). And Hoyos turns the tables on what Siskind called cosmopolitan and metropolitan literatures when he argues that "some might regard Bolaño as something that, in Spanish, happened years ago, with English and other langues catching up later.... So, in some sense, Bolaño is an instance (of which we are bound to have more of as the world becomes more integrated) of metropolitan centers experiencing the kind of belatedness that used to be reserved to, and a hallmark of, the periphery" (30).

Cheah's take on a postcolonial and Siskind's and Hoyos's on a Latin American world literature are firmly situated in what I will call "the extended present" of a globalizing world, and basically employ what Rey Chow has called a "Europe and ..." construction, whereby the European or Western serves as the initial term of comparison. Hence, they can be said to still adopt a hierarchizing principle, even if with a vengeance in some cases. Over the past few years however there have been an increasing number of comparative world literature studies on literary systems that pre-date the beginnings of globalization and Modernity as of roughly the turn of the sixteenth century, and that are not only geographically but also culturally almost as far apart as possible. Again the geopolitical angle here shows. On a par with the steadily rising importance of the area economically, politically and militarily, the literatures of East Asia, and especially China, have been gaining ever more attention over the last two decades or so. On the one hand this has translated into studies such as Karen Thornber's *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (2009), that look at the area as an integrated cultural unit, the literatures of which relate to one another at least as intimately, and as Thornber argues, more so, than to Western literatures. Concretely, Tornber shows that Japanese literature, which after the Meiji restoration quickly retooled itself along European lines, came to serve as the center of what in Domínguez's terminology we may call an East Asian centrismo. On the other hand, this increased interest in the literatures of East Asia has also yielded such boldly comparative studies as Alexander Beecroft's *Authorship and Cultural Identity in Early Greece and China* (2010) or Wiebke Denecke's *Classical World*

Literatures: Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman Comparisons (2014). Denecke compares the relationship of the literatures of Japan and Rome in their formative stages to that of what she calls, after ZHANG Longxi (2013), their respective “reference cultures,” the Chinese and the Greek or Hellenic. In her introduction she stresses that rather than privileging the chronologically earlier European case over the later East-Asian one, and discussing the latter from the ontological perspective of what it lacks in comparison with the former, she has “framed her comparison as a quadruple constellation, which, although it still consists of two binaries, avoids essentializing dichotomy and the creation of false ellipses” (12–13). Instead, she considers China and Japan, and Greece and Rome, “as long-standing constellations of cultural reception processes, of cultural translatio,” and “when we come to compare the four literary cultures of the Ancient Mediterranean and East Asia, we are not in fact comparing cultures, but reception processes” (12). Likewise, Beecroft in *Authorship and Cultural Identity in early Greece and China* is not comparing cultures but how authorship functions in the two cultures concerned. Denecke argues for her book that it “tries to make a seductive case for dialogue” (15). The same can be said to apply to Beecroft’s book. Both Beecroft and Denecke, however, are only two of a recent wave of (relatively) younger scholars that approach world literature from a refreshingly open perspective, deliberately avoiding Eurocentrism. Instead they comply with what ZHANG Longxi has argued that “a comparative literature for our time should be—comparison not just within but beyond and across philologically linked language groups, across Romance and East Asian languages” (ZHANG 2013: 59).

In an even later volume, *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (2015), Beecroft explains how when he was working on *Authorship and Cultural Identity in early Greece and China* he was struck by the fact that “in both cases, the historical record shows that literary texts (oral or otherwise), and other cultural artifacts, circulated across political boundaries so that the world of a common Greek (Pan-hellenic) or Chinese culture was larger by far than that of any polity then in existence, providing some measure of cultural solidarity to a politically fragmented world” (1). At the same time he noticed a similar phenomenon with Sanskrit literature as explained by Sheldon Pollock in the latter’s *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (2006). In any case, these observations

led Beecroft already in 2008 to propose a six-mode model of literature across time: the epichoric (within the confines of a local community, the panchoric (operating across a range of epichoric communities, united to some degree in language and culture, but generally fragmented politically, the cosmopolitan (circulating in a cosmopolitan literary language used by groups speaking a variety of mother tongues), the vernacular (but not yet in a national context; i.e., Germany at the time of Goethe), the national, and the global (transcending national, even continental, borders, but continuing to represent itself as a national literatures) (Beecroft 2008: 92–98). In his most recent volume, Beecroft elaborates these modes into a full-blown theory of world literature comparing literatures across the world.

And then there are scholars that look at how contemporary literature adapts to the tautology of a “global world.” Rebecca Walkowitz, in, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (2015), remarks that if works of literature have of course always been translated – some, such as *Robinson Crusoe*, even with remarkable speed—“the translation and circulation of literature today is historically unprecedented once we consider how quickly books enter various national markets, small and large, across several continents” (2). Moreover, she argues, “many novels do not simply appear in translation ... they have been written for translation from the start.” These novels she calls “born translated” and “like born-digital literature, which is made on or for the computer, born-translated literature approaches translation as medium and origin rather than as afterthought. Translation is not secondary or incidental to these works. It is a condition of their production.” (3–4). Moreover, many of these novels themselves reflect on translation, or present themselves as already-translated. A historical example would, again, be Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*. As well-known contemporary examples Walkowitz mentions a.o. the later works of J.M. Coetzee, Haruki Murakami, and Orhan Pamuk. I myself might be inclined to add the French-Caribbean (Guadeloupan) Maryse Condé—specifically her *La migration des coeurs* (1995), which is a rewriting in French of Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* and which was duly translated into English, by Condé’s husband Richard Philcox, as *Windward Heights* in 2003. But here we might also think of popular literature such as crime fiction or popular romance—what the Germans call *Lektur* rather than *Literatur*. It is not difficult to see that such practice plays into the hand of the kinds of globalization I raised

at the very beginning of my talk: to speak with Apter, born-translated works sharply reduce or altogether eliminate untranslatables, thus ensuring themselves easy access to the “global” market for fiction: “world” literature indeed! Not surprisingly given today’s linguistic world map, most of these works are written with an eye to translation into English, because most profitable. In a sense we could say that the authors of such born-translated works are “worlding” their products in the sense of the widest possible dissemination while the student of such literature—in this case Walkowitz—is “worlding” the study of world literature in today’s geopolitics once more.

I have insisted on the relation between world literature and geopolitics because I truly believe they are two sides of the same coin. Interest in the study of world history has risen on a par with that in the study of world literature—suffice it to think of recent books such as *Grand Strategies: Literature, Statecraft, and World Order*, a 2010 volume by Charles Hill, a former US career diplomat, *The Revenge of Geography* (2012) and *Asia’s Cauldron* (2014) by Robert D. Kaplan, with whom we see a return to older theoreticians of geopolitics such as the turn-of-the-twentieth century British Halford Mackinder and his “geographical pivot of history” theory, or Jürgen Osterhammel, with his *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*. Edward Said, by the way, when discussing Joseph Conrad in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) refers to Mackinder. Or we might cite the revival of the work of the early and mid-twentieth-century German Carl Schmitt, whose work, although much contested because of his Nazi-sympathies, is making a remarkable comeback also in literary studies, a.o. via Bertrand Westphal’s *géocritique*. But we might also think of other ways of linking world history and world literature, “worlding” the world differently according to for instance routes of communication, commerce, and disease. Here we might think of recent works such as Lincoln Paine’s *The Sea and Civilization: A Maritime History of the World* (2014) or Peter Frankopan’s *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (2015). To suggest only one instance of what Walter Benjamin, and after him Mads Rosendahl Thomsen in his *Mapping World Literature* (2008), call a “constellation” in literature fitting the “world” of the works just cited consider Marco Polo, the sixteenth-century Portuguese poet Luís Vaz de Camões, Joseph Conrad, the Dutch early twentieth-century poet J.J. Slauerhoff, the Italian twentieth-century novelist Italo Calvino, and the Portuguese contemporary novelist Gon-

çalo M. Tavares, all of whom write about “the Indies,” in the widest sense: going there, getting there, trading there, failing there and getting lost there, and do so in a densely woven web of intertextuality. All these ways of “writing” world literature, then, are as many ways of “worlding” our world for “our” age, as Goethe did for his. We could be in lesser company!

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