CHAPTER 1

Introduction
World Literature, Cities, and Urban Imaginaries

Jini Kim Watson and Ato Quayson

City Worlds

Why has world literature been such a compelling framework for literary scholars to think through and against over the last decades? And what might a volume that examines the city's relationship to this field add to these debates? *The Cambridge Companion to the City in World Literature* contributes to this growing body of scholarship by foregrounding the key relationship of urbanism to world literature, a relationship that has not yet been adequately explored. Through a series of chapters spanning a number of metropolises across the globe, we address the way cities have given rise to aesthetic dispositions, acts of linguistic and cultural translation, topographic conceptualizations, global imaginaries, and narratives of self-fashioning that are central to understanding world literature and its debates. Deploying a wide variety of reading methods and textual objects, our contributors offer case studies from cities both well known in the world literary orbit and those less often anthologized: Beijing, Bombay/Mumbai, Dublin, Cairo, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Lagos, London, Mexico City, Moscow and St. Petersburg, New York, Paris, Singapore, Sydney, as well as (in Part I chapters) Chicago, Dubai, Manila, Seoul, and New Delhi. Our expansion of the typical nodes of world literary production activates not just a broader spatial imaginary or geographical reach for the field, but multiplies the historical and linguistic formations of potential literary world systems. Instead of offering a singular new theory of world literature to supersede previous ones, this volume aims to proliferate the "worldings" which urban literatures simultaneously invoke and create.[1] This introductory chapter will trace several of the most salient contributions to the field of world literature in order to position our volume's focus on city literature.

We start with two uncontroversial propositions about the appeal and prominence of world literature formulations. The first is that, at a very basic

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level, theories of world literature have sought to move beyond the boundedness of national literatures, challenging the way literary texts have typically been divided up and organized by both the modern university and publishing practices. Such theories emphatically contest the divisions of literary study into departments of English, French, German, and – for non-Western languages – the so-called "area studies" departments of Asian, African, or Latin American studies. The turn to world literature, in Emily Apter's phrase, is an "experiment in national sublation."[2] The burgeoning of critical interest in world literature approaches over the last twenty years or so is undoubtedly related to the rise of the post-Cold War era of globalization, understood as ushering in a new economic and cultural regime that supersedes national literatures.[3] But invocations of world literature formulations often refer back to two well-known nineteenth-century pronouncements on the subject. The first, by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), enthusiastically announced an epoch of *Weltliteratur* beyond national literatures, while Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels famously wrote in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) of the power of worldwide capitalism to break down national barriers: "National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature."[4] In 1952, comparative philologist Erich Auerbach would write: "[N]ew outlooks on history and on reality have been revealed, and the view of the structure of inter-human processes has been enriched and renewed. We have participated – indeed, we are still participating – in a practical seminar on world history [….] In any event, our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation."[5] For better or worse, Goethe, Marx, and Engels are frequently invoked as a kind of origin point for thinking about literary cultures beyond national boundaries, while Auerbach is taken to provide an important twentieth-century literary critical method for thinking beyond individual national literatures. Such approaches offer the substantive appeal of studying literature in a global frame and attending to its boundary-crossing, transnational, translational, cosmopolitan, worldly, or globalizing dimensions. To quote one influential definition from David Damrosch, world literature takes as its remit the sum of literary works that "circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language."[6]

A second, and related, proposition is that the expansion of literary study from the nation to the world brings with it a theoretical concern for literary systematicity or *totality*. As Ben Etherington and Jarad Zimbler have noted, the concept of totality "brings to the fore the dynamic relationship between parts and whole: that is, the ways in which the interrelations

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and interactions of particulars cumulatively constitute a *single intelligible entity*."[7] Witness, then, the proliferation of studies that seek to model those "dynamic relationships" between part and whole at a world scale. The most cited of these is arguably Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* (1999), which depicts a literary world system structured by its own internal laws. Centered on Paris, the "literary Greenwich meridian," this system comprises "dominant and dominated literary spaces" which jostle in a rivalrous contest of "literary geopolitics."[8] Relatedly, we have Franco Moretti's turn to "distant reading" as a necessary methodology for understanding the worldwide distribution of literary forms such as the novel; he explicitly theorizes such an approach in imitation of "world systems theory" – with its concern for the *longue durée* and changing relationships between core and periphery – formulated by economic historian Immanuel Wallerstein.[9] A variant of this interest in literary world systems, with more emphasis on a Trotskyian understanding of uneven development, occurs in the work of the Warwick Research Collective. In *Combined and Uneven Development* (2015), the group recasts world literature as that which registers the core–periphery unevenness of the world system resulting from modern capitalist globalization.[10] Joe Cleary has further contributed to these debates by interrogating the push and pull of great literary capital cities, showing how the rise of Dublin and New York effectively de-centers "the Anglophone world long dominated by London."[11] As he puts it, "the literary world was no longer a tale of two cities but of many."[12] Acknowledging literary world systems beyond the core capitalist countries, he also takes into consideration the important rise of Moscow as the center of an alternative Soviet world literary system, as does recent work by Rossen Djagalov, Amelia Glaser, and Steven S. Lee.[13]

What does a focus on cities and city literature add to these debates? Regarding our first proposition, we can immediately note that urban centers are typically highly networked at regional, national, and global scales. As Brigid Rooney puts it in this volume, "cities are simultaneously subnational, operating below nation at regional level, and supranational, transcending nation via city-to-city global circuits." Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong note that by virtue of being "a milieu that is in constant formation, drawing on disparate connections, and subject to the play of national and global forces,"[14] cities readily epitomize the vibrant interactions and border-crossing cultural ecologies that have motivated a significant tributary of world literary studies. Indeed, the phenomenon of globalization has prominently been theorized through the "world" or "global" city by theorists including Saskia Sassen, Anthony D. King,

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Doreen Massey, and Manuel Castells.[15] Yet these latter approaches have typically remained within the purview of social scientists and geographers, focusing on empirical questions of infrastructure, housing, transport, inequality, governance, and so on. Our volume, by contrast, proffers accounts of world-connecting circuitry that depends upon the complex dialectics of urban materialities and worldly imaginations.[16] Cities are therefore much more than nodes in the circuitry of global flows; they profoundly shape our understanding of the conditions of the global itself.

By foregrounding the linguistic, cultural, political, and economic commingling at the heart of urban world-making, the chapters in this volume demonstrate that cities are also central to our second proposition regarding totality, but that they exceed merely registering competitive flows of the global literary market (Casanova, Damrosch) or the uneven development of global capitalism (Warwick Research Collective). If geographers and urban sociologists have typically been concerned with the empirical aspects of the city, world literature theorists have sometimes disregarded the texture and materiality of the local for an emphasis on systematic models of global circulation and universality. In theories such as Casanova's, for example, cities function mainly as sites through which texts must pass in order to accrue literary value (and of course, the most influential publishing houses, such as Random House, Penguin, Knopf, Bloomsbury, Larousse, have been located in cities). Our point is, rather, that cities function as "switchboards" of cultural translation for local, regional, and transnational flows, and therefore provide an especially rich site for activating questions of part to whole, and local to global. We can unpack this idea in relation to the shift from what Raymond Williams memorably called "knowable communities" – or traditional village communities – to the unknowable spaces of the large metropolis.[17]

Most large urban centers, such as London, Paris, Lagos, Johannesburg, Mexico City, and Sydney, expanded through the accretion of hitherto disparate neighborhoods and districts. This uneven process of conurbation resulted in the impetus to tell stories about the people of the city since urban migrants and people from the assumed outskirts of the city were unknown to those at its business or political core, and were often as unfamiliar as people who had come from outside the relevant area entirely. The need for telling stories about strangers sometimes found peculiar outlets, such as the narratives of criminals made popular in the criminal portraits of London's Newgate Calendars in the eighteenth century.[18] The marriage notices and obituaries in papers such as Paris's *Gazette de France* (first issued in 1625), the *New-York Gazette* (first issued in 1725), London's *The Times* (first issued

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in 1785), Singapore's *The Straits Times* (first issued 1845) and Johannesburg's *The Sowetan* (first issued in 1981) served a similar purpose, while the Onitsha Market pamphlets that spoke of the knowledge required to survive Nigerian cities served a similar function (see Emmanuel N. Obiechina [1972], Stephanie Newell [2001] and Madhu Krishnan, this volume).[19] In their chapter for this volume, María Moreno Carranco and José Ruisánchez Serra tell us of the nineteenth-century *forastrero*'s (outsider's) gaze toward Mexico City, which was associated with the genre of the early travel guide and "attempted to portray the city, its attractions and amenities, for an imagined visitor." What we see in all these cases is the way urban narratives serve to make the *strange knowable* and, in turn, work to resolve the problem of the part to whole. Cities, each perceived as a potential "single intelligible entity",[20] constantly demand new theorizations of that totality and thus become engines of storytelling. Urban narratives therefore tend to produce imagined worlds – not on the national scale of imagined communities as described by Benedict Anderson in his classic book, *Imagined Communities*[21] – but rather on the smaller scale of evolving cities. Moreover, if cities have always been "principal sites for launching world-conjuring projects,"[22] conversely, urban experiences themselves have also been deeply shaped by a web of global processes including colonialism, capitalism, and migration that in their turn engender stories, desires, and counter-worldings.

To think about cities as contested sites for imagined communities or potential totalities raises a third and final proposition about world literary debates. This approach, we might say, is motivated by the desire to complicate the first two propositions through a postcolonial interrogation of what counts as world literary space in the first place, and to repoliticize what has often thought to be a depoliticizing theoretical framework. This branch of the field has therefore offered an ideal venue for thinking through the manifold cultural legacies of conquest, colonialism, and imperial domination. Scholars such as Amir Mufti, Francesca Orsini, and Baidik Battacharya, for example, focusing on British-South Asian literary relations, have shown the way that a notion of worldwide literary space emerged out of colonial and Orientalist philological study.[23] In *Forget English!*, Mufti reveals how Orientalist knowledge structures were the unacknowledged ground for the production of a world literary space, a space in which English would dominate as the global vernacular and "vanishing mediator."[24] Orisini, with reference to the specific locatedness of multilingual South Asian literatures, has rejected the notion of world literature "as a single global or transnational scale or a movement towards global integration," to instead emphasize the "many significant geographies" that "creatively manage,

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shift and combine scales.[25] A different tack of postcolonialist intervention into the world literary debates has been equally provocative. This strand is aptly described by Philip Holden as those that involve an "ethical value" or the attempt "to remake the world" (this volume), with Pheng Cheah's work being the most emblematic of this turn. In *What Is a World?* (2016), Cheah takes issue with circulation-based models of world literature for reducing literature to an effect of the global market, instead emphasizing literature's "worldly causality" and its potential for remaking the world.[26] For this task, he argues that postcolonial literatures from the Global South carry the capacity to craft "new stories of world-belonging" in the face of the "worldlessness" of global capital. J. Daniel Elam's work broadly echoes Cheah's rejection of the empiricism of much circulation-inspired world literature theory. In *World Literature for the Wretched of the Earth*, he takes South Asian anti-colonial literature from the 1920s and 1930s as exemplars of thinking that "attempt[s] to articulate a world that has yet to exist." Conceiving of the "world" as literature's *demand* rather than its external set of conditions, writings by M.K. Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar and others help us conceive world literature less as "a list of texts" or institutional program and more as "a critical orientation toward a political and aesthetic world that may never be known in its totality."[27] Such approaches exceed established notions of world literary space by conceiving, as Jane Hiddlestone has observed in relation to Moroccan literary critic Abdelkébir Khatibi, "literary worldiness not as the result of a text's circulation but as a mode of thought."[28]

The chapters in this volume are largely written in the spirit of our third proposition about world literature: that it offers an arena in which the dominant notions of world literary space may be complicated by urban-based "significant geographies" (Orsini), such that the ongoing decolonization of literary cultures can be pursued. Chapters by Varma, Nerlekar, Krishnan, and Moreno Carranco and Ruisánchez Serra help to challenge narrow notions of world literature by engaging with the spatial, linguistic, and literary afterlives of imperial and colonial rule in London, Bombay/Mumbai, Lagos, and Mexico City. Other essays by Holden, Rooney, Watson, and Bush – on Singapore, Sydney, colonial/neocolonial cities, and Paris – offer new starting propositions for rethinking world literary space in ways that decenter European literary capitals. Together, our volume's chapters stress cities as vibrant cultural ecologies that are embedded in multiple scales and interlaced imperial histories; they are both the spatial *objects* of specific (imperial, capitalist, nationalist, or statist) worldings and *generative sites* for the critical counter-demand of world-making projects,

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in the sense invoked by Cheah and Elam. Several chapters also revise the well-known trope of "world capitals" to account for the fact that the largest and most vibrant metropolises are now located in the Global South.[29] The latter, moreover, are sites where the contradictory processes of modernity, coloniality, globalization, and neoliberalism are typically most acute, resulting in the most prescient cultural and political responses.[30] City literatures thus suture together the local and the global without smoothing away their contradictions, and call forth the problematic of totality or wholeness, while incessantly demanding alternative storytelling against imperial processes. To quote Roy and Ong again: "Worlding projects remap relationships of power at different scales and localities, but they seem to form a critical mass in urban centers, making cities both critical sites in which to inquire into worlding projects, as well as the ongoing result and target of specific worldings."[31]

One of our central arguments in this volume is that the city tends to be the favored scalar unit for multiple world-making projects both below and above the nation-state scale. Cities are thus simultaneously sites where "global designs" touch down,[32] and matrices of possibility, where connectivity, reinvention, and self-translation also occur. As such, *The Cambridge Companion to the City in World Literature* is less interested in "conceptualizing the entire sphere of literary activity"[33] and more interested in *proliferating* literary formulations around the possibilities, genealogies, and coordinates through which worlds can be imagined and constructed. The chapters presented here help us ask: What emerges if we go beyond the notion that cities are paradigmatic sites for analyzing intercultural mixing and literary vibrancy, and instead claim that city literatures are productive of new methods for thinking through the relationship of local to global, of part to whole, of comparativity, of movement and stasis, or of nation, time, and translation? The chapters that follow offer multiple approaches to urban allegories, cosmopolitan imaginaries, and migrant itineraries in order to theorize a range of relationships between the local and the global, the regional and national, and everything in between. Consequently, if theories of world literature tend to vie with each other to produce a single master theory, the seventeen chapters of this volume reject the field's will-to-totality and instead offer contributions that do not cohere into a smooth version of the globe or an agglomeration of regional literatures that add up to a whole. Rather, different chapters offer competing versions of worldliness that may be untranslatable and incompatible with others.

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Itineraries

Part I, Critical Approaches, will provide introductory overviews of the city in world literature through three different lenses: the skyscraper and urban poetics; the legacies and literary aesthetics of the divided Manichean city; and literary mapping. Martin's chapter on "Chicago Schools" delineates the way in which the skyscraper has functioned as a transnational figure of both modernity and exclusion, tracing its transformation from early twentieth-century Chicago to the Burj Kalifa in twenty-first-century Dubai. Watson's chapter on "Writing the Manichean City" excavates the anti-colonial literary energies that arise from within the partitioned spaces of colonial and neocolonial cities, and shows how such texts then travel via unexpected routes and temporalities across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. "The Urban Itinerary and the City Map" by Tally explores the tensions inherent to literary cartographies that necessarily involve both a subjective perspective and abstract mapping. Each of the framing chapters addresses multiple cities in a comparative mode through world literary examples.

In Part II, rather than base our choice of cities on the notion of "coverage" (which would be impossible), we have selected some sites for their obvious importance for literary writing and circulation (London, Paris, New York, Mumbai, Johannesburg, Beijing), and others that especially lend themselves to examinations of urban and literary "worlding," that is, cities that have functioned as distinct crossroads and which evince the intermingling of cultures, peoples, and imperial processes (Singapore, Istanbul, Lagos). Our goal in each chapter is not an overview of all the literature that pertains to that city, but rather to pinpoint particular facets of the urban that have been essential to the production of literary worlds – whether that be reckoning with the city's particular "world-conjuring project," the experiences of migrant and other communities, the role of the city as a node in a regional "world," or the multilayered transformation from colonial to global metropolis. In lieu of a list of discrete chapter descriptions we instead offer the following keywords which may function as nodal points or suggested itineraries for reading between and across the chapters.

Scale demands we attune our senses to different aesthetic dimensions of urban worlding, from the distinct neighborhoods of Johannesburg or New York (Jones, Quayson) and the specific architectural forms of the skyscraper (Martin), Cairo's balconies, rooftops and *hara* (Naga) to the multiscalar mental mappings that guide the subject through city spaces

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(Tally). While cities are obviously key circuitry for global **networks**, our contributors explore the way literary cities narrate cultural networks in multifarious ways; in one key we have the cultural mixing and imbricated language worlds of major port cities (Holden on Singapore, Nerlekar on Bombay/Mumbai, Krishnan on Lagos); in another, we have imperial and postcolonial cities that constellate diaspora with empire and nation (Varma on London, Bush on Paris), or cities that orient to "migrant elsewheres" such as Johannesburg's turn toward Bulawayo and Kigali (Jones). Despite the obvious spatiality of cities-as-worlds, **time and temporality** are equally central to many of our chapters, from the deep indigenous pasts that haunt the global connectivity of Sydney (Rooney), the enduring colonial spatial hierarchies of rising Asian cities (Watson), to the "stacked slices of time" that constitute Dublin (Morash). Relatedly, many of the cities here are depicted as **palimpsests** of multiple worlds: Mexico City is the "layered city," combining pre-Hispanic Altepetl with centuries as the capital of New Spain (Moreno Carranco and Ruisánchez Serra), while Mumbai retains imprints of the Mughals, the Portuguese, and the British (Nerlekar), and Cairo those of the tenth-century Fatimid dynasty (Naga).

Love and desire form another pair of keywords, whether pertaining to Cairo's cramped spaces of courtship (Naga), Istanbul as "the city the world desires" (Aynur), or New York as sublime "celestial city" and beacon of migrant self-fashioning (Quayson). Meanwhile, the city as an **imperial center** of gravity has long underwritten a plethora of world-making projects. These range from Moscow's imagined status as "a new Jerusalem" around which all provinces orbited (Lounsbery), to London as center of an imperial "exhibitionary complex" (Varma), back to Beijing and Istanbul as renowned pinnacles of architecture, literature, and civilization as well as political or religious power (Song, Aynur). Finally, a number of these chapters offer paradigms for thinking through the social worlds of today's **mega-cities**: Moreno Carranco and Ruisánchez Serra on Mexico City's boundlessness; Nerlekar on Mumbai's "congregation of the world's differences"; and Krishnan on the "extraversion" of Lagos's unmappable conurbation.

Let us conclude by returning to the question of totality, but less in terms of the totality of any ideal world literary system and rather as the unfinished project of urban literary energies. Writing of the spaces of Accra, Quayson has noted that urban phenomena are always connected to "other phenomena that may not appear in the first instance to be immediately related to it."[34] This analytical challenge demands a literary method which must "draw out the mediated relations between different aspects of

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a *potential totality*"[35] while historicizing those related phenomena. In her work on the industrial transformation of postwar Asian cities, Watson has similarly observed that there is "no unmediated, total view of all the processes and forces making up [Seoul's] new urban landscape"; nevertheless, "struggles over the creation of new urban and material spaces constitute the social, material, and ideological world that is imperfectly incorporated by fictional texts."[36] That literary forms take up a city's "potential totality" as their aesthetic remit informs, in very different ways, all the chapters in this volume, suggesting the way material and historical urban processes precipitate worldly imaginations. This notion also usefully connects our first two propositions on world literature (that it is boundary crossing and concerned with totalities) with the third (that it offers space to imagine other, decolonizing worlds). Put otherwise, if theories of world literature have often viewed cities simply as nodes which consecrate literary value or as indicators of uneven culltural capital our volume understands them as peculiarly concentrated sites where multiple – and often contradictory – temporal and spatial processes of worlding interact with each other and generate important stories as they do so. The narratives of self-making and self-fashioning that one often finds in urban fictions are precisely the means by which city dwellers create a new urban spaces that are already palimpsests of multiple worldings.

Note on the Text

Because discourses relating to racial, national, ethnic, and indigenous identities are constantly changing, we have not attempted to standardize capitalization regarding such terms across the chapters. Instead, we have allowed individual authors to choose whether to capitalize them, which often varies depending on specific locations and histories.

Notes

1 "Worlding" invokes Martin Heidegger's influential notion of world and worlding, as discussed in his 1956 essay "The Origin of the Work of Art": "The *world worlds*, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home." See David Farrell Krell, ed., *Basic Writings* (New York: HarperCollins, 1977), 170. We are also influenced by Edward Said's key concept of the "wordliness" of textual production. See Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); and *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

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2 Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (New York: Verso, 2013), 15.
3 On the era of globalization as a post-1989 vibrant "intellectual exchange alley" see Debjani Ganguly, *This Thing Called the World: The Contemporary Novel as Global Form* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 20.
4 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, Lawrence H. Simon, ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1994), 162. We should also note that the *Manifesto* itself was self-consciously conceived as a world literary text, declaring that it was to be immediately "published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages" (ibid., 158).
5 Erich Auerbach, "Philology and Weltliteratur," trans. Edward Said and M. Said, *The Centennial Review* 13, no. 1 (1969): 10–11; 17. First published 1952.
6 David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5.
7 Ben Etherington and Jarad Zimbler, "Introduction" to *The Cambridge Companion to World Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 4 (emphasis added).
8 Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 83, 82.
9 See Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review* 1 (2000); and *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (New York: Vintage, 2007). For world-systems theory, see Wallerstein's *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).
10 Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).
11 Joe Cleary, *Modernism, Empire, World Literature* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press), 38.
12 Ibid.
13 See Rossen Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism: Literature and Cinema between the Second and Third Worlds* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020); and Amelia Glaser and Steven S. Lee, eds., *Comintern Aesthetics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020).
14 Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong, eds., *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 3.
15 See, for example, Saskia Sassen's *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Anthony D. King, *Global Cities: Post-Imperialism and the Internationalization of London* (London: Routledge, 1990); Doreen B. Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005); and Manuel Castells, *Technopoles of the World: The Making of 21st Century Industrial Complexes* (Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 2014).
16 The editors and a number of our contributors are indebted to the thinking of Marxist spatial theorist, Henri Lefebvre who, in *The Production of Space*, theorizes social space as simultaneously material, practical, ideological, and imaginative; *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith ([1974] Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991).

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17 See Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). See chapter 16 "Knowable Communities."
18 See Stephen K. Knight, *Crime Fiction Since 1800: Detection, Death, Diversity*, (London: Red Globe Press, 2010).
19 See Emmanuel N. Obiechina, *An African Popular Literature: A Study of Onitsha Market Pamphlets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); and Stephanie Newell, *Ghanaian Popular Fiction: "Thrilling Discoveries in Conjugal Life" and Other Tales*, (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001).
20 Etherington and Zimbler, "Introduction", 4.
21 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verson, 1983).
22 Roy and Ong, *Worlding Cities*, 1.
23 See Amir Mufti, *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Francesca Orsini, "Significant Geographies: Scale, Location, and Agency in World Literature," in Diana Roig-Sanz and Neus Rotger, eds., *Global Literary Studies: Key Concepts* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), 113–136; Baidik Battacharya, *Postcolonial Writing in the Era of World Literature: Texts, Territories, Globalization* (London: Routledge, 2018).
24 Mufti, *Forget English!*, 16. Relatedly, Battacharya, focusing on the development of Anglophony, argues that, "The passage from 'literature' to 'world literature' in the nineteenth century […] was mediated by colonial histories"; *Postcolonial Writing*, 8.
25 Orsini, "Significant Geographies," 133, 113. Another important strand of world literary debates has attended to the question of translation. See, for example, Emily Apter's attempt to "activate untranslatability as a theoretical fulcrum of comparative literature with bearing on approaches to world literature," *Against World Literature*, 3.
26 Pheng Cheah, *What Is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).
27 J. Daniel Elam, *World Literature for the Wretched of the Earth: Anticolonial Aesthetics, Postcolonial Politics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2021), 17.
28 Jane Hiddlestone, "'Un Nouvel Internationalisme Littéraire'? Dreams and Delusions of 'World Literature' in Khatabi, Djaout, and Adimi," *PMLA* 137, no. 2 (2022): 390.
29 For an influential theorization of "world city," see Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999), 3–26.
30 This line of thought follows from Jean and John Comaroff's *Theory from the South: or, How Euro-American is Evolving toward Africa* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2012), in which they argue that cities in the Global South are taking the lead in providing formulas for understanding contemporary crises.
31 Roy and Ong, *Worlding Cities*, 12.

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32 On imperialism as "global designs" see Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledge and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).
33 Etherington and Zimbler, "Introduction," 2.
34 Ato Quayson, *Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 30.
35 Ibid., 31 (emphasis added).
36 Jini Kim Watson, *The New Asian City: Three-Dimensional Fictions of Space and Urban Form* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 15, 20.

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