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World Literature Sickness: Exile and Dissent in Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi's *Call Me Zebra*

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ABSTRACT

This article explores "literature sickness", a term coined by the contemporary Iranian-American writer Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi and developed, I suggest, in her novel *Call Me Zebra* (2018). In doing so, it aims to offer not only an account of this novel, but to consider the radical potential of the condition Van der Vliet Oloomi outlines. This potential lies in the challenge to the dualism of reality and representation posed by literature sickness, an idea I develop comparatively via *Call Me Zebra* and the reflections on exile and, specifically, world literature in the work of Edward Said and Erich Auerbach. To develop these ideas further, I explore key concepts relating to the politics of world literature – exile, marginalization, and dissent. I focus on the work of Pascale Casanova to show how the concept of literature sickness that I develop in my readings of the novel relates to current debates in world literature theory. I position *Call Me Zebra* within a wider critical debate in order to argue that this novel offers a distinctive response to the Kantian dualism evoked in much contemporary world literature theory, one that I unpack using Gilles Deleuze and Bruno Latour. Deleuze's philosophy of literature is central to my reading of *Call Me Zebra*, as it has distinct parallels with Zebra's own theoretical musings. I use Deleuze to illustrate how, in the novel, Zebra's exile gives her an especial perspective on oppression and marginalization, revealing literature's capacity for imagining new futures and ways of belonging, and making *Call Me Zebra* a paradigmatic text of literature sickness and its radical potential.

According to the contemporary Iranian-American writer Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi, an example of "literature sickness" can be found in Lynne Tillman's novel *Motion Sickness*, a "book about books".[1] Described in Van der Vliet Oloomi's review as "[p]art philosophical diary, part travelogue" ("AC"), *Motion Sickness* follows an unnamed narrator across Europe, paralleling her geographical journey with a literary one. As the narrator "reads voraciously in various hotel rooms", it becomes evident, Van der Vliet Oloomi claims, that she is "suffering from a case of literature sickness—a feverish obsession with reading and with viewing the world through the lens of literature", a "compulsion to read [that] threatens to erode the reader's sense of reality" ("AC"). Tillman's novel is certainly not the first "book about books" (a tradition Van der Vliet Oloomi traces back to *Don Quixote*), but as such it presents an acute case of literature sickness, so much so that Van der Vliet Oloomi can use *Motion Sickness* to define the condition's symptomatology. This, in turn, I argue, is crucial for an understanding of her own novel, *Call Me Zebra*, published two months prior to her review of Tillman in 2018. In revealing *Call Me Zebra*'s narrator, Zebra, to be a fellow sufferer of literature sickness, my aim in this article is

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not merely to expand the tradition of "book[s] about books", but to consider the radical potential of the condition Van der Vliet Oloomi outlines. For what these bibliophile narrators or extra-literary novels reveal in their obsession with reading and literature is the narrative structure of the world itself. As a reader's or character's "grasp of reality is supplanted by the logic of the worlds encased within the books they are reading" ("AC"), they become cognizant of how language and discourse shape reality beyond the world of the novel they are reading. Thus, Van der Vliet Oloomi argues, the novels, narrators, characters, and even, in some cases, readers afflicted by literature sickness "use literature to expose the unreality of identity and to examine the poetic and geo-political dynamics of space" ("AC"). Although it is characteristic of literature sickness to question the adequacy of language as a faithful representation of reality, to become lost in the "echo chamber of literature" ("AC"), and to doubt one's own sense of self and identity, those texts that embody or provoke the condition are nonetheless works of literature that respond to, interrogate, and, sometimes, contest the world outside the text.

By tracing Zebra's literature sickness, Van der Vliet Oloomi's novel reflects on the narrator's exile and marginalization as conditions, in part, created by a dominant order's attempt to regulate and define identity (national or otherwise) as a fixed, incontrovertible truth rather than a lived, relational process. In this respect, as this article will demonstrate, *Call Me Zebra* can be aligned with the work of Edward Said. For Said, exile allows the intellectual to both observe the ideas and values of a given society and, crucially, contest them. It is with Said that both exile and literature are identified as means to contest the rigid confines of fixed categories of identity as they are ascribed to literature as much as to individual persons. In particular, world literature, Said argues in his preface to Auerbach's "Philology and *Weltliteratur*", is "a visionary concept, for it transcends national literatures without, at the same time, destroying their individualities".[2] In other words, Auerbach's concept can be seen to present a challenge to exclusionary and reified categories of identification but without suggesting that an individual text (or person, to extend the concept) has no sense of particularity or affiliation whatsoever. This, as this article will argue, is an important qualification to the dizzying experience of literature sickness proposed in *Call Me Zebra*: for all that the novel confronts the exclusions and rigid categories of belonging which police the world in which Zebra finds herself adrift, the challenge to the boundary between reality and representation posed by literature sickness is one that promises to disrupt and contest an ordered world view but not to dissolve the latter into a chaotic, undifferentiated nothingness. These ideas have precedent in critical responses to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, who is sometimes misunderstood as a philosopher who privileges the virtual over the actual and thus presents us with a philosophy that "leads out of this world".[3] As I will argue, Deleuze's philosophy never dismisses the world-shaping role of the actual even while he promotes the virtual as a force with the potential to dispute, disrupt, and reshape the seemingly fixed forms within the actual. I use Deleuze to read the philosophy of literature that Zebra proposes not just because his work traces a similar route through the Kantian problem of how to conceive of the connection between reality and its representation, but more pointedly because it is with Deleuze that literature sickness finally comes into focus as far more than an ailment to be suffered. "Literature", Deleuze writes, "appears as an enterprise of health", not because the writer (or narrator, or reader) "would necessarily be in good health", but because they embrace the creative and critical forces that shape life, rather than those that attempt to fix it.[4] Literature as health, therefore, becomes a prescription not only for Van der Vliet Oloomi's Zebra, but for all readers and critics alike.

Finally, then, this article positions itself and *Call Me Zebra* within a wider debate that has characterized much contemporary criticism in the field of world literature. Indeed, when understood as a condition brought on by a somewhat "feverish obsession with reading" ("AC"), literature sickness begins to sound like an occupational hazard for scholars of world literature. Alarm at the impossible task of achieving anything close to a comprehensive knowledge of the body of world literature was sounded in the middle of the last century by Auerbach, who, in turn, was remarking on the exponential increase of the canon in the lifetime of the writer who gave currency to the term *Weltliteratur*, Goethe.[5] Faced with an ever-expanding field of literary production, more recently, Franco Moretti declared world literature to be "a problem" rather than a corpus of texts, since "the

sheer enormity of the task makes it clear that world literature cannot be literature, bigger; what we are already doing, just more of it".[6] Moretti's answer to this methodological challenge – distant reading – might be regarded as a prophylactic against the risk of falling world literature sick: a "new critical method" that urges literature scholars to collectivize their intellectual labor, and to share the burden of analyzing the "hundreds of languages and literatures" that constitute the global field of literature today.[7] But then again, literature sickness might just turn out to be more than a mere malaise and, rather, be recognized as part of the solution to the "problem" of world literature. This article will interrogate critical issues in world literature theory which coalesce around the central question of how to conceive of the relationship between literature and the world, a question the concept of literature sickness focuses and perhaps answers. In so doing it will emphasize that literature's response to the world is a political issue, concerning how literature might function as an insurgent, disruptive, and rebellious force; as a contestation of dominant hierarchies and the norms that sustain them; and as a space in which to imagine, radically, the possibility of a more equal and just world. This is not a prescription for every text, but rather an exercise set for the critic with the aim, as we shall see, that literature sickness might become a pathway toward a kind of "health".

To develop these ideas, with respect to *Call Me Zebra* and world literature theory more broadly, I explore some key concepts and conditions relating to the politics of world literature – exile, marginalization, and dissent – in the writings of a constellation of theorists and philosophers. In the first section below, I outline some important theoretical background for my readings of the novel. Specifically, I focus on the work of Pascale Casanova, to show how the concept of literature sickness that I develop in my readings of the novel relates to current debates in world literature theory, especially in its materialist guise. In the second section, I interrogate Casanova's idea of a world republic of letters by linking it to Zebra's conception of a matrix of literature. In the third section, I read *Call Me Zebra*'s representations of the relationship between the condition of exile and political dissent, via comparison with the writings of Said and Auerbach (who are both cited in the novel). The final section then uses Deleuze to illustrate how, in the novel, Zebra's exile gives her an especial perspective on oppression and marginalization, revealing literature's capacity for imagining new futures and ways of belonging, and making *Call Me Zebra* a paradigmatic text of literature sickness and its radical potential.

Symptoms of (World) Literature Sickness

Hypothesizing both how to respond to the problem of world literature and how to formulate what exactly this problem amounts to has characterized this resurgent field of literary studies in the twenty-first century. Issues of scale and definition have been contested and debated in the scholarship on world literature that followed the publication of Moretti's "Conjectures on World Literature" (2000) and Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* (1999). As a critical practice, world literature can promote an awareness of the unevenness of global capitalism (Moretti; Warwick Research Collective), can shed light on the constellations of power and prestige that shape literary cultures (Brouillette; Casanova), and can seek to interrogate the practices of translation that support literature's international exchange (Apter; Damrosch; Walkowitz).[8] Yet a distinctly materialist approach has emerged as the dominant tenor of contemporary world literature scholarship, and this has generated its own set of conceptual problems. "Is it possible", asks Pascale Casanova, "to re-establish the lost bond between literature, history and the world, while still maintaining a full sense of the irreducible singularity of literary texts?"[9] This question points to the issue of how to theorize the interconnectivity of literature and the world, and yet Casanova's own treatise, *The World Republic of Letters*, ultimately reinstates their separation. As Edward Said argues, "the overall achievement of Casanova's book is [. . .] contradictory": she reconceptualizes literature as "a highly efficient, globalized, quasi-market system", in other words, as fully embedded in the world, but the "drift of her argument is in effect to show how this powerful and all-pervasive system can even go as far as to stimulate a kind of independence from [the world]".[10] For Said, Casanova's theoretical model, which holds that external forces are refracted

and translated by the literary field or "republic" according to an internal logic, establishes too strong a division between literature and the world. At issue is the concept of autonomy that she characterizes as the inevitable end of literary production. As Said recognizes, *The World Republic of Letters* is devoted to elevating the condition of artistic autonomy to the extent that the unevenness of the world literary system proposed in the book is derived as much from degrees of autonomy as it is from accumulations of literary capital (the "quasi-market system" Said alludes to). Casanova's theory amounts to what Christian Thorne has recognized as a rather programmatic grafting of "Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory onto Pierre Bourdieu's account of distinction or cultural capital".[11] On the one hand, the republic is populated by "citizens" with relative amounts of literary capital, which can be understood in materialist terms such as sales figures, numbers of translations, prizes awarded and so on (Casanova with Wallerstein). On the other hand, following Bourdieu, the field of literature must operate autonomously from other fields such as economics, politics, or society, via a mediating process of translation – for instance, financial capital is translated into forms of literary capital. But the argument unravels as autonomy also becomes the endgame of life in the world republic. The underclass of this republic are the writers of the peripheries, who produce a "small" literature which is poor in literary capital *and* demonstrates a restricted degree of literary autonomy. As a result, the world republic of letters is also a Blochian model of non-contemporaneity in which at any moment in time a modern core coexists alongside regressively less-modern peripheries.[12] And what distinguishes the modern core is not only a measure of literary wealth, but the extent to which a text can demonstrate its autonomy from external forces such as politics, nation, and history. Thus, despite being the best-selling African novel of all time, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* will remain a peripheral citizen of Casanova's literary republic because it is "a realist, didactic, demonstrative, and national novel" (*WR*, p. 196), which is to say it uses established rather than innovative novelistic techniques (realism) and is motivated by a desire to retell a nation's history.[13] By contrast, the writers celebrated by Casanova are those associated with modernist abstraction; writers such as Faulkner, Joyce, Kafka, and above all Beckett, who displayed "a radical autonomy [which] led him to break with all the forms of national dependence peculiar to writers" (*WR*, p. 346). In this, Said adds, Casanova overlooks "one of the hallmarks of modernity [which] is how at a very deep level, the aesthetic and the social need to be kept, and are often consciously kept, in a state of irreconcilable tension" (*DC*, p. 129). The temporality that Said's gesture to modernity introduces here is in no way incidental; the unfolding of history within the cultural logic of the literary republic is a teleological progression toward autonomy. For all that Casanova claims "the necessity of reestablishing the original historical bond between literature and the world" (*WR*, p. 350), *The World Republic of Letters* proposes a telos that moves from an initial correspondence between text and world (the moment of small literatures wherein social and political concerns dominate) toward their total separation.

The philosophical response to this modern telos has been well argued by Bruno Latour, with respect particularly to Bourdieu's theory of cultural fields. For Latour, it is a typically modern fallacy to create and sustain a division between the spheres of reality and representation, a dualism Latour identifies with Kant's philosophy and its lasting influence.[14] In this light, and whether viewed from the perspective of small literatures overdetermined by social and political contexts or from those closer to the autonomous core, Casanova's theory repeats this basic Kantian error and thus deemphasizes the entanglement of text and world. This has wider implications for world literature theory which increasingly reveals its indebtedness to world-systems theory. Materialist accounts of world literature, such as those of Casanova, Moretti, or, more recently, the Warwick Research Collective, who claim the hyphenated term "world-literature as the literary registration of modernity under the sign of combined and uneven development," operate within the terms of a base/superstructure argument.[15] They therefore begin from what Latour would designate "the modern critical stance," which not only posits separate spheres, but assumes the primacy of one sphere against which all others are rendered contingent.[16] In these world-system theories of world literature, the separate spheres are those of the primary economic base and of literature, which is always and only a secondary, superstructural reflection of that base.[17] For this reason, world literature theory has in many cases simply perpetuated

the poststructuralist versus Marxist argument by doubling down on the materialist position which views the text as above all else a "registration" or representation of the more fundamental – unconscious, even – capitalist base of economic relations.

As Raymond Williams argued long ago, such approaches tend to overlook the fact that language itself is "a practical material activity; it is indeed, literally, a means of production. It is a specific form of that practical consciousness which is inseparable from all social material activity".[18] World-system materialists therefore show no symptoms of (world) literature sickness, since characteristic of the delirium induced by this condition is the collapse of the boundaries that separate material reality from its literary representation, and a hyper-sensitivity to the role that Williams ascribes to language in producing material and social reality itself. Casanova's ambition to fashion a "critical weapon in the service of all deprived and dominated writers on the periphery of the literary world" (*WR*, pp. 354–5), or the intent to expose the inequalities of capitalism in an era of globalization evident in the Warwick Research Collective's manifesto of world-literature, are admirable critical ventures, but they also rest upon a kind of residual, unexamined dualism, targeted by Latour's and Williams's critiques. By treating material reality and literary representation as distinct, separate spheres, the former determining the latter, these forms of world literature theory construct a priori systems and so rather forget that, as Williams puts it, a "lived hegemony is always a process. It is not, except analytically, a system or a structure".[19] By contrast, those who are literature-sick recognize language as a "practical material activity" and its role in shaping lived processes rather than fixed structures. They see the parallelism, rather than dualism, between text and world. They also see how individual books and even whole literary genres can stage dialogs or, as Van der Vliet Oloomi argues, "ongoing correspondence[s] with rapidly shifting planes of reality", serving to "launch the reader into a fictional dimension that runs parallel to their contemporary socio-historical reality and that exposes the latter's inherent contradictions and hypocrisies" ("AC"). Perhaps not all world literature scholars are literature sick after all. To be afflicted by world literature sickness is to view literature not as a map of the world, but as a guide; not as a mirror to reflect reality without distortion, but as a source of counsel that encourages us to question commonplaces and recognize language's complicity with hegemony as well as its potential to challenge it. Literature is the lens through which the literature-sick view life, revealing the world to be a complex network of forces, irreducible to one singular, systematized position. With these ideas in mind, in what follows, I will develop these reflections on (world) literature sickness as a confrontation of the representation/reality dualism by close reference to Van der Vliet Oloomi's own literature-sick novel, *Call Me Zebra*.

Literature Sickness in *Call Me Zebra*

Call Me Zebra's narrator, Bibi Abbas Abbas Hosseini (self-renamed as Zebra), is decidedly literature sick. Indeed, her case of literature sickness may prove to be incurable. Born, as she proclaims, into an Iranian family of "Autodidacts, Anarchists, Atheists", she inherits the capacity to memorize and reproduce the whole pantheon of world literature.[20] Early in the novel, Zebra recalls her father's role in developing her talent:

> My father read aloud to me from Nietzsche's oeuvre on a daily basis, usually in the mornings, and after lunch, he taught me about literature, culling paragraphs from books written by our ingenious forebears, the Great Writers of the Past [. . .]. Literature, as my father would say, is a nation without boundaries. It is infinite. There are no stations, no castes, no checkpoints. (*CMZ*, p. 15)

For the Hosseini family, literature is nationless – a citizen of nowhere – not because it is translated and traded across national borders (to evoke Damrosch), nor because it has displayed an autonomy that puts it in the echelons of the world republic of letters (as in Casanova), but because literature is not restricted by those artificial boundaries. This is not to say that literature cannot become associated with nations and nationalism, or, to gesture to world literature theory, that it cannot become capital; indeed, Zebra both draws attention to and resists the capitalist logic

of Casanova's world literary republic in her refusal of "an endless stream of mail from this or that recruiting university offering [her] a variety of scholarships" (*CMZ*, p. 33). For Zebra such offers are evidence of "white guilt" and are "perfectly in keeping with American foreign policy" which at once "interfere[s] with and profit[s] from far-flung governments at the peril of their citizens [. . .]! I, an ill-fated member of this infested universe, a Hosseini descendent, would never give in to such effacement. I would never eradicate my difference" (*CMZ*, p. 34). This is the threat of assimilation inherent in Casanova's autonomous republic of letters: a world literary system which purports to embrace a diversity of languages, cultures, and peoples, but ultimately promotes the values of the center, which embraces translation and comparison, but within a single plane of equivalence or sameness. Such is a model of world literature beset by "castes" and "checkpoints" since it aims at the reduction and management of difference, as Auerbach too once cautioned as he saw the ultimate realization of world literature as homogeneity. Contrary to this, the texts that Zebra memorizes operate within a "matrix" of anarchic intertextuality: "a giant literary womb" in which "texts have been leaping across eras for centuries in order to cross-contaminate one another", such that literature "perpetuate[s] itself like a disease. Every text is a mutant and a doppelgänger" (*CMZ*, p. 58). This is a clear case of literature sickness, one that leads Zebra to the recognition that just as "texts give a false impression of being closed systems capable of operating independently of one another" (*CMZ*, p. 59), so individuals delude "themselves into believing in a coherent and linear reality" (*CMZ*, p. 61). A coherent and unique identity and linear conception of reality are the illusions that Zebra's literature sickness cuts through.

The "literary womb" or matrix into which Zebra descends is not a stratified republic of letters, but, recalling Wai Chee Dimock, an anarchic totality, which in its refusal to correspond to a linear temporality and national borders is an "enemy of the state."[21] At this point we can bring into focus the deviation from those proponents of world-literature who conclude that a critical reading of literature need not necessarily lead to criticality or dissent.[22] Zebra finds in the matrix of literature not a reproduction of the economic field, nor even its translation into a literary logic, but rather the embodiment of "life's infinite multiplicity, its capacity for perpetuating and recycling itself" (*CMZ*, p. 97). By this radical openness, literature retains the potential for criticality or dissent: a future reader, in an unknowable time and place, may well find in what seems to be the most conservative text the inspiration for dissent. There is, simply, no limit to "life's [and literature's] infinite multiplicity" and, as such, it is of little consequence to ask whether or not literature *can* produce criticality or dissent, since it will always be theoretically possible that it can do so. More significant is the choice made by the reader or the critic as they are led to one interpretation rather another. Do they find in the text confirmation of capitalism's efficacy or, by contrast, the means to imagine alternative forms of social organization? This is the politics of reading world literature, bolstered by the acknowledgment that to the extent that literature can embody a world, it is a sprawling, disordered one, where any pretense to linearity, coherence, or order is a mere illusion. Faced with the problem of world literature, Zebra underscores the importance of dissent in a world in which language and literature can be mobilized in the service of sustaining a dominant hierarchy and its various forms of exclusion and repression. As a Hosseini, those "expert connoisseurs of literature," Zebra is "capable of taking a narrative apart and putting it back together," a "talent" that is her "sword" (*CMZ*, p. 12). This is a case of literature sickness that allows Zebra to cut through the illusion of coherent and independent entities (selves, texts, and conceptual categories alike). At the same time, it is also useful to consider another distinct feature of the Hosseini's hereditary sickness: their position as members of Iran's exiled intelligentsia. Zebra's great-great grandfather is persecuted during Mohammad Reza Shah's White Revolution, her great-grandfather is executed by Ayatollah Khomeini after the founding of the Islamic Republic, and finally, during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980–88, her father decides that "Iran [. . .] was no longer a place to think. Not even the Caspian was safe. We had to flee. We had to go into exile" (*CMZ*, p. 17). Zebra's and the Hosseini's particular symptomatology thus brings us to another aspect of contemporary world literature theory that we need to examine in some detail: exile as a critical consciousness of the world.

Exile and Dissent in World Literature Criticism

To examine the shaping force of exile on the literary-critical consciousness, we can take the case of Auerbach, who was both a political exile and "at bottom an autodidact" (*DC*, p.101), much like Zebra and the Hosseinis. Exiled from Nazi Germany, Auerbach was witness to the destructive force of nationalist ideologies and came to realize, as Aamir Mufti argues, that such rhetoric belied "a sort of leveling, the pressure for replication of the same political and cultural forms everywhere".[23] For Auerbach, world literature bore the indisputable marks of capitalist modernity, tending toward uniformity despite the veneer of national specificity or local diversity. His pessimistic evaluation of our condemnation "to existence in a standardized world, to a single literary culture" ("PW", p.3), however, is tempered by the hope that we might yet return to Goethe's idea of "universal literature, or literature which expresses *Humanität*, humanity", and as such, Edward Said continues in his translator's preface, "*Weltliteratur* is therefore a visionary concept, for it transcends national literatures without, at the same time, destroying their individualities".[24] In this account, the universal is necessarily sustained by the particular; a tension that persists in Auerbach's concept of *Weltliteratur* despite his well-known assertation that "our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation" ("PW", p.17). The critical task of the world literature scholar in the wake of the twentieth century's catastrophes is to transcend the national context, but not in the direction of an essentialist humanism (the homogenization Auerbach cautioned against). There is therefore a tension within the concept of world literature between the specific and the universal, the nation and the world, but this need not suggest the telos of Casanova's theory. The specific is neither a primary moment in which literature is entirely shaped by nationalist concerns, nor is it exclusively a normative force that regulates identities and sustains the fiction of a coherent "I". It is, simply, history in all its complexity; a network of hegemonic, resistant, and oppositional forces. For this reason, Mufti characterizes Auerbach as the proponent of "a radically historical humanism", one that takes up the philological task of analyzing "the creation of meaning in language".[25] And if we understand language in Williams's terms, as itself "a means of production", analyzing the ways in which literary language creates meaning should make us aware that texts are always more than a passive reflection of the historical, social, and economic contexts that shape them.[26] In this sense, literature is both an archive of dominant *and* marginalized histories, and a space in which to imagine alternative futures.

Call Me Zebra's account of literature reaches a similar conclusion. Zebra identifies intertextuality as the material presence of the past that repeats as difference and exposes "*reality's shattering pluralism*" (*CMZ*, p.60), or in Auerbach's terms, confronts us with "a conception of man unified in his multiplicity" ("PW", p.4). Zebra's matrix is a network of cross-contaminations, echoes, and correspondences to be traced throughout the world's literature in a non-linear, anarchic fashion. To the extent that world literature is a matrix, its unity is nothing other than the proliferating connections between texts, as well as the continual and disruptive force of difference as each repetition produces something new and unforeseen. In this way the past is understood as a creative force rather than a static record: "'Literature is the residue of the past radiating back out into the world'. Then I examined the thought from a different angle: the past, I concluded, contains within it a trace of the future" (*CMZ*, p.102). For Zebra, literature does not simply reflect history, since that would render former a secondary, passive object. World literature is more than a map of the world-system's superstructure: it is at once a "residue of the past" and a means of production that shapes perception both in the present and, in an untimely manner, in "advance of [its] time" (*CMZ*, p.102). A standardized world literature co-opted by capitalism, however, threatens to restrict the openness to the future that Zebra identifies with the eternal return of difference. The tourists that she encounters on Barcelona's La Rambla embody this capitalist impulse by posting selfies on social media, through which they "duplicate their image in order to affirm: I exist" (*CMZ*, p.121). Zebra, however, balks at the "idea that the world had been duplicated in the virtual plane [. . .]; I hated that the virtual dimension had been linked to its physical counterpart to form a single continuum and that people had started to move between the two – the physical world and its hologram, the Internet – with the same ease they would exit a highway only to re-enter it on the other side of the overpass" (*CMZ*, pp.120–1). The images shared on social media create a parallel virtual world that is a perfect reproduction of the same, so much so that one might "exit" one plane

or "highway" (reality) to enter the other (virtual) and register no difference. In other words, the tourists' selfies are a form of representation that strives toward sameness and, as such, are mere surface, an artificial image that seeks to capture a moment in time entirely sanitized from the historical specificity of their location: "those stupid tourists with their white-gloved inspection of the most marketable qualities of another nation, another culture, their experience purified of the painful clutter of the past" (*CMZ*, p.123). The tourists here are ignorant of the pristine artificiality of the commodity, wholly detached from the historical and lived reality of its production.[27] Like Auerbach, Zebra fears a standardized world not merely as the outcome of rampant globalization, but because it signals a world "purified of the painful clutter of the past", of history. Forms of representation which duplicate an image of the same offer only a weak aesthetic value for Zebra because they establish an artificial separation of reality from the past and restrict the production of difference. By contrast, the texts that Zebra is drawn to are those that embody literature's radical potential; that capture life's and literature's "infinite multiplicity" and "capacity for perpetuating and recycling itself" (*CMZ*, p.97), a capacity that stems from language's creative force. The latter signals a world literature that is more than a reflection of the world-system, even while it remains embedded in the "painful clutter" of world history.

The emancipatory potential of world literature suggested in Auerbach's otherwise pessimistic essay resonates with the views of another exile, Edward Said – "*the clear-eyed Edward Said*, [. . .] *a specular border intellectual*" (*CMZ*, p.192) – who promotes a democratic humanism in the aftermath of the late twentieth and twenty-first century's catastrophes – the war on terror, the refugee crisis, the climate emergency, to name a scant few. In these contexts, Said suggests, the intellectual work of critique demands a renewed concept of humanism that acknowledges and escapes its historical association with essentialism:

> schooled in its abuses by the experience of Eurocentrism and empire, one could fashion a different kind of humanism that was cosmopolitan and text-and-language-bound in ways that absorbed the great lessons of the past from, say, Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer and more recently from Richard Poirier, and still remain attuned to the emergent voices and currents of the present, many of them exilic, extraterritorial, and unhoused. (*DC*, p.11)

Within Said's critical endeavor, then, is a commitment to the world-making force of language. Revealing symptoms of his own literature sickness, Said looks back to Nietzsche – or more specifically, he looks back to Nietzsche looking back to Vico before him – in order to characterize the work of interpretation as at once engaged in the excavation of historical reality and as a means of production in itself: "human history is 'a mobile army of metaphors and metonyms' whose meaning is to be unceasingly decoded by acts of reading and interpretation grounded in the shapes of words as bearers of reality, a reality hidden, misleading, resistant, and difficult" (*DC*, p.58). A contrapuntal reading, then, is the methodology of his post-Nietzschean philology and democratic humanism; a reading attentive to the workings of language and which will "disclose what may be hidden or incomplete or masked or distorted in any text we may have before us" (*DC*, p.59).[28] This excavation, however, is not aimed at uncovering an a priori cause or system; rather, Said shares with Auerbach and *Call Me Zebra* a concern to expose multiplicity as process not system. This literary-critical practice is far closer to Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) than it is to world-systems theory, as is apparent from Said's own characterization of his work as, in part, the tracing of a network of texts and interpretations: "Only connect, says E. M. Forster, a marvelous injunction to the chain of statements and meanings that proliferate out of close reading" (Said, *DC*, p.66).[29] In this way, if we follow Latour's case against modern critical practice, the Kantian separation of reality and representation into discrete categories is forestalled by Said.[30] Literature, for Said, is irreducible to "social, political, historical, and economic forces" and yet it is never wholly divorced from them, operating within "an unresolved dialectical relationship" (*DC*, p.64). As a network or, as Zebra would have it, a matrix, literature is entirely enmeshed in the reality that it purports to represent. It shapes and produces reality as much as it responds to it, and it is bound to no higher system or immutable laws, save those that emerge from the community of texts it allies itself to. The literary critic and text alike can say whatever they please – as Zebra reminds us, we live in the shadow of Nietzsche's declaration "that God is dead" (*CMZ*, p.7) and thus there is no transcendent authority to constrain us – but at the same time, as Said cautions, "one

cannot just say anything one pleases and in whichever way one may wish to say it" (*DC*, p.69).[31] For this reason, Said's new humanism is both critical and democratic: critical insofar as the intellectual undertakes a contrapuntal reading of literary texts or historical documents in order to "excavate the silences, the world of memory, of itinerant, barely surviving groups, the places of exclusion and invisibility, the kind of testimony that doesn't make it onto the reports" (*DC*, p.81); and democratic in that the political imperative for telling those stories is derived from a kind of consensus-building among those we ally ourselves to. It is a creative, constructivist method that is at once a Rancièrian dissensus (excavating the silences, exposing the exclusions) and a provisional consensus.[32]

To participate in the democratic humanism Said argues for, one must be "both insider and outsider to the circulating ideas and values that are at issue in our society or someone else's society or the society of the other" (*DC*, p.76). And it is here that Said returns full circle to Auerbach, reworking his declaration that "our philological home is the earth" ("PW", p.4). Said modifies the geo-political significance of Auerbach's claim: "the intellectual's provisional home is the domain of an exigent, resistant, intransigent art into which, alas, one can neither retreat nor search for solutions. But only in that precarious exilic realm can one first truly grasp the difficulty of what cannot grasped and then go forth to try anyway" (*DC*, p.144). This statement resonates with *Call Me Zebra* since it is Zebra's position as an exile which places the protagonist "in a liminal space between worlds, a position that affords [her] a vantage point from which to envision new formations of thoughts, to live beyond the frontiers of ordinary experience" (*CMZ*, p.192). Both Said and Zebra, then, stress the importance of being at a remove from society, but not wholly so. There is a critical imperative to challenge hegemony and the mechanisms by which the state determines who counts as a citizen and who does not; as Zebra's father reminds her, "our job [is] to resist the tyranny of hate and its behaviour of choice: the elimination of others" (*CMZ*, p.19). The Hosseinis, like Said and Auerbach, are in a position of forced exile that affords them an appreciation of what may be uncovered and heard anew. World literature criticism in the wake of Said and *Call Me Zebra* might be thought of as the act of reading and of forging connections between texts, histories, and narratives from within a "precarious exilic realm", since it is there that enforced silences and repressed histories can be uncovered, and alternatives imagined.

Zebra's persecution forces her into exile, but she reaches out to others who share her exilic consciousness even though circumstances have not placed them in an equivalent state of precarity. Exile, she muses, is a hierarchy – "The Theory of the Pyramid of Exile" (*CMZ*, p.80). Her lover, Ludo Bembo, "a runaway philologist from Italy" (*CMZ*, p.74), "live[s] somewhere at the top of the pyramid. As a man in voluntary exile, you have access to the most oxygen. [. . .] 'I [Zebra] live in the middle of the pyramid. There is a sea of refugees beneath me. The pyramid constantly gets fed with fresh blood'" (*CMZ*, p.81). Exile is an expanded state in Zebra's theory, encompassing "*experiences of disenfranchisement, alienation, abandonment, banishment, rejection, voluntary or involuntary exile* [. . .] *and, last but not least, physical exile (defined as a lack of correspondence between one's mind and body)*" (*CMZ*, p.247). It shares, in other words, the symptomatology of literature sickness in that it is an experience characterized by the collapse of the boundaries that separate "*mind and body*", perception and phenomenon, representation and reality. Those texts most likely to induce such a state are those that themselves bear the scars of history – "books [. . .] conceived at the site of a rupture" (*CMZ*, p.72) – and for all the authors and literary references one encounters in *Call Me Zebra*, this is a unifying feature. What the border intellectual or exilic author reveals is the catastrophes of human history, the false narratives that sustain hegemony, but also the potential (as well as risk) of a future world. This takes us some distance from theories of world literature which deprioritize the role of criticality and dissent. By foregrounding "danger zone[s]", moments of "transgression" (*CMZ*, p.113), or the disruptive force of exile, Zebra and Said privilege a critical reading that is always a dissident and resistant activity. This does not mean that the critic must necessarily be physically displaced or live as a minority. Auerbach agrees with Hugh of St. Victor on this point: "All the world is a foreign soil to those who philosophize".[33] The work of philosophy is here characterized as a dissenting force; like works of literature which transgress national borders and cross temporalities with impunity, "those who philosophize" find themselves to be enemies of the state when they view the world with a critical eye, the eye of an exile or outsider. They read beyond what is readily apparent and already known to uncover that which was silenced, excluded, or oppressed. Rancière

would name this an act of dissensus; for Deleuze, it would constitute a deterritorialization. Both are significant as philosophers of immanence, a point on which they converge with Latour and, more broadly, with the line of thought that underlies this article. Moreover, Rancière and Deleuze both conceive resistance – dissensus and deterritorialization – not only as an insurgent activity of reshaping what is currently possible or known, but as an activity that blurs the Kantian line between reality and representation. In this way, both philosophers show the common symptoms of literature sickness. However, it is with Deleuze that we can further refine the symptomatology of world literature sickness and, by returning once more to the literary-clinical constellation evoked by the term "literature sickness", perhaps even find a route toward a final prognosis of health.

Physician, Heal Thyself!

While the philosophers whose works inform this article – Nietzsche, Latour, Rancière, and now Deleuze – are not classifiable as members of a single school of thought, they share a response to Cartesian and Kantian dualisms, reconceiving the world instead as a relation of forces without a transcendental, a priori first cause or teleological end, and outlining instead an ontology of immanence and of multiplicity – much like the literary matrix imagined by Zebra, who repeatedly cites Nietzsche. Deleuze's own response to Nietzsche – philosophers can be literature sick too – takes up the relation of active and reactive forces and refigures these as the concepts of the minor and major, which in turn are central to his writings about literature. *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, coauthored with Guattari, is perhaps Deleuze's best-known account of the revolutionary force of literature, but it is to his *Essays Critical and Clinical*, the most sustained treatment of literature by Deleuze alone, that we will turn here. The *Essays* interweave literary and philosophical references to reinforce Deleuze's stance against interpretative models of analysis: a stance taken also in coauthored works such as *A Thousand Plateaus*, with its claim that "Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology. There is no ideology and never has been".[34] This statement betrays a Nietzschean rejection of interpretation and judgment, both of which would be reactive states of affairs, projecting the already-known onto the new. Moreover, in presenting literature as an assemblage Deleuze does not imagine a fixed object, but rather an always-shifting constellation or process which moves either in the direction of the major or the minor: literature is "a process, that is [. . .] inseparable from becoming: in writing, one becomes-woman, becomes-animal or vegetable, becomes-molecule to the point of becoming-imperceptible" (*ECC* p.1). Literature does not stand apart from life and there is no transcendental aesthetic sphere in Deleuze's philosophy; rather, both life and literature unfold a process which can tend toward a becoming (the direction of the minor) or toward a fixed and recognizable (majoritarian) form. This is the radicalism of literature for Deleuze: there is always something that moves beyond expectations, revitalizes established conventions, or challenges hegemonic interests. To the extent that literature "is inseparable from becoming", there can never be a strictly national literature, or indeed a world literature, if world is taken to signal "the world-system". As Zebra's father says, literature "is a nation without boundaries" (*CMZ*, p.15) because the nation state is always a majoritarian form – it is the creation of borders, establishing who belongs and who does not. To rework Deleuze's argument, to write is to become-exile and the work that results is the trace of that process of becoming-exile, which can be reenacted anew with each reading.

The concept of minor literature takes on a decidedly "clinical" dimension in the *Essays*, wherein literature is characterized as leading either toward sickness (a blockage or reification) or health (a minor becoming): "Illness is not a process but a stopping of the process [. . .]. Moreover, the writer as such is not a patient but rather a physician, the physician of himself and of the world. The world is the set of symptoms whose illness merges with man. Literature then appears as an enterprise of health" (*ECC*, p.3). States of ill-health that have been officially classified are part and parcel of the interpretative methodology which seeks to uncover an ideology or unconscious intent within literary texts. It is not that ideologies or systems cannot emerge within a given society or text, but that they should not be mistaken for anything other than a projection – they are created and sustained as majoritarian

systems through the process of life, which they do not precede. Ill-health, then, is characteristic of a majoritarian state of affairs, a blockage, and the world appears as a "set of symptoms" insofar as the writer encounters those ideologies, hegemonies, and norms that block the passage of life. But literature as a becoming sustains the potential for movement toward the other pole, that of the minor, and of health. For that reason, literature as health or as minor literature cannot be characterized as conforming to nationalist ideologies (Casanova's classification of a small literature), since it "consists in inventing a people who are missing" (*ECC*, p.4).[35] The distinction here is not between a national literature that is overdetermined by context and over-reliant on established literary conventions, and an autonomous literature than innovates only to the degree that it detaches itself from the world, as in Casanova's conceptualization of world literature. Rather, literature is understood as a process that operates between the twin poles of minor (repeating life's force of becoming) and major (the blocking of that process), and as such neither pole indicates a transcendental sphere apart. This is literature as a symptomatology of the world, revealing how certain states of affairs (symptoms) came to be what they are, but at the same time reactivating, unblocking, that process so that those states of affairs can change – literature as health. As part of this same process, literature invents "a people who are missing", imagining new forms of life, alliance, and solidarity.

Literature sickness might be something of a misnomer if understood only as a state of ill health. The prognosis rather depends upon how one reacts to the condition, since we are always between the two poles of minor and major. Or as Deleuze argues:

> Literature is delirium, and as such its destiny is played out between the two poles of delirium. Delirium is a disease, the disease par excellence, whenever it erects a race it claims is pure and dominant. But it is the measure of health when it invokes this oppressed bastard race that ceaselessly stirs beneath dominations, resisting everything that crushes and imprisons, a race that is outlined in relief in literature as process. (*ECC*, p.4)

Delirium need not necessarily confirm a blocked or majoritarian state of affairs, although it could become so if it sustains essentialist concepts such as race, ethnicity or nation, precisely for the reasons that Van der Vliet Oloomi outlines – the nation-state was founded on a narrative of ethnic purity and the exclusion of others and, thus, is always a majoritarian or "ill" concept. By contrast, those writers, narrators, characters, and readers who are literature-sick enter into a delirious state in which reality and representation become blurred, and where the narrative logic that upholds systems of domination are revealed as falsifications (as blockages). Writers such as Tillman, Van der Vliet Oloomi adds, are "*linguistic deterritorializers*" who write within a "majority language [. . .] as if [they] were a foreigner" ("AC"). This is the very definition of the work of minor literature: the use of language in such a way that it becomes defamiliarized; or, as Deleuze puts it, "a becoming-other of language, a minorization of this major language, a delirium that carries it off, a witch's line that escapes the dominant system" (*ECC*, p.5).[36] In these terms, literature sickness as a delirium or disease can be an illness (a blockage) but it can also lead to health. Think of a literature-sick character such as Roberto Bolaño's Father Urrutia, clearly on the boundary of reality and imagination as he lies on his deathbed, recalling his life as one of Chile's premier literary critics.[37] His life in literature amounts to an almost total renunciation of ethical responsibility as he hypocritically teaches Marxism to Pinochet's military junta and retreats into his library to read the classics while the fascists seize control of his country. Father Urrutia's life, and Bolaño's telling of its story, serve to illustrate Deleuze's point that "there is always the risk that a diseased state will interrupt the process or becoming [. . .], the constant risk that a delirium of domination will be mixed with a bastard delirium, pushing literature toward a larval fascism" (*ECC*, p.4), signaling the always-present potential that a becoming-minor can be co-opted by a dominant order. But literature-sick characters, like Zebra, who dub themselves a "literary terrorist" (*CMZ*, p.191), who challenge state oppression, censorship, and nationalist sentiment knowing that they are "armed with literature" (*CMZ*, p.7), are far closer to a state of health, in Deleuze's sense, since health moves in the direction of the minor. Health is that which deterritorializes and "ceaselessly stirs beneath dominations, resisting everything that crushes and imprisons" (*ECC*, p.4). Literature and, indeed, literature sickness can become health when literature itself is recognized not as a "box" to be

unpacked with the tools of interpretation, but as a process; when literature invents a people who are missing, rather than mirroring those that fit the national type; when it reveals that repetition and intertextuality are not the perpetuation of the same, but an always-renewed production of difference; and when it challenges the notion of a coherent, individual self and so, in Zebra's words, "*exposes man's denial of reality's shattering pluralism*" (*CMZ*, p.60). When these are the symptoms, literature sickness becomes health, with the ability to inspire resistance and dissent.

Zebra's claim that "*a book is a counsellor*" (*CMZ*, p.113) takes on a renewed significance when read through the lens of Deleuze's critical-clinical project. As much as "the writer as such is not a patient but rather a physician, the physician of himself and of the world" (*ECC*, p.3), so too the book. Characters such as those found in the work of Herman Melville read the world with "the eye of a *prophet*, and not a psychologist" (*ECC*, p.79) because they relay the symptoms presented by the world without subjecting them to a pre-established interpretative framework. Melville's "Bartleby is not the patient, but the doctor of a sick America" (*ECC*, p.90) because his inscrutable response to his employer – "*I would prefer not to*" (*ECC*, p.68) – does not function metaphorically, but rather unsettles and deterritorializes language through its ambiguity (what would Bartleby prefer to do?). His lack of self-interest as he is condemned to the insane asylum shows an impulse beyond the personal, "not an individual or particular affair, but a collective one" (*ECC*, p.85). Finally, Melville's story can be viewed as a diagnosis of his America and a prophetic prognosis of future health, however tentative, insofar as it stands as an "affirmation of a world in *process*" (*ECC*, p.86) and "preserves the rights of a people to come, or of a human becoming" (*ECC*, p.90). *Call Me Zebra* tracks a similar direction. Zebra, our guide, has something of a deterritorializing effect on other characters – as Ludo chides, "[y]ou make no room. No room for being understood" (*CMZ*, p.235). She positions herself as one of those who "trapped in the ghetto of the pyramid [of exile] [will] eventually emerge to contaminate the world with their power and mirror back to this miserly universe its own terrible distortions" (*CMZ*, p.191). That power is not simply to draw attention to systems of oppression, but to reveal their constructed, falsified reality – or, in other words, to deterritorialize majoritarian forms such as identity, the individual, or nation: "I, a modern literary inventor, was going to walk the void of my multiple exiles causing trouble, discombobulating the world" (*CMZ*, p.55). Zebra's decision to live in this way, within "the void of [her] multiple exiles", renders her incomprehensible to Ludo. His experience of Zebra, then, is much like the attorney's perplexed response to Bartleby, according to Deleuze's account: an encounter with a character who cannot be subjected to interpretation or be "understood" (Bartleby is not a metaphor); rather, their companions only experience their "discombobulating" effect on the world. Furthermore, despite their singularity no minor character is an individualist, and for all her condescension toward "the 99.9% of anti-intellectual rodents" (*CMZ*, p.50), Zebra's is a collective endeavor. Her activity of re-transcribing the literature of exiled writers is an act of "restoring dignity not only to literature but also to ourselves", a statement she poses to her fellow dissenters, the "Pilgrims of the Void" (*CMZ*, p.253). Her concept of the literary matrix is founded on interconnectivity and she posits that literature (like life, like humanity) is plural not strictly individuated, intermixed not self-sufficient, and diverse in ways that undermine notions of national exclusivity. Her literary project to expose each text's production of difference, without subjecting them to a linear temporality or privileging single works above their collective embeddedness, finds its correlate in Deleuze's philosophy in which "[t]he collective problem [. . .] is to institute, find, or recover a maximum of connections" (*ECC*, p.52). Zebra is a prophet, "the last remaining scribe of the future" (*CMZ*, p.22), because of the light she shines on the world – "what is the purpose of a flicker of light in the midst of all [history's] bloodshed? Easy. To illuminate the magnitude of the surrounding darkness" (*CMZ*, p.16) – but also because as an exile, with language and literature as her "sword" (CMZ, p.157), she transcribes in the service of a people who are missing.

To be a physician or counselor, Zebra reminds us, a book must "wound us": "there must be a transgression, a leap, a move beyond a prohibition [. . .] that calls up the ghosts of our past in order to reflect the haunting instability of our future world" (*CMZ*, p.113). The challenge facing Zebra and all those who live in the ruins of history's bloodshed is to find in the wounding event what Deleuze and Guattari call a line of flight or creativity, and thus to be "equal to the event" or to become "the offspring

of one's own events".[38] Literature, Zebra holds, offers the potential for redemption even while it looks back to "the ruins of humanity" (*CMZ*, p.177). What hope there is lies in the capacity to challenge sedimented commonplaces and restrictive ideologies. In this way, as Van der Vliet Oloomi argues, "reading *is* a political encounter" that can "allow us to imagine an alternative future, to see the connections between systems of domination across the globe and to name them accordingly".[39] When world literature sickness becomes health it allows writers, readers, characters, and critics alike to produce a symptomatology of man-made and always-evolving "systems of domination across the globe", to deterritorialize the language of nations and nationalism in a becoming-exile, and to repeat creatively the wounding events of history in order to at least imagine a more equal, democratic future.

Biographical Note

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Notes

1. Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi, "A Case of Literature Sickness," *The Believer*, 5 Apr. 2018, https://www.thebeliever.net/logger/literature-sickness/ n.pag. Hereafter abbreviated "AC."
2. Edward Said, "Preface" in Erich Auerbach, "Philology and *Weltliteratur*", trans. Marie Said and Edward Said, *The Centennial Review*, 13 no. 1 (1969): 1.
3. Peter Hallward, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (Verso: London and New York: Verso, 2006). Also see Hallward's *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing Between the Singular and the Specific* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2001).
4. Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel Smith and Michael Greco (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1991) p. 3; hereafter abbreviated *ECC*.
5. Erich Auerbach, "Philology and *Weltliteratur*", trans. Marie Said and Edward Said, *The Centennial Review*, 13 no. 1 (1969):4; hereafter abbreviated "PW."
6. Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (Verso: London, 2013), p.46.
7. *Ibid*. p.46, p.45.
8. See Moretti, *Distant*; Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool UP: Liverpool, 2015); Sarah Brouillette, *Postcolonial Writers and the Global Marketplace* (Palgrave: Basingstoke and New York, 2011); Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. DeBouvoise (Harvard UP: Cambridge, M.A., 2007), hereafter abbreviated *WR*; Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (Verso: London, 2013); David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton UP: Princeton, 2003); Rebecca Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (Columbia UP: New York, 2015).
9. Pascale Casanova, "Literature as a World," *New Left Review*, 31 (2005):71.
10. Edward Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (Columbia UP: New York, 2004), p.128; hereafter abbreviated *DC*.
11. Christian Thorne, "The Sea is Not a Place: Or, Putting the World Back into World Literature," *boundary 2*, 40. 2 (2013):59. Bourdieu is expressly acknowledged as an influence, but, as Christopher Prendergast has noted, nowhere is Wallerstein directly named ("The World Republic of Letters," *Debating World Literature*, ed. Christopher Prendergast [Verso: London, 2004], p.6). Prendergast persuasively outlines the work's indebtedness to Wallerstein, a critical endeavor taken further by Thorne.
12. We find Bloch deployed in another context, explicitly acknowledged as providing a framework for reading literary unevenness in Moretti's *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to Garcia Marquez* (Verso: London, 1996), pp.242–5.
13. The claim is problematic on several fronts. First, the novel has clearly accumulated a significant degree of literary capital (see Simon Gikandi, "Fifty Years of *Things Fall Apart*", *Wasafiri* 24.3 [2009]:4). Second, labeling Achebe as Nigeria's bard without reflecting on his support for Biafra and subsequent exile obscures the colonial legacies of the modern nation-state. On the postcolonial response to Casanova, see Lorna Burns, *Postcolonialism After World Literature: Relation, Equality, Dissent* (Bloomsbury: London, 2019), pp.28–45.
14. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Harvard UP: Cambridge M.A., 1993), pp.56–7.

15. Warwick, *Combined*, p.17. Aamir Mufti critiques Casanova and Moretti's use of the base-superstructure paradigm, claiming that in doing so they dehistoricize the discipline (*Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures* [Harvard: Cambridge, MA, 2016], pp.33–58).
16. Sociologists, such as Bourdieu, will afford society such primacy; poststructuralists, language; scientists, nature and empirical facts (see Latour, *We Have*, pp.4–5).
17. This contradicts Casanova's notion of literary autonomy, but time and again the argument is contradictory (see Burns, *Postcolonialism*, pp.32–7).
18. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford UP: Oxford, 1977), p.38.
19. Williams, *Marxism*, p.112.
20. Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi, *Call Me Zebra* (Alma Books: Surrey, 2018), p. 12; hereafter abbreviated *CMZ*.
21. Wai Chee Dimock, "Literature for the Planet," *PMLA*, 116, no. 1 (2001):175.
22. A claim stated by the Warwick Research Collective (*Combined*, p.20), but which might also apply to Moretti if we append to his theory of world literature his argument that Jacobean tragedy was the last instance in which literature produced dissent by discrediting the concept of absolute monarchy and leading to the English Revolution (see Franco Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders* [Verso: London, 1988] p.28).
23. Mufti, *Forget*, p.211.
24. Said, "Preface," p.1.
25. Mufti, *Forget*, pp.222, 218.
26. Williams, *Marxism*, p.38.
27. In Marx's terms, the commodity fetish (*Capital. Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes [Penguin Classics: London, 1990], pp.164–5).
28. This echoes his definition of contrapuntal reading in *Culture and Imperialism* (Chatto and Windus: London, 1993), pp.78–9.
29. See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: an Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford UP: Oxford, 2007).
30. Actor-Network Theory is a departure "from Descartes and Kant [. . .] Hegel, Heidegger, Habermas and Derrida" since "[t]hese philosophers base their thinking on firmly held beliefs about a radical division between the subjective and the objective, or between language and the world" (Anders Blok and Torban Jenson, *Bruno Latour: Hybrid Thoughts in a Hybrid World* [Routledge: London, 2011], p.12). By contrast, Latour allies himself to philosophers of immanence (Deleuze) and vitalism (Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson).
31. Latour makes a similar claim in *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Harvard UP: Cambridge, M.A.), p.182.
32. Rancière's work can be located within the loose tradition of post-Nietzschean philosophies of immanence that this article positions against those that posit separate spheres. Dissensus may also be aligned with Deleuzian deterritorialization, since within the framework of immanence both signal the radical potential of literature. Dissensus is Rancière's own version of a democratic critique, since it refigures who "counts" in the demos: "It consists in making what was unseen visible; in making what was audible as mere noise heard as speech" (Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran [Continuum: London, 2010], p.38).
33. This citation aims to induce further literature sickness by quoting Mufti's use of Hugh of St Victor. Mufti contextualizes Auerbach's reference to Hugh of St Victor by quoting Jerome Taylor's translation of a longer passage (Mufti, *Forget*, p.223), the same passage that Said, acknowledging Auerbach, references in *Culture and Imperialism* (pp.406–7).
34. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Continuum: London, 2004), p.5.
35. Casanova rejects Deleuze and Guattari's characterization of Kafka as an author of minor literature because, for her, small literature is equated with nationalism, and any sense of the collective for her correlates to the nation (*WR*, p.201). Deleuze and Guattari thus "project upon Kafka their view of politics as subversion, or 'subversive struggle,' whereas for him, in the Prague of the early twentieth century, it was identified solely with the national question" (*WR*, pp.203–4). Deleuze and Guattari would certainly contest the intentional fallacy expressed by Casanova, but more crucially this is another version of the critique of Deleuze as a transcendentalist. I would argue that deterritorialization or becoming-minor are in fact features of an immanent dualism of actual and virtual. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari do affirm that Kafka was "prophetic" and "described events to come" but *not* because he "did not care about the burning political issues of his time" (*WR*, p.204).
36. Also see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (U of Minnesota P: Minneapolis 1986), pp.16–27.
37. Roberto Bolaño, *By Night in Chile*, trans. Chris Andrews (Vintage: London, 2009).
38. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (Verso: London, 1994), p.159.
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