

The Predicament of World Literature

World literature. Comparative literature. Circulation of literature. Mentality of power. Globality.

World literature is a term that has been discussed in literary studies for two hundred years. But only in recent decades has this concept been the subject of a broader global debate due to its popularity in Anglophone literary studies. It seems to have brought a second wind to the discipline of comparative literature. Indeed, the notion of world literature seems to correspond to the unprecedented globalization which we experience every day in various forms. The aim of the article is to summarize the current debate on world literature, to discuss its consequences for the practice of literary studies and to reflect on its didactic and ethical implications. The author points out the asymmetrical power relations inherent in the current notion of world literature and calls for intercultural literary studies that would not be based on a mentality of power.

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