



## THE ROLE OF WORLD LITERATURE

Kenjaeva Muhabbat Toshtemirovna  
Teacher, Termez State University

### Annotation

History is not only a gateway to the past, it's also suggestive of our present and the future. Within every time period lies different people and within them, different stages in our ever-growing culture. Each individual before was a product of their own time. As a species we evolve every day and without that timestamp that literature gives us, we would know nothing about the past.

Literature allows a person to step back in time and learn about life on Earth from the ones who walked before us. We can gather a better understanding of culture and have a greater appreciation of them. We learn through the ways history is recorded, in the forms of manuscripts and through speech itself.

In periods from ancient Egypt, we can gather their history through hieroglyphics and paintings. The symbols Egyptians left behind are what we now use to understand their culture. This is different to Greek and Roman culture, which is found with greater ease, because of their innate desire for accuracy in their writing.

This is the power that words have. They have the ability to spark a meaning, reform a nation and create movements while being completely eternal. Inevitably, they will outlive their speaker.

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### Introduction

For the majority of people around the world, our first serious encounter with literature comes from school. Reading and writing has been drilled in all of us from an early age and this is set in motion with the start of examinations.

Being able to empathise with a group of characters written on a page is categorical and from a student's perspective a necessary skill. Additionally, the ability to sense themes and messages opens us up to another way of thinking. Literature becomes a vessel. The 130 million books which have been published around the world are guides for the reader and generate a bridge for them to learn something new. When we think of globalization and forms of entertainment, we immediately think of the Internet, social media, movies, or television shows. But, contrary to popular belief, literature also





holds an important place in the flow of entertainment media that is coursing through the veins of public consumption in our globalized world. The technological advances that are connecting people worldwide through shared information are also serving as a medium to disseminate books across national and cultural boundaries.

The term “world literature” was first used by the German writer and statesman Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, referring to the dissemination of literature from and to countries across the globe. Goethe famously stated in letters to Johann Eckermann in 1827, “National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach.” World Literature, in the modern sense, refers to literary works that are translated into multiple languages and circulated to an audience outside their country of origin.

World literature is not a new concept, but as new media technologies explode, so do new ways of disseminating books across national boundaries. And as new ways emerge of delivering world literature to readers worldwide, many scholars are examining the implications of translations on literature, the impact that literature has on culture, and the ways that cultures can transform books. World literature can be an amazing tool for analyzing globalization because it provides a wonderful example of the ways that information is shared across languages and cultures. Valerie Henitiuk, a professor of Literature and Translation at the University of East Anglia, in a compelling 2012 essay, explored the process of translation and the meanings that it holds. She posits that “texts become successfully worlded only through interpretive acts of mediation profoundly bound up in aspects of culture.” In other words, a text can never truly be independent of its translation. As literature moves across boundaries of culture and language, it is, in a way, transformed into a unique cultural artifact.

While some believe that world literature gains value in translation, some scholars, such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, hold the alternate view that the study of world literature often ignores the power of a work in its own language. Spivak believes that scholars must take care to avoid homogenizing cultures and languages when undertaking the study of translated texts, and that consideration must be given to protecting the diversity of languages and cultures present in literary works.

Aims. Venkat Mani, in an essay published in 2014, submits that world literature is best understood in the larger context of global media dissemination. Mani points out that in the globalized world that exists today, the place of origin of a literary work does not necessarily define the cultural or national context of the work. He believes that





modern world literature is being created and disseminated in a public sphere, aided by new media technologies and the interconnected nature of the Internet and social media. Mani's viewpoint mirrors Goethe's statement that "national literature is now a rather unmeaning term," but takes on new meaning as, almost 200 years later, the world is more connected than ever before through modern technology.

The study of world literature is a powerful tool for global studies because it encompasses so many themes that are important to understanding globalization. World literature can show us how information is shared between cultures and nations. It provides insight into how cultural artifacts are transformed as they traverse languages and boundaries. It also can help us to understand the ways that new media technologies could be facilitating globalization by creating a public space for the transmission of literature and other information across the globe.

Conclusion. The act of writing is also an act of communication. Language is not fixed. Its meaning changes based on how members of respective cultures interpret it, and this meaning also shifts over time. World literature is a way of collecting those ideas in a way that reflects a specific group of people at a certain time in history.

Since literature is reflective of predominant political and philosophical principles of the time in which it is written, world literature is also a historical reflection of the evolution of world culture. It is a snapshot of a region within a given time. This knowledge is not only used by societies to improve their dialogues with each other but also to understand the struggles and priorities of those who are different and how those struggles affect others.

World literature is sometimes presented as a statement of demands or as a critique of a society. In such cases, authors attempt to call for change by reaching widespread numbers of people and by using language to persuade them to join a cause. Literature is a timeless piece of entertainment. As the innovations of technological advancements have grown, the way we read has revolutionised and evolved. However, the essence of storytelling and the effect it has on our lives hasn't wavered.

Literature reflects human nature and a way we can learn and relate to others. By reading through a first-person perspective, we can fully immerse ourselves into a different mindset and figure out how others think and feel. This is important within today's society as we're becoming increasingly detached from human interaction through iPhones, FaceTime, and social media. Literature is something that will never change in the way it makes you feel, regardless of whether that's on paper or as an eBook.





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