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Order and disorder in the library of Comparative Literature

If we were to single out an everlasting concern among scholars of Comparative Literature, then that summed up by the question "What are the typical procedures denoting our discipline?" would certainly do. "Comparing" has been the damnation of comparatists, dauntingly looming on the theorizations of the various "turns" attempted in the past few years and on the death-sentences provokingly uttered by the most influential critics. What's at stake is the grounding reason of our practices. The concept of World Literature has notably provided this ground because it allows the redistribution and reframing of former Euro-centric narratives and national canons (a concern that thanks to Spivak has come to mingle with the very conception of Comparative Literature, and not anymore with the sole field of Postcolonial studies). After all aren't the theoretical reflections of Franco Moretti, David Damrosch, Haun Saussy or Susan Bassnett attempts at tracing an order in that vast merging chaos that World Literature is? In this intervention we argue that disorder ought not to be entirely discarded for it could serve us as criteria for comparison, hence for the recasting of the methods we employ in our research. Too often have we pondered on the content of our library and too little on the position of its books. In this new configuration of the library serving Comparative Literature, we find that chanced (yet not arbitrary) juxtapositions constitute the occasion for dealing with yet-to-be traced histories of literature and for accessing minoritarian or forgotten literatures. Edward W. Said warned us that "affiliation" also risks of reproducing filiative design, but our concept of an embraced "ideal disorder" can release unexpected motives in literary criticism. Finally, we contend that the editorial project of the Italian publishing house "Adelphi" can be taken as an established example.