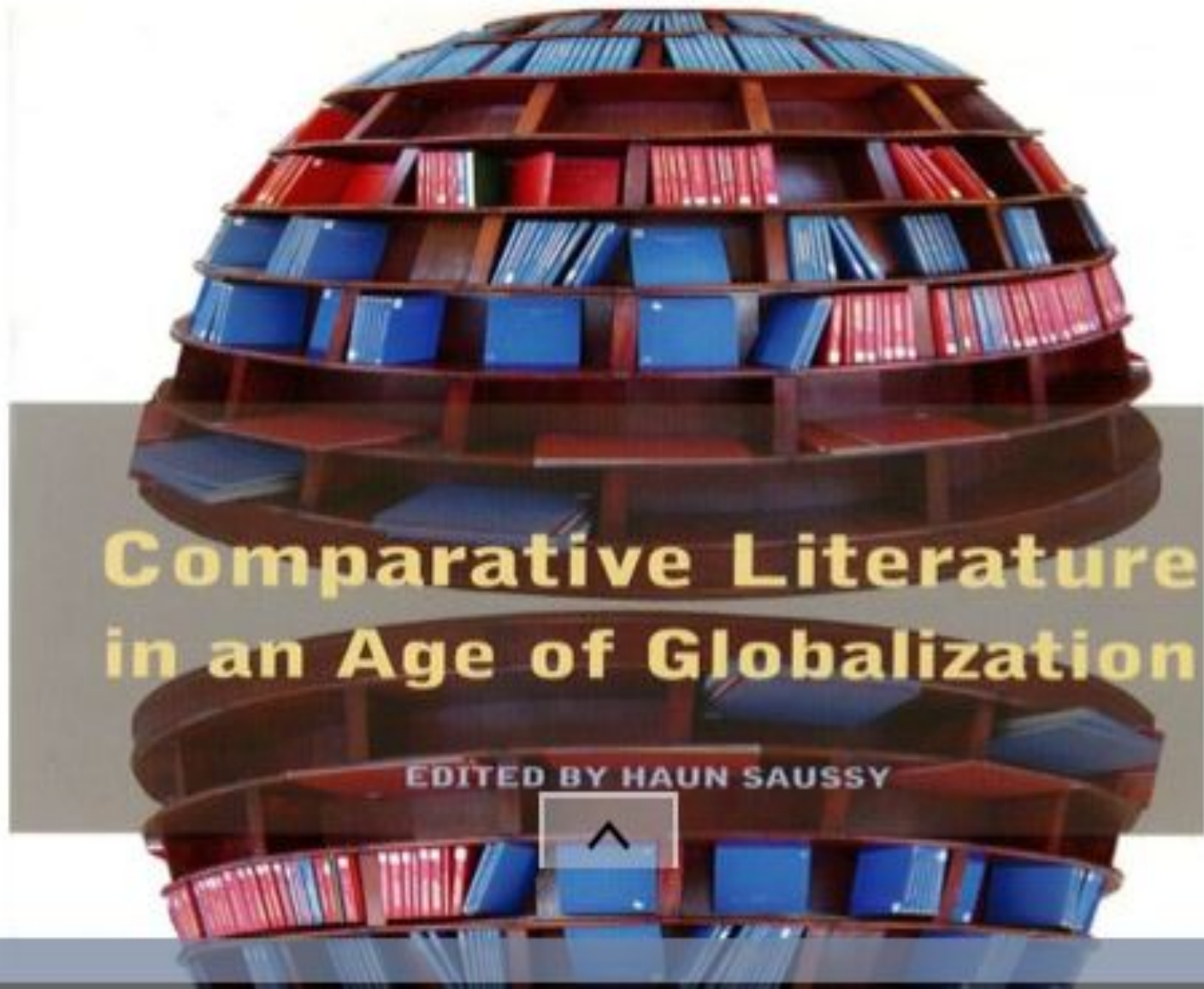


Comparative Literature/



Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization

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Definition

- ▶ Comparative literature can be simply defined as the study of texts across cultures.
- ▶ It's said to be interdisciplinary.
- ▶ It's concerned with patterns of connection in literatures across both time and space.



Comparative Literature:

An Introduction

Genesis

The term 'Comparative Literature' came into existence as a reaction against national literature.

By the second half of the 18th century in Europe the feudal society was being replaced by a new entity/category called 'nation'.

Nation: A Limited Concept

The 'nation' was a very limited concept because it meant one region, one religion, one race, one language, one literature, one culture.

For England it meant England as a geographical territory, Anglo-Saxon race, Christianity as religion, English language, English literature & English culture. This became a source of compartmentalization of societies.

Two New Categories

The great minds of Europe reacted against it. Goethe of Germany put forward two categories-Comparative Literature & World Literature.

National literature was literature of a nation in one language. There was an implicit notion of superiority of that literature over others.

Europe was changing in the sense that other countries, other societies, their cultures, their literatures were available to Europe through translations

The Two Terms Differentiated

The term 'world literature' was stated by Johann Eckermann, the student and friend of Goethe, on 31 January 1827.

Both the terms- 'comparative literature' & 'world literature' were being used synonymously but in practice world literature became a collection of literary masterpieces from different cultures & different literatures. Comparative literature became a methodology on how to study world literature.

Different Schools of Comparative Studies

This methodology was result of practice of comparative study of literature. In Europe different countries focused on one particular aspect more than the other. In all countries different ways of comparing similarities, dissimilarities & resemblances were practiced but different schools came into existence.

French scholars of comparative literature focused on study of influence. A writer is influenced by different forces- economic, social, cultural & the ideas around the person. These influence the psyche /mind of the creative writer & then they are articulated in literary works.

Comparative Study as Methodology

This methodology one might see today in terms of comparative study of themes (thematology), comparative study of literary forms, comparative study of influence, which later on came to be replaced by reception and comparative study of studying different literary studies by putting them together. This included translation, their comparative studies, the comparative study of literary movements, historiography, critical traditions & compa

Methodology



○
△
Author
past



□
Text



○ ○ ○
△ △ △
Audience
now

Formalist

Time → change → difference
postmodern

Reception

The influence came to be known as a mechanical category- people worked in this area, collected details about what the author read, with whom the author interacted & the way that shaped the author's writings. The influence has an influencer (one who influences) and an influencee (one who gets influenced). The influencer becomes more important than the person who is influenced. Therefore, it was later replaced by Reception- which includes the basic assumption that the receiver is more important because everything is in the air but the way they are received depends on the receiver.

Methodology

