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Manuel R. Montoya Date

Making the Global Legible:

An Examination of World Polity as it Relates to World Literature

By

MJR Montoya

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts

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B.A., University of New Mexico, 1999

M.Litt., Oxford University, 2001

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An Abstract of

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2010

Abstract

Making the Global Legible:

An Examination of World Polity as It Relates to World Literature

This project explores how global structures become legible in the world system through text. I frame this analysis by studying how internationalism is conflated with globalism, which produces a series of disjunctive problems that I refer to as illegibility. I argue that in order to distinguish between international and global categories, one must understand how the global emerges as a meaningful part of our social realities. Given that world culture is its own distinct cultural category, and given that global structures have crystallized over the past two hundred years, I describe how certain literary figures appear with great consistency, and I describe how they resolve certain ambiguities between international and global structures. This analysis places studies on world literature in conversation with world polity theory. I evaluate world literature as a problem of global aesthetics, wherein literary analysis is a way of understanding the aesthetic distinctiveness of globality. I apply world polity theory as a way of identifying what stakeholders are imagined as purely global actors, and how authority is conferred upon them in the world system. These studies are applicable across a broad array of scholarly fields, including foreign relations, international law, and international finance. By learning how we imagine global landscapes, I argue that we can learn how to address how nations obstruct or conceal effective solutions to major global issues.

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