



## Report on the Sixth Annual Session of the Institute for World Literature Harvard University, 20 June - 14 July 2016

by

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From June 20 to July 14, 2016 the Institute for World Literature's (IWL) sixth summer school was held at Harvard University. 150 participants from more than 60 nations came together to think, analyse and discuss perspectives on the field of World Literature Studies. During the four-week programme participants were able to broaden their knowledge in World Literature Studies by attending lectures and a keynote, specialize in their own fields of research by attending seminars taught by leading thinkers of World Literature, benefit from experiences discussed in panels on jobs and publishing, and contribute themselves to the field of World Literature by presenting own research to peers in eight thematically different colloquia.

The IWL started with **David Damrosch's** (Harvard University) lecture "What Isn't World Literature? Problems of Language, Context, and Politics" in which he marked the range and issue of the field, suggesting an opening of the academic canon towards minority languages. **Rebecca Walkowitz** (Rutgers University) took texts that are 'born in translation' into the account of her lecture, asking how these heterogeneous texts fit into the concept of world literature. **Gisèle Sapir** (CNRS and EHESS Paris) showed the importance of translational practices and policies. She related these questions to authorship in transnational contexts taking France as an example. **Mariano Siskind** (Harvard University) "Dislocated France" in his lecture when he examined "Comparative Modernisms and Cosmopolitan Distance". **Homi Bhabha's** keynote "The Internal Emigrant: or, Who Is at Home in the Humanities" showed not only the scope of research in the humanities when he described his reading and analysing of refugee testimonies, but also created connections between literature and current political issues. Taking the massive, global movements of migration into account, he pointed to the role of the humanities in the face of humanitarian crises.

From the 14 different seminars Laura Fuchs-Eisner selected Rebecca Walkowitz' **"Close Reading and World Literature"** and Paul Giles' (University of Sydney) **"Transnational and Crosstemporal: World Literature Across Space and Time"**. Monika Raič opted for Margaret Cohen's (Stanford University) seminar **"Imagining the Oceans"**, in which the sea as space of global communication was examined, and Mariano Siskind's seminar **"Cosmopolitanism and Its Discontents"**, where political theory met literary readings enlightening the problematic relation between "The Home and the World", to use the title of Tagore's famous novel.

Beside the dense weekly intellectual program, we could still benefit from the unique facilities on Harvard's campus. Above all, the Widener Library provided a motivating environment to study and to do research. Browsing the archives turned out to be a lifetime experience and allowed us to discover a lot of new material. Of course we took advantage of the great weather that accompanied our visit in Cambridge and met for discussions and readings on the lawns of Harvard Yard or cooled down at the Fogg Museum.

The four weeks at Harvard were an immensely enriching, challenging and inspiring time for both of us. Not only were we able to meet people from all over the world, but we found new friends and colleagues with whom we will keep sharing interests, perspectives and challenges.