



INSTITUTO DE LITERATURA COMPARADA
MARGARIDA LOSA

Seminário aberto:

The Frontiers of Knowledge: Shouldn't the Other Speak Her Own Language?

Abstract: Using the structuring metaphor of an imaginary meeting between Walt Whitman and Jose Marti, I examine the relationship between American formulations of World Literature and Comparative Literature and investigate how each discipline 'welcomes' the Other. I distinguish between what a European comparatist might envision about the relationship between the two disciplines, as working together in a symbiotic relationship to engage in passive and active canon reform. The European comparatist might take a neutral attitude to the recent American marketing of World Literature. I do not see this phenomenon in neutral terms and examine the American configuration of World Literature as a political program, discussing its origins in Area Studies, its relationship to the American academic model of multiculturalism and ultimately viewing it as an institutional strategy aiding in the management of diversity on US campuses.

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