



# Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability

*Emily Apter*

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**Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability** Emily Apter

*Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* argues for a rethinking of comparative literature focusing on the problems that emerge when large-scale paradigms of literary studies ignore the politics of the “Untranslatable”—the realm of those words that are continually retranslated, mistranslated, transferred from language to language, or especially resistant to substitution.

In the place of “World Literature”—a dominant paradigm in the humanities, one grounded in market-driven notions of readability and universal appeal—Apter proposes a plurality of “world literatures” oriented around philosophical concepts and geopolitical pressure points. The history and theory of the language that constructs World Literature is critically examined with a special focus on *Weltliteratur*, literary world systems, narrative ecosystems, language borders and checkpoints, theologies of translation, and planetary devolution in a book set to revolutionize the discipline of comparative literature.

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