



The Promise and the Challenge of World Literature

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Abstract:

In this lecture, Prof. Zhang Longxi will address the current situation of "World Literature." Although the notion of "World Literature" aims at global cosmopolitanism, the field remains heavily Eurocentric. While Goethe's original vision was inspired by Chinese texts, modern circulation still prioritizes Western languages like English and French. Thus, academic frameworks, exemplified by Casanova's Paris-centric model, continue to marginalize rich non-Western traditions, including Chinese classics. To achieve a truly global perspective, scholars must actively integrate diverse literary histories and expand the literary canon to reflect a genuine, rather than Western-dominated, global reality.

Short Bio:

Prof. Zhang Longxi (Ph. D. from Harvard) has taught at Peking, Harvard, the University of California, Riverside, and City University of Hong Kong, and is currently Xiaoxiang Chair Professor 潇湘特聘教授 at Hunan Normal University and Li De Chair Professor 砺德讲席教授 at the Yenching Academy of Peking University. He is an elected foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History, and the Antiquities and also of Academia Europaea. He has published more than 30 books and numerous articles in Chinese and English, including, most recently, *A History of Chinese Literature* (London: Routledge, 2023), and *World Literature as Discovery: Expanding the World Literary Canon* (London: Routledge, 2024).