SOUTH ASIAN WRITERS, LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE, AND THE RISE OF GLOBAL ENGLISH

Ever since T. B. Macaulay leveled the accusation in 1835 that “a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India,” South Asian literature has served as the imagined battleground between local linguistic multiplicity and a rapidly globalizing English. This book traces an unexpected journey to Latin America for South Asian literature in English. The cohort of authors that moved between these regions include Latin-American Nobel laureates Pablo Neruda and Octavio Paz; Booker Prize notables Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai, Mohammed Hanif, and Mohsin Hamid; and foundational literary and cultural figures such as Geeta Kapur, Jagdish Swaminathan, and Arvind Krishna Mehrotra. In their explorations of this new geographic connection, Roanne L. Kantor claims that they formed the vanguard of a new, multilingual world-literary order. Their encounters with Latin America fundamentally shaped the way in which literature written in English from South Asia exploded into popularity from the 1980s until the mid-2000s, enabling its global visibility.

Roanne L. Kantor is Assistant Professor of English at Stanford University. She has published in Comparative Literature; Interventions; South Asia; Global South Studies; Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East; and Transmodernity. Her translation of Juan José Saer’s La mayor won the 2009 Susan Sontag Prize.
World literature is a vital part of twenty-first-century critical studies. Globalization and unprecedented levels of connectivity through communication technologies force literary scholars to rethink the scale of literary production and their own critical practices. As an exciting field that engages seriously with the place and function of literary studies in our global era, the study of world literature requires new approaches. Cambridge Studies in World Literature is founded on the assumption that world literature is not all literatures of the world nor a canonical set of globally successful literary works. The series will highlight scholarship on literary works that focus on the logics of circulation drawn from multiple literary cultures and technologies of the textual. While not rejecting the nation as a site of analysis, the series will offer insights into new cartographies – the hemispheric, the oceanic, the transregional, the archipelagic, the multilingual local – that better reflect the multiscalar and spatially dispersed nature of literary production. It will highlight the creative coexistence, flashpoints, and intersections of language worlds from both the Global South and the Global North, as well as multiworld models of literary production and literary criticism that these have generated. It will push against existing historical, methodological, and cartographic boundaries and showcase humanistic and literary endeavors in the face of world-scale environmental and humanitarian catastrophes.

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SOUTH ASIAN WRITERS, LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE, AND THE RISE OF GLOBAL ENGLISH

ROANNE L. KANTOR
Stanford University
To Hayden and Emmanuelle
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5.1 Cell 13 from Mohsin Hamid’s “The (Former) General in His Labyrinth” (Hamid 2008).

5.2 “Map of Story” from planning documents for “The (Former) General in His Labyrinth” (Hamid 2010, 321).
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