

Contemporary Literary Commitment as Denunciation of an Unacceptable. Elements for a Cross-cultural Poetics.

Summary

Far from being an outdated notion, "commitment" remains, with some enlargements, a valid concept for literary analysis, in the West as much as in other regions of the world. Rethinking literary commitment as the "denunciation of an unacceptable" allows us to unfold and compare the various rhetorical and poetic strategies characterizing the literary production of contemporary authors as diverse as Waris Dirie, Peter Handke, Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, Toni Morrison, Taslima Nasreen, Ben Okri, Orhan Pamuk, Salman Rushdie and Luis Sepúlveda. We seek to highlight the ideal-typical elements of literary commitment in these texts, such as the authorial presence or the advocacy of certain political programmes. These elements are related to various theoretical discourses, some of which have traveled through the twentieth century. We examine their different patterns in the texts, showing that our authors renew literary commitment through the reorganization and alteration of its usual features. Thus, we define literary commitment as the denunciation of an unacceptable that is not necessarily polemical. The notion of "unacceptable", which implies the textual construction of a moral judgment, allows us not only to undertake a transhistorical analysis, which goes beyond the Sartrean conceptualization, but also to engage in a cross-cultural study of literary commitment.

Keywords : literary commitment ; committed author ; Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) ; world literature ; comparative literature ; literature and politics ; postcolonial studies ; history of intellectuals ; sociocriticism.