

From the Margins of the Neoliberal University: Notes Toward Nomadic Literary Studies

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Abstract Literary studies are living a nomadic existence on the margins of the neoliberal university, forced to adapt to the needs of more profitable disciplines and the insidious marketization of higher education to find an intellectual home. By drawing on Rosi Braidotti's nomadic theory, this article situates the current state of literary studies in the wider networks of power relations that differentially distribute nomadic experiences in the contemporary world. The article begins with an examination of the contradictions of nomadic mobility in the era of globalized capitalism and how these contradictions interrelate with the study of world literature. The second half of the article focuses on the transformation of labor under neoliberalism, charting the rise of cognitive capitalism and its relationship to the university. While the future of literary studies might look precarious in the era of cognitive capitalism, the increasing casualization of intellectual labor creates the conditions for unstructured, unrestrained, and deterritorialized flows of thought that escape the constraints placed on those in the institution. By harnessing literature's subversive potential, literary studies can use these nomadic flows of thought to resist the operating principles of the neoliberal university and help combat the conditions that create precarious nomadic experiences across the globe.

Keywords nomadic mobility and labor, Rosi Braidotti, cognitive capitalism, world literature, neoliberal university

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