

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN CHINA

Introducción a la Literatura comparada en China

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Notwithstanding its relatively short history as a discipline, comparative literature in China has embarked on a booming period during the past three decades since the foundation of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association, a sharp contrast to the doomsday predictions prevalent in Western scholarship, as represented by statements like comparative literature «has had its day» (Bassnett 1993, 161), «exquisite cadavers» (Saussy 2006, 3) and «death of a discipline» (Spivak 2003, 1). Just as Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Louise O. Vasvári (2013, 4) observe, «What is remarkable—and this is paid scant attention to in Anglophone comparative literature or world literatures scholarship—is that both the concept of the discipline, as well as its institutional presence are advancing in so-called “peripheral” languages and cultures including Iberian Spanish and Portuguese, Greek, etc., and this is the case also in Latin American languages, Chinese, Indian languages, in Arabic or Farsi», which is certainly true, at least in China.

Scholars in comparative literature in China have, in their own way, contributed to the development of the discipline by way of practical and theoretical innovations with a view to dragging the discipline out of the former dominant binary modes—*influence studies* and *parallel studies*—including the proposal of *variation studies*, *intercultural studies*, *world literature* and *medio-translatology studies*, etc., which has wide resonance with their counterparts in the West, who consider the above studies could well serve as better substitutes for comparative literature. But a distinguished aspect of the progress made in China in this regard lies in its strong advocacy for the inter-civilization dimension of research in comparative literature, a strong and effective counterpoint to the age-old tradition of Eurocentrism, Western-centrism or the centre-peripheral dichotomy in this discipline.

Thus, it is significant to present to the rest of the world the new subject and methodology of comparative literature developed here, though in a rather brief way consisting of only five papers, through which one may get a glimpse and go further if interested.

«Cultural Translation of Chinese Ethnic Minority Literature: The Case of *King Gesar*», by citing the translation of ethnic minority literature (using *King Gesar* as an example), discusses the effectiveness of thick translation as a proper method to translate ethnic minority literature for the ultimate purpose of cultural transfer and transmission in translation.

This «Introduction to Comparative Literature in China» includes the following articles. «Variation in Translation and the Formation of World Literature» investigates the inevitable variation in the process of translation due to factors of cultural heterogeneity, the translator's subjectivity, the reader's expectation, etc., thus again confirming the validity of creative treason in translation and further proposing that world literature is literature with variation in translation.

«Rethinking *Daughter of the River* in the English-speaking World» explores differences in the analysis of the same novel, *Daughter of the River*, in domestic studies and researches in the English-speaking world by describing their respective focuses and the underlying reasons. The article also pays due attention to the feminist consciousness studied by critics and researchers.

«A Variation Study on the Thematic Evolution of Chinese and Western Ocean Literature from the Perspective of Communication», on the basis of a retrospective analysis of the crisis confronting the discipline, proposes variation theory as an effective way out of its predicament due to the theory's emphasis on heterogeneity and variety in the globalized context.

«Study on the Evolution of Chinese and Western Ocean Literature from the Perspective of Communication and the Theory of Variation» analyses

the variation in the communication and exchange of ocean literature among different regions in China and the West arising from various factors, drawing attention to the representative themes of Chinese and Western ocean literature so as to finally reveal the mutual effect, reference and exchange between these two sides.

The authors of the articles, including myself as the guest editor of this issue, «Introduction to Comparative Literature in China», would like to extend the sincerest thanks to *1616: Anuario de Literatura comparada* for reviewers' comments on the papers submitted to the journal and for the opportunity to publish our work.

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