Tamkang Review 45.1 (December 2014): 105-128.
DOI: 10.6184/TKR201412-6

Translation and World Literature in Goethe's *West-East Divan*[1]

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Abstract

Due to the emergence of the globalized world, much attention has been paid to Goethe's concept of world literature, which can be considered an appropriate term to describe literature in the age of globalization. However, many current discussions are so dominated by the political and social-economic issues that the literary-aesthetic dimension, which plays an important role in Goethe's considerations, is to some extent neglected. To describe the literary-aesthetic significance in Goethe's concept of world literature, the present paper suggests an indirect approach by exploring his *West-East Divan* which consists not only of poetic cycles, but also of notes and essays discussing the literature and culture in both Orient and Occident as well as the problems of translation and poetics. In addition, with Walter Benjamin's theory of translation, the present paper argues that translation and world literature shares the poetic concept considered in *West-East Divan*, which assumes that poetry or literature is essentially relational and translational.

Keywords: world literature, translation, *West-East Divan*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Walter Benjamin

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[1] This paper is part of the result of my research project "Walter Benjamin's Concept of Criticism of Art and the German Literature in the Late 18th Century II-II," granted by the National Science Council, now the Ministry of Science and Technology (NSC-100-2410-H-160-015-). I am very grateful to its generous support. I also want to thank two anonymous reviewers. Their precious suggestions and opinions did help me improve this paper.

(Received: 7 August 2014; Accepted: 1 December 2014)

I. Introduction

On July 25th, 1814, Goethe began a journey to the Rhine-Main area, where he was born and raised. It had been decades since Goethe visited his homeland after moving to Weimar to serve in the court of Carl August, Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. There, he was burdened with administrative work as a minister of state and unable to succeed in literary writing. By 1814, he had not found the same popular success he had with his first novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. During the Napoleonic Wars, Goethe personally joined the campaign in Mainz and directly experienced the disorder and turmoil caused by the war as French soldiers invaded his home in Weimar. Considering this biographical background, it is no wonder that some Goethe experts tend to interpret this journey to his homeland as Goethe's "escape from the confinement of Weimar" (Unseld 24).

The journey gave Goethe a chance to see a world different from provincial Weimar. The city of his birth, Frankfurt, was undergoing prosperous growth because it had been reconstructed into an international commerce center after the Napoleonic Wars. It had established connections with cities all over the world through international commercial correspondence. The cosmopolitan atmosphere in Frankfurt appealed to the sixty-five-year-old Goethe, touching him again with vitality; he wrote in his journey diary that he felt "rejuvenated" and "reborn to the youthful energy" (Koch 178). With this feeling of rebirth and youth, the journey to his homeland was not only a flight from uncomfortable reality but also an inducement to transcend his previous limits, finding some new possibilities.

About two months before this journey to the Rhine-Main area, Goethe received a special gift from his publisher—two booklets containing the collected poems of the Persian medieval poet Hafiz. This collection had been translated into German by a contemporary of Goethe, the Austrian orientalist Josef von Hammer-Purgstall. During the journey, Hafiz's poems were Goethe's loyal travel companion. He was very impressed when he first read them, as he recalled in a note:

> It was last year that I received all of Hafiz's poems in the translation by Hammer-Purgstall. . . . The effect was too vivid, the German translation was at hand, and it was here that I had to find the spur to my own participation. Everything that had been stored away and nurtured in my mind and that bore a similarity either in sense or in substance made its mark, and all the more forcefully, so that I felt an absolute necessity to flee from the real world—which was both an overt and covert threat—into an ideal world, the participation in which was left to my pleasure, my ability, and my own will. (Unseld 22-23)

The most obvious effect of Hafiz's poetry on Goethe was remarkable productivity in his poetic writing. His journey diary indicated that several "poems to Hafiz" (Koch 177) were written while he was still on the way to his homeland in the summer of 1814. Like the bourgeoning Frankfurt, Hafiz's poems greatly fascinated Goethe, giving him a strong desire to act interestedly and passionately as well as to write productively.

In Goethe's eyes, Frankfurt as a progressive modern city and Hafiz as a foreign medieval poet did not contradict each other, for they both represented what he imagined for the world to come—a world of free circulation that broke boundaries and opened to states of fluidity and hybridity. Goethe saw in the flow of Frankfurt's trade the ideal of free exchange and communication, the conceptual basis for developing the idea of world literature. In Hafiz and his poetry, he saw the projection of the self into the other that renews poetic production with another voice. His inspiration from Hafiz and his oriental poetry, as well as the crossing of the cultural boundaries, are all literarily reprocessed by Goethe in *West-East Divan* (*West-östlicher Divan*), a poetic cycle with prosaic notes and essays. In content and form, *West-East Divan* not only adapts the oriental poetic form, the *ghazal*, but also applies symbols and motifs unique to oriental culture and religion. With its combination of oriental and occidental traditions in poetry, some critics consider *West-East Divan* as "the cornerstone on the way to Goethe's conception of world literature" (Birus 73).[2]

Because of the emergence of the globalized world, much attention has been paid to Goethe's concept of world literature, which can be considered an appropriate term to describe literature in the age of globalization. By pointing out that "literature is becoming immanently global," John Pizer asserts that Goethe's concept of world literature "both anticipates and helps us to examine" this trend in literature (213). Referring to Goethe, Homi K. Bhabha formulates his view on world literature from the postcolonial perspective in the introduction of *The Location of Culture*: ". . . there may be a sense in which world literature could be an emergent, prefigurative category that is concerned with a form of cultural dissensus and alterity, where non-consensual terms of af-

[2] Manfred Koch and Anne Bohnenkamp indicate a close connection between Goethe's development of the concept of world literature and his *West-East Divan* by referring to *Über Altertum und Kunst*, a magazine initiated and published by Goethe himself, in which important passages and discussions about world literature are expressed. Koch notes that 1816, the founding year of *Über Altertum und Kunst*, is exactly the period when *West-East Divan* was being written (231). Bohnenkamp argues that Goethe's concept of world literature should be examined in context with his late literary works, such as *West-East Divan* and *Faust II*, for it is typical for Goethe to introduce a term such as "world literature" without any systematical and comprehensive explanation, but rather being poetically explored and represented in his literary writings (200-01).

filiation may be established on the grounds of historical trauma. The study of world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of 'otherness'" (17). In his *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Edward W. Said sees in Goethe's utopian vision of world literature "a universalist conception of all the literatures of the world seen together as forming a majestic symphonic whole" (95). Based on Goethe's discussions of world literature, David Damrosch claims in his book *What Is World Literature?* that "world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of, but rather a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike" (5). Though all the discussions in recent years have brought Goethe's concept of world literature to current relevance, some critics have raised doubts about the new interpretation of the term inspired by the postcolonial and globalization studies. Paul Michael Lützeler, for example, argues that the idea of world literature discussed in recent years, especially under the multicultural and postcolonial discourses, is "somehow basically different" from Goethe's considerations on the same subject (105). This difference stems from the fact that much current discussion about it is dominated by political and social-economic issues while, as Dieter Lamping reminds us, world literature is for Goethe initially "a literary idea" whose specific "aesthetic dimension" has to be foregrounded (135).

Heeding Lamping's reminder, the urgent question of how the literary-aesthetic dimension of Goethe's concept of world literature can remains, especially since Goethe simply postulated the term "world literature" in various later writings, some of which are only brief mentions in letters and conversations. This certainly poses complications to answering this question. Therefore, this paper suggests an indirect approach by exploring Goethe's *West-East Divan*, which is "Goethe's own poetic effort to approximate the ideal of hybridity in world literature" (Pizer 218), for it consists of not only poetic cycles but also notes and essays discussing the literature and culture of both the Orient and Occident, as well as the problems of translation and poetics.[3] In addition, this

[3] Edward W. Said's assertion in his *Orientalism* that Goethe's *West-East Divan* was "based on the Rhine journey" (19) needs revision. In a letter in 1815, Goethe expressed that he still wanted to learn Arabic, "at least to practice writing the characters so that he could somehow copy the amulet, talisman, abraxas and seal in the original" (*Werke: Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden* [*HA* 2] 540; hereafter referred to as *HA* with the volume and page number). Katharina Mommsen discusses in her book *Goethe und die arabische Welt* that Goethe during the years of writing *West-East Divan* not only consulted the works of the Orient-experts in his time, but also made efforts to learn Arabic, for Goethe wished to have a better insight into the oriental culture by learning the language and reading the Arabic manuscript sent to him (24-50). In a historic-critical edition (the Frankfurter Ausgabe) of *West-östlicher Divan*, some pictures taken from the archive show Goethe's handwriting of the Arabic characters and the

reading of *West-East Divan* takes Walter Benjamin's writings on translation as its theoretical basis to support the thesis that translation and world literature share the poetic concept embodied in *West-East Divan*, which assumes that poetry or literature is essentially relational and translational.

II. A Translational Poetics

In the opening poem of *West-East Divan*, the poet is portrayed as a traveler who wants to escape from the dismembered world of reality and therefore takes an imaginative journey to the ideal land of the East. Goethe deliberately uses the word *hegira* as the title of the poem, for this Arabic word not only means flight or immigration but also has an important cultural-religious implication. It signifies the beginnings of Islam in the Middle East sparked by the prophet Mohammed's immigration from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD. However, in Goethe's poetic context, the word *hegira* is taken from its original social-cultural background[4] and used in a poem that implies a fleeing journey to the East, where one can be rejuvenated before returning to one's origin:

North and South and West—they shake!
Thrones are cracking, empires quake,
To the purer East, then, fly
Patriarchal air to try:
Loving, drinking, songs among,
Khizer's rill will make you young.

There, in what is pure and right,
Generations I, with might,
Urge to depth of origin
Where they from the Lord would win
Earthly-worded Heaven—lore;
They will rack their brains no more.

Where their fathers they respected,
Alien rule at length defected,
Youthful limits I'll embrace:

Nord und West und Süd zersplittern,
Throne bersten, Reiche zittern,
Flüchte du, im reinen Osten
Patriarchenluft zu kosten,
Unter Lieben, Trinken, Singen
Soll dich Chisers Quell verjüngen.

Dort, im Reinen und im Rechten,
Will ich menschlichen Geschlechten
In des Ursprungs Tiefe dringen,
Wo sie noch von Gott empfingen
Himmelslehr' in Erdesprachen
Und sich nicht den Kopf zerbrachen.

Wo sie Väter hoch verehrten,
Jeden fremden Dienst verwehrten;
Will mich freun der Jugendschranke:

excerpts from the poems in their Arabic original (xxiii-xxvi). These show that Goethe was not so ignorant of the oriental language and culture as some critics questioned.

[4] In her book *Goethe und die Arabische Welt*, Katharina Mommsen gives a detailed account of Goethe's studies of a group of the pre-Islamic Arabic poem *Moallakat,* whose German translation and introduction by Anton Theodor Hartmann was the source of inspiration for Goethe's writing the poem "Hegira" (79-93).

Thought confined in faith-wide space;
Word still worthy to be heard
For it was the spoken word. *(West-East Divan. The Poems, with "Notes and Essays": Goethe's Intercultural Dialogues* 1-2, hereafter referred to as *WED*)[5]

Glaube weit, eng der Gedanke,
Wie das Wort so wichtig dort war,
Weil es ein gesprochen Wort war.
(*HA* 2: 6)

In the first three stanzas, the East is depicted as an ideal land, well preserved in its original state, in contrast to the rest of the world, which is falling apart. In the poem, paradise is still not lost in the East because the heavenly message can be heard and understood without mediation and reasoning, for the word there is received and communicated as it is spoken. This linguistic belief holds that language in the East is practiced as God's word, which immediately mediates the "heaven-lore." It seems that Goethe implies a linguistic concept close to Walter Benjamin's considerations of language discussed in his 1916 essay "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man." In this essay, language is construed as a medium that "knows no means, no object, and no addressee of communication" (65). It only "communicates the mental being corresponding to it" (63). Under the circumstance that "language communicates itself in itself" as the "medium of communication" in "its purest sense" (64), mental being and linguistic being are identical. Benjamin writes in his essay:

> Mental being is identical with linguistic being only insofar as it is capable of communication. What is communicable in a mental entity is its linguistic entity. Language therefore communicates the particular linguistic being of things. But their mental being only insofar as this is directly included in their linguistic being, insofar as it is capable of being communicated. (63)

Benjamin considers the equation of mental and linguistic being through immediate communication to be a "great metaphysical moment to linguistic theory," which consists of the "most intimate connection with the philosophy of religion" (66). The metaphysical ground of language is based on the concept of revelation found in the Bible. In his essay, Benjamin explicates the following:

> The expression that is linguistically most existent (that is, most fixed) is linguistically the most rounded and definitive; in a word, the most expressed is at the same time the purely mental, if it takes the inviolability of the word as the only and sufficient condition and characteristic of the divinity of the mental being that is expressed in

[5] Martin Bidney's translation of Goethe's *West-East Divan*, with both parts of poetry and prose translated into English, is the only English version I can access thus far. The quality of this translation seems not so satisfactory that some artistic beauty in Goethe's poetry seems lost. I apologize for that, and to make amends, add the German original of the quoted verses.

> it. The highest mental region of religion is (in the concept of revelation) at the same time the only one that does not know the inexpressible. For it is addressed in the name and expresses itself as revelation. (67)

Language as mediation and the immediately communicable has the characteristics of the inviolable word, the "most expressed," which is understood as revelation. One can see the epitome of such language in the first chapter of Genesis, in which the "deep and clear relation of the creative act to language appears" (68). It is God's word that performs the act of Creation, as manifested in the naming of everything in the world. Through the act of Creation, the created is cognized completely and immediately. Benjamin describes this in his essay:

> In God, name is creative because it is word, and God's word is cognizant because it is name. . . . The absolute relation of name to knowledge exists only in God; only there is name, because it is inwardly identical with the creative word, the pure medium of knowledge. This means that God made things knowable in their names. (68)

This kind of language is "pre-predicative and non-intentional" (Steiner 597) as it mediates knowledge in the same moment of its self-expression.

With Benjamin's considerations of language, what Goethe writes in the verses "Word still worthy to be heard / For it was the spoken word" is to be understood as an indication of an ideal language in which "spirit, word, and writing are still primordially united," as Goethe characterizes the Arabic language in a letter to a friend (*HA* 2: 540). In "Notes and Essays," the prose part of *West-East Divan*, Goethe saw that there is a "primal expression of nature and life" in the Arabic language, which "may not be called metaphoric or tropological," for, in the Orient, "everything an individual expresses with natural freedom is related to life" (*WED* 220). Goethe further elaborates on this idea:

> One will discover that anything reminds the Oriental of any other thing. So, just as he is accustomed to connect the most distantly related objects, so, by means of minor changes in the letters and syllables of words, he unhesitatingly derives contradictory ideas. Here we can see that the language is already productive in itself—rhetorically insofar as it adapts to one's thought, and poetically insofar as it appeals to one's imagination. (*WED* 220)

In Goethe's view, the language of the Orient captures the immediacy between the signifier and the signified. It represents a linguistic ideal close to Benjamin's concept of language that mediates knowledge immediately as it "communicates itself in itself" (64). However, such a linguistic ideal was not present in Goethe's time, which was "infinitely intertwined and scattered through art, science, technology, politic, and negotiations and damages in war and peace" (*WED* 225). In contrast to the oriental poets, for whom it is easy to form "their language in poetic creation," the poets in Goethe's time have only linguistic material that has

become "the sort of concept that abolishes all imagery and hence poetry itself" (*WED* 221). What Goethe observes from his studies of oriental culture and literature is that "it is language as language that plays the main role" (*WED* 222) in oriental poetry. This viewpoint implies that the essence of poetry lies in the self-expression of language, as evoked in the verses of *East-West Divan*: "The plain inscription nothing more will hide; / Quite self-sufficient, needing nought beside. / Whatever else behind the words may lie, / Candidly answer, 'I, I said it – I'" '*Die Inschrift aber hat nichts hinter sich, / Sie ist sie selbst und muß dir alles sagen, / Was hinterdrein mit redlichem Behagen / Du gerne sagst: Ich sag' es! Ich!*'" (*WED* 3; *HA* 2: 9). Here, the effect of the "spoken word" is recreated by the written word in poetry that expresses nothing but itself. Poetry, according to Goethe's considerations, is exactly the proper writing that can represent this effect.

In this respect, poetry becomes the writing that translates the "spoken word" into the written word while preserving the effect or the spirit of the "spoken word." Such a poetic writing involves translation as "removal from one language into another through a continuum of transformations" (70), according to Benjamin's formulation in "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man." In his famous essay "The Task of the Translator," Benjamin argues that translation is practiced to manifest the "pure language" in which "all suprahistorical kinship between languages consists" (257). Translation aims "to regain pure language fully formed from the linguistic flux," while the pure language is construed as the "expressionless and creative Word" in which "all information, all sense, and all intention finally encounter a stratum in which they are destined to be extinguished" (261). The pure language, in Samuel Weber's formulation, "is a language that performs by signifying without being absorbed or determined by entities that appear to exist independently of all signifying" (75). In another form, it continuingly represents the primordial state of language that communicates nothing other than itself in itself, as described in "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man." To express the pure language, Benjamin suggests that translation must "write literalness" (263). He posits the following argument:

> A real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully. This may be achieved, above all, by a literal rendering (*Wörtlichkeit*) of the syntax, which proves words rather than sentences to be the primary element of the translator. For if the sentence is the wall before the language of the original, literalness (*Wörtlichkeit*) is the arcade. (260)

Since translation is realized by the "literal rendering of the syntax," Weber suggests that it is understood as "word-by-word syntax" (74), as the "sequential arrangement of words" that "takes precedence over the time-and-space tran-

scending rules of grammar and semantics" (75). By writing literalness, translation expresses the immediacy and the mere presence of words, and hence reveals the effect and quality of self-expression or the self-communication in the pure language. As the final outcome of translation, the pure language implicates the "continuum of transformations," namely the inviolable word, as the core of language continuingly transformed from its primordial state in God's word to its profanation in diverse human languages.

Concerning the practice of translation as the manifestation of the pure language, Benjamin argues that the translator's task is to "release in his own language that pure language which is exiled among alien tongue, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his recreation of that work" (261). To accomplish this task, he suggests that the translator "break through decayed barriers of his own language" (261). Similarly, Goethe reflects on translation in *East-West Divan* as follows:

> The translator who faithfully follows the original text will have to sacrifice, to a greater or lesser degree, the distinctiveness of his own tradition. And so a *tertium quid* arises—a new item of such a kind that, to develop a taste for it, most people will need to educate themselves. (*WED* 280)

In this sense, the translator does not only "convey the different dialects and types of rhythmical, metric, and prosaic diction found in the original," but he should also make his translation "newly enjoyable and familiar to us in all its distinctiveness" (*WED* 280). Like Benjamin, Goethe argues that a translator should break the boundaries between different languages and cultures to make the translation a work of its own, a "*tertium quid*" in which neither the source nor target language can preside. Obviously, a translation is not a faithful reproduction of the original in either Goethe's or Benjamin's view. Rather, in Benjamin's formulation, translation forms itself "in its own language according to the original's way of meaning" (259).[6]

[6] By analyzing the figure of translator presented in Goethe's literary works, Carrie Asman asserts that Goethe consideres translation as an act to bring about the "reunification of sign and sound" '*Wiedervereinigung von Zeichen und Laut*' (61), which stands in line with Herder's philosophy of language claiming that the linguistic ideal lies in the primordial state of language being immediately spoken and heard. With such a reading, Asman takes Goethe's discussion of translation in the notes to *West-East Divan* as the theory of translation with the goal to regain the "spoken word" by writing "literalness as a poetic translation" '*die Wörtlichkeit der poetischen Übersetzung*,' which Benjamin adapts as the ideal model for developing his concept of translation in his "Translator" essay (68). Though Asman clearly points out Goethe's influence on Benjamin, there is one important point missed in her article, namely, Goethe and Benjamin's emphasis on literalness (*Wörtlichkeit*) is meant not just to return to the orality of language, but also to indicate a textual basis to which literalness is referred. I will elaborate this point later in part III of this paper.

As previously mentioned, Goethe is inclined to present the poet as a traveler in *West-East Divan*. He describes in "Notes and Essays" that the poet is a traveler who "assimilates the ways of life of a strange country, tries to appropriate its forms of speech, and learns how to share views and comprehend customs" (*WED* 175). When the traveler or poet returns from his journey, he "takes on the role of a merchant who displays his goods appealingly and tries in many ways to make them pleasing" (*WED* 176). Like the translator, the poet has to cross the borders between different poetic traditions to make his poetic work unique and appealing. For the poet, the destination of his travel is the land of poetry, as the following verses read: "Poetry if you would know, / To its country you must go; / If the poet you would know, / To the poet's country go" '*Wer das Dichten will verstehen, / Muß ins Land der Dichtung gehen; / Wer den Dichter will verstehen, / Muß in Dichters Lande gehen*' (*WED* 175; *HA* 2: 126). In the land of poetry, there are "words and expressions" considered "to be sacred testimonies" (*WED* 226) of the "spoken word" in its original state. Accordingly, Goethe defines poetry as the kind of writing that "will always remain the [truthful] expression of an inspired, heightened [spirit], without goal or purpose" (*WED* 226). In this respect, Goethe's view on poetic writing implies "a process of transcribing" that brings forth "the outcome of translation" (Witte 91), the truthful expression, which is, similar to Benjamin's pure language, represented by the word "without goal or purpose." In *West-East Divan*, Goethe clearly argues for a translational poetics, describing a poetic work as a *tertium quid* that presents a poetic world of its own, relates itself to other poetic texts and refers to the translation whose outcome is the truthful expression of the word.

III. The Implication of World Literature

In the notes to *West-East Divan*, Goethe discusses that there are three modes of translation belonging to three phases of its development respectively. The first mode involves the "simple prosaic" (*WED* 279) style that makes us acquainted with the foreign country in our own way of understanding. The second mode is called by Goethe the "parodistic" (*WED* 279) translation, for it conveys the foreign content with the translator's own original style. The third mode is regarded as the "last and highest" phase in the development of translation, where one can "seek to make the translation identical to the original" (*WED* 280). Finally the discussion is concluded as follows:

> A translation that tries to identify with original finally approaches an interlinear version and greatly eases our understanding of the original. As a result, we are led, in

> fact driven, back to the basic text (*Grundtext*). So at length, we close the whole circle in which the nearing of the foreign to the familiar, of the known to the unknown, has taken place. (*WED* 281)

With the interlinear version, Goethe believes that translation is related to a textual fundament, the "basic text," which indicates a background and an epistemology based on religious inspiration. In much of Germany, writers of Goethe's generation were either sons of the Protestant pastors or students educated with a strong Protestant influence. Against this social-historical background, the Bible served as the basic material of reading that provided the source of inspiration for their literary productions. The German literature of Goethe's time shows "an enlightened world with all religious energy, but without religious obligation," as Heinz Schlaffer characterizes it in his provocative book on the history of German literature (57). Without exception, Goethe sees in religion an incomparable importance for epistemology as he writes in his autobiographic work *Literature and Truth* (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*): "Religion is a great feeling of certainty for the present and future. This certainty arises from the faith in an unusual, overwhelming, and inscrutable being. All depends on the inviolability of this faith" (*HA* 10: 23). For Goethe, religion is not only about faith in a supernatural being but it also refers to a firm epistemological ground that reveals the truth with perceivable lucidity. Conversely, in the same passage, Goethe asserts that knowledge based on modern science "is endless and formless" '*endlos und gestaltlos*,' for it "starts from isolated details" and therefore can "never be combined in the highest" (*HA* 10: 23).

It goes without saying that religion is the essential subject matter in both the poetic and essayistic parts of *West-East Divan*. The poem "Talismans" presents a god that knows no ramification of human languages and cultures:

To God belongs the Orient!	Gottes ist der Orient!
To God belongs the Occident!	Gottes ist der Okzident!
The Northern and the Southern lands,	Nord- und südliches Gelände
Resting, tranquil, in His hands.	Ruht im Frieden seiner Hände.
He, the Righteous, in His height	Er, der einzige Gerechte,
Wants, for everyone, what's right.	Will für jedermann das Rechte.
By His names, all hundred, then,	Sei von seinen hundert Namen
Lauded be the Lord! Amen.	Dieser hochgelobet! Amen
Straying aims to faze the mind,	Mich verwirren will das Irren;
Yet from error You unbind.	Doch du weißt mich zu entwirren.
When I act, when I indite,	Wenn ich handle, wenn ich dichte,
Lord, direct my steps aright.	Gib du meinen Weg die Richte.

Ev'n when I think of worldly things
I gain a height with mind-quick wings.
The spirit earthly dust won't pulverize:
It's driving, driven, upward to the skies.

Two graces of competing kinds
One in the feat of breathing finds.
Pressured, breathe in; breathe out refreshed:
How well is life-strength intermeshed!
So thank the Lord when you are stressed,
And thank Him when He grants you rest.
(*WED* 5)

Ob ich Ird'sche denk' und sinne,
Das gereicht zu höherem Gewinne.
Mit dem Staube nicht der Geist zerstoben,
Dringet, in sich selbst gedrängt, nach oben.

Im Atemholen sind zweierlei Gnaden:
Die Luft einziehn, sich ihrer entladen.
Jedes bedrängt, dieses erfrischt;
So wunderbar ist das Leben gemischt
Du danke Gott, wenn er dich preßt,
Und dank' ihm, wenn er dich wieder
entläßt. (*HA* 2: 10)

The poem expresses that religion is the source in which the basic, the righteous and the living are originated, for God is the absolute, almighty being that stands above all cultural-geographical divisions. Despite being called many names in different cultures and societies, God remains the one and the only capable being who directs human doing, thinking, and writing up to the right and higher instance. Accordingly, the creation of a poetic work by a modern writer depends mostly on God's guidance and inspiration. To achieve this, one must become acquainted with the holy texts, as Goethe suggests in the "Notes and Essays" of *West-East Divan*:

> Recall from the second half of the previous century how among the Protestants of Germany one might encounter not only clergymen but laymen as well who had acquainted themselves with the Holy Scriptures to the point where, like living concordances, they were well prepared to specify, for every saying, where one could find it and in what connection. They knew the most important passages by heart, keeping them ever ready for any application. Such men necessarily accumulated great learning from this practice because the memory, always occupied with worthy objects, preserved for feeling and judgment of fresh material to be enjoyed and applied. They were called *bibelfest* [well grounded in scripture], and this appellation conveyed an outstanding worthiness and an unequivocal recommendation. (*WED* 202)

The neologism *bibelfest* does not only mean to attribute to someone the characteristics of having internalized the Holy Scriptures but also implicates a textual source, a basic text that mediates the true messages of the Protestant faith as well as poetic-aesthetic expressions in various literary forms. One who is qualified to be called *bibelfest* is able to represent the messages of the holy text with profane human words reprocessed to be both spiritually and aesthetically revealing. Moreover, becoming *bibelfest* is not limited to those belonging to the Christian faith. With a certain degree of irony, the role model for such a person is exemplified in *West-East Divan* in the figure of Hafiz, the Persian medieval poet.

Goethe sees in him a well-learned man to whom "no religious edifice founded on [the Koran] was a secret" (*WED* 203). His poetry, as Goethe claims in the verses of *West-East Divan*, reveals the unshakable truth: "Hafiz' lyric writings boldly show you / Truths enduring, firm, uncontroverted" '*Hafis' Dichterzüge, sie bezeichnen / Ausgemachte Wahrheit unauslöschlich*' (*WED* 21; *HA* 2: 22). Accordingly, Hafiz' poetic writings are meant to represent what is contained and delivered in the holy text. However, since the holy text is regarded as absolute, pure, and irreplaceable, poetic texts by Hafiz cannot act as exact reproductions of the original holy text but as its potential representations in their own poetic form. Being such a poet, Goethe describes Hafiz as a "truly intelligent, sensible man" whose poetic talent comes from his being so trained and educated as to "make every effort to return to the original, pure text" (*WED* 202). With Hafiz, Goethe seems to draw an analogy to poetry that returns to "the original, pure text"; the translation has as its final goal an interlinear version, which draws readers back to the basic text.

In "The Task of the Translator," Benjamin mentions that Rudolf Pannwitz, a writer and contemporary, concludes, "Goethe's notes to *West-East Divan* as the best comment on the theory of translation" (261). Concurring with this viewpoint, Benjamin concludes his essay:

> . . . just as language and revelation are joined without tension in the original, the translation must write literalness with freedom in the shape of an interlinear version. For, to some degree, all great texts contain their potential translation between the lines; this is true above all of sacred writings. The interlinear version of the Scriptures is the prototype or ideal of all translation. (263)

Applying the same term that Goethe uses in *West-East Divan*, translation in Benjamin's view is ultimately realized in the form of an interlinear version, in which the translation refers to an original in which the true meaning is immediately conveyed. For Benjamin, the holy text, which mediates God's word with its absolute meaning, is such an original in which "language and revelation are joined without tension." Considering that the only truthful meaning of language consists in linguistic materiality, both Carol Jacobs and Jacques Derrida argue that the holy text mediates hardly any meaning but the mere word itself. Hence, they see Benjamin's interlinear version as the final instance of translation, which tends to abandon meaning.[7] However, it is not necessary to interpret

[7] Jacobs argues, "For in the Holy Scriptures, meaning no longer separates language and revelation. The holy text is totally literal, in Benjamin's sense of the word, which is to say, because no meaning stands behind its language, because language and revelation coincide absolutely, it is as absolutely meaningless as an original may be" (88). Similarly, Derrida asserts in his essay "Des tours de Babel" that the interlinear translation of a sacred text is "the event of a *pas de sens*, a step of meaning/no meaning" (224).

this from such a nihilistic perspective. At least, Benjamin still discusses what remains as meaning or sense when translating all languages into the pure language realized in the form of the interlinear version. He illustrates this in his essay "The Task of the Translator":

> What remains for sense, in its importance for the relationship between translation and original, may be expressed in the following simile. Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point—establishing, with this touch rather than with the point, the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity—a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux. (261)

Benjamin suggests a parallel relationship between a translation and the original text as he describes how translation continues moving on its own path after a light and fleeting touch to the original. It is not about two fixed points of contact standing for the reproduction of the fixed meaning, but about the touch itself that makes a translation able to bring forth what the original text signifies. Weber points out that the word "touch" in Benjamin's original German word is *Berührung*, which means "contact" and the "state of being moved" (93). With this affective dimension of touch, a translation in its own way evokes the effect that the original intends to reveal as it signifies. This implies further that meaning is not to be "equated with the sum of the meanings of individual words and phrases" (73), since Benjamin argues that "what is meant is never found in relative independence, as in individual words or sentences; rather it is in a constant state of flux—until it is able to emerge as the pure language from the harmony of all the various ways of meaning" (257). According to this argument, there is not only linguistic materiality in the pure language but also a semantic dimension not simply identified with nor limited to what is meant. This view is expressed in "The Task of the Translator":

> Fidelity in the translation of individual words can almost never fully reproduce the sense they have in the original. For this sense, in its poetic significance for the original, is not limited to what is meant, but rather wins such significance to the degree that what is meant is bound to the way of meaning of the individual words. People commonly convey this when they say that words have emotional connotations. (259-60)

Benjamin sees in translations that write literalness an unconventional kind of signification consisting in that "what is meant is bound to the way of mean-

A sacred text is therefore read as "the absolute text, because in its event it communicates nothing, it says nothing that makes sense beyond the event itself" (224).

ing of the individual words," from which not a complete reproduction of the original sense but its "poetic significance" is created through the design of word-by-word composition.[8] This sense-making through translation as writing literalness is not to be exhausted by words or sentences that signify according to a fixed system of grammar. Instead, the individual words in translation carry in themselves "emotional connotations," implying a poetic-aesthetic experience related to the affective dimension contained in the fleeting and light touch of a translation to its original. In this regard, Benjamin describes that "sense is touched by language only the way an Aeolian harp is touched by the wind" (262).

It seems that Goethe's reflections on interlinear versions that "greatly ease our understanding of the original" are imagined by Benjamin as the tangential touch of the translation to its original, expressing the semantic ideal that "language and revelation are joined without tension." With a different figure and in a poetic way, Goethe describes a similar kind of touch or contact, which indicates not only the linguistic nature but also a poetic-aesthetic dimension in the following verses in *West-East Divan*:

The word's a fan! Between the rods—	Das Wort ist ein Fächer! Zwischen den Stäben
A glancing pair of comely eyes:	Blicken ein Paar schöne Augen hervor.
With fans, a gauze we will devise,	Der Fächer ist nur ein lieblicher Flor,
That even if it shade her face	Er verdeckt mir zwar das Gesicht,
The maiden-beauty we may trace.	Aber das Mädchen verbirgt er nicht,
Her eye!—that is the loveliest:	weil das Schönste, was sie besitzt,
It lightnings into mine! I'm blest	Das Auge, mir ins Auge blitzt. (*HA* 2: 25)
(*WED* 25).	

The word, standing for the human language in general, is described in the poem as a fan that symbolizes the plurality of language and the unfolding of meaning in different contexts. What stands behind the fan, the language in plurality, is the truthful expression of the beauty, which is poetically represented as a "pair

[8] Paul de Man sees in Benjamin's text on translation "a poetics, a theory of poetic language" (80), which in his deconstructionist interpretation is rhetorical, fundamentally linguistic, and therefore initiating "a necessarily nihilistic moment that is necessary in an understanding of history" (92). Against this nihilistic aspect, Emily Apter describes de Man's reading of Benjamin's text as "linguistic inhumanism," criticizing de Man for turning Benjamin's pure language into "something technical, purely linguistic" (*The Translation Zone* 62). Reading Benjamin's theory of translation as global *translatio*, Apter suggests a "translational humanism" according to the philological considerations by Leo Spitzer and Edward W. Said (249). For the present paper, the poetic significance resulting from translation is argued in correlation with Goethe's poetic writing in *West-East Divan*, which indicates a translational poetics that implies a humanism emphasizing the humans' urge to understand the meaning of their being and their relation with the world.

of comely eyes." However, the language that acts as the signifier is like a piece of gauze, serving more to cover the beauty than to reveal her. Yet, in spite of being veiled, there is the glancing contact of eyes to reveal the beauty. With such a figure, the poem implies the deficiency of language in its usual daily application and suggests the suspension of its practical communicative function. Moreover, the touch of two different eyes depicted in the poem as a winking moment of lightning, standing for the instance of being illuminated, indicates an affective kind of cognition that transcends linguistic mediation, reflecting the fact that poetry as the art of language conveys something that cannot be fully expressed by language itself. This paradox points out the unique aspect of the poetic language that lies in the arrangement of words as a play of covering and disclosing the truth of what is linguistically expressed.

However, the critical point here is not simply to claim that poetry is deception. Rather, it emphasizes the specific character of the poetic language that lies more in its aesthetic performativity than in the metaphysically firm ground. In *West-East Divan,* Goethe draws a comparison between the poet and prophet, in which poetic writing is concerned with aesthetic experience:

> To indicate more clearly the difference between a poet and a prophet, I would say: Both are seized and enkindled by one god, but the poet expends the enjoyable gift bestowed upon him in order to produce pleasure, to attain honor, or at least a comfortable life, by what he produces. He neglects all other purposes, seeking to be versatile, and to prove himself unconfined in his convictions and artistic production. In contrast, the prophet has one purpose in mind, and to attain it, he uses the simplest means. (*WED* 190)

The prophet who receives inspiration from God is purpose-driven because he has a goal to reach and a religious obligation to be fulfilled. Differing from the prophet, the poet regards the initial inspiration that God bestows on him as a kind of aesthetic experience not in service of a particular purpose that therefore exists only for pleasure and joy. Within the aesthetic experience, the poet, by "taking part in the fullness of the world," as well as "looking into the mysteries of the Divinity from afar" (*WED* 203), can be versatile and unconfined in his poetic writings. In doing so, the poet represents in his poetry the original state of being enkindled by the divine revelation, with his words being used in a playful and unrestricted way. He is aesthetically motivated "to grasp the splendor of the world" (*WED* 201) as "to feel comfortable with contemporary happenings, to sense their outstanding values" (*WED* 197). Accordingly, the poetic writing appears as a kind of aesthetic performativity that stages humans' need and desire to understand the significance of their being as well as to go after their relation to the world. Poetry in this regard is not limited to a certain dogma and meaning-

forming but shared by all human beings as a means to get in touch with the world and be related to it by experiencing the "ardent, blissful moment of feeling" (*WED* 185) of enjoying poetry.[9]

Indicating that poetry is a common property belonging to all human beings, Goethe expresses the idea of world literature in *West-East Divan* without explicitly naming it. In his famous conversation with Eckermann on January 31st, 1827, Goethe addresses poetry before mentioning the term "world literature":

> I am more and more convinced . . . that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men. One makes it a little better than another, and swims on the surface a little longer than another—that is all. Herr von Matthison must not think he is the man, nor must I think that I am the man; but each must say to himself that the gift of poetry is by no means so very rare, and that nobody need think very much of himself because he has written a good poem. (22-23)

As the "universal possession of mankind," poetry expresses the human spirit, life, and experience in general. Neither individual character nor the national identity can predominate poetry. The beauty of poetry is to be appreciated "everywhere and at all time in hundreds and hundreds of men," as described in the verses of *West-East Divan*: "You in a thousand forms yourself may hide, / Yet, All-Beloved, I acknowledge you. / Covered with magic veil you may abide, / All-Present One, yet I acknowledge you" '*In tausend Formen magst du dich verstecken, / Doch, Allerliebste, gleich erkenn' ich dich; / Du magst mit Zauberschleiern dich bedecken, / Allgegenwärtige, gleich erkenn ich dich*' (*WED* 121; *HA* 2: 88). Therefore, the appreciation of a poetic work is dependent on not only the poet's own writing skill and the artistic tastes of a single nation but also communication and participation from readers in different places and at different periods of time. In *West-East Divan*, Goethe even suggests that the present edition of his work is "incomplete" because he wants to invite all participating readers to "complete it eventually in proper form" (*WED* 233). With this consideration, Goethe suggests the weaving of a poetic or literary work into a "transindividual" and "transnational grid" (Pizer 215), indicating what he proclaims in the same

[9] The argument for such a concept of literature is based on Wolfgang Iser's literary anthropology. In his essay "Staging as an Anthropological Category," Iser assumes that staging is "an anthropological mode which can claim equal status to that of knowledge and experience" (883). He takes literature as the proper medium for staging the human plasticity that is regarded as limit-breaking. Iser argues: "If literature permits limitless patternings of human plasticity, it indicates the inveterate urge of human beings to become present to themselves; this urge, however, will never issue into a definitive shape, because self-grasping arises out of overstepping limitations. Literature fans out human plasticity into a panoply of shapes, each of which is an enactment of self-confrontation" (877).

conversation with Eckermann: "national literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach" (23). He even envisions that the emergence of world literature could promote a "neighborly relationship" that brings forth a "spirit demanding a free intellectual trade and traffic" (*HA* 12: 364).

It is not difficult to see that what Goethe has in mind about world literature is a textual universe analogous to a global market with a free circulation of products as well as free-flowing exchange and communication. By comparing the idea of world literature with the global market, Goethe expresses his embrace of modern industrialization, which helps improve the world and shorten the distances between different parts of the world at an unexpectedly rapid tempo. On the other hand, he feels the dark side of this acceleration caused by the progress of science and technology, for it is predictable that artistically excellent works of literature can be downgraded to a great degree of mediocrity as massive production and the trivialization of literature prevail.[10] Against this degradation, world literature is for Goethe not just a matter of intercultural communication and exchange but a means of regaining the essence of literary art, which is constantly refined and independent of any external change, from the broader ground of the international, global literary productions. In accordance with this viewpoint, Goethe continues his conversation with Eckermann as follows:

> But, while we thus value what is foreign, we must not bind ourselves to some particular thing, and regard it as a model. We must not give this value to the Chinese, or the Serbian, or Calderon, or the *Nibelungen*; but, if we really want a pattern (*etwas von Musterhaftem*), we must always return to the ancient Greeks, in whose works the beauty of mankind is constantly represented. All the rest we must look at only historically, appropriating to ourselves what is good, so far as it goes. (23)

At first sight, Goethe seems to favor the literature of the ancient Greeks and could be suspected of being Eurocentric. However, his emphasis is not on a particular genre or style of literary writing but on "a pattern" '*etwas von Musterhaftem*' that demonstrates something fundamental, objective, and enduring contained in all literary works, not exclusively in those of the ancient Greek literature. The works of ancient Greek literature are exemplary for exploring this pattern, as they repeatedly represent "the beauty of mankind." In this sense,

[10] In his book *Weimaraner Weltbewohner*, Manfred Koch notes that Goethe uses the word *velozziferisch* in several pieces of his writing to describe the rapid change caused by the progress of science and technology during his later years. It is a word coined by Goethe himself that combines *velocitas* (speed) and *Luzifer*, an ambivalent figure standing for both light and evil. With this word, Goethe succinctly characterizes the dark side of modern times as a demonic acceleration (253).

Goethe does not endorse a return to Greek antiquity; rather, he was expressing that, with the study of the ancient Greek authors, an inquiry into the literary-aesthetic essential begins, which is not only constantly valuable for the production and reception of literary works but also reflects the objectivity of literary art universal to all human cultures, beyond the subjective perception of any individual writer. It is exactly this pattern and the literary-aesthetic fundament it contains for which Goethe's idea of world literature is intended.

Implying such an idea, Goethe has previously imagined the textual universe as a global market in *West-East Divan*:

> Anyone who considers words and expressions to be sacred testimonies and does not want them to be possibly brought into rapid, immediate circulation like small coins or paper money, but rather to be interchanged in intellectual trade and traffic as true value indicators, cannot be blamed for pointing out that conventional expressions, to which nobody takes exception anymore, nonetheless exercise a harmful influence, obscure our views, distort our conceptions, and lead entire disciplines in a wrong direction. (*WED* 226)

Not denying the advantage of the circulatory mechanism in the modern commercial and monetary system, Goethe considers that, to avoid the devaluation of the literary art, there should be "intellectual trade and traffic" in which the true value of poetry or literature is indicated by words and expressions, which are not influenced by external change and fluctuation despite their circulation in the global market of literature. The pattern found in ancient Greek literature is translated or transcribed in *West-East Divan* as the words and expressions that serve as indicators of the true value in poetry, exposing the essential of the (oriental) poetry lying in the poetic language in which "it is language as language which plays the main role" (*WED* 222).[11]

Anticipating what would be later intended in the idea of world literature, Goethe looks across the European border to explore oriental literature and culture. By doing so, he not only expands the horizon of his literary writing but also retrieves the essential of the literary art and its consistently true values from a different cultural area and tradition, which is foreign to and still somehow related to that of his own.

[11] Using the economic vocabularies to describe poetry as the writing that translates words and expressions into indicators of true value, Goethe implicitly critizes the negative effect of the global market and seemed to suggest translation as "a model of deowned literature" that "stands against the swell of corporate privatization in the arts," as discussed in Emily Apter's new book on the untranslatable (*Against World Literature* 15).

IV. Conclusion

Expecting the emergence of world literature, Goethe predicts that the Germans and their language could make a significant contribution to world literature, as he argues in an article in the Scotch magazine *German Romance* in 1827: "Those who understand and study the German language are situated in a market where all nations offer their goods. There, they take the role of translator by which they enrich themselves" (*HA* 12: 362). Goethe expresses his vision that the German language could play an important role as a mediator in the coming age of world literature, for, since the mid-18th century, translation has become part of the development of German literature that benefits from it to a great extent. A translator's achievement is taken as respectful as that of a literary writer. This explains why Johann Heinrich Voss, the renowned translator in Goethe's age, is highly praised in *West-East Divan*: "But who now fully appreciates what has happened, what Germans have gained in versatility, what rhetorical, rhythmical, metrical advantages are now available to talented, inventive youth, how Ariost, and Tasso, Shakespeare and Calderon, newly Germanized, are brought to us with double and triple benefit? I hope literary history will state candidly who was the first to take this path, bestrewn with obstacles as it was" (*WED* 280). By transforming foreign literatures into its own through translation, German literature around 1800 was both translational and transnational and therefore able to establish itself as the mediating medium of world literature, differing from the consolidated national literatures in France and England. Regarding the literary-historical background, the idea of world literature is not so much based on Goethe's desire to "compensate for the genuine instability, fragmentation, and lack of cohesiveness that characterized German politics and letters in his time", as John Pizer describes (219). Rather, it is more like a literary politics intended to counter the arising of the nationalistic discourse in German politics and letters in the early 19th century, which causes Goethe's concern about its negative influence on the development of German literature as it has tendentiously become more isolated and confined within either the nihilistic phantasm or the fanatic patriotism. To find a way out, Goethe turns to world literature with which German language and literature can open to a broader horizon by taking the advantaged position as the mediator of different cultures and literatures.

Considering the practice of world literature, Goethe does not take German as a language confined within national boundaries, but as a specific poetic language recreated by translating commonly applied languages into truthful expressions reflecting their true nature. The translational aspect that indicates a move-

ment to an origin as something basic and constantly valuable is even radically claimed in *West-East Divan* as that "we will have to Orientalize ourselves" to get the poetic "treasures at their source" (*WED* 222), agreeable with the verses in the opening poem of *West-East Divan*, "Generations I. with might, / Urge to depth of origin" (*WED* 1). To be Orientalized in Goethe's view is to become acquainted with the poetic language expressing truthful expressions with its true meaning, suggesting that any particular work of poetry or literature is not only written with its individual characteristics but also related to a fundamental and universal pattern in all works of literature. Through the poetic language, works of world literature are inherently related to and supplement one another in order to reveal the consistent truths of literature, corresponding to Benjamin's translation, which regains pure language through which all languages "supplement one another in their intentions" (257). In both translation and poetic writing, the supplementary act, aiming at either pure language, or consistent truths of literature, involves a relational dynamics that does not constrain words within a determined content of meaning. Words in translation and in poetry or literature are to be related to what Benjamin describes in his essay "On the Program of the Coming Philosophy" as the "total sphere of neutrality in regard to the concepts of both subject and object" (104). As already mentioned, Benjamin sees God's word as the ideal of the immediately communicable which as the "pure medium of knowledge" (68) is non-intentional and sufficient and therefore stands for the absolute objectivity and neutrality of language. In the "Translator" essay, translation with pure language as its outcome refers to "God's remembrance" which is "a realm unfulfilled by men" (254), implying that pure language is the profane and insufficient form to commemorate God's word. Though pure language only "points the way" to God's word as "the inaccessible realm of reconciliation and fulfillment of languages" (257), it indicates a writing that can represent the objectivity and neutrality of words with which the relational dynamics between all languages is initiated. In this regard, words in their profane and material aspect are what Goethe calls the "sacred testimonies" referring to the aesthetic-poetic fundament which is objective, enduring and free to cross regional or national boundaries.

Being translational and relational, poetry is as Goethe describes in the poem "Ginkgo Biloba" in *West-East Divan*:

Here's a leaf the East, with favor,	Dieses Baums Blatt, der von Osten
To my garden would confide -	Meinem Garten anvertraut,
Tree with meanings we may savor	Gibt geheimen Sinn zu kosten,
To the wise a vital guide.	Wie's den Wissenden erbaut.

Do we spy one living being	Ist es ein lebendig Wesen,
That had split itself in two?	Das sich in sich selbst getrennt?
Is it two things we are seeing	Sind es zwei, die sich erlesen,
That we yet united view?	Daß man sie als eines kennt?
To this query quite revealing	Solche Frage zu erwidern,
I have found the right reply:	Fand ich wohl den rechten Sinn;
Won't my singing give the feeling	Fühlst du nicht an meinen Liedern,
That both two and one am I? (*WED* 92-93)	Daß ich eins und doppelt bin? (*HA* 2: 66)

The poem demonstrates a self-reference by relating the self to a foreign element that reflects back its own truth. With the leaf described as being transplanted from the East into the garden of the lyrical I, the poem implies a translational aspect that initiates movement back to the inner structure or the basic pattern of poetry, namely that of being "both two and one," which is concretely represented again by the form of the leaf, which creates unity in duality. At a metapoetic level, it precisely reflects Goethe's poetic concept in *West-East Divan*, which lies in mirroring of the self by the other because of the mutual ground with which both the self and the other are related, which in turn serves as the conceptual basis from which the idea of world literature is further developed.

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歌德的《西東詩集》裡的翻譯與世界文學

摘　要

由於全球化的潮流影響，歌德的「世界文學」概念再度受到重視，並且普遍認爲是個恰當的術語，用來描述全球化時代之下的文學。然而，近年來相關的討論，大部分都著重在政治與經濟社會面向，較忽略原本歌德的「世界文學」概念中非常核心的文藝與美學上的問題。因此，本文將藉由對《西東詩集》這部歌德晚年重要文學作品的探討，試圖勾勒出原本歌德在「世界文學」概念中，所要透露出的美學與詩學上的意涵。而以《西東詩集》爲研究文本，不只因爲它超越地理疆界，融合歐洲與中東的文學與文化傳統，體裁上詩體與散文體並存，同時也隱含對「世界文學」概念中，相當關鍵的翻譯與詩學上的反思。另外本文也將以班雅明的翻譯理論爲基礎，論證《西東詩集》裡的詩學理論中，將文學視爲具有關聯性與翻譯性的基本特質，而此基本特質同樣也出現在歌德對翻譯與世界文學的思考上。

關鍵字：世界文學，翻譯，《西東詩集》，歌德，班雅明