

Historical Sketch of Chinese Comparative Literature Studies

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Despite China's new-comer status into comparative literature circles, quite extraordinary developments in recent decades make a sketch of its history already somewhat overdue.¹ The essay which follows is purely historical, tracing the rise and rapid development of comparative literature studies in China (Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the China Mainland). As a matter of fact, in the literal sense of what-has-actually-taken-place, this is the recognizable and measurable reality of what I have termed the "Chinese School" of comparative literature.² More than a decade has passed since I first introduced the term. I am pleased to say it has been a period full of all kinds of activities by comparatists I would associate with the "Chinese School." Such a wide-ranging conglomeration of programs (found in teaching and research institutes) and activities (meetings, associations, and publications), does not necessarily reveal a neat and predictable pattern of continued development. This is especially so since the three distinct geographical locations do not easily interact with each other.

In a later essay,³ I will attempt to move from tracing actual facts, as I am doing here, to the realm of ideas and even ideals. If we can describe the hard facts and realities of this historical sketch as the stones providing the fill for the foundations of the "Chinese School," then a description of the ideas and the ideals resembles the actual deep digging of those foundations according to a certain shape or plan as well as part of the ever-rising edifice itself. Some of the notions I attribute to the "Chinese School" describe the necessary scaffolding of the building, while others will be part of the architectural design of the structure as it actually emerges. Finally, these two essays in combination will say something about the pragmatic and aesthetic functions of the buildings' many rooms and their interior decor as well as offer an explanation for the somewhat unfinished

— though solid — look from the outside.

Of course, the historical context provided here for China should be seen in the even broader context of how China has fared as part of the general history of comparative literature in the rest of the world. I will confine myself to developments in the English-speaking world, particularly North America, which has shown the greatest enthusiasm in renewing literary ties with China.

The first signs from comparatists in America, indicating a recognition of the increasingly important role China (and other Eastern literatures) should play in comparative literature, can be traced to three very important essays; Arthur Kunst's "Literatures of Asia"; Yü Kuo-fan's "Problems and Prospects in Chinese-Western Literary Relations"; Liu Jo-yü's "The Study of Chinese Literature in the West: Recent Developments, Current Trends, Future Prospects."⁴ These three highly respected scholars have rendered a very enlightening service by informing comparatists of the English-speaking world about the importance of long-neglected but rich Asian literatures, especially Chinese literature.

The pointed observations of these three scholars have also helped to correct the parochial concept of what constitutes comparative literature as understood by many scholars from the West. Because there is very little direct genetic connection between Asian literatures and the West, some Western scholars have taken it for granted that much Western literary history, theory, criticism, methodology, and technique could be applied almost universally. But for a field such as comparative literature to be fully international and, therefore, eventually to represent all the countries in the world, it must first undertake to make known all the major literary traditions of the world, not least of all that of the Chinese. Recent publications from the English-speaking world indicate a definite shift in this direction for more balanced representations of non-occidental literatures.⁵

Most of the pages which follow trace the origins and developments of comparative literature studies as an *academic discipline*⁶ in China (Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the China Mainland) during the past two decades. This is not to say there were no outstanding achievements by earlier Chinese scholars, and so we begin with a brief description of some representative individuals who did a great deal to clear the ground and map out some blueprints so that a later generation could lay more solid foundations.

Part I. Early Beginnings⁷

The 20th century has not dealt kindly with China. It has been a century of wars, conflicts, and purges of every kind as well as a great deal of self-defeating isolation which lasted up to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. But despite all this upheaval and turmoil, much important work was done related to comparative literature studies.

It is not surprising that translation is where we find the first traces of "comparing the literature," for translation played a particularly crucial role in calling China's attention to cultures beyond its borders. Yen Fu 嚴復 (1854-1921), was among the most famous of China's early translators, best known, perhaps, for propagating his three essential criteria for translation; namely, *hsin* 信 (fidelity), *ta* 達 (intelligibility), and *ya* 雅 (elegance). He is also considered by some to be the first Chinese comparatist in the general sense of that word (through his translations of Western natural and social science works). He probed into the reasons why the West was strong and China weak by comparing the development of their respective ideologies and methodologies.

Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924), a creative writer and translator, was among the first to demonstrate Western narrative structures and writing techniques to China. His adolescence and young adulthood were spent in Taiwan where his father worked on the secretarial staff of a Ching Dynasty official. Not only did he translate over 170 foreign books, mostly fiction and drama (including English, French, Spanish and Japanese) into Chinese, but he made comparisons which extended from Chinese writers to Dickens and Scott in Britain. He claimed, for instance, that Dickens' novels were equal in value to the works of China's grand historian, Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 (c. 145 - c. 85 B.C.). His fame as a translator is all the more remarkable since he knew no foreign languages and relied on the collaborative efforts of his more linguistically-gifted friends. He "translated" their spoken vernacular versions into more acceptably classical Chinese without losing the spirit of the original.

Su Man-shu 蘇曼殊 (1884-1918) perfected a particular style in novel writing which he learned, to a great extent, from the works of Hugo and Goethe. He translated Burns, Shelley, and Byron into Chinese and his own "romantic" personality and creative writing took on certain Byronic characteristics. He asserted that Byron shares a similar style with Li Po 李白 (701-762), Shelley with Li Shang-yin 李商隱 (813?-858); and Milton

and Shakespeare with Tu Fu 杜甫 (712-770). Such assumptions may seem far-fetched; they are, nevertheless, somewhat "comparative."

Liang Ch'i-ch'ao 梁啟超 (1873-1929) was one of the most important intellectuals and propagandists for Western culture in the early 20th century. He wielded considerable influence and advocated much of Western literature to serve as a model for his contemporaries, even though he only knew it in translation. Under Liang's guidance, translation entered a new phase as an academic study. It flourished and, consequently, broadened the concept of literature as well as provided a basis for the development of comparative literature.

Of course, there were also many other distinguished translators who rendered Western academic treatises into Chinese (for instance, see note 7 for references to Lolié and Van Tieghem translations). Two very famous writers, Wang Kuo-wei 王國維 (1877-1927) and Lu Hsun 魯迅 (1881-1936), were also important translators in their own right, in addition to their other great contributions to literature.

Wang Kuo-wei, one of China's great critical thinkers, made important contributions in spanning Chinese and Western cultures when he compared Chinese modes of thinking with the philosophy of Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, portions of whose works he translated into Chinese. His 紅樓夢評論 (Critical Review of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*), in 1904, was probably the first attempt to analyse Chinese literature with a Western approach (applying Schopenhauer's ideas on "the will").

Undoubtedly, among all the early pioneers, the greatest contributor to comparative literature studies was Lu Hsun, China's most famous 20th-century writer-thinker. Early in 1907, he wrote 摩羅詩力說 (The Mara [Hindu diety] Spirit in Poetry), an essay with a comparative slant in which eight European poets are described "satanically" as examples of unconventionality and defiance. After 1908, he engaged in comparative research, introducing Western writers like Byron and Shelley to the reading public. He also coined the term, 文人比較學 (*Literati Comparatism*) in 1936.

Lu's career in comparative studies included introducing, translating and comparing Western works of literature. He considered the comparative to be, in fact, a complement for one's weaknesses by incorporating into oneself the strengths of others. Merging the methodologies of analogy and influence studies, Lu Hsun not only contrasted the ancient Chinese poet, Chu Yuan 屈原 (340?-278 B.C.) with the Mara poets, but also China's

most famous literary critic, Liu Hsieh 劉勰 (c. 465-522) with Aristotle as well as classical Chinese novels with Western works. In his 中國新文學大系 (A Collection of New Chinese Literature), he explicates the impact of foreign literature on his own works, and also points out foreign influences on other Chinese writers.

Lu went quite beyond conventional comparisons, however, and boldly applied Western theories to revitalize China's traditional literature. His urgent concern was always to bring China back to the "world." Lu's personal achievement in comparative literature was not only a considerable advance over his predecessors; it also laid out a kind of an unofficial plan for comparative literature in 20th-century China. Unfortunately, the blueprint failed to materialize because of the great political and social changes which were taking place from his times all the way into the 70s.

Finally, when we turn from the isolated accomplishments of great individuals, to attempts at institutionalizing comparative literature as an academic discipline, we naturally turn to Wu Mi 吳宓 (1894-1977) who studied at Harvard University and wrote an influential essay entitled, 論新文化運動 (On the New Cultural Movement). This essay helped to introduce the viewpoint of the "French School" into China. He himself also spent a great deal of time on influence studies. He points out, for instance, that Hu Shih's 胡適 so-called 新詩 (New Poetry) or 白話詩 (Vernacular Poetry), was an imitation of American free verse.

Wu Mi was also responsible for the inclusion of comparative literature into the university curriculum when, in the 20s, he offered the course, Comparative Poetry: East and West at the Nanjing (Nanking) Southeast 南京東南 University. In 1926, he taught at Tsinghua University and, after becoming Department Head of Foreign Language in 1930, he set up two courses: "Comparative Poetry: East and West" and "Ancient Greek and Roman Literature."

In December, 1929, I.A. Richards, Head of the English Department, Cambridge University, was invited to Tsinghua. He offered two courses: Literary Criticism and Comparative Literature in the ensuing two years. Richards' distinguished pupil, William Empson, also taught at Peking University, first in 1937 and again in 1951.

Lecturers of the Chinese Department realized the need for comparative literature and opened courses with a comparative slant, such as Study of Foreign Literary Scholars and Contemporary Comparative Literature. In addition, they invited Zhu Guangqian (Chu Kuang-ch'ien [1897-1986])

朱光潛, famous lecturer at Peking University, to give a talk on the Psychology of Literature and his ideas about poetics. Finally, teachers from the Chinese Department gave special lectures to students in Foreign Language departments: for instance, Foreign Backgrounds of Contemporary Chinese Literature. Courses on comparative literature were also opened at Peking University, Yenching University, Qilu (Ch'i-lu) 齊魯 University, Fudan University, and Lingnan University. But owing to the lack of adequate funds and qualified teachers, these courses could not be systematically organized and were disrupted by various events.

Only another lengthy monograph could do justice to the long list of scholars who, in various ways and degrees, helped to give shape to the early designs of Chinese comparative literature studies.⁸ But we must now turn to Part II where we will show, first of all, how Taiwan and Hong Kong developed comparative literature into an academic discipline. Then, we will pick up where we left off in Part I, outlining China's special contributions to the ever-growing structure, as we describe its full range of comparative literature activities which are now also developing into a full-fledged academic discipline.

Part II. Recent Developments

During the past two decades, probably no area in the world has had such an impressive record of comparative literature activities as in China. In relation to the development of this phenomenon from a Chinese perspective, the term "China" or "Chinese" can be taken in a broader sense than usually conceived; that is, the term may be allowed to include all those geographical areas where groups of scholars (Chinese and non-Chinese) are doing research on Chinese literature and its relations to other literatures. On the other hand, although much serious work is being done in the West by individual scholars, it is not surprising that most Chinese-Western comparative literature activities being done on an institutional level are concentrated in the East. Consequently, the historical sketch which follows will restrict itself to developments in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the China Mainland. The past ten years (1977-1987), in particular, have seen a tremendous growth and, indeed, may well be called the Golden Decade of comparative literature studies in China.

During the first half of this period (1977-1981), there was a phenomenal growth, both in the range of topics as well as the expanse of different

territories covered. What is more, the 80s have not only seen considerable development in the sheer quantity and variety of published materials, but even more significant developments of a different kind. This was particularly true of the China Mainland where a different type of comparatist began emerging. This new comparatist was one who viewed the field, not just as some incidental hobby-like activity of an individual scholar who happens to be adept in two or more languages and literatures; on the contrary, s/he was one who took the field far more seriously, as a complex academic discipline which requires serious and systematic scholarship on the part of many collaborators to assure its qualitative growth and stable continuity.

The following pages will examine in some detail each portion of the three-legged Chinese tripod represented by Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the China Mainland. In this and a related essay (see note 3), I will suggest possible ways in which they may support each other in order to produce a good comparative literature mix according to clearly-defined goals. The strength of each leg of the tripod will be an alloy of certain materials combined in due proportion; namely, solid *academic programs* on the undergraduate and graduate levels; *regular meetings* on a local, regional, and international scale; and, especially, the dissemination of research and *publications* to insure a continuous two-way traffic of Chinese and Western comparative literature ideas. For the sake of clarity amidst so much prolific complexity, the parallel development of comparative literature in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the China Mainland will be traced roughly according to the three sub-divisions just mentioned, beginning with Taiwan, the pioneer in developing comparative literature as an academic discipline.

Taiwan

From the modest beginnings of individual scholars who had studied abroad as well as strong local departments in foreign languages and literatures, there gradually developed, in Taiwan, a structure most conducive for the development of comparative literature studies.

Teaching and Research Institutes

Beginning in 1967, individual Chinese professors offered occasional courses on comparative literature at a number of local universities. A few bold graduate students wrote on comparative topics for their master's theses.

Occasionally, lively panel discussions were held on Chinese-Western literary relations, sponsored by private institutions like Tamkang College and the Tien Educational Center. The panels represented both the views of Chinese and non-Chinese scholars and drew audiences of more than 500 teachers and students on each occasion.

But it was not until 1968 that serious thought was given to formally inaugurating a doctorate program in comparative literature at the nation's most prestigious university, National Taiwan University. The pioneers in this effort were Dr. Limin Chu 朱立民, the then Dean of the College of Arts, and Dr. Yen Yuan-shu 顏元叔, former Chairman of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (both specialists in Anglo-American Literature). From the very beginning, they saw the great desirability of a combined effort on the part of the Departments of Chinese and Foreign Literatures.

In 1970, the Ministry of Education gave the signal to launch the program but the first two students were not accepted till the 1971 school year. So far, six students have earned their doctoral degrees since the program's inception. In short, from the beginning, scholars like Dr. Yuan Heh-hsiang 袁鶴翔 and Dr. John J. Deeney, worked hand in hand with Dr. Chu and Dr. Yen, to put the program on a solid basis. Later, other scholars such as Dr. Wai-lim Yip [Yeh Wei-lien] 葉維廉 made their special contributions.

Other universities (e.g., National Taiwan Normal University, National Cheng-chi University, National Kaohsiung Teachers College, Tamkang University, Fu Jen University and Soochow University), encourage their students to write research reports or theses from a comparative perspective. All the above institutions have also hosted many internationally famous scholars to give lectures or courses on various aspects of comparative literature studies.

Meetings and Associations

The obvious emphasis in Taiwan has been on East-West (mostly, Chinese and Anglo-American) literary relations, which places the theoretical and methodological stress clearly on the broadly conceived "American" approach rather than the more narrowly defined "French" school. But from the very beginning, I have suggested there should be a "Chinese School" which, in no sense of the word wishes to harken back to an earlier Sinocentrism, but simply insists on taking its rightful place in the world of international

literary scholarship. Perhaps the most impressive proof of this very cosmopolitan interest was found in the first international conference devoted to the study of the literary relations between China and the West, hosted by Tamkang University in Taipei, July, 1971. In August, 1987, Taiwan will have hosted its fifth consecutive quadrennial International Comparative Literature Conference.

In 1973, Taiwan formed its own Comparative Literature Association and, later in the same year, joined the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA). The objective of the Association in Taiwan was to promote all studies related to the field, both within Taiwan and outside. Its stated aims are to assist comparative literature research and teaching, the international inter-flow of ideas, and the translation and publication of related works. During each academic year, the Association holds its annual conference-meeting and organizes public lectures to discuss the relationship between Oriental and Occidental literatures. During the First Comparative Literature Conference in July, 1976, there were over 100 scholars in attendance.⁹

Even at this early date, the flourishing but fledgling organization was cautioned to take stock of itself. To paraphrase Dr. Yuan Heh-hsiang, one of the main participants who spoke up on the occasion: We have passed through the crisis of apathy towards comparative literature so rapidly that now we have entered upon a "crisis of a crisis." Some of us are overly-enthusiastic about too many peripheral "comparisons" that have not much real connection with each other and accept them uncritically without distinction.

More recently, an important panel meeting took place in March of 1985 on "The Sinologization of Comparative Literature."¹⁰ Well-known comparative literature scholars covered a wide range of topics: comparative drama, the permanent crisis of comparative literature, translation and comparative literature, literary theory vs. literary works, and, of course, the "Chinese School."

Journals and Books

Fortunately, it is now relatively easy to keep abreast of comparative literature developments in Taiwan; one has only to consult regularly the issues of the *Tamkang Review* 淡江評論 and the *Chung-wai Literary Monthly* 中外文學月刊. The first of these to be launched was the bi-annual

Tamkang Review (April, 1970-) whose first editor was Dr. Yen Yuan-shu. The journal is published in English, became a quarterly in 1978, and continues to be mainly devoted to comparative studies between Chinese and foreign literatures. The second publishing venture was even more ambitious, a monthly literary magazine in Chinese, the *Chung-wai Literary Monthly*, which began in June, 1972. Its first editor, then visiting professor of Comparative Literature, Hu Yao-heng 胡耀恒, attempted the difficult task of producing a journal that was both popular and scholarly at the same time.

In addition to these two journals, there are many other magazines, in Chinese and English, which publish occasional articles on comparative literature. Some of the universities also put out English journals with comparative literature articles: for instance, National Taiwan University's *Studies in English Literature and Linguistics*, Fujen University's *Fujen Studies: Literature and Linguistics*, etc.

There is also one series of books (in Chinese) which deserves special attention. In 1983, the Tung Ta Publishing Company 東大圖書公司 began issuing the first volumes of a comparative literature series under the general editorship of Professor Wai-lim Yip. To date, seven volumes have appeared, most of which emphasize Western critical approaches to Chinese literature.

Hong Kong

Unlike Britain's commonwealth countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, comparative literature studies in the "Crown Colony" of Hong Kong have, in recent years, tended to relate themselves more directly to China. In light of the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, we can expect that there will be a further intensification of this China dimension. To date, almost all of the studies on comparative literature are centered in institutions of higher learning; namely, the University of Hong Kong (UHK) and the Chinese University of Kong Kong (CUHK). More recently, other institutions have shown interest such as Baptist College where courses in comparative literature are offered as well as public meetings held on comparative culture subjects.

Teaching and Research Institutions

The formal study of Comparative Literature began in 1964 as a part of the Department of Modern Languages at UHK. Its initial emphasis was

an attempt to give students access to the Western tradition who did not speak the languages of various European literatures (French, German, Russian). In 1966, the Department began also to give some attention to East-West (particularly China) literary relations. Comparative Literature, like German and French, became an independent course and, in 1975, the Department changed its name to Department of English Studies and Comparative Literature. Undergraduate courses are offered in comparative literature and there are also graduate programs leading to degrees on both the master's and doctor's levels.

In recent years, beginning with the introduction of more Chinese topics into its hitherto Western-dominated comparative literature curriculum, the UHK has steadily expanded its interest in Chinese-Western literary studies. Antony Tatlow (an internationally well-known Brecht scholar) was largely responsible for creating this Chinese-Western atmosphere which has been carried on by his colleagues, Drs. Chan Ping-leung (Chen Ping-liang) 陳炳良, Chung Ling 鍾玲, Leung Ping-kwan (Liang Ping-chün) 梁秉鈞, and Wong Tak-wai (Huang Te-wei) 黃德偉.

The CUHK, on the other hand, has, at an early stage, concentrated its attention on literary studies from a Chinese perspective and began offering courses in Chinese-Western comparative literature on the undergraduate level from 1974 on. This emphasis is also reflected very strongly in its master's degree program which began in 1980 and which concentrates exclusively on Chinese-Western (usually English) literary studies. It has enrolled students from Hong Kong, Taiwan, the China Mainland, and even as far away as Australia.

Another important academic center at CUHK is the Comparative Literature Research Unit (CLRU), which was founded in 1978 with Dr. Yuan Heh-hsiang as its Head and Dr. John J. Deeney as its Executive Secretary. There are presently eight other research fellows associated with the Unit, most of whom have doctorate degrees in Chinese-Western comparative literature studies.¹¹ There is probably no other institution in the world which can boast of such a large concentration of highly-qualified comparatists doing Chinese-Western comparative research and teaching.

The rationale behind the Unit's activities is to foster inter-cultural exchanges through the medium of comparative literature studies from a Chinese perspective, very much in the spirit of the University's dedication to "both traditional Chinese scholarship and modern Western scholarship, and to the synthesis of the two."¹² In collaboration with the English

Department, the Unit has also been instrumental in inviting world-renown comparatists from different parts of the world to assist in short- and long-term scholarly visits for the purpose of lecturing and doing research. Since the early 80s, the Unit has been inviting visiting research scholars from China to do collaborative research as well as recruiting graduate students for its comparative literature program.

Meetings and Associations

Both UHK and CUHK have been active in organizing comparative literature meetings of many kinds. Of particular importance for integrating literary theory with comparative literature studies (even though the majority of the papers lean more to the theoretical than the comparative), are the series of conferences begun in 1981 and organized by Ackbar Abbas and Jonathan Hall of UHK. There have also been two highly successful Brecht conferences in 1981 and 1986, arranged by Antony Tatlow. UHK was the organizer of the conference on "Comparative Literature and East-West Literary Relations," as part of the Association of South-East Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL) in 1982. In addition, the University has also put together symposia on more broadly Chinese-Western cultural themes such as "China, the Chinese and the West" (1985) and "The Revolution of Man: Ideological and Cultural Dimensions of China's Modernization" (1986). These meetings always contain important papers on various aspects of Chinese-Western comparative literature studies.

Since its founding, The Chinese University's CLRU has provided a Chinese perspective to complement the work of Western comparatists and has sponsored a number of international conferences to achieve this aim. In August, 1979, the first conference on "East-West Comparative Literature: Theoretical and Practical Reconsiderations" was held. The second conference occurred in March, 1982, on "Directions in East-West Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, and Practice," and the third conference on "Narrative in a Chinese-Western Context" was held in September, 1985. A fourth conference on the theme "Problems and Possibilities in Chinese-Western Comparative Drama" is being organized for August, 1987.

In January, 1978, collaboration between the faculties of several institutions of higher learning made it possible to form a nucleus which soon developed into the formal inauguration of the Hong Kong Comparative Literature Association (HKCLA), in the same year, it joined the ICLA. The

long-range goals of the HKCLA are: 1) to discern and disseminate what is characteristically *national* in Chinese literature in order to enrich world literature; 2) to promote non-Western *regional* comparative literature studies (e.g., Chinese-Japanese-Korean), which may contribute to the development of critical theory and practice; 3) to demonstrate that the scholarship of comparatists concerned with Eastern literatures deserves equal attention with that of comparatists concerned with Western literatures in order that comparative literature studies may be truly *world-wide*; and 4) to look forward to an integrated East/West perspective which, while nationally based, generates *universal* understanding inasmuch as it transcends national boundaries in elucidating the literatures of both East and West. These goals are achieved by engaging the members of the cosmopolitan community of Hong Kong in a variety of public lectures, panels, seminars, and full-scale international conferences.

Journals and Books

Although Hong Kong does not put out a journal on comparative literature *per se*, mention should be made of *Renditions*, an English magazine of Chinese-English translation published by the Translation Center of Chinese University. Now and then, it does carry items related to comparative literature as do other local journals in Chinese. On many occasions, local meetings and conferences have led to substantial publications.

The CLRU of Chinese University has been particularly prolific regarding comparative literature publications in English from a specifically Chinese perspective. The Unit has published (all under the CUHK Press imprint), a number of essay-collection titles largely based on previous conferences. In *China and the West: Comparative Literature Studies*, ed. William Tay (Cheng Shu-sen) 鄭樹森, Ying-hsiung Chou, and Heh-hsiang Yuan (1980), an attempt to transcend both Sino-centric and Western-oriented perspectives is made as the authors relate comparative literature approaches to China's long and varied literary tradition.¹³ The second number in the series was *Chinese-Western Comparative Literature: Theory and Strategy*, ed. John J. Deeney (1980). The main portion of this collection consists of a number of theoretical and critical essays, ranging from an inquiry into possible approaches to actual case analyses in the study of Chinese-Western comparative literature. The third collection of essays is *The Chinese Text: Studies in Comparative Literature*, ed. Ying-hsiung Chou (1986), focusing on recent

trends and problems of East-West Comparative Literature studies by critically relating Chinese Literature to other literatures.

Work at the Unit also involves a collaborative project of compiling a dictionary/encyclopedia of critical terms useful to comparatists from both Chinese and Western traditions. A six-volume *Comparatist's Companion* (two volumes of which are in press), will include excerpts from classical statements keyed to useful comparative literature topics. There are also plans to prepare an international newsletter (in Chinese and English) as well as a directory of comparatists interested in Chinese literature. Translations into Chinese of works on literary theory with a view to suggesting a variety of methodologies for the study of literature also fall under the Unit's research and publication plans. The first volume of this series, already published, is the translation of *Theories of Literature in the Twentieth Century* 二十世紀文學理論 (1985) by D. W. Fokkema and Elrud Ibsch, with its particularly useful chapter on the Marxist approach to literature in China.

Mainland China

Without in any way diminishing the splendid achievements of comparatists in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the area which has attracted most attention from all over the world — especially since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 — is the China Mainland. China's new openness to the Western world and its willingness to test the waters of a great variety of contemporary literary currents has led to a number of exciting developments. As I have already noted in Part I, the first two decades of this century — especially since the time of the May Fourth Movement in 1919 — saw an enormous amount of attention given to Western writers. On the other hand, such interest did not make every *litteratus* a comparatist overnight. It is worth repeating a fundamental distinction: occasional comparative studies, even when done by very talented individuals, do not necessarily constitute what I mean by the modern study of comparative literature *as an academic discipline*. Nevertheless, it is still useful and interesting to continue where we left off in Part I and to sketch some of the events which led up to the establishment of comparative literature as an academic discipline in China.

From the 50s and through the 60s to the late 70s, there was a considerable amount of interest and a certain degree of activity in areas closely related to comparative literature studies. This manifested itself in book reviews, commemorative meetings in honor of foreign writers, the

national associations dealing with non-Chinese literatures, and participation in Afro-Asian Writers' Conferences. More noticeable and permanent has been the enormous number of works that have been rendered into Chinese from a wide number of the world's languages, to say nothing of the vast program of translating both vernacular and classical Chinese into modern languages. Although many of these translations as well as what goes by the name, "literary criticism," were often politically motivated (particularly during the Cultural Revolution), there was a small residue of genuinely "comparative" studies. Furthermore, since special attention is given even to the minorities or border regions (e.g., Yün-nan, Tibet, Mongolia, etc.), there has been much interest in the folklore, myths, etc. of these peoples. When China re-opened its cultural doors to two-way traffic after 1976, literary scholars by the hundreds traveled back and forth between China and other countries of the world. Many Chinese have stayed abroad for longer periods to obtain advanced degrees.

Teaching and Research Institutions

The shortage of trained teachers and adequate research facilities which the Cultural Revolution affected so adversely for a full decade — particularly Western literatures — is now, gradually, being redressed. Many universities in China have been offering courses in world literature (even though largely through Chinese translations), and this has often provided the natural foundation for beginning more formal programs in comparative literature. Because of the great proliferation of these programs throughout China,¹⁴ I shall only be able to refer to a few representative institutions.

Many institutions have become involved in comparative literature activities to one degree or another (often initiated by Chinese departments, but not infrequently in collaboration with Foreign Language and Literature departments). There are now two institutions (Peking University and Fudan University) which grant master's degrees in comparative literature.

As for research centers, the early 80s saw the establishment of several important units. Among the most influential were Peking University and the Shanghai International Studies University (formerly called the Shanghai Institute of Foreign Languages, in English, but still retaining its original Chinese name: 上海外語學院). Both these institutions seem to have had access to the resources to take an early lead in comparative literature studies and, therefore, can represent much of the activity that is taking place in

Mainland China.

After individual efforts on the parts of Ji Xianlin (Chi Hsien-lin) 季羨林, Li Funing 李賦寧, Yang Zhouhan (Yang Chou-han) 楊周翰, and Yue Daiyun (Yüeh Tai-yun) 樂黛雲 bore fruit, a Comparative Literature Research Center was set up at Peking University in the Summer of 1981. Quite unprecedented and welcome was the research emphasis put on non-Western countries, as expressed by Professor Yue in an article which appeared in the *YCGL*: "We have a project to develop Chinese comparative literature based on the comparative research into the literatures of oriental countries, particularly China, India, Iran, the Arab countries, and Japan, and to contrast these with Western literature. Oriental literature has made a great contribution to and has influenced the literature of the world, but unfortunately, it has not drawn enough attention in the field of comparative literature today. We anticipate that from this starting point, we would be able to open up new paths in both the theory and the methodology of comparative literature."¹⁵

The Shanghai International Studies University has one of the most wide-ranging language programs for engaging in comparative literature all over the world. In addition, they have established links with many sister-institutions abroad. Under the leadership of Professor Liao Hongjun (Liao Hung-chun) 廖鴻鈞, Director of their Comparative Literature Research Center, a number of on-going, long-range collaborative projects have been worked out with The Chinese University's CLRU.

Meetings and Associations¹⁶

Although the Chinese Comparative Literature Association was not formally inaugurated until 1985, there were many meetings which have been related – directly or indirectly – to comparative literature studies. These helped to prepare for and lead up to the more formal meetings and the formation of many associations. But pride of place undoubtedly goes to Peking University as China's most prestigious institution of higher learning. It was there that the Peking University Comparative Literature Association was founded on January 23, 1981 and, on March 21, they brought out their first *Peking University Comparative Literature Association Newsletter*. The first paragraph, reporting on the inaugural meeting, is worth quoting:

With the objective to introduce current developments of

comparative literature studies to China from all parts of the world, to establish and evolve a Chinese branch of comparative literature under the guidance of Marxism and, hence, to enlarge the academic and literary scene in Socialist China, teachers and scholars from the Chinese Department, Western Languages Department, Oriental Languages Department, Russian Languages Department, Asian and African Research Institute, and South Asian Research Institute, join together to set up a mass academic organization for research on comparative literature — the COMPARATIVE LITERATURE ASSOCIATION OF BEIJING UNIVERSITY.¹⁷

As in Taiwan and Hong Kong, many eminent scholars from all over the world have been attracted to give lectures or offer full courses at Peking University and other institutions in China.

Shanghai also has its Comparative Literature Association, founded in 1985; it held its inaugural meeting on March 21 of that same year. It is headed by Jia Zhifang (Chia Chih-fang) 賈植芳 of Fudan University who has been energetic in engaging other institutions in or near Shanghai, in order to promote comparative literature activities of all kinds. Numerous other associations were formed in the 80s and conferences abounded. Notable among these conferences were: the first nation-wide Comparative Literature Conference held in Tianjin (Tientsin) 天津 during June, 1983; the First Sino-American Comparative Literature Symposium held in Peking, Chengdu (Ch'eng-tu) 成都 and Shanghai during August, 1983; the first Chinese and Western Comparative Aesthetics and Arts Conference held in Wuhan during October, 1984; and the East-West Comparative Culture Conference held in Shanghai during December, 1984.

These meetings were an important build-up to a two-week workshop at the end of October, 1985, in Shenzhen (Shen-chen) 深圳 University (immediately across the border from Hong Kong). Back-to-back with the workshop was a five-day international conference co-sponsored by 34 institutions throughout China, culminating in the formal inauguration of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association (CCLA) on the last day of the Conference (November 2nd). Professor Ji Xianlin was elected Honorary President and Professor Yang Zhouhan, President.

The CCLA falls under the auspices of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Beijing), maintains its secretariate at Peking University, now numbers approximately 1,000 members, and is a member of the ICLA.

The first issue of the *Chinese Comparative Literature Bulletin* (in Chinese) appeared in May, 1986; it contains an account of the Conference, lists of all the officers and committees, teaching and research centers, major publications, and conferences. The constitution of the Association was also included in the *Bulletin*. Two of the articles are particularly instructive:

The main purpose of the association is to promote the development of comparative literature teaching and research in China, to exchange the results and experiences in the various aspects of this field at home and abroad, and make great efforts to enrich our literary cause (Article 2).

To take dialectical materialism and historical materialism as our guiding ideology. To carry out the principle of "Let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" (Article 3).¹⁸

The Workshop was organized to satisfy the enormous enthusiasm for comparative literature studies which has swept through China during the past decade. It was designed to inform teachers and graduate students about all aspects of the field both as it has developed abroad and in China. Chinese and Western scholars spoke on the history, theory, and methodology, and explored the role of Chinese literature in possible developments. A particularly useful feature of the Workshop was a book and journal exhibit of publications from China and the West which also included a representative sampling of 20th-century developments in Western literary theory and criticism. A 184-page bibliography (in Chinese and English) was produced by John J. Deeney and Liu Jiemin for the occasion.¹⁹

Journals and Publications²⁰

After the Cultural Revolution, hundreds of new literary journals (many of which contained articles on comparative literature) appeared. There are now two annuals devoted exclusively to comparative literature studies: the English journal, *Cowrie* 文具: *A Chinese Journal of Comparative Literature* (1983-), edited by Sun Jingyao (Sun Ching-yao) 孫景堯 and Mark Bender at Guangxi (Kuang-hsi) 廣西 University, and now at Suzhou (Su-chou) 蘇州 University. The other annual is *Comparative Literature in China* 中國比較文學 (1984-), edited by Ji Xianlin and the staff

of the Shanghai International Studies University, and soon to become a quarterly.

Cowrie's importance cannot be over-estimated, particularly because it is the only journal in English on comparative literature to come out from China (with the exception of occasional articles in recent issues of the Beijing Foreign Language Press's *Chinese Literature*). For most non-Chinese comparatists, therefore, it is the single source they can consult for information on comparative literature developments in China. The aim of the journal is clearly stated in the first issue as giving, "a representative yearly report on developments of the field in China by publishing notes, translated articles from current Chinese publications, and important papers delivered at scholarly conferences. We seek to encourage scholarly contacts worldwide, and welcome correspondences with foreign scholars, as well as Chinese scholars in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere."²¹ Subsequent issues have also included valuable bibliographies detailing the hundreds and hundreds of studies now being published on comparative literature in China. Another very valuable feature is the convenient critical survey of annual developments by the indefatigable Yuan Haoyi (Yuan Hao-yi) 远浩一.²²

Comparative Literature in China is the paramount journal in Chinese which has a considerable influence on developments in China inasmuch as it is the official journal of the CCLA. For the convenience of those among its international subscribers who do not read Chinese, it publishes its contents in English and, since its second issue in 1985, also includes paragraph-abstracts in English of the main articles. In addition to the usual full-length articles on comparative literature one would usually expect, there are sections on Chinese Writers and Foreign Literature, Chinese Literature Abroad, On Translation, Comparative Literature Studies Abroad, The Teaching of Comparative Literature, Book Reviews, Bibliography, Correspondence, and a catch-all category called, Bulletin Board. The average issue numbers around 400 pages.

Another important journal (for internal circulation only), is the quarterly *Comparative Literature Studies* 比較文學研究, which began publication in 1987. It is edited by Jia Yimin 賈益民 and is co-published by the Chinese Department of Jinan 暨南 University and the Guangdong 廣東 Comparative Literature Association. Each issue contains a useful table of contents in English.

We have referred to several newsletters and bulletin-type publications from the CCLA and Peking University. Similar bulletins are put out by

groups from Shanghai and Shenyang 瀋陽. There have already been at least a score of book-length studies devoted exclusively to comparative literature. Among the first was Lu Kanghua (Lu Kang-hua) 盧康華 and Sun Jingyao's (Sun Ching-yao's) 孫景堯 *An Introduction to Comparative Literature 比較文學導論*, put out by the Heilongjiang University Press in 1984.

Several other collections as well as translations have been published.²³ Peking University Press for instance, has begun publishing an important series under the general title: Peking University Studies of Comparative Literature. So far, five books (in Chinese but supplied with English titles) have already come out: 1) *Essays in Comparative Literature* (1982) 比較文學譯文集, ed. Zang Longxi (Chang Lung-hsi) 張隆溪, including fifteen translations from around the world; 2) a translation of *M. F. Guyard's "La Litterature Comparée"* (1983) 比較文學, trans. Yen Bao (Yen Pao) 顏保; 3) *Comparative Literature Studies: A Collection* (1984) 比較文學論文集, ed. Zhang Longxi and Wen Rumin, containing original articles by China Mainland authors; 4) *In Search of Common Poetics Between Chinese and Western Cultures: Selected Comparative Literature Studies of Wai-lim Yip* (1986) 尋求跨中西文化的共同文學規律, ed. Wen Rumin and Li Xiyao (Li Hsi-yao) 李細堯; 5) *Comparative Literature and Modern Chinese Literature* (1987) 比較文學與中國現代文學, Yue Daiyun; 5) *Representative Works on Comparative Literature from Taiwan and Hong Kong*, forthcoming.

Although Mainland China's access to foreign publications (not only current books and journals, but also theses and back issues of important journal collections) is improving, it is a difficult, time-consuming, and expensive operation. But the obvious need of building up more complete and balanced library collections remains as the primary *conditio sine qua non* of serious research. As two-way academic exchanges between Chinese and non-Chinese institutions continues, there is every possibility that depleted library sources will be replenished, conference-contacts between national associations and the ICLA will grow, and more and more institutions of higher learning will increase the quality of their teaching and research on comparative literature.

To recapitulate: if the 70s was the period which saw the tremendous growth of comparative literature as an academic discipline in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the 80s will certainly go down in history as the decade when China took the field to heart. No national history of comparative literature

can match China for sheer speed of development and numbers of literary enthusiasts. On the other hand, no measure of the field's popularity can take the place of solid scholarship and clear ideas about the direction to be pursued. The signs for the future are promising. China has opened its doors to serious bi-lateral literary relations. A giant step forward has been taken on the bridge linking the East and the West.

Notes

1. I am indebted to my friend and colleague, Mr. Liu Jiemin (Liu Chieh-min) 劉介民, for supplying much of the information contained in Part I of this essay. I should also like to acknowledge Ms. Christina Lee Ka-pik (Li Chia-pi) 李家碧 and Mr. Oliver Tsoi Yee-hang (Ts'ai Yi-heng) 蔡懿恆 for their translation and research assistance. To keep this essay relatively brief and uncluttered, I have sometimes deliberately omitted transcriptions, Chinese characters, or full imprint information for certain references. Complete citations of titles will be supplied in a forthcoming comprehensive bibliography of English and Chinese sources Mr. Liu and I are now compiling.
2. The term, "Chinese School" is a coinage I believe I was the first to employ in my teaching at National Taiwan University in the mid-70s. It appears in several of my publications: see "New Orientations for Comparative Literature," *Tamkang Review*, VIII, No. 1 (April 1977), 227-36, *passim*. The book-length study (in Chinese) had the same title as the English article and was translated as 比較文學研究之新方向 (Taipei: Lingking Publishing Company, 1978); a second and enlarged edition came out in 1982.
3. See my "Modern Developments in Chinese-Western Comparative Literature Studies: A Golden Decade (1977-1987) for the 'Chinese School'," *Tamkang Review*, forthcoming.
4. Kunst in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective* rev. ed., ed. Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois Univ. Pr., 1971), pp. 312-25; Yü in *YCGL*, 23 (1974), 47-53; Liu in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 35 (1975), 21-30.
5. See, for instance, the number of essays referring to non-Western literatures in Clayton Koelb and Susan Noakes, eds., *The Comparative Perspective on Literature: Approaches to Theory and Practice* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), *passim*. Two other forthcoming texts (titles undecided), give promise of the same phenomenon; namely, a collection of comparative essays edited by Claus Clüver and Cliff Flannigan (Indiana University Press) and a handy introduction by Susan Bassnett (Blackwell's).
6. I use the expression here in the sense it is found in Robert J. Clements, *Comparative Literature as Academic Discipline: A Statement of Principles, Praxis, Standards* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1978); namely, as the collective effort of like-minded colleagues, supported by an institution and a thought-out methodological discipline.
7. For useful historical sketches of what I would call the antecedents to Chinese-Western comparative literature studies as an academic discipline, see Cowrie, I, No. 1 (1983), 81-125; Liu Xianbiao's (Liu Hsien-piao) 劉獻彪 *Comparative*

Literature and Its Development in China 比較文學及其在中國之興起 (Nanning: Guangxi People's Pub. Co., 1986), Preface, pp. 2-3 and pp. 218-87; and *中國比較文學年鑒* which adds the English title, *Yearbook of Chinese Comparative Literature, 1986*, edited by Peking [sic] University's Comparative Literature Institute (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1987), *passim*, including a detailed English table of contents (pp. 11-25). Incidentally, the European influence of comparative literature on Mainland China and, subsequently on Taiwan, seems to have come indirectly through Japan, to some extent, as well as through the early renderings of Loliée's and Van Tieghem's books translated respectively as *比較文學史* (1931) by Fu Donghua (Fu Tung-hua) 傅東華 and *比較文學論* (1937) by Dai Wangsu (Tai Wang-su) 戴望舒. Both books were reprinted in Taiwan in the mid-sixties by the Commercial Press.

8. The list would include, among many others, Chen Yin-que (Ch'en Yin-ch'ueh [1890-1969]) 陳寅恪, Xu Dishan (Hsu Ti-shan [1893-1941]) 許地山, Mao Dun (Mao Tun [1896-1981]) 茅盾, Zhu Guangqian (Chu Kuang-ch'ien [1897-1986]) 朱光潛, Zong Baihua (Tsong Pai-hua [1897-1986]) 宗白華, Zheng Zhenduo (Cheng Chen-to [1898-1958]) 鄭振鐸, Wen Yiduo (Wen Yi-to [1899-1946]) 聞一多, Fang Zhong (Fang Chung [1902-]) 方重, Liang Zongdai (Liang Tsung-tai [1903-1983]) 梁宗岱, Fan Cunzhong (Fan Ts'un-chung [1903-]) 范存忠, Li Guangtian (Li Kuang-t'ien [1906-1968]) 李廣田, Li Jianwu (Li Chien-wu [1906-1982]) 李健吾, Qian Zhongshu (Ch'ien Chung-shu [1910-]) 錢鍾書, Ji Xianlin (Chi Hsien-lin [1911-]) 季羨林, Ge Baoquan (Ke Pao-ch'üen [1913-]) 戈寶權, Yang Xianyi (Yang Hsien-yi [1914-]) 楊憲益, and Yang Zhouhan (Yang Chou-han [1915-]) 楊周翰.
9. The proceedings of most all of these meetings (local and international) are found in either the *Tamkang Review* or the *Chung-wai Literary Monthly* (both described in the next section). Professor A. Owen Aldridge of the University of Illinois, has attended every international conference and faithfully added his critique-summary on each occasion.
10. 比較文學中國化, comp. Hu Hsiao-chen 胡曉真 and Ku Chia-yen 古佳艷 *Wen Hsun* 文訊, 17 (April 1985), 54-76.
11. Present members include Simon S. C. Chau (Chou Chao-hsiang) 周兆祥, Chou Ying-hsiung 周英雄, Thomas Y. T. Luk (Lu Yun-t'ang) 陸潤棠, Ng Mau-sang (Wu Mao-sheng) 吳茂生, Sun Shu-yue (Sun Shu-yü) 孫述宇 John K. K. Tam (T'an Kuo-ken) 譚國根, Wong Kin-yuen (Wang Chien-yüan) 王建元, and Wong Wai-leung (Wang Wei-liang) 黃維樑.
12. *Vice-Chancellor's Report: 1978-1982* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1983), p. 1.
13. This publication was done in collaboration with the HKCLA and originally appeared as a Special Issue on East-West Comparative Literature for Chinese University's *New Asia Academic Bulletin* (1979). A revised edition (in which some essays were replaced) came out in Chinese under the title, *中國比較文學論集* (Taipei: Shih-pao wen-hua, 1980).
14. For a convenient listing of teaching and research institutions, see the *Yearbook*, pp. 293-338.
15. *YCGL*, 31 (1982), p. 129.
16. See *Yearbook*, pp. 28-47 and 350-379, for further descriptions of the various activities under this section.

17. Unpublished mimeographed text.
18. Quoted in *Cowrie*, 1, No. 3 (1986), p. 109.
19. *Twentieth-Century Comparative Literature Bibliography: A Sampler of Representative Sources in Chinese and English* (Hong Kong: CLRU, 1985, privately printed). Complimentary copies are available by writing to the CLRU.
20. See *Yearbook*, pp. 339-49, for further information on various publications. The *Yearbook* also contains a valuable bibliography on pp. 518-647, compiled by Zhang Wending (Chang Wen-ting) 張文定 and Wen Rumin (Wen Ju-min) 溫儒敏.
21. See *Cowrie*, I, No 1 (1983), p. 1. There is also one book-length study, in English, by Wang Zuoliang: *Degrees of Affinity: Studies in Comparative Literature* (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1985).
22. See "Survey of Current Developments in the Comparative Literature of China," *Cowrie*, I, No. 1 (1983), pp. 81-125; "First Steps - Survey of Current Developments in Comparative Literature in China - January 1982 - July 1984," *Cowrie*, I, No. 2 (1984), pp. 75-94; "New Stimuli - Review of Developments in Chinese Comparative Literature from 1984-1985," *Cowrie*, I, No. 3 (1986), pp. 117-23.
23. Since its Summer 1983 (XIII, No. 4) issue, the *Tamkang Review* has been bringing out a number of reviews of Mainland publications for the convenience of English readers.

