

The Application of the Structuralist Approach in East-West Comparative Literature: Problems and Prospects¹

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I

Although comparative literature on an East-West basis has already been developed for quite a number of years, a commonly accepted definition for East-West Comparative Literature all along evades scholars. The search for a definition for East-West Comparative Literature is not a manifestation of provincialism or a deliberate effort to separate our discipline from the main trends of comparative literature in the West. Instead, it demonstrates an awareness of the inherent difference between the study of comparative literature within a single cultural context and the study on a cross-cultural basis. In addition, a definition of this particular area of study may eventually help circumventing those pitfalls which do not exist in the comparative study within a common cultural context at all.² One of the most important contributions toward defining East-West Comparative Literature may be Heh-hsiang Yuan's series of essays of which the most useful one is perhaps "East-West Comparative Literature — An Inquiry into Possibility."³ In this essay, Yuan probes into the fundamental problems of East-West Comparative Literature, the answers to which would possibly lead us to a definition of some kind. Yuan, however, sketches only a working definition which provides some guiding principles and objectives for the enterprise. The problems of "what to compare" and "how to compare" are still not fully resolved. It is my purpose to make use of the application of Structuralist approach in East-West Comparative Literature as an example to entertain these problems. I realize that the scope of my essay is somewhat limited to the so-called "extrinsic" approach to literature,⁴ and I do not claim that my work here covers all possible areas concerned. In the mean time, I also try to evaluate

the applicability of Structuralist approach in the study of East-West Comparative Literature. My ultimate aim is to give some practical suggestions for sketching the definition of East-West Comparative Literature and for the future use of Western critical models in this kind of studies. Therefore, this paper is not a thorough investigation into every aspect in Structuralist approach to literature. Rather, it only discusses the advantages and disadvantages, validity and limitations of applying Western critical approaches to East-West comparative literary studies, using Structuralist approach as example. As a result, many problems discussed are not necessarily unique to the Structuralist approach. In the evaluation of the Structuralist approach to Chinese literature, owing to the limit of space, I only selectively pick up some essays on that subject. My main focus is on bringing out the possible crises and problems in this kind of studies.⁵

According to the prevailing concepts of and attitudes towards comparative literature, there exist at least three possibilities in an attempt to apply the Structuralist approach to comparative literature on an East-West basis. The first possibility consists in the interdisciplinary studies – the study of an Eastern literature (hereafter, we will confine our discussion to Chinese literature as focus) and Structuralism from an interdisciplinary perspective. The second possibility lies in the concept of metacriticism or comparing the theories of literature, i.e., to derive from Structuralism certain literary theories or critical methods and compare them to similar Chinese literary theories or critical methods. The third possibility is that we apply the Structuralist approach to the comparative study of some chosen Western and Chinese literary texts of which affinity of some kind can be identified.

II

The first possibility is deduced from the definition of comparative literature advocated by the American School. The American School divides comparative literature into two separate areas. The first area consists in a comparative study of literature beyond national frontiers. The second area is equivalent to what is called interdisciplinary studies – studying literature and other “spheres of human expression” from a comparative perspective. Henry Remak clarifies this idea by saying that “we must make sure that comparisons between literature and a field other than literature be accepted as ‘comparative literature’ only if they are systematic and if a definitely separable, coherent discipline outside of literature is studied

as such . . . The tracing of a character in a novel by Henry James would be WITHIN the scope of comparative literature only if it developed a methodical view of this character in the light of the psychological theories of Freud."⁶ The implication is, as Calvin Brown observes, that "the relationships of literature with other arts [and other spheres of human expression] are . . . by general consent, usually considered as a part of comparative literature even when only one country is involved."⁷ If studies involving "only one country" can be considered a legitimate part of comparative literature, it follows logically that the Structuralist approach (or any Western critical approach) to Chinese literature (or any Eastern literature) should also be considered a legitimate branch of East-West Comparative Literature.

Unlike psychology, however, which is itself an academic discipline, Structuralism is basically conceived as a methodology more than anything else. No doubt, that is the reason we hear terms such as Structuralist Poetics, Structuralist Anthropology, etc. Roland Barthes once defined Structuralism in its most specialized and consequently most relevant version, as a mode of analysis of cultural artefacts which originates in the methods of contemporary linguistics. On another occasion, he says, "I think that the name of Structuralism should today be reserved for a methodological movement which specifically avows its direct link with linguistics . . . This would be to my mind the most precise criterion of definition."⁸ In both cases, Barthes highlights the concepts of Structuralism as a methodology and its direct blood relation to linguistics. Thus, it may seem inappropriate to draw an analogy between the psychological approach to James's novel as an example of interdisciplinary studies and Structuralist approach to Chinese literature as such. Barthes's definitions, however, do hint at a rationale for justifying such analogy. The hereditary relation between linguistics and Structuralism calls our attention. Jonathan Culler, for example, defines the Structuralist approach to literature as "interpreting the linguistic model and of applying it to the study of literature."⁹ If Structuralist study of literature consists in interpreting the linguistic model and of applying it to the study of literature, then the "interdisciplinarity" between Structuralism and Chinese literature rests precisely on the "interdisciplinarity" of linguistics and literature.

The application of modern Western approaches to Chinese literature in general is considered a legitimate branch of comparative literature by many Chinese scholars. James Liu discerns that "the application of modern Western critical approaches to Chinese literature implicitly involves a

comparative dimension."¹⁰ Anthony Yu even believes that the application of Western critical approaches to Chinese literature has great potentials in the future study of Chinese-Western relations. He argues that "the use of the more peculiarly Western critical concepts and categories in the study of Chinese literature is, in principle, no more inappropriate than the classical scholar's use of modern techniques and methods for his study of ancient materials."¹¹ A. Owen Aldridge, however, points out the danger in drawing such an analogy by reminding us that those classical scholars mentioned by Yu do not claim themselves undertaking the work of comparative literature.¹² Although a retort backed up by Remak's definition would state that those scholars are in fact one way or another working in the area of comparative literature and whether they are aware of it is irrelevant, there exist many problems in the application of Western approaches to Chinese literature itself. To solve these problems requires a look into the purposes and some basic assumptions of literary criticism.

Literary criticism is both inquisitive and explanatory in nature. Each individual act of literary criticism is motivated by an inquisitive force which urges a critic to explain certain literary phenomena. Moreover, two levels exist in literary criticism – theoretical and practical. On the theoretical level, a critic poses to himself the problems about the nature and function of literature (and other theoretical problems). On the practical level, the critic then considers the problems of interpretation and evaluation.¹³ Yet, these two levels are never really separate. On the theoretical level, a critic, for example, tries to explain why certain linguistic discourse is considered poetic while others are not, or explain what function literature should carry and why. When interpreting a poem, a critic is explaining the (hidden) meanings of this poem; while in evaluation, the critic either explains why a particular poem is good or bad, or why it is better or worse than another. One should notice that the theoretical critic has to build theories upon existing literary works or use literary works for illustration, whereas the practical critic would gain big benefit from literary theories in his interpretation and evaluation. The theoretical and practical critics, however, have different audience in mind. The audience of the theoretical critic are mainly initiated readers including writer, other critics, practical and theoretical, students of literature, and experienced common readers. Since his expected audience are not laymen of literature, he feels free to use more abstract concepts and metalanguage. The practical critic, in general, takes common readers as his major audience. The role he plays is pedagogic in nature.

As John Reichert puts it, one of the important goals of (practical) literary critic is "to induce new perceptions and alter response — to bring the reader to see something in the work that he had not seen, or to see it in a new way, or to see the whole work from a new perspective."¹⁴ Owing to his pedagogic role, a practical critic has a dual duty — to make himself as explicit as possible by using relatively plain language, and to subject a piece of literary work constantly to new critical approaches.

The choice of critical approaches always depends upon the critics' interest and purpose. If a critic wants to uncover the author's psychological anxiety hidden in a literary text, then he adopts a psychological analysis. Thus, no matter how objective a critical method is in itself, any critical activity is fundamentally subjective. Moreover, in the application of any critical approach to a piece of literary work, subjective judgement of the critic is inevitable. One big problem always worrying critics is the possibility of distorting a literary work when submitting it to a foreign critical approach as in the situation of applying a Western critical approach to Chinese literature.¹⁵ Here, we would like to express our agreement with Joan M. Ferrante that "good literature is by its nature capable of almost infinite interpretation" and with John Deeney that "Chinese literature like all great literatures — will never seriously be damaged by, nor break down under any critical system(s), for its permanent beauty always beckons us to look, and look again, for increased enjoyment and enrichment."¹⁶ In fact, in the study of literature, we should not be obsessed by the validity of any critical paradigms but focus on their usefulness, since after all, no matter how close to scientific method we are, we never come to the "one plus one equals two" type of the absolute. As long as a critical model leads us to a better understanding of literature, or helps us reaching Reichert's goal, there is no reason to exclude any critical method from our current usage. But if the critical method is loaded heavily with evaluative overtones, all its merits will be outweighed in the study of East-West Comparative Literature, for our purpose is not to set one national literature against another.¹⁷

While Yuan shows his skepticism, if not also despair, on the interdisciplinary studies in East-West Comparative Literature, his colleague, Deeney observes optimistically that interdisciplinary studies suggest a promising future for Chinese-Western Comparative Literature, especially the areas literature and linguistics, literature and sociology, literature and political science, and literature and the history of idea.¹⁸ Whether the application of Structuralist approach to Chinese literature is useful is a practical question.

Even though we may agree that Chinese literature can theoretically be subjected to any critical approaches, and Structuralist approach opens a new horizon for the study of Chinese literature, if in practice we find that Structuralist approach brings more trouble than convenience to our enterprise, a strong objection to such practice is not without reason.

There are certainly both advantages and disadvantages in the application of the Structuralist approach to Chinese literature.¹⁹ The first advantage stems from the fact that Structuralist approach among other Western critical approaches in a sense complements traditional Chinese literary criticism which almost always rests upon impressionistic and intuitive grounds. We realize that the Chinese critical method is not inferior to the Western one, but instead simply represents another way of looking at things. It does not, however, provide relatively objective ways for our appreciation, interpretation and evaluation of Chinese literature. Chinese critical concepts such as *pi-hsing* 比興, *chien-chieh* 境界, and *ch'i-hsiang* 氣象 do represent ancient Chinese critics' perspectives of approaching, appreciating and evaluating literary works. Their judgements may even have involved objective analysis.²⁰ But as is observed, these critical terms (or the critical language as a whole) are designed for communication among members of the same literary coterie.²¹ No matter how useful, ostensive and clearcut they appear to their target readers, they are now too occult for many students of literature.²² It may be one of the reasons behind the popularity of applying Western critical approaches to Chinese literature in our academic world.

The second advantage which distinguishes the Structuralist approach from other critical models loaded heavily with evaluative overtones, is its claimed objectivity. Since the ultimate aim of Structuralist approach is to discover the underlying deep structure of literature, the critical concepts it develops are not value oriented.

The third advantage lies in the basic assumption of Structuralism that literature as a system of signs would only give meanings when it is juxtaposed with other systems of signs. The assumption alerts our attention to the relationship between literature and other arts and disciplines which precisely points to the direction of interdisciplinary studies.²³ The results of Structuralist research would certainly promote the development of interdisciplinary studies.

Last but not the least, Structuralist poetics aims at universality. Not only do Structuralists address themselves to the study of a single literary text, but also to "literariness," i.e., the conventions which make literature

possible.²⁴ The attitude may perhaps release the tension of the hostile tone of imposing a Western critical method to Chinese literature. Like that in the science of linguistics, the Structuralists attempt to transcend national and cultural boundaries. This attempt fulfils Cyörgy m. Vajda's requirement of methodology for comparative literature when he declares that "its up-to-date methodological task is not simply comparison, but the observation of literary phenomena placed within a broad network of interrelationship and approached from a variety of angles" and "the ambition and true task of modern comparative literary research" are to arrive at some "general valid laws."²⁵ Since the Structuralist approach is originally not aiming at evaluation, the results of the kind of studies free ourselves from any value judgements which might be harmful to cross-cultural comparative literary studies.

Although Structuralist approach does sound promising, it also suffers certain shortcomings. One of the major defects of applying Structuralist approach to Chinese literature or literature in general is that meaning of a work is not being emphasized. As Culler puts it:

the type of literary study which Structuralism helps one to envisage would not be primarily interpretive Rather than a criticism which discovers or assigns meaning, it would attempt to specify how we go about making sense of texts, what are the interpretive operations on which literature itself as an institution, is based.²⁶

In other words, Structuralist approach only helps us to arrive at a "grammar" of literature. We are very interested in knowing such grammar and the underlying structure of literature, but we are equally interested in what a poem means, what the speaker is saying to us and sometimes, even the author's intentions of making the speaker saying something in a certain particular way to us.²⁷ As a result, knowing how to make sense of literary texts without knowing the sense or meaning of a particular literary work can be compared to an observer witnessing how to cook a delicious dish without actually eating it. In both cases, the persons involved would only feel a sense of loss. This is certainly not true if the reader is a theoretical critic (and the observer a chef), and especially when his main concern is to find out the nature of literature. From this perspective, the Structuralist approach is more useful to a theoretical than a practical critic.

The second defect can be located in the ambitious attempt of some Structuralists – to reduce literature to a limited number of Structures. This is a problem not only on the theoretical level. The fact that some radical critics' using literature to illustrate certain Structuralist literary theories annoy many non-Structuralists. More often, the annoyance is heightened when they witness a single work being reduced to numerous "structures" by different critics who in most cases claim their own models a panacea for all literary texts. This practice of reduction indeed does much harm to great literature such as the *Dream of the Red Chamber* 紅樓夢, *War and Peace*, *Divine Comedy* and *Paradise Lost*, just to mention a few. We certainly lose more than gain by reducing these works to one structure. The impression of arbitrariness is conveyed to readers as a result.

The next disadvantage is related to the defect recounted above. The structures or paradigms that the Structuralists employed as critical models are almost always derived from a set of literary texts of certain period of time and of certain national literature. It is very likely that the structures obtained are not comprehensive enough to cover all literary texts at all times and in all national literatures. Ferrante gives a very interesting example. She compares the structures Pickens, Dorfman, Haidu and Gallais imposed upon the medieval writer Chretien's romances and finds out that "Pickens perceives two parts subdivided into three, Dorfman three, subdivided into four narremes; Haidu perceives a convincing five parts structure . . . Gallais both a spiral . . . and a hexagonal pattern."²⁸ To ask which pattern represents the correct one is not our concern. Perhaps what Culler proposes is right: ". . . the results of methodological indeterminacy are in fact properties of literary works themselves: if a great many structures can be discovered it is because the work has a variety of structures."²⁹ Witnessing this methodological indeterminacy, a further doubt emerges in our mind. When these structuralist analytical methods are applied to Chinese narratives, would there be further complications? Of course, which particular structure model is useful depends upon the critic's interest: "it is the critic's interest, not the work's essence, which determines the structure he finds in it."³⁰ As we have said, no matter how scientific, how objective the method the critic claims, the findings are almost always subjective.

Another possible defect may be partly described as a necessary evil. What we meant is the terminology or metalanguage of Structuralist criticism. The result of an enormous use of terminology is that only "initiated readers" are able to appreciate the fruits of Structuralist research. An immediate

effect is misunderstanding which may even lead to hostility and disgust on the part of uninitiated readers.³¹ On the one hand, the use of metalanguage contributes to the establishment of the Structuralist approach to literature as an independent, or perhaps scientific as well, discipline. On the other hand, it simultaneously makes this discipline somewhat an esoteric enterprise. This problem is rather easy to overcome, if a critic can refrain from unnecessary use of jargon.³² But if the Structuralist approach to literature is more suitable for a theoretical critic and only a small group of people know the rules of the game, the degree of usefulness greatly decreases. The ultimate purpose of studying literature is to understand literature better and to teach others how to achieve this goal, but the Structuralist approach seems to set a barrier between literature and reader more than bring them closer together. The problem becomes poignant when we are talking about the application of the Structuralist approach to Chinese literature. For most Chinese readers, Structuralism is such a new discipline that they are not familiar with it at all.³³ For many Western readers, Chinese literature is an exotic area. The audience, at least at present, who can fully understand an essay on the Structuralist approach to Chinese literature is of a very limited number. For this we can only hope for the best — either we popularize the Structuralist approach to Chinese readers or we persuade more initiated Western readers to make themselves more acquainted with Chinese literature. Without new comers' participation, it will ultimately bring us back to the common phenomenon in the history of Chinese literary criticism — limited number of members of a certain literary coterie communicating among each other.

The advantages and disadvantages will be more obvious in actual practical works dealing with the subject in question. One of the most important Chinese scholars who anxiously try to apply Structuralist analysis to Chinese literature is Han-liang Chang of the National Taiwan University. His contribution is especially important to the study of the T'ang narrative fiction — *ch'uan-chi* 傳奇. We shall only focus our discussion on two of his essays written in English. In "Towards A Structural Generic Theory of T'ang *ch'uan-chi*,"³⁴ Chang attempts to revise the traditional Chinese methods of literary taxonomy and proposes a new scheme based upon Structural theories of genre. To begin with, he shows how inadequate it is to classify four chosen stories of the tiger motif from a famous *ch'uan-chi* anthology, *Tai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記, according to their motif similarities. Grounding his theory on Jonathan Culler's concept that a theory of

genre "must attempt to explain what features are constitutive of functional categories which have governed the reading and writing of literature," he goes on examining two structural models postulated by Barthes and Tzvetan Todorov, and arrives at a conclusion that Barthes's model "is not adequate enough for universal application" and resorts to Todorov's model to analyse another story of the tiger motif, i.e., "*Nan-yang shih-jan*" 南陽士人. Unfortunately, Chang also finds the triple division of "fantastic," "uncanny" and "marvelous" of Todorov's model inadequate to classify this particular story and is obliged to call this story "fantastic-marvelous." William Touponce comments on Chang's analysis that "Chang bases his entire case for this story's being in the fantastic on what for Todorov is only an optional rule."³⁵ He quotes from Todorov's book to support his argument. Todorov points out that "the fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event."³⁶ Thus, "what is always required, . . . is the reader's hesitation and a special kind of reading which is neither poetic nor allegorical."³⁷ In other words, a story is only the fantastic if readers are willing to cooperate. The necessary and sufficient conditions require the reader's not merely willing suspense of disbelief but willing suspense of interpretation as well. Then, once a story is classified as the fantastic, readers and other critics should not argue but are obliged to read the story as such. This is exactly where our objection lies. First, a critic has the duty to submit a piece of literary work to new critical models constantly. Secondly, literary criticism would change from description to prescription, if we follow this kind of taxonomy. The theory of genre is important and there are rules governing the reading and writing of certain literary genre. For example, when we read a picaresque novel like *Lazarillo de Tormes*, we have to read *Lazarillo* as a picaresque and accept the episodic structure as necessary. We should not depreciate it just because it lacks a well structured plot and sophisticated characterization. Neither would we prevent our imagination from giving any new interpretations. In these lights, to use Todorov's model as the basis for a generic theory of T'ang *ch'uan-chi* is questionable.³⁸

In another essay "The Yang-lin Series: A Structural Analysis" Chang after submitting this series of stories to a number of Structuralist models, concludes that "to analyse the four stories (Yang-lin series) in terms of Greimasian actantial and syntagmatic models is most rewarding."³⁹ Another scholar Tim-hung Ku obtains a similar optimistic result after his application of Greimasian models to another series of *ch'uan-chi* stories.⁴⁰ Ku,

simultaneously, finds that Greimas's models are inadequate and he has to revise the models so that the models are capable of taking care of all the stories chosen. Now, without modification, Greimasian models are very useful, according to Chang, in analysing a series of *ch'uan-chi* stories; with modification, Greimas's models are also useful to analyse another series of *ch'uan-chi* stories. We wonder that if there exists another series of *ch'uan-chi* stories that cannot be analysed satisfactorily by Greimas's models with or without modification. Ferrante shows us how different critics use different models to apply to the same literary texts and obtain different results. Here, we discern how two different critics use the same models with and without modification and apply them to different texts and obtain different results. It is really the critics' interests not the texts' essence that determine the methodology. Going back to Greimas's models, Culler has something to say:

Greimas starts from the assumption that linguistics, and particularly semantics, ought to be able to account for meaning of all kinds, including literary meaning. But as his attempts to develop this semantics show only too clearly, linguistics does not provide an algorithm for the discovery of semantic effects.⁴¹

Greimas's method offers us a fact that "the direct application of techniques for linguistic description may be a useful approach if it begins with literary effects and attempts to account for them, but that it does not in itself serve as a method of literary analysis."⁴² Culler's observations make us reconsider the meanings of the optimistic conclusions of the two scholars above.

As a result, the Structuralist theories of narrative discussed above leave us an impression that the theories are constructed more for writers than readers. The "structures" help a writer, especially a beginner to compose, for example, "a story" by listing the formulas of a story, even though readers may not receive the products as stories at all. A recent research on the story grammar may shed light on this problem. William F. Brewer and Edward H. Lichtenstein have designed an experiment to find out how readers actually receive a narrative as story. They propose a "structural-affect theory" of the story schema and suggest that enjoyment on the part of readers, or entertainment as the discourse force of the text, is the most deterministic factor of a narrative as story. They create a set of narratives according to some other story grammarians' schemas, such as a story as

a goal-directed action sequence, then they add to this set of narrative the elements of suspense to form another set of narrative. The two sets of narrative are presented to subjects for their judgements. The result shows that most subjects reject the first set of narrative as stories but nearly all accept the second set as such. The descriptive adequacy test proves that the schemas proposed by those story grammarians without taking into consideration the factor of entertainment are not really corresponding to the actual situations of how readers receive a narrative as story.⁴³

As Culler points out, Structuralist models are more useful to account for literary effects. Roman Jakobson's model which suffers the same shortcomings as Greimas's,⁴⁴ helps Ying-hsiung Chou to explain an all along obscure poetic concept — *hsing* 興. Chou's essay covers only the folk songs from *Shih-ching* 詩經 to the Han Dynasty.⁴⁵ His work is complimented by an earlier essay by Yu-kung Kao and Tsu-lin Mei who adopt Jakobson's linguistic model to account for T'ang poetry.⁴⁶

The potentiality of Roman Jakobson's model is very well revealed in Jakobson's own analysis of the slogan "I like Ike" and explanation of why the title of I. A. Richards's poem "Harvard Yard in April / April in Harvard Yard" is so much superior to its converse, "April in Harvard Yard / Harvard Yard in April."⁴⁷ In Chou's essay, "The Linguistic and Mythical Structure of *Hsing* as a Combinational Model," Jakobson's combinational model serves as a good point of departure to describe the linguistic features of *hsing*. Chou shows that *hsing* is a metonymic operation and operates on the basis of combination. Yet this kind of combination is so special that it leaves gaps between the two terms (*hsing* and response) and invites readers to relate them metaphorically. Ways to bridge these gaps exist outside Jakobson's theory and have to be found in cultural orientation of the age. Although Chou's method has been criticized as rehearsing a Structuralist methodology without being entirely consistent,⁴⁸ he actually shows us a way to apply the Structuralist model which is constructed mainly for Western texts to Chinese literary studies without doing too much harm to Chinese literature. As he himself confesses, "it is perhaps more appropriate to restrict the strictly linguistic analysis within a certain limit and leave room for another phase of reading process where one's cultural or even archetypal knowledge seems to be more useful."

Thus, for a better understanding of literature, a combination of the searches for structures, meanings and values is indispensable, as René Wellek believes, the only right conception of literature is "a resolutely 'holistic'

one which sees work of art as a diversified totality, as a structure of signs which, however, imply and require meanings and values."⁴⁹ Our conclusion for this section is, therefore, this: although the Structuralist approach to Chinese literature might be considered as a part of East-West Comparative Literature theoretically, the result of this kind of studies is "incomplete" and should by all means combined with other critical models to give a complete picture of the works in question.

III

The second possibility of applying the Structuralist approach to Chinese-Western Comparative Literature stems from the recent declaration of aims of the International Comparative Literature Association:

ICLA aims to develop the study of comparative literature which includes the study of literary history, literary theory and text interpretation undertaken from an international comparative point of view.⁵⁰

In the same year, in a comparative literature conference, Culler in his "Comparative Literature and Literary Theory" elucidates and advocates the importance of literary theory to the study of comparative literature.⁵¹ To compare Structuralist poetics as a literary theory to a Chinese literary theory is no easy task, for Structuralist poetics attempts to raise the study of literature to the realm of science, while traditional Chinese literary theories are fundamentally unscientific and intuitive. Moreover, the purpose of engaging in this enterprise determines our approach. Are we looking for a common poetics? Or we are, as Bernhard Scholz's comments on this new task of the ICLA, comparing the theories of literature so as to compare and assess "the methodological and practical justification of various previously or currently available theories, with an eye obviously to being able to decide for oneself which method to use, and for what end." If it is the former, then our task is mainly theoretically oriented, whereas, in the latter case, the result "would not necessarily lead us to a unified theory of comparative literature (common poetics) . . . [but] it would provide the comparatist with the means for an explicit discussion of the possible bases of comparison which after all involve decisions about the relevant similarities of literary texts," and the task is therefore practically oriented.⁵²

Scholz does not state explicitly how to carry out his way of comparing the theories of literature. If, however, the ultimate purpose is to assess a literary theory, inevitably literary texts have to be employed as touchstones. That is not much different from applying a literary theory to a literary text and ask for its validity and limitation. In our context, then many scholars engaging in the first possibility are virtually doing the same thing. They apply the Structuralist approach to Chinese literature and find out the validity and limitations.

Another manner of comparing theories of literature is metacriticism. Scholars who are equally competent for both Chinese poetics and Structuralist poetics are very few at present. We can hardly find strictly speaking an essay which deals with the metacriticism between Structuralist poetics and Chinese poetics. Ying-hiung Chou after a careful examination of traditional Chinese literary criticism, concludes that the phenomenological approach is more suitable than the Structuralist approach for Chinese literary studies.⁵³ Two other famous Chinese scholars James Liu and Wai-lim Yip, who quite conscientiously try to develop a synthesis of Chinese and Western literary theories and aesthetic criteria, concomitantly ground their synthesis on phenomenology and Taoist aesthetics.⁵⁴ It seems that the overlapping area between Chinese and Western view of literature lies in the similarities between phenomenology and Taoism. We wonder how much place Structuralist poetics would have in the search for a common poetics on a Chinese-Western basis.⁵⁵

Very loosely, Ch'ui-lang Chi's "Liu Hsieh's view on Novelty and Russian Formalists' Concept of Defamiliarization" and David Jason Liu's "The *Chih-yen-chai* Commentary: An Analysis in the Perspective of Western Theories of Literature" could be considered examples of comparing Chinese literary theories and Structuralist theories. Liu's essay is divided into two parts and the first is the only relevant one. He writes:

The first part will be a brief consideration of two Western approaches to literature: Russian Formalism and French Structuralism: in our consideration of these two approaches, we will be merely suggesting terms which may serve as rough equivalents to the terminology of the CYC (*chih-yen-chai* commentary) . . . we feel that they may be mutually illuminating — the CYC may benefit from the systematic nature of Structuralism, and Structuralism may be made aware of phenomena perhaps unaccounted for within its scope. . . .⁵⁶

We indeed see the juxtaposition of terms like "painting the cloud to bring the moon into relief" 烘雲托月 and Shklovsky's "metalepsis," but he fails to show the mutual illuminating aspect. It is therefore not very different from, for example, pointing out that Lao She's 老舍 (1898-1966) *Cat Country* 貓城記 is a dystopian story using the animal world as a satirical mirror to reflect the human world, and Rynunosuke Akutagawa's 芥川龍之介 (1892-1927) *Kappa* 河童の國 is another dystopian story using the animal world as a satirical mirror to reflect the human world and stop there. The question "so what" remains unanswered.

Chi's essay gives a deeper comparison and can really be called comparing theories of literature from an international comparative perspective. He says early in his essay that "sprung from a cultural background poles apart from that of modern Western formalistic criticism, the theoretical structure of *The Literary Mind* offers a sharp contrast to the basic concepts of formalists either Russian or Anglo-American," and Formalism's "contrast with Asian poetics such as Liu Hsieh might have rescued its one-sidedness." Indeed, Chi makes a very sharp contrast between the two literary theories, but how to rescue Formalism's onesidedness is not resolved. In fact, we get an impression that Chi grades Liu Hsieh's theory, which is more rounded, higher than "defamiliarization." Does he advocate a replacement? The purpose of this essay therefore remains obscured. It is not a search for a common poetics. Neither does it aim at assessing the methodological and practical justification of defamiliarization or of Liu's concept of novelty. Perhaps, it is also appropriate to address its author the question "so what?"

What is the purpose of comparing the theories of literature from an international comparative perspective? Different purposes will yield different methodologies and results. If the purpose is just as Scholz suggests, the business is relatively easier to settle. If, however, we are searching for a common poetics, the kind of common poetics based on Structuralist poetics leaves a blank at present. From the point of view of usefulness, these two approaches are only different in degree than in kind. They will ultimately lead us to a methodology for analysing literature, only that the second is more ambitious and comprehensive. Either approach is better than comparing for comparing's sake.

IV

The last possibility, applying Structuralist approach to the comparative

study of Chinese and Western literary works, is perhaps accepted by most scholars as truly part of East-West Comparative Literature and interdisciplinary approach to East-West Comparative Literature simply because "comparative literature implies by definition the treatment of works from at least two national traditions" as A. Owen Aldridge aptly puts.⁵⁷ The aim of comparative literature is not only to find similarities but also differences between works from different national camps. It is possible that when two similar works are juxtaposed together, certain features which we take for granted or take no serious notice when looking at them individually would come to the foreground and ask for explanation or re-examination. No matter it is a matter of technical aspect or thematic aspect, it is in many cases products of cultural environment. The meanings, as the Structuralists postulate, would only come out when they are seen in relation to other social phenomena.

This kind of comparative study should not confine our attention to the underlying structure of literature, for any good critic would understand that just one piece of Eastern and one piece of Western literature will certainly oversimplify the situation. Like our early comments on the function of the Structuralist approach in the study of Chinese literature, it only helps explaining certain features and should not be the only concern of a research plan.

Ying-hsiung Chou's "*Mung chiao-kuan yü Li-erh wang*" 懵教官與李爾王 (Foolish Teacher and King Lear) is perhaps the only one available example of the third possibility.⁵⁸ "*Mung chiao-kuan*," a piece of unimportant short story in a famous anthology of Ming short stories,⁵⁹ and the important tragedy of Shakespeare's "King Lear" share a number of similarities in their plots and themes. Both literary works adopt the theme of filial ingratitude. A foolish man after dividing his properties among his daughters is turned against by his daughters. The man suffers and learns certain wisdom through his experiences. Chou from a semiotic perspective analyses the meanings and implications behind these two similar conflicts between father and daughters. To achieve that goal, it is necessary to place the Chinese story within the value system of the Chinese patriarchal clan society, Chinese social spirit and systems of other kinds, and "King Lear" in the context of Renaissance individualism, the 16th and 17th century social spirit, socialism, etc. His conclusion is that "Foolish Teacher" presents an affirmation of the Chinese patriarchal clan system, but in the story, since human relation is measured by money, the author actually depreciates

the value judgement derived from that system. "King Lear" represents an investigation into an individual's human nature. Lear, in the search for the meaning of existence, obtains a completely illusive emptiness. Chou also points out that although in the Chinese story, we have, as in "King Lear" a father, no mother and three daughters, they are not considered as individuals but everymen. The implication is that whoever violates the rules of the patriarchal clan system will be punished. The fact is especially obvious when the author does not give even names to the three daughters. In Lear's case, Lear who wants to give up his kingship and to preserve it after forsaking it is more than violating the human relation but also the harmony of nature. That is why Lear's violation is a tragedy and his problems include internal conflicts, and conflict between man and nature, and Lear is portrayed as an individual.

The problem of Chou's essay is not so much a matter of bringing two works of different genres for comparison, but as Aldridge points out, "minor works are given as much attention as the masterpieces" in the study of themes.⁶⁰ The essay, however, fulfils our requirement: it does not force a foreign critical model on the Chinese text and it provides a better understanding of the literary works in question. Maybe some readers would ask what difference would it make if we analyse the works separately. We think that when we juxtapose the two works together, we will be called to our attention the question why the two stories begin with the same motif will turn out two entirely different stories both in meanings and significances. We will be more interested in why the break between Regan and Goneril and Lear is not amendable, whereas the three daughters in the Chinese story dare to go back to their father after he gets rich again. We will also ask ourselves the question why Kao the father in the Chinese story would live with his nephew and why his former student would help him getting rich. What is the difference between Lear's reconciliation with Cordelia and Kao's with his nephew? These problems may be taken for granted or overlooked when we read them separately. Only when the two stories are juxtaposed together are we forced to look into them and search for an answer.

V

James R. Hightower concludes his essay "Chinese Literature in the Context of World Literature" by these statements:

What is need now are scholars trained in the disciplines and techniques of literary study in one or more of the better known literatures, who can apply those methods to the study of Chinese literature. Only through such studies can we expect Chinese literature to be faithfully interpreted, and the Western reader persuaded to accept Chinese literature as one of the literatures of the world deserving his attention.⁶¹

Although the essay was written some 30 years ago, Chinese literature cannot be said since then well received by the students of literature in the West, not to mention Chinese literary theories. Let us assume that Chinese literary criticism is not just impressionistic and subjective as some critics suggest, can we in a term paper or an essay ready for publication write, for example, "Li Po's poetry is *ch'i-hsiang wan-ch'ien*" without explaining what we mean by that phrase, especially when our target readers are uninitiated readers? This is a very practical problem. Before these Chinese critical terms and methods being well received, we can hardly avoid adopting Western critical terms and methods. Eventually, we should by all means "attempt a synthesis of Chinese and Western theories of literature and of critical concepts and methods, so as to provide the study of Chinese literature with both a theoretical basis and a practical methodology" as James Liu proposes.⁶² That is also the main reason we welcome the ICLA declaration on studying theories of literature from an international comparative perspective, so that we could make Chinese literature more accessible to non-specialists.

The application of the Structuralist approach to Chinese literature does not seem to suggest a promising future. Two things can still be done. One is using Structuralist methods to explain certain already noticed literary effects. The second thing is to adopt certain Structuralist assumptions but not directly apply existing Structuralist critical models to Chinese literature. It is also what Culler describes: "uses linguistics not as a method of analysis but as the general model for semiological investigation."⁶³ Chou's method in the two essays discussed above is more or less working in that direction. Andrew Plaks's investigation on Chinese "novels" can be subsumed to this method too. Plaks does not impose a foreign model on Chinese novels, but tries to establish the structure of Chinese novels by a comparative analysis of a number of Chinese novels.⁶⁴ Both the first and second things serve as a preliminary step to a full-fledged research. As Ferrante warns us, "studies of style and structure are important and

useful, because they enable us to understand what is going on in a work by comparison and contrast, but only if we use them as tools, not as ends in themselves. We must, eventually, confront the overall meaning, or we will have lost the point of literature altogether."⁶⁵ Since Structuralist approach to Chinese literature can hardly stand by itself as a complete work, we cannot treat it as a branch of interdisciplinary studies. Then, to call Structuralist approach to Chinese literature a part of comparative literature deserves a second thought.

Comparing theories of literature in order to arrive at a common poetics is not itself a wrong thing. Our doubt is first the possibility of coming to this common poetics and secondly how useful it is. What is the foundation upon which we build our common poetics in order that it can really be described by that term? Wai-lim Yip's "The Use of 'Models' in East-West Comparative Literature," and more recently "*Pi-chao wen-hsüeh ts'ung-shu tsung-hsü*" 比較文學叢書總序 (The General Preface to the Comparative Literature Studies Series) spell out his purposes of establishing a common poetics (and common aesthetic grounds) and the practical means to achieve that goal. The common poetics conceived by Yip is a synthesis of the Chinese and Western poetics, treating each other on an equal basis. The foundation is located in the overlapping areas of the two systems of poetics. He writes:

In the studies of Chinese-Western comparative literature, if we want to establish a common poetics or a common aesthetic ground, the first thing to do is to find out the similarities and differences in the theories of each critical orientation as they develop respectively in the Eastern and Western cultural-aesthetic traditions. In the process of juxtaposition and comparison, we sort out the problems rooted in the common aesthetic grounds. Then we make use of their identical or similar procedures of expression to check the possibility of a convergence of aesthetics beyond cultural boundaries. . . . We should not only look for "similarities" and eliminate the "differences." . . . We should also base upon the differences to identify the similarities, and base upon that which does not exist to achieve that which has already existed.

我們在中西比較文學的研究中，要尋求共同的文學規律、共同的美學據點，首要的，就是就每一個批評導向裏的理論，找出它們各個

在東方西方兩個文化美學 統裏生成演化的「同」與「異」，在它們互顧互對互比互識的過程中，找出一些發自共同美學據點的問題，然後才用其相同或近似的表現程序來印證跨文化美學滙通的可能性。…我們不要只找同而消除異…我們還要藉異而識同，藉無而得有。

The ambition and ideal of Yip should be highly respected. The enterprise itself is also worth undertaking. But I would like to add a few questions and considerations. Except that we want to confine our perspective to the Chinese-Western traditions, if the term common poetics is used in a global sense, I think that it is also a necessity of taking into account the Arabic and African literary traditions which are often distinguished from the Western (Anglo-American-European) tradition. As for the East, I doubt whether Chinese tradition is adequate enough to represent India, Japanese, Korean and other oriental traditions. Therefore, if we want to find a common poetics in a global sense, then, I believe, the initial step is an establishment of what I call "cosmopolitan poetics," the concept of which I am indebted to André Lefevere. Lefevere argues that a science of literature is in need of a stable transmit which "is a vital necessity if literary scholars are ever to be able to argue on common ground, not just in the West but, a *fortiori*, between West and East." The transmit Lefevere has in mind is a repertory of procedures, "an imaginary inventory of all possibilities of literary creation."⁶⁷ The cosmopolitan poetics I conceive is an encyclopaedic inventory of all poetics in world literature. Without reaching this initial stage, all efforts of searching a common poetics would turn out to be futile. While Western poetics *per se* is not the proper place to harbour our hope of arriving at a common poetics, a mere addition of the Chinese perspective would never finalize the great enterprise common poetics either. Moreover, every critic would depend on his own knowledge to develop his own version of common poetics. I wonder whether a common poetics accepted by all scholars would ever come out at all, if we do not have at the outset a cosmopolitan poetics as our common solid basis.

The second doubt, the usefulness of common poetics, is even more important. What exact contributions would this common poetics bring to literary studies in general? Even though it may not be the ultimate aim, common poetics should at least contribute some help to our literary criticism and creation. How far common poetics can go in this direction we still have to wait and see.

World literature, yes; common poetics, yes too. But world literature seems to be more tangible, if not also more promising, than common poetics.⁶⁸ It is, therefore, perhaps wiser to follow Scholz's practical concern in comparing theories of literature before we finish compiling cosmopolitan poetics. That is to say, even if we compare two theories, our purpose is to improve them so that they can offer more help to us in practical criticism. In the mean time, I also hope that in the process of coming to cosmopolitan poetics, we could build another encyclopaedia of critical theories and critical methods in the same global sense. Let us call that "world critical models."⁶⁹ World literature refers to literary works, whereas "world critical models" refers to critical theories and methods. My purpose is that Western scholars would get themselves more acquaintance with critical theories and methods outside the Western traditions. In the light of the application of Western critical approaches to Chinese literature, which opens a new horizon for, and enlarges our perspectives of, interpreting and appreciating Chinese literature, we anticipate that the reciprocal treatment of applying non-Western critical approaches to the studies of Western literature would refresh the *status quo* of the studies of Western literature. Comparing a Chinese literary theory to a Western one so as to make the former intelligible to Western critics will eventually become another orientation for the second possibility – metacriticism – other than what Scholz expects.⁷⁰ How much the Structuralist approach can contribute to this new orientation is still not predictable.

The future of Structuralist approach in East-West Comparative Literature therefore mainly stems from the third possibility.⁷¹ What we mean is again not a direct application of certain Structuralist theory to the works in question. Aside from that, the kind of Structuralist poetics which shifts our focus from writers' way of composing literary works to readers' ways of reading literature may contribute something to the translation of Eastern texts into Western languages and vice versa. In our final definition of East-West Comparative Literature, perhaps interdisciplinary studies should be defined as the third possibility, no matter whether the other sphere of expression is psychology or Structuralism or others, but not as Remak's definition. Yes, comparative literature involves at least two national literatures. We should also take into our enterprise comparing theories of literature, so that East-West Comparative Literature in future should not merely aim at world literature, but also cosmopolitan poetics and world critical models, and perhaps eventually common poetics.

Before we close our discussion, we would like to quote Levi-Strauss's opinion on applying the Structuralist approach to literature:

The fundamental vice of any literary criticism with Structuralist pretensions comes from its amounting too often to a play of mirrors, wherein it becomes impossible to distinguish the object from its symbolic reverberation in the consciousness of the subject. The work studied and the analyzer's thoughts reflect themselves in each other, and we are denied any means of discerning what is simply received from the former and what the latter puts there. One is thus trapped in a reciprocal relativism which can afford subjectively certain charms; but we do not see what type of external evidence it could be referred to. . . . One never knows during the unfolding of a pseudo-dialogue between the critic and the work, if the former is a faithful observer, or the unconscious animator of a production whose spectacle he is providing for himself, and whose audience will always be wondering if the text is emitted by flesh and blood characters or if it is bestowed on puppets which the critic himself has invented through a ventriloquial skilfulness.⁷²

It is our wish that scholars would bear in mind Levi-Strauss's opinion as a reminder of some kind in their process of engaging in Structuralist analysis of literature.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Dr Ying-hsiung Chou of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I have also to thank Dr Wong Kin-yuen of the National Taiwan University, my commentator, Professor Lubomir Dolezel of the University of Toronto, and Professor Douwe Fokkema of the University of Vtrecht for their questions and suggestions to my paper during the conference. My reactions to their questions would be found in detail in the following notes.
2. Ulrich Weisstein, for example, "hesitate [s] . . . to extend the study of parallels to phenomena pertaining to two different civilizations" and describes Etiemble's call for the comparison between the East and West as *naïveté*. For details, see his *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 7-8. According to Heh-hsiang Yuan, it is also the problems existed in the cross-cultural comparative studies that make A. Owen Aldridge engage in

- the find of comparative studies of literature which is not based on theories of literature and which is minorly criticized by William Tay. See Heh-hsiang Yuan, "Ts'ung kuo-chia-wen-hsüeh tao shih-chieh-wen-hsüeh - chien t'an chung-hsi pi-chiao-wen-hsüeh yeh-chiu ti i-hsieh wen-t'ï" 從國家文學到世界文學—兼談中西比較文學研究的一些問題 (From National Literature to World Literature - Also on some Problems in Chinese-Western Comparative Studies of Literature) *Chung-wai Literary Monthly*, 11, No. 2 (1982), 13-14. William Tay (Cheng Shu-shen) "wen-hsüeh-li-lun yü pi-chiao-wen-hsüeh" 文學理論與比較文學 (Literary Theories and Comparative Literature) *CWLM*, 11, No. 1 (1982), 112-36. Hereafter, *CWLM* refers to *Chung-wai Literary Monthly*.
3. Yuan's series of essays includes: I. "Lioh-t'an pi-chiao-wen-hsüeh - hui-ku, hsien-chuang yü chan-wang" 略談比較文學—回顧、現狀與展望 (A Sketch of Comparative Literature: Retrospect, Current State and Future prospects) *CWLM*, 2, No. 9 (1974), 62-70; II. "chung-hsi pi-chiao-wen-hsüeh ting-i ti t'an-t'ao" 中西比較文學定義的探討 (An Investigation into the Definition of Chinese-Western Comparative Literature) *CWLM*, 4 No. 3 (1975), 24-51; III. "T'a-shan-chih-shih: pi-chiao-wen-hsüeh, fang-fa, p'i-p'ing yü chungkuo-wen-hsüeh yen-chiu" 他山之石：比較文學、方法、批評與中國文學研究 (Rocks from Other Mountain: Comparative Literature, Methods, Criticism and Chinese Literary Studies) *CWLM*, 5, No. 8 (1977), 6-19; IV. "East-West Communication and Cooperation," *Comparative Literature Studies*, 15 (1978), 166-76; V. "East-West Comparative Literature - An Inquiry into Possibility," ed. John Deeney, *Chinese-Western Comparative Literature - Theory and Strategy* (Hong Kong: The Chinese Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 1-24. Hereafter this book will be cited as *CWCLTS*.
 4. Rene Welleck and Austin Warren, in *Theory of Literature*, call the interdisciplinary approach to literature "extrinsic approach." See *Theory of Literature* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978), pp. 73-74.
 5. For a more comprehensive discussion of the validity and possible functions of Structuralist approach in the study of Chinese literature, see Ying-hsiung Chou, "Chieh-kou-chu-i shih-fou shih-he chung-kuo-wen-hsüeh yen-chiu" 結構主義是否適合中國文學研究 (Is Structuralism Suitable for the Studies of Chinese Literature) *CWLM*, 7, No. 10 (1979), 30-45; and William Tay, "Chieh-kou-chu-i yü chung-kuo-wen-hsüeh yen-chiu" 結構主義與中國文學研究 (Structuralism and Chinese Literary Studies) *CWLM*, 10, No. 10 (1982), 4-41.
 6. Henry H. H. Remak, "Comparative Literature: Its Definition and Function," ed. Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz, *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1961), p. 7.
 7. Calvin S. Brown, "Comparative Literature," *Georgia Review*, 13 (1959), 174.
 8. See Roland Barthes, "Science Versus Literature," *The Time Literary Supplement* (September 28, 1967), p. 897 for the first definition, and "Une Problematique du Sens," *Cahier Nedia*, 1 (1967-8), 10 for the second definition. English translation of the second definition in Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 255.
 9. Culler, p. 256.
 10. James J. Y. Liu, "The Study of Chinese Literature in the West: Recent Development, Current Trends, Future Prospects," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 35, No. 1 (1975), 28.
 11. Anthony C. Yu, "Problems and Prospects in Chinese-Western Literary Relation," *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 23 (1974), 50. Hereafter, cited

- as *YCGL*.
12. A. Owen Aldridge, "East-West Relation: Universal Literature, Yes; Common Poetics, No," *Tamkang Review*, 10, No. 1 (1979), 18. Hereafter, cited as *TKR*.
 13. See James Liu, "Towards A Synthesis of Chinese and Western Theories of Literature," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 4 (1977), 1. Here, I agree with Liu on putting theoretical and practical criticism together instead of separating them as Welleck does. See also Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics* trans. Richard Howard, (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1981), pp. xxi-xxiii. In the following discussion, I would use the term critic to include both theoretical and practical critics, and literary theory and theory of Literature are used interchangeably to denote the two meanings that James Liu distinguishes.
 14. John Reichert, *Making Sense of Literature* (Chicago & London: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 4. See also André Lefevere, "Some Tactical Steps Towards a Common Poetics," ed., William Tay, Ying-hsiung Chou and Heh-hsiang Yuan, *China and the West: Comparative Literature Studies* (Hong Kong: Chinese Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 9-16; hereafter cited as *CWCLS*; and E. D. Hirsh, Jr., *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago & London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1976), esp. pp. 156 ff.
 15. James Liu is right in asking that "how far are critical methods and standards derived solely from Western literature valid when applied to Chinese literature given the widely divergent cultural environment in which the two literatures have been proved?" James Liu, 1975, p. 28. See also K. W. Radtke, "Concepts in Literary Criticism: Problems in the Comparative Study of Japanese, Chinese and Western Literature," *Orien Extremus*, 28, No. 1 (1981), 107-23; Wai-lim Yip, "The Use of 'Models' in East-West Comparative Literature," *TKR*, 6, No. 2 & 7, No. 1 (Oct. 1975-Apr. 1976), 109-26; Yuan, 1977 & 1982; and William Touponce, "Book Review: Chinese-Western Comparative Literature: Theory and Strategy," *TKR*, 11, No. 3 (1981), 317-27, "Book Review: China and the West: Comparative Literature Studies," *TKR*, 11, No. 4 (1981), 437-45.
 16. Joan M. Ferrante, "Some Thoughts on the Application of Modern Critical Methods to Medieval Literature," *YCGL*, 28 (1979), 5. John J. Deeney, "A Prospectus for Chinese Literature from Comparative Perspectives," *CWCLTS*, p. 181.
 17. A Owen Aldridge, in his *Comparative Literature: Matter and Method* (Urbana, Chicago, London: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1969), p. 1, writes that "it is now generally agreed that comparative literature does not compare national literatures in the sense of setting one against other." Although the problem of evaluation in comparative literature has already aroused many scholars' attention, in my opinion, it is unwise to make value judgement in comparative literature. It is sometimes controversial to tell whether Milton is a greater poet than Shakespeare, or Tu Fu a greater poet than Li Po. It is even more difficult to judge whether Tu Fu is a greater poet than Milton or vice versa. Whenever there is a conclusion of this kind, hostility and aggression may arise from the supporters of the supposed worse poet. The discussion might even turn out to be meaningless quarrels. An example may be the quarrel between C. T. Hsia and Yen Yuan-shu about the merits and demerits of American New Criticism and Chinese Classical criticism. See Sze Chien, "Wen-hsieh p'i-p'ing ti ts'eng-tz'u" 文學批評的層次 (The Levels in Literary Criticism) *Yu-shih wen-i* 幼師文藝, 280 (April 1977), 192-209 and Craig Fisk, "Chu-kuan yü p'i-p'ing-li-lun - chien-t'an chung-kuo shih-hua" 主觀與批評理論—兼談中國詩話 (Subjectivity and Critical Theories - also on Chinese

- Poetry Talks) *CWLM* 6, No. 11 (1974), 46-78 for a bibliography and details of that quarrel. For other problems of literary evaluation, see ed. Joseph Strelka, *Problems of Literary Evaluation* (University Park & London: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1969).
18. Yuan, 1982, p. 16 and 1980, p. 6; Deeney, p. 181.
 19. The advantages and disadvantages recounted here are not necessarily only related to the application of Structuralist approach to Chinese literature, but also to literature in general.
 20. See Sze Chien, pp. 192-209, and Wong Wai-leung, "Chinese Impressionistic Criticism: A Study of the Poetry Talk (*shih-hua tz'u-hua*) Tradition," Diss., The Ohio State University, 1976.
 21. Shih-hsiang Chen, "The Genesis of Poetic Time: The Greatness of Ch'u Yüan, Studied with a New Critical Approach," *The Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, 10, No. 1 (1973), 1.
 22. For a discussion of the difficulties of the Chinese critical terms, see Yang Sung-nien, "*Chung-kuo-wen-hsüeh-p'i-p'ing yung-yü yü-i han-hu chih wen-t'i*" 中國文學批評用語語義含糊之問題 (The Problems of Semantic Ambiguities of the Chinese Critical Terms) *Nan-yang University Journal*, 8 & 9 (1974), 122-30, also Wong Wai-leung, pp. 69-82.
 23. See György m. Vajda, "Present Perspectives of Comparative Literature," *Neohelicon*, 5 (1977), 279. Also, Elmar Holenstein, *Roman Jakobson's Approach to Language: Phenomenological Structuralism* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 7-8.
 24. See Culler, p. viii.
 25. See Vajda, p. 268.
 26. See Culler, p. viii.
 27. Although it has been a canonical belief that we should not take into account the intention of an author in judging the success or failure of his work — what Wimsatt and Beardsley called "intentional fallacy," sometimes, it is impossible for us not to take into account the intention of the author, especially when the work is didactically oriented, ironic or satirical or a dramatic monologue by Browning. For further discussion of the authors' intention, see John Reichert, pp. 59-95, and David Newton De Nolina ed., *On Literary Intention* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1976); E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven & London: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 1-23.
 28. Ferrante, p. 8.
 29. Culler, p. 257.
 30. Ferrante, p. 8.
 31. André Lefevere comments, for example, that "the reader of this type of criticism (Structuralist criticism) is not supposed to either 'feel' or 'be taught,' not even to understand what the author has to say. He is merely invited to admire the consummate dexterity of the jester, the juggler with unnecessary formalization, diagrams, models." "Western Hermeneutics and Concepts of Chinese Literary Theory," *TKR*, 6, No. 2 & 7, No. 1 (Oct 1975-Apr 1976), 162. Lefevere's comment is perhaps true to a certain extent, and certainly provides an example of hostility and disgust that some critics show to the application of Structuralism to the study of literature in general.
 32. Professor Wong Kin-yuen, my commentator, points out here that it is sometimes very difficult to judge what is an unnecessary jargon. While an employment of

certain technical terms may sound superfluous to a reader, it may be an indispensable and irreplaceable usage for the writer. Professor Wong has a very good point here. But what I mean is that a critic should by all means make his critical work communicable to as many readers as possible. If a critic has tried his best to make his essays plain, but still only a small number of readers can appreciate his efforts, we can only sympathize with him, and can offer not much help.

33. The few number of essays on the topic of Structuralism written in Chinese perhaps partly reflects that the Chinese readers are not very familiar with the philosophy of Structuralism. For a bibliography of the essays in Chinese dealing with Structuralism and its application to the study of Chinese literature, see William Tay, "Chieh-kou-chu-i chung-wen tzu-liao mu-lu" 結構主義中文資料目錄 (The Chinese Materials on Structuralism: A Bibliography," in Ying-hsiung Chou and Shu-shen Cheng ed., *Chieh-kou-chu-i ti li-lun yü shih-chien* 結構主義的理論與實踐 (Structuralism: Theory and Practice) (Taipei: Li-ming weh-hua-shih-yeh kung-szu, 1980), pp. 207-13.
34. Han-liang Chang, "Towards a Structural Generic Theory of T'ang Ch'uan-ch'i," *CWCLTS*, pp. 25-50.
35. Touponce, "Book Review: Chinese Western Comparative Literature: Theory and Strategy," p. 320.
36. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca and New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1973), p. 25, see also p. 33 for a definition of the fantastic.
37. Same as note 35.
38. Culler warns us that the dangers of a purely theoretical approach exist in the fact that the "postulated norms might bear little relation to what readers actually do," p. 258. This warning is perhaps relevant to Todorov's model Dr Chang used here. See also William F. Brewer and Edward H. Lichtenstein, "Stories Are to Entertain: A Structural-Affect Theory of Stories," *Journal of Pragmatics*, 6, No. 5 & 6 (1982), 473-86 esp. 475 ff and also my discussion of this paper following.
39. Han-liang, "The Yang-lin Series: A Structural Analysis," *CWCLS*, 195-216.)
40. Tim-hung Ku, "T'ang ch'uan-ch'i ti chieh-kou fen-hsi" 唐傳奇的結構分析 (A Structural Analysis of T'ang ch'uan-ch'i) *CWLM*, 4, No. 3 (1975), 80-107.
41. Culler, p. 256; see also pp. 75-95; and Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature* (New Haven & London: Yale Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 102-11.
42. Culler, p. 95.
43. See William F. Brewer and Edward H. Lichtenstein. For details of the experiments and results, see also Edward H. Lichtenstein and William F. Brewer, "An Evaluation of Four Classes of Story Theories." Requests for reprints should be addressed to William F. Brewer, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois, 603 East Daniel, Champaign, Illinois 61820. Here I would like to thank Mr Kowk Leung of the Department of Psychology, University of Illinois, for his calling my attention to these two papers.
44. Culler, p. 256 and pp. 55-74.
45. Ying-hsiung Chou, "The Linguistic and Mythical Structure of *Hsing* as a Combinational Model," *CWCLTS*, pp. 51-78. See also his "Lord, Do Not Cross the River: Literature as a Mediating Process," *CWCLS*, pp. 109-26, and his other essays in Chinese in *Chieh-kou-chu-i yü chung-kuo weh-hsüeh* 結構主義與中國文學 (Structuralism and Chinese Literature) (Taipei: *Tung-ta t'u-shu kung-shih*, 1983). For a discussion of Chou's works in English, see Touponce's two reviews on *CWCLS*

- and *CWCLTS*; in Chinese, see William Tay, "Chieh-kou-chu-i yü chung-kuo-wen-hsüeh yen-chiu," op. cit.
46. Yu-kung Kao and Tsu-lin Mei, "Meaning, Metaphor and Allusion in T'ang Poetry," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 38, No. 1 (June 1978), 281-356, see Tay's comment on this essay, in "Chieh-kou-chu-i yü chung-kuo-wen-hsüeh yen-chiu," pp. 25-28 op. cit. See also their "Syntax, Diction and Imagery in T'ang Poetry," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 31, (1971), 49-136.
 47. See Roman Jakobson, "Concluding Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," *Style in Language* (Cambridge, Mass: M. I. T. Press, 1960), pp. 350-77. Also, Culler, p. 66 & p. 69.
 48. Touponce, "Review: Chinese-Western Literature: Theory and Strategy," p. 321.
 49. Rene Welleck, "The Crisis of Comparative Literature," *Concepts in Criticism*, ed. Stephen C. Nichols (New Haven & London: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), p. 294.
 50. "New Text of the Statutes of the ICLA," presented to the General Assembly of the IXth Congress, Innsbruck, August 20-24, 1979.
 51. Jonathan Culler, "Comparative Literature and Literary Theory," *Michigan Germanic Studies*, 5 (1979), 170-84.
 52. Bernhard F. Scholz, "Comparing the Theories of Literature: Some Remarks on the New Task Description of the ICLA," *YCGL*, 28 (1979), 27.
 53. Ying-hsiung Chou, "Chieh-kou-chu-i shih-fou shih-he chung-kuo-wen-hsüeh yen-chiu," p. 41.
 54. See James Liu, "Towards a Synthesis of Chinese and Western Theories of Literature," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 4 (1977), 1-24; and Wai-lim Yip, [(Language and the Real World - The Establishment of the Chinese and Western Aesthetic Grounds)] "Yü-yen yü chen-shih shih-chieh - chung-hsi mei-kan chi-ch'u ti sheng-ch'eng" 語言與真實世界—中西美感基礎的生成 *CWLM*, 11, No. 5 (1982), 4-39, and "A New Line a New Mind: Language & the Original World," ed. M. A. Abbas & Tak-wai Wong, *Literary Theory Today* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 161-76.
 55. For some critics, phenomenology and structuralism are not really mutually exclusive. See for example, Holenstein, pp. 51-52. Taoism can also be compared to post-structuralism. See Michelle Yeh, "The Deconstructive Way: A Comparative Study of Derrida and Chuang Tzu," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 10, No. 2 (1983), 95-126. Since the scope of this essay is within the confine of structuralism, I am not going into this area. For a discussion of the use of Derrida's philosophy in comparative literature, see Donald Wesling, "Methodological Implications of the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida for Comparative Literature: The Opposition East-West and Several Other Observations," *CWCLS*, pp. 79-112.
 56. Chi Ch'iu-lang, "Liu Hsieh's View on Novelty and Russian Formalists' Concept of Defamiliarization," *TKR*, 10, No. 47 (1980), 495-516. David Jason Liu, "The Chih-yen-chai Commentary: An Analysis in the Perspective of Western Theories of Literature," *TKR*, 10, No. 4 (1980), 471-94.
 57. A Owen Aldridge, "East-West Relations: Universal Literature, Yes; Common Poetics, No" *TKR*, 10, No. 1 (1979), 18.
 58. Ying-hsiung Chou "Mung chiao-kuan yü Li-erh wang," *Yu-shih wen-i*, 306 (June 1979), 28-51.
 59. Ling Meng-ch'ü 凌濛初 (1580-1644) *Erh-k'e p'ai-an ching-ch'i* 二刻拍案驚奇, *chüan* 26 (Shanghai: *Ku-tien-wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she*, 1957), pp. 545-62.
 60. A Owen Aldridge, *Comparative Literature - Matter and Method* (Urbana, Chicago,

London: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1969), p. 107.

61. James Robert Hightower, "Chinese Literature in the Context of World Literature," *Comparative Literature*, 5 (1953), 117-24.
62. James Liu, 1975, p. 29.
63. Culler, p. 257.
64. See Plaks, "Towards A Critical Theory of Chinese Narrative," ed. Andrew Plaks, *Chinese Narrative* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 309-52. "Concept Models of Chinese Narrative Theory," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 4 (1977), 25-47. "Major Issue on Chinese Narrative Theory," *PTL*, 2 (1977), 339-66. Of course, Plaks does build his theory largely on Lukács's *a Theory of The Novel*.
65. Ferrante, p. 9.
66. See Wai-lim Yip, "Pi-chao-wen-hsüeh ts'ung-shu tsung-hsü," *CWLM*, 11, No. 9 (1983), 122-34.
67. Lefevere, *CWCLS*, p. 13.
68. For problems of common poetics, see also Aldridge, *TKR*, 1979.
69. Originally, I use the term cosmopolitan poetics to include also this world critical models. Here I accept Professor Fokkema's advise to single out the practical concern from the concept of cosmopolitan poetics.
70. We have to be very careful in order that we do not abuse this orientation. Unlike literary works which may be opened to almost infinite interpretation, a literary theory or critical concept always means one single thing for its author. In the interpretation of certain Chinese literary concepts by means of some modern Western literary theories, we should by all means avoid putting words in our ancient Chinese critics' mouth by the pretext that it is a matter of point of view. Therefore, a critic's own understanding of the Chinese literary concepts is most essential.
71. In fact, Structuralist approach means a vital force for the future of comparative literature for some scholars such as Henry Remak and Vajda. See Remak's, "The Future of Comparative Literature," *Acts du VIII^e congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée* (1980), 429-37; Valda, pp. 267-81 (Valda actually means Semiotics). A. M. Rousseau, however, in the same conference with Remak, presented an opposite view towards Structuralist approach to the future of comparative literature. See "la Littérature Comparée et l'analyse Formelle des Tests Littéraires: Bilan et perspective," pp. 457-66. For the future of structural poetics in the studies of literature in general, see the special issue on "The Future of Structural Poetics" in *Poetics*, Vol 8, no. 6 (Dec 1979).
72. See Levi-Strauss, "Risposte a un questionario sullo strutturalismo," *Paragone* 16 (1965), 126-128. English translation in James A. Boon, *From Symbolism to Structuralism: Levi-Strauss in A Literary Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), pp. 54-55.