

ce dialogue dans le cadre d'un article. Cependant, il faut souligner qu'une histoire du comparatisme au Brésil s'avérera lacunaire, si elle ne la prend pas en considération. Elle sera également lacunaire, si elle oublie la conjonction de la théorie de l'anthropophagie du modernisme brésilien avec celle de l'inter-textualité.

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Toward a New Framework of Comparative Literature

Although Comparative Literature, as an independent discipline, came into being in the latter part of the nineteenth century, its development and broad institutionalization are a twentieth-century event, especially after the Second World War. In these years, great changes have taken place in the domain of international Comparative Literature studies, and remarkable advances have been achieved both in the West and in the East. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions Comparative Literature has made, was its impact on bringing together scholars from different fields of literary and cultural studies from different parts of the world, thereby breaking through the artificial limitation of Eurocentrism or West-centrism or any other regional centrism. Now, as we are moving towards the end of the century, it may be appropriate to review Comparative Literature from an international point of view. At the same time, owing to dramatic political changes in the past few years and in order to reinforce one of the basic elements of Comparative Literature, namely its *inter-national* and *intra-national* approach to the study of literature, it is urgent that we readjust some aspects of established Comparatist orientations of research. By this I mean a more stringent focus on an international and pluralistic Comparatist perspective, thus mitigating the traditional West-oriented perspective.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE: A RE-ORIENTATION

In China, Comparative Literature has been restored after years of stagnation and has begun to develop rapidly since the post-Mao years, both as a research approach and as an independent discipline in literary studies. In 1988, I wrote in an essay that

the increasing maturity of Comparative Literature as an independent discipline in China was marked by the popularity of the approach in university classrooms and literary research circles and the appearance of numerous books and essays dealing with Comparative Literature. But still, there are quite a number of scholars who attempt to negate the value of Comparative Literature as a discipline in its own right. To them, it lacks a fixed definition, and it does not even have a distinct object of study. Thus it comes that it is still far from being regarded as an independent discipline. (1992, 1; my translation)

At the time, I did not intend to involve myself in any protracted debate on whether or not there is such a discipline as Comparative Literature in China, or argue that in the West Comparative Literature has long been an established approach in literary studies.¹ What I intended to do was to "suggest an approach or a paradigm of research for my Chinese colleagues by referring to the main approaches of Comparative Literature both in the West and in China" (1-2). The reason why I introduced the interdisciplinary approach of Comparative Literature at that time was to "break through the model of the 'two methods' (influence study and parallel study) dominant in the circles of Chinese Comparative Literature studies" (1-2).

When Comparative Literature was first introduced as a discipline in China, after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), many scholars understood it simply as a method of comparative study between Chinese literature and another foreign literature. They were not aware that Comparative Literature, as practised in the West, included approaches where literature was studied by drawing on other disciplines and fields of learning. In recent years, however, academic exchanges between Chinese and foreign scholars has made it possible for literary scholars in China to learn more about Comparative Literature. Consequently, Comparative Literature has begun to be recognized institutionally both by the government and by universities and its recognition among scholars has also increased. A few examples will illustrate the current situation. First, the authorization of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association occurred in 1985 and, second, a Ph.D programme in Comparative Literature was established at Peking University in 1993. My third example is the recent authorization of the journal *Zhongguo bijiaowenxue* (*Comparative Literature in China*), a quarterly published in Shanghai.²

Most importantly, Chinese scholars of Comparative Literature have begun to move — beyond the established modes of influence and parallel studies — to the frameworks of "parallel-reception" and "influence-interdisciplinary approach." Cross-cultural and Chinese-Western comparative poetics allow for the re-orientation of parallel studies to explore theories of literary interpretation

applicable to literary phenomena in an East-West context. Reception-influence studies are no longer only about tracing and compiling factual data of one literature influencing another. Instead, drawing on the aesthetics of reception, they include such areas as the re-writing of Chinese literary history and, especially, that of modern Chinese literature since the May 4 Period,³ from an international comparative perspective. The interdisciplinary approach, on the one hand, has broken through artificial demarcations between disciplines, fields of learning, and branches of arts, and positioned literature in a broader context of culture. On the other hand, it has also broadened literary scholarship into one of inter-cultural, inter-linguistic, and inter-artistic comparative studies in a real sense, thereby facilitating communication between countries and nations.⁴

The flourishing of Comparative Literature in China is also marked by another factor: out of the isolation, Chinese Comparatists are now increasingly able to participate in theoretical dialogues in international scholarship. This dialogue is reciprocal, however, in the sense that while Chinese scholars gain in knowledge of Western theories and methods, they in turn are able to communicate their research and theoretical constructions to increasing numbers of Western scholars. The event of the XIIIth Triennial Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association / Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée (Tokyo, 1991), as well as the programme of its XIVth Triennial Congress (Edmonton, 1994) demonstrated the growing level of East-West dialogue. Today, Western as well as Eastern scholars are aware that both Western and Eastern poetics are worthy of inquiry and this recognition results in the obvious acknowledgement, namely that Comparative Literature must break through Eurocentrism and embrace a broad international context (see, for example, Fokkema; Wang). More and more Western scholars recognize the fact that Comparative Literature will not be able to contribute to literary scholarship without a dimension including Oriental cultures and literatures. The level of Western interest in Orientalism, Third World literatures, and post-colonialism is

3 According to traditional Chinese literary historians, twentieth-century Chinese literature is divided into two periods: modern Chinese literature is marked by the May 4th Movement of 1919, and contemporary Chinese literature is marked by the founding of the People's Republic of China. Attempts to re-think and to re-write Chinese literary history include the examination of twentieth-century Chinese literature as different from the literature in previous centuries. This approach has been inspired by methods of Comparative Literature as well as reception studies.

4 In recent years, under the influence of such Western trends of academic thought as postmodernism, post-colonialism and Cultural Studies, even the demarcations between high literature and popular literature, between (pure) literary genres and (sub) literary genres, and between history and fiction seem obscured in the current discussions taking place in Chinese literary and critical circles.

1 Although Comparative Literature came to China in the early twentieth century, signalled by Lu Xun's article "Moluo shi li shuo" ("On Romantic Poetry"), a number of scholars doubted Comparative Literature as a discipline as late as the mid-1980s. Thus, it is not surprising that there are no Comparative Literature departments at China's universities. There exists one Research Institute of Comparative Literature and Culture affiliated with the Department of Chinese at Peking University where a graduate program is offered. This lack of institutionalization of Comparative Literature at our universities is in contrast to the interest in Comparative Literature among students and faculty which, in my experience, is prevalent at most universities and research institutes in China.

2 It should be noted that this publication existed in the form of a book series for ten years prior to its foundation as a learned journal.

clear evidence of the importance accorded to the international context of the study of literature.

Since the end of the 1980s great changes — political, economic, social and cultural — have taken place in many parts of the world. These changes had an impact on the Humanities, the Social Sciences, and on Comparative Literature. Taking into consideration these changes, the current conditions of Chinese-Western Comparative Literature studies, and the specific situation of Comparative Literature in China, I will now outline my proposal for a new comparative framework, a re-orientation of international Comparative Literature studies for the turn of the century. In my view, the cultural and linguistic paradigms situated in French, Anglo-Saxon, and Soviet and East-Central European theoretical frameworks and approaches could be rethought of as consisting of a European theoretical environment (with France and/or Germany as its centre), a North American theoretical environment (with the United States as its centre), and an Oriental theoretical environment (with China, India, and Japan as its centre). Increased levels of dialogue are needed among these theoretical environments — and other theoretical environments such as an African, an Arabic, a Feminist, a Gay-Lesbian, etc., which should also be included and paid attention to. Such dialogues should hopefully result in mutual understanding in every aspect of our lives and in every field of learning. The same is true in the more specific field of Comparative Literature: no single force can dominate the international landscape of Comparative Literature. The European theoretical environment can only reflect what has been done or is still going on in the European circles of Comparative Literature and the North American theoretical environment can at best represent Comparative Literature in the United States and in Canada. Similarly, an Oriental theoretical environment will by no means replace what has been achieved in our field in China or in other parts of the world. Meaningful results in Comparative Literature will be achieved if attention is paid to scholarship in a truly international context.

Some will say that Comparative Literature has been dominated by the French, the American, and the Soviet and East-Central European theoretical environments. Thus, the development of an Oriental theoretical and methodological environment would face some obstacles. For instance, what would be its research basis on which it could be developed and what are its own characteristics as compared to the other theoretical environments?

We should be aware that no theoretical framework will remain stagnant. In an analogue, let me point out that any unit of the social system has its own periods of inauguration, development, prevalence, and decline. In literature, periods, movements, or styles such as the Renaissance, the Baroque, Classicism, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, the Biedermeier, or Realism have soon become historical phenomena in the course of their different evolutions between start and end. Many contemporary scholars would agree that Modernism, for example, has already produced a canon. At the same time, some would argue that

postmodernism already reached its decline.⁵ Similarly, French theories of the positivistic type had been strongly challenged in the latter part of the 1950s by American theories while the two schools co-existed and dominated Comparative Literature. Shortly after that, reception studies inspired the French theoretical landscape and enabled French scholars to shift their attention from passive influence studies to the problematics of the recipient. Consequently, the almost "exhausted" French theoretical environment gained new momentum.⁶ The American response to the challenge of the French theoretical landscape occurred on both the theoretical and methodological levels and it shifted the focus from the positivistic data-compilation of factual influence to an emphasis on analytical interpretation and on inter-cultural and inter-disciplinary comparison.

This direction broadened the scope of Comparative Literature in that it began to pay more focused attention to contemporary theoretical advances in the Humanities and Social Sciences and even the Natural Sciences. The American environment of Comparative Literature can be characterized as focussing on contemporary issues in literary theory and criticism, and literary historiography, thus making Comparative Literature an increasingly inclusive discipline. A strong point of Comparative Literature in this sense lies in its enrichment of more traditional Comparative Literature while pushing it toward a more rapid development of theoretical and methodological parameters and institutionalization. Its shortcomings are being, at times, too inclusive; the attempt to deal with too wide a range of problems, and the loss of its own distinct character in literary studies. So it is not surprising that many Western scholars could not but question whether Comparative Literature has meaningful boundaries and, as a result, whether the discipline has reason to exist at all. Obviously, these problems or "crises" may well be solved through a readjustment of the internal mechanism of Comparative Literature I implied above rather than by immediate responses to external challenges.

As for as the Soviet and East-Central European environments of literary theory and Comparative Literature are concerned, these are less definable than the European and North American landscapes. Although I seldom hear Western scholars discuss specifically "Soviet" theories of Comparative Literature, it has been discussed specifically in Chinese Comparative Literature circles. One example of this is the entry in the volume "Foreign Literature" of *Zhongguo da*

5 For instance, Ihab Hassan said already in 1987, "Let postmodernism rest!" (1988, 22) and Douwe Fokkema sums up postmodernism "which we cannot influence directly" (1984, 6).

6 One example of the mechanisms of theory transfer is the result of Yves Chevalier's speech at the First National Congress of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association (Shenzhen, 1985), in which he largely drew upon elements found in reception studies. This in turn inspired Chinese scholars to observe and study recent developments in Western literary and critical theories.

baikeshu (*The Chinese Encyclopedia*), on Comparative Literature, in which the "Soviet School" is described as the third influential school in the field of international Comparative Literature. It is said that the "Soviet School" is characterized by thematic approaches to literature and, at the same time, the School has attached great importance to comparatist studies of Russian and Soviet literature and the literatures of the other nations both inside and outside the former Soviet Union. To this rather limited picture of this environment, one should at least add the contributions to the semiotic study of culture. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the Soviet and Central and East European theoretical and critical environment is limited in scope. Moreover, for a long period of time, owing to the dominance of policies issued by the former Soviet Communist Party, approaches and methodologies of so-called vulgar sociology adversely affected literary studies in these countries. Often, Comparative Literature was regarded as a kind of "anti-Marxist pseudoscience," whose development was further restricted by powerful political agendas which marginalized Comparative Literature as a discipline. In China, largely owing to the influence of the Soviet line and policies in literature and art, Comparative Literature as a discipline was almost forbidden during the years from 1949 to 1977. Even studies of foreign literature were confronted with great political difficulties. Therefore, the indeterminacy of the concept of the "Soviet School" is all the more remarkable. With political turmoil, economic change, and cultural depression in current Russia, the Social Sciences and the Humanities — previously totally depended on government support — are now on a course of decline. It follows that the Soviet environment in which a particular type of Comparative Literature flourished, has now all but disappeared. While we should not neglect the impact of the Soviet and Central and East European type of Comparative Literature, we can also recognize that it is now a historical fact but possibly without further possibilities of development. Personally, I hope that this theoretical environment, with certain modifications, can re-emerge in the form of new frameworks and methodologies.

AN ORIENTAL ENVIRONMENT FOR COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

In the previous section, I suggested a new framework of Comparative Literature in an international context for the turn of the century. Here, I would like to suggest that within Comparative Literature we develop a focus with regards to an Oriental environment of comparative literary theory and criticism. My definition of an "Oriental" environment in Comparative Literature is different from what Edward Said means by the term. For Said, the "Oriental" or "Orientalism" means, apart from its other implications, a certain image of the Orient created in the West or a certain type of discourse embedded in Oriental Studies in the West. In contrast, the notion of an Oriental environment for literary theory and criticism has been defined by Comparatists in the Oriental countries. Their

notion is not one in opposition to the West; rather, it is aimed at carrying out a dialogue with Western scholars on equal terms. For Said, the Orient is the "Other" (i.e., *alterite*) in the eyes of the West, similar to the "Occident" for some Oriental scholars. The Oriental "School" I propose is a notion developed by scholars of the Orient and seen through our own eyes.

It may be assumed that the three dominant theoretical and critical environments of Comparative Literature have been surpassed. It may also be a valid assumption that the previously marginalized area of Eastern literatures within Comparative Literature will rapidly gain importance in our discipline. Thus, the development of an Oriental environment of theory and criticism within Comparative Literature appears to me self-evident. Chinese Comparatists — including our colleagues in Hong Kong and Taiwan — as well as Indian, Japanese, and Korean Comparatists, all based on ancient cultures and aesthetics rich in tradition, are well equipped to develop new paradigms in Comparative Literature, enabling us to cross over between Occidental and Oriental literatures. An Oriental environment of Comparative Literature can allow for a poetics that can be applied to literatures of the East and the West while allowing for a dialogue between scholars on equal footing.

Historical experience taught us that a certain culture may exist relative to an "Other" culture. The "Other" culture, at the same time, may be read as the reflection of one's own culture. This interrelationship manifests itself in such phenomena defined as marginality, "post-colonialism," "minority discourse," "post-orientalism," or "Third World literature." "Modernism," "avant-garde," or "postmodernism" penetrates the East as mutations from the West, acquiring different meanings and functions on their way. Similarly, when two essentially different cultures encounter each other, it is very likely for one of them — the relatively stronger one usually — to exert influence on the other. Even so, such an influence does not necessarily mean direct imposition of a model. The model may be modified, transformed and reconstructed, often through misunderstanding or misreading, often to a large extent subject to the other's attitude. The receiving culture may reject it completely, or it may remain indifferent to it, or it may actively receive it by transforming it into a new mutation according to its own needs. Such mechanisms occurred in the transformations of "Symbolism," "Neo-Romanticism" and "Modernism" in Chinese literature following the May 4th Period, thus signalling the birth of a new Chinese literature (*Xin wenxue*). Similar counter- and cross-impregnations happened between modernist literature and postmodern culture in Latin American literature, where established cultural concepts and literary conventions were transformed in a process which resulted in the birth of "Magic Realism." More interestingly, Latin American writers such as García Márquez, Borges, and Fuentes have suddenly emerged from their originally marginal positions into central stage of contemporary world literature. Such mechanisms and processes indicate that a culture, be it Occidental or

Oriental, cannot and does not remain isolated and primary even within its own boundaries. It is the task of Comparative Literature to acknowledge the difference, relativity, and complementarity among different cultures so as to form an appropriate situation for a real dialogue.

The notion of an Oriental environment in Comparative Literature is an inevitable product of the inter-change, inter-action, and inter-communication of Occidental and Oriental cultures and literatures. It is necessitated by the recognition that Oriental cultures and aesthetic traditions should be embraced with an open and tolerant attitude, thus enriching our understanding of culture and literature in both the West and the East.

My next question concerns the viability of the Oriental environment in Comparative Literature, taking into account the dominance of the European and the North American environment in the discipline. First, the restoration and development of Comparative Literature in China during the last dozen years have already been recognized in international scholarship. China has the largest contingent of Comparatists in the world and their potential of research and development has attracted the attention of scholars in both the West and the East. Many of these scholars have already begun to explore Chinese and Oriental cultures as the "Other-s" which might well help them to re-examine their own culture(s).⁷

When considering the Oriental environment, we should attach great importance to the contributions made by Indian culture. In my opinion, the rich heritage of Indian culture and literature, together with classical Chinese literature and aesthetics, has laid solid foundations for the future development of Oriental aesthetics. We should also take note of the achievements of Indian Comparatists. In particular, the prevailing trend of post-colonialism and the study of post-colonial literatures in the West are largely a result of works by Indian scholars or those of Indian origin. Indian Comparatists, following the example of their Japanese colleagues, made a bid to sponsor the XVth Triennial Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association/Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée in 1997. Owing to considerations of geography and distance, as well as financial matters, their bid did not materialize. However, their example encourages us Chinese Comparatists in our bid to host the XVIth Congress in 2000. Intellectual (including literary theory and criticism), ideological, geopolitical as well as institutional aspects all point to the viability and, indeed, necessity that the previous centre of Comparative Literature located on the European-North American axis be merged with the formerly marginal and

marginalized region: the East. At the very least, the emergence of the Oriental environment would modify the previously monolithic centre of Comparative Literature and literary studies in general.

My proposal for a new orientation within Comparative Literature would not be complete without specific reference to Japan. Comparative Literature in Japan — rooted in an ancient culture and reinforced by a powerful economy that fuels her advanced science and technology — will increasingly claim our attention and this was obvious at the XIIIth Triennial Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association/Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée in 1991 in Tokyo.

CONCLUSION

It is well known that Comparatists in general, and in many specific parts of the world, are worried about the future of their discipline. There is concern with its increasingly widening disciplinary and theoretical boundaries and many are anxious with regard to the theoretical as well as institutional "take-over" of Cultural Studies. Still others are worried about whether or not it is necessary at all to have a discipline such as Comparative Literature when literary studies are more and more inclusive and pluralistic. Especially after the challenges of postmodernism and post-colonialism, the previously marginalized have begun to move into the mainstream: Third World cultures and literatures, Feminist literary theory and criticism, and various minority discourses are all affecting de-centralization and de-marginalization.

Comparative Literature is increasingly characterized by interest in comparative studies of Eastern and Western literatures, of literature and culture, of literary discourse and other discourses, of literary genres and sub-literary genres, of literary historiography and other historical narratives, etc. In my opinion, the existence of the discipline of Comparative Literature as a method of research is probably secure and it will continue to develop. However, it will no longer be a more or less homogeneous construct with one or two centres of theoretical, methodological, and critical environments. Undoubtedly, the Oriental environment of Comparative Literature will play a more and more important role in the future development of the discipline. It will not replace the role played by other environments; rather, it will develop side by side with other environments and approaches, be these Occidental or Oriental.

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7 For instance, such established European and American scholars as Douwe Fokkema and Fredric Jameson have expressed their interest in reading Lu Xun from the point of view of the "Other" (West), and, in turn, to modify their theories from the point of view of the other "Other" (China).

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MARIÁN GÁLIK

Comparative Literature in Slovakia

I.

Comparative Literature in Slovakia and its history is seldom mentioned in the books or articles devoted to the history of Comparative Literature. Scholars familiar with the histories of Central European Comparative Literature will know, however, that Slovak Comparative Literature dates back to the nineteenth century. Pavel Jozef Šafárik's (1795-1850) *Geschichte der slawischen Sprache und Literatur nach allen Mundarten*, published in 1826, marks the starting point of Slovak endeavours in Comparative Literature. Šafárik's monumental work represents the first concretization of the interliterary process within the framework of Slavonic languages and literatures — especially of Czech and Slovak — where dialectical tensions between intra-literary and inter-literary perspectives are stressed, although these terms are not used. Significantly, integrational as well as differential tendencies are taken into account in the work, even though much more space is devoted to the original and undifferentiated idea of Slav unity. "Slavonic language and literature" in the title of the work is misleading. On the contrary, in Šafárik's work diversity is a crucial concept, albeit at times sacrificed to the notion of an imagined homogeneity to comply with contemporary political and historical realities. In essence, Šafárik understood Slavonic literatures in an analogy to European literary "families," similar to the linguistic concept of Germanic languages.

Typologically similar to Šafárik's book was Ján Kollár's (1793-1852) *O literárnej vzájemnosti medzi kmeny a nářečnými slavskými (On Mutual Literary Relations Between Slav Tribes and Dialects)*, published in 1836. In my opinion, Kollár's concept of a unified Slav literature was a regression in comparison with that of Šafárik. At the same time, it is more than likely that Kollár was aware of Goethe's concept of world literature — first published in 1831 — and Kollár understood Slav literature as a hypostasis of world literature in the Goethean sense: "Nationalliteratur will jetzt nicht viel sagen; die Epoche der Weltliteratur ist an der Zeit, und jeder muß jetzt dazu wirken, diese Epoche zu beschleunigen" (Goethe in Biedermann Nr. 2472).

The third important representative of the prehistory of Slovak Comparative Literature was Ľudovít Štúr (1815-1856), who is credited as the codifier of the Slovak literary language. His work, *O národných písních a pověstech plemen slovanských (On Folk Songs and Legends of Slav Peoples)*, published in Prague