

Western Canons in China 1978-2014

He Lin

Sichuan University & University of Electronic Science and Technology of China

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [Education Commons](#), [European Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Other Arts and Humanities Commons](#), [Other Film and Media Studies Commons](#), [Reading and Language Commons](#), [Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#), [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#), [Television Commons](#), and the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

Dedicated to the dissemination of scholarly and professional information, [Purdue University Press](#) selects, develops, and distributes quality resources in several key subject areas for which its parent university is famous, including business, technology, health, veterinary medicine, and other selected disciplines in the humanities and sciences.

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture, the peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access learned journal in the humanities and social sciences, publishes new scholarship following tenets of the discipline of comparative literature and the field of cultural studies designated as "comparative cultural studies." Publications in the journal are indexed in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (Chadwyck-Healey), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Thomson Reuters ISI), the Humanities Index (Wilson), Humanities International Complete (EBSCO), the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, and Scopus (Elsevier). The journal is affiliated with the Purdue University Press monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Contact: <clcweb@purdue.edu>

Recommended Citation

Lin, He. "Western Canons in China 1978-2014." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 16.6 (2014): <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2668>>

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

The above text, published by Purdue University Press ©Purdue University, has been downloaded 258 times as of 11/07/19.

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](#).

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture, the peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access learned journal in the humanities and social sciences, publishes new scholarship following tenets of the discipline of comparative literature and the field of cultural studies designated as "comparative cultural studies." In addition to the publication of articles, the journal publishes review articles of scholarly books and publishes research material in its *Library Series*. Publications in the journal are indexed in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (Chadwyck-Healey), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Thomson Reuters ISI), the Humanities Index (Wilson), Humanities International Complete (EBSCO), the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, and Scopus (Elsevier). The journal is affiliated with the Purdue University Press monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Contact: <clcweb@purdue.edu>

Volume 16 Issue 6 (December 2014) Article 12
He Lin, "Western Canons in China 1978-2014"
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol16/iss6/12>>

Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 16.6 (2014)**
Special Issue **Western Canons in a Changing East Asia**. Ed. Simon C. Estok
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol16/iss6/>>

Abstract: In his article "Western Canons in China 1978-2014" He Lin surveys anthologies of foreign literature, book series, textbooks used in literary departments, and learned journals and draws a map of the situation of Western canons in China. He concludes that Western canons underwent a complicated process when establishing their roles in Chinese scholarship and that canonization is determined, in particular, by market mechanisms, ideological preconceptions, and literary institutions at universities. He posits that in the age of globalization a more intimate and subtle relationship has been established between Western literary canons and Chinese readership and scholarship. The publishing market, national policy, and educational institutions are not any more the only forces to dominate the canonization of literary works. Other factors and processes including consumerism, new media, the change of the notion of canons suggest that the canon is not static and that canon formation remains an unfinished project.

He LIN

Western Canons in China 1978-2014

Since late Qing Dynasty at the turn of twentieth century, Western literature has exerted influence on China and its culture. Under this trend, it is generally acknowledged that not only the domestic literary tradition, but also the very language for expressing literary concepts have been influenced. Those who have often been viewed as the most important Chinese writers of twentieth century such as Lu Xun (1881-1936), Hu Shi (1891-1962), Ba Jin (1904-2005), Cao Yu (1910-1996), among many others, produced their works under the influence of Western writers and Western literary thought. Under the circumstance of the eastward influences of Western culture during the major part of twentieth century, Marxism, Freudism, Modernism, New Criticism, etc., became widespread in China. Further, since the 1980s Chinese writers and scholars have showed great enthusiasm in modern Western literary theory. This interest has become so widespread that some scholars even claim that Western literary concepts, terminologies, and methodologies gradually became their only sources of interpretation and analysis of both foreign and Chinese literary works (see, e.g., Feng 214). Thus it appears that Western literary texts and theories have achieved a position of "canon" in China. Some scholars claim that a serious concern with the canon and canonization occurred when in 1993 Douwe Fokkema was invited by Peking University to present a lecture entitled "Literary Studies and Cultural Participation" (see, e.g., Li; Peng; Wang and Song). It is of course somewhat impossible to ascribe the issue of canonization to a single person or event, but Fokkema did find something that is significant to our concern about canonization of Western literary canons in China. Based on his Peking University lecture, Fokkema published a translated book—with Elrud Ibsch—entitled *文学研究与文化参与 (Literary Studies and Cultural Participation)*, in which they discussed processes and ideologies of canonization with regard to 1919 (May Fourth Movement), 1949 (New China), 1966-1976 (Cultural Revolution), and 1978 (Reform and Opening-up).

Fluctuations of political and social developments affected the situation of foreign literatures in China and while after 1949 literary works from the Soviet Union, most East European countries, and some third-world countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin-America were translated and studied, most literary texts and theories from the capitalist West (i.e., Europe and the U.S.) were rejected and hence little known. Since the beginning of the 1978 reform, Western literatures and theoretical texts poured into China and achieved dominance over literary scholarship and readership. Literary and theoretical canons are formed through a "cumulative process" that includes various components and factors such as the literary text, readership, literary history, criticism and scholarship, book sales, the use of library, etc. (see, e.g., Tötösy de Zepetnek). In this sense, in order to probe into the issue of the processes of the canonization of foreign literature, it is necessary to study the interactions between publications, criticisms and scholarship, readership, Chinese writers, and other market and literary mechanisms which may influence canon formation. The Western concept of the literary canon (here including both primary and secondary texts), is nearly equivalent to *经典 (jingdian)* as exemplified by the authoritative texts of Confucianism *十三经* (the Thirteen Classics). Since 1949 until 1978, however, *jingdian* had been used mainly for the classics of Marxism and socialist literature.

In the 1980s, Western literature that has been excluded from academia and education in China went back to universities and textbooks of foreign literature begun to emerge. However, in this decade of the reform and opening-up, the influence of the previous period can still be found. For example, ideological factors could be still strongly sensed in the 1980 book *外国文学简编 (A Short Anthology of Foreign Literature)*. According to editors Weizhi Zhu and Li Zhao, their emphasis was on literature's functions of social awareness and ideological education (see Zhu and Zhao). Then it is not surprising to see that they adopted "realism"—a concept dominant in China in the past several decades—as the fundamental principle for the theoretical structure of the book: three fourths of the content of the book is devoted to "literature of critical realism," "proletarian literature," and "literature of socialist realism" while the fourth is devoted to "foreign literature from ancient Graeco-Roman literature to Romanticism." Interestingly but understandably, Shakespeare, Goethe, Balzac, Tolstoy, and Gorky are discussed in the book, but none of modernist writers are included.

In the new decade Western literature would be confronted with a new fate in China. With the joint effort of translators, scholars, and publishers, a systematic republishing of Western literature's canon was carried out, most of which were in the form of anthologies. Among the influential ones were, for example, "complete works" by Shakespeare and Balzac and "collected works" by Pushkin, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Molière, Walter Scott, Dickens, Steinbeck, Heine, Strindberg, Andersen, among many others. Moreover, the representative or the most famous works of some modern Western writers were translated into Chinese, including Maugham, Brecht, Maurois, James, Bellow, Vonnegut, etc. But it is equally noticeable that US-American writers took a larger percentage in this period of the introduction of foreign literature in China. In the recovered, as well as renewed enthusiasm of importing Western literature, there were some book series whose significance cannot be neglected until today. Although the society was becoming more open in the 1980s, China still favored a firmly controlled planned economy. Correspondingly, the publishing market would not be determined mainly by the market itself. The book market was in the hands of several major large presses whose decisions in publishing books could lead the reading trend among readers. This can be best illustrated by the various book series developed by the most prestigious presses specializing in publishing literary works.

After the Cultural Revolution the publishing project underwent substantial advances, indeed. As a result of a joint effort between the Institute of Foreign Literature of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and two presses—the People's Literature Publishing House and the Shanghai Translation Publishing House—a series was named 外国文学名著丛书 (Foreign Literature Canons Series) and published by the two publishers. By the year of 2000, there had been altogether 149 books, most of which were published in the 1980s. The book series has enjoyed a good reputation among Chinese scholars and readers not only because of the two flagship publishing houses, but more importantly because of the good quality of translation (nearly all were done by the best translators in China at that time). As the name indicates, the book series extends its list from the classic to modern literary works. However, it is noticeable that Western literature (i.e., France, Britain, Russia/Soviet Union, Germany, and the U.S., are in a predominant position (see Table 1):

Table 1: Books published in the Foreign Literature Canons Series 1958-2000

nation & language	books
France	30
Britain	26
Russia / the Soviet Union	17 /1
Germany	14
the U.S.	12
Italy	7
Ancient Greek	6
Persia	4
Ancient Rome	4
Spain	4
India	4
Japan	3
Poland	2
Hungary	2
Arab countries	1
Bulgaria	1
Denmark	1
Philippines	1
Finland	1
Columbia	1
Czechoslovakia	1
Mexico	1
Norway	1
Portugal	1
Switzerland	1
Ukraine	1
Total	149

Another influential book series was *世界文学名著文库* (World Literature Canons Series) published by the People's Literature Publishing House 1993-2002. It has produced a total 200 translated books of world literary canons, most of which were Western literary works. We can see in Table 2 that the top favorite Western literary works are still those of Russia/Soviet Union, France, Britain, the U.S., and Germany. Also noticeable is that it has included more US-American literary works including such by Dreiser, Twain, London, Hawthorne, Poe, Beecher Stowe, Whitman, Melville, etc. Overall, this book series included mainly Western writers written before the twentieth century. But there are some exceptions. For instance, the representative works by those who are often viewed as modernist such as Kafka, Rilke, Zweig, Wilde, Joyce, Woolf, or Conrad are also found in the series.

Table 2: Books published in the World Literature Canon Series 1993-2002

nation & language	books
China	40
Russia/Soviet Union	24/6
France	29
Britain	27
U.S.A.	13
Germany	10
Spain	5
India	4
Japan	4
Italy	4
Ancient Greece	4
Austria	3
Ancient Rome	3
Poland	3
Ireland	3
Persia	2
Czechoslovakia	2
Hungary	2
Mexico	2
Arab countries	1
Lebanon	1
Portugal	1
Switzerland	1
Sweden	1
Norway	1
Denmark	1
Bulgaria	1
Peru	1
European fables	1
Total	200

The People's Literature Publishing House has begun one more ambitious canon series in 2003. The new series is entitled *名著名译* (Famously Translated Canons Series) featuring illustrations inside the books. So far there have been 140 books, 100 of which are selected from the previous World Literature Canons Series while the rest consists of new works. It is also noticeable that there is another important book series—*获诺贝尔文学奖作家丛书* (Nobel Prize Winners Book Series) published by the Lijiang Publishing House since 1983 (100 books have been published by now), which has been popular among readers. The large circulation of the series is perhaps related with the "Nobel Prize Complex" of many people in China, because the Nobel Prize in Literature, as the only authoritative international prize in many Chinese's eyes, had not favored any Chinese person in any field, especially in literature, before this century. Therefore, the factor of the Nobel Prize should not be neglected when probing the canonization of Western literary canons in China.

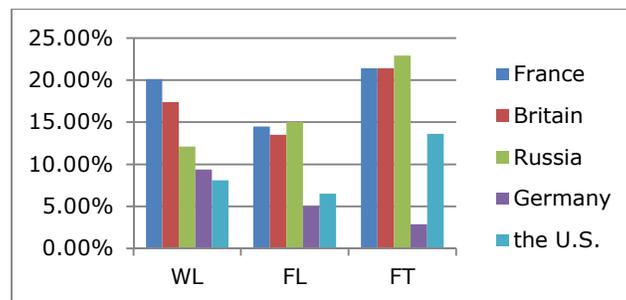
Table 3: Books published in the Famously Translated Canons Series 2003-2012

nation & language	books
Russia/Soviet Union	21/11

France	30
Britain	30
U.S.A.	19
Australia	4
Germany	4
Ancient Greece	4
Japan	4
Ireland	2
Italy	2
India	2
Arabia	1
Denmark	1
Ancient Rome	1
Kyrgyzstan	1
Czechoslovakia	1
Swiss	1
Spain	1
Total	140

From the above three canons series, we find that French, British, Russian, German, and US-American literatures dominate during the past three decades. While French, British, and Russian literary canons are among the top three in each of the three series, there is an apparent increase of translated US-American literature (see Graph 1):

Graph 1: The distribution of the top five favorite national literary canons in WL, FL, and FT canon series (WL: World Literature Canons Series, FL: Foreign Literature Canons Series, FT: Famously Translated Canons Series)



During the same period, there were other series such as *外国文学研究资料丛* (Foreign Literature Study Materials Series) and *二十世纪欧美文论丛书* (20th-Century European and US-American Literary Theories Series). These series provided resources for Chinese scholars to reinterpret Western literature. Since the influences are mainly found in the field of literary criticism, it will be much more useful here to see what has been happening in literary scholarship proper. The newest research findings and introduction of new concepts are often reflected in academic journals, so it is useful here to analyze the issue of Western literary canons through the top academic journals of foreign literature in China. According to the Chinese Social Sciences Research Evaluation Center at Nanjing University, *外国文学研究* (Foreign Literature Studies), *当代外国文学* (Contemporary Foreign Literature), *外国文学* (Foreign Literature), *外国文学评论* (Foreign Literature Review), *国外文学* (Foreign Literatures) are the top five most influential journals in foreign language studies and are all listed in the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSCSI, an interdisciplinary citation index program developed by Nanjing University since 1997 and now viewed as the most important benchmark for the evaluation of academic achievement in the social sciences and humanities). Interestingly, the five journals were all founded in the 1980s (see Table 4; and in the first few years some of the them were mainly devoted to literary works rather than academic papers and this was the case with *Contemporary Foreign Literature* and *Foreign Literature*). The emergence of the academic journals in the decade indicates a more liberal atmosphere and the emergence of a new scholarly discourse was taking place.

Table 4: The founding years of the top five journals in foreign literature studies

name of journal	founding year
<i>Foreign Literature Studies</i>	1979
<i>Contemporary Foreign Literature</i>	1980
<i>Foreign Literature</i>	1980
<i>Foreign Literature Review</i>	1987
<i>Foreign Literatures</i>	1981

Foreign Literature Studies in particular played an important role in scholarship in that it recorded the process of Chinese scholars' breakthrough of the last decade's Cultural Revolution discourse and efforts to restore the normal academic order (see Wen, "Foreign"). For instance, *Foreign Literature Studies* set a column of "Conversations on Humanism" in the first issue of 1979. The contributors for the column reached a consensus that humanism reflected in the European classic literature should not be discarded as it happened in the Cultural Revolution; instead, it is the "essence" one should assimilate into Chinese literature and culture. Modernist literature is another touchstone for looking for new standards for the acceptance of Western canons. Once viewed as reactionary and against social realism in the previous decades, modernist literature was reintroduced (in the sense that it had been introduced into China in the early twentieth century) by some scholars. For example, Kejia Yuan, who was also a member of the Nine Leaves School (a circle of Chinese modernist poets in 1940s), took the initiative by publishing *外国现代派作品选* (Selected Foreign Modernist Works) in 1980, a four-volume anthology mainly of Western modernist works and that would exert great influence on both scholars and writers in the coming years in China (see Chen, Sihe 262). He took a cautious attitude in the preface pointing out that there would exist a duality of ideology and art in those Western works and therefore readers should be alert to those hidden "wrong ideologies" such as nihilism, pessimism, individualism, pacifism, and pornography (see Yuan 26). Further, the resonances of the re-evaluation of Western modernist literature were soon found in academic journals too. *Foreign Literature Studies* initiated the argument about modernist literature with an article entitled "Modernization and Modernists" in 1982 and then many others joined the discussion (see Wen, "Reflections"). Modernist literature, as a result, was thought to be a new literary trend that left literary realism behind and would ascend to the top end of the "literary evolution" and something that Chinese scholarship ought to pay attention to. Moreover, since most modernists were Europeans or US-Americans, 世界文学 (world literature) became an alternative term for Euro-American literature. Certainly, these arguments would be useful in propelling the modernist literature from the peripheral to the center on the one hand and rebuilt the canon map of foreign literature on the other.

The acceptance of Western modernist literature helped promote further the formation of new Western canons in 1990s. One example is that of textbooks. In their 1994 book *外国文学史* (The History of Foreign Literature), Weizhi Zhu and Li Zhao began to play down the notions of "critical realism" and "proletarian literature" which were the standards for selecting writers and works in their 1980 book. In the new book they excluded writers from East Europe and Russia such as Petőfi, Chernyshevsky, Fadéyev, etc., and included Virgil, Rabelais, Milton, Fielding, Voltaire, Rousseau, Flaubert, Maupassant, Whitman, Zola, Hardy, and T.S. Eliot instead. In addition, it is perhaps more significant to see the change of the aforementioned *A Short Anthology of Foreign Literature* made by the same two scholars. In 2004, the book had its fifth edition which shows a somewhat new look in its structure. The structure of the book is still composed of several major parts with the titles of "Literature from Ancient Times to the Eighteenth Century," "Literature of the Nineteenth Century," and "Literature of the Twentieth Century," but in the new edition modernist literature has achieved its equal position in the formation of foreign literature canons together with classicism, romanticism, and realism. One third of the fifth edition is devoted to modernist literature (see Table 5) which was not been mentioned at all in the first edition of the book. *A Short Anthology of Foreign Literature* has enjoyed a large circulation, with an accumulative amount of over 2 million copies sold before the sixth edition of 2011.

A similar endeavor can be found in many other textbooks of foreign literature. For example, the 1999 book *外国文学史* (History of Foreign Literature) edited by Kelu Zheng has been one of the widely used and well-received textbooks in departments of literature at many universities in the past years (for a survey of theoretical books published since 2000 see Wang, Miaomiao <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2370>>). It is worth noting that at least one fourth of the book is devoted to modernist literature including T.S. Eliot, Kafka, O'Neill, Proust, Joyce, and Faulkner) and

postmodernist literature including Sartre, Beckett, Heller, and García Márquez. In this sense, modernist literature finally wins its place in the Western canon of Chinese pedagogy and scholarship.

Table 5: Foreign literary canons in A Short Anthology of Foreign Literature (5th Edition)

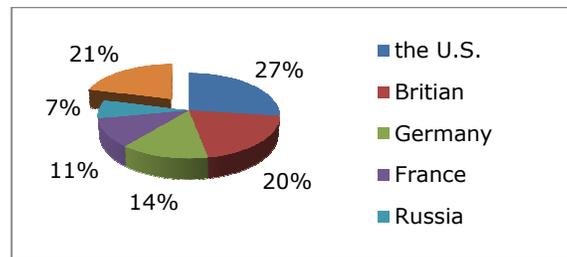
period	writers
Ancient Times	Homer, Greek Dramatists
Middle Ages	Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare
Classicism (17th Century)	Molière
Enlightenment (18th Century)	Rousseau, Goethe
Romanticism (19th Century)	Byron, Heine, Hugo, Pushkin, Whitman
Critical Realism (19th Century I)	Stendhal, Balzac, Dickens, Gogol, Dostoevsky
Critical Realism (19th Century II)	Flaubert, Hardy, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Ibsen, Twain
Non-mainstream (19th Century)	Baudelaire, Pottier, Zola
Realist literature (20th Century I)	Roland, Dreiser, Zweig, Hemingway
Realist literature (20th Century II)	Gorky, Mayakovsky, Sholokhov, Aytmatov
Modernist literature (20th Century I)	Kafka, T.S. Eliot, Joyce, Faulkner
Modernist literature (20th Century II)	Sartre, Ionesco, Heller, García Márquez

The canonization of Western literary texts is not only reflected in anthologies or textbooks, but also in the introduction and translation of theory books. For literary critics and scholars, the theoretical canons are important and indispensable. Therefore, it is useful to check what foreign scholarly books and monographs have been used or cited in foreign literature studies in China. Based on the Chinese Social Science Citation Index database, Aibin Qian performed a survey on what books were the most frequently cited in the field from 2000 to 2007. He finds that 92 books (all are translated books) are most cited by Chinese scholars of foreign literature studies (Qian 268). Here I would like to list the top 10 of the long list (see Table 6), in which we can find that Chinese scholars cited a wide variety of sources for theoretical reference. In other words, such theories as polyphonic theory, postcolonialism, feminism, among many others, are not as strange to the scholars as they were in the previous decades; instead, they have become the major sources for the scholars to rely on. More interestingly, in terms of nationality of the authors, among the 92 books there are 25 books from the U.S., 18 from Britain, 13 from Germany, 10 from France, and 6 from Russia (including the former Soviet Union) (see Graph 2). The consistency between Graph 1 and Graph 2 indicates that the five countries, especially the U.S. and the United Kingdom (i.e., the English language), have taken the most important places in the formation of Western canons in both literary works and literary theory.

Table 6: top 10 foreign scholarly works cited in foreign literature studies 2000-2007 (see Qian)

order	book	author	publication year of Chinese translation
1	<i>Complete Works of M.M. Bakhtin</i>	Bakhtin	1998
2	<i>Ästhetik</i>	Hegel	1979
3	<i>Orientalism</i>	Said	1999
4	<i>Complete Works of William Shakespeare</i>	William Shakespeare	1978
5	<i>Literary Theory</i>	Rene Wellek	1984
6	<i>Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics</i>	Bakhtin, Warren	1988
7	<i>Colonial and Postcolonial Literature</i>	Boehmer	1998
8	<i>Being and Time</i>	Heidegger	1987
9	<i>Poetics</i>	Aristotle	1962
10	<i>Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice</i>	Lanser	2002

Graph 2: nationalities of the authors of the most cited foreign scholarly works 2000-2007 (see Qian)



As a comparison, here I would like to cite Jing Xie's findings on the most cited foreign scholarly works in Chinese literature studies in the same period of 2000-2007. Also based on the CSSCI database, Xie finds that the foreign scholarly works takes 17.67% of the whole scholarly works cited by the academic papers of Chinese literature studies (see Xie, Jing 82). That means Western canons has not such a great impact on Chinese literature studies as some Chinese scholars often assume. Table 7 manifests those foreign literary theory works most cited in Chinese literature studies, some of which have become firmly canonized, such as *Literary Theory* (René Wellek), *The Mirror and The Lamp* (M.H. Abrams), and *The Western Canon* (Harold Bloom).

Table 7: top 10 foreign theoretical texts cited in Chinese literature studies 2000-2007 (see Xie, Jing)

rank	book	author	publication year of Chinese translation
1	<i>Literary Theory</i>	Wellek	1984
2	<i>Chinese Narrative</i>	Plaks	1996
3	<i>The Art of Fiction</i>	Kundera	2004
4	<i>The Mirror and the Lamp</i>	Abrams	1989
5	<i>The Rhetoric of Fiction</i>	Booth	1987
6	<i>Recent Theories of Narrative</i>	Wallace	1990
7	<i>Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics</i>	Bakhtin, Warren	1988
8	<i>Structuralism and Semiotics</i>	Hawkes	1987
9	<i>Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative</i>	Bal	2003
10	<i>The Western Canon</i>	Bloom	2005

It should be noted that all the scholarly books are Chinese translated works and this is partly because of the fact that there is no English-language journal of foreign literature studies in China (the only exception is the journal *Foreign Literature Studies* that permits English paper submission, but only few English-language texts are published per year). The more important reason is that in China most scholars studying foreign literature are from departments of Chinese and usually lack foreign language proficiency, thus their use of source books is correspondingly restrained to Chinese translated works. Even for those scholars from foreign language departments, the academic journals they are able to choose for publishing their work, including the above-mentioned five most influential journals, are nearly all in Chinese. It is also noticeable that all the literary works in the aforementioned canons serials are Chinese translated as well. The canonization of Western literature and secondary sources in China is, therefore, intertwined with the issue of translation. Owing to the impact of translated foreign literary works, some Chinese scholars argued in 1990s about the status of Chinese-translated foreign literature (see Xie, Tianzheng 131). The focus of these arguments was on the question: "Is Chinese-translated foreign literature a part of Chinese literature?" This question goes unanswered and there has never been an agreement until the present days. The fact is that it is rare to find a book of Chinese literature—either in Chinese literary works or in histories of Chinese literature—that has integrated translated literature as a part of it. But Chinese-translated works may have the chance to form its own category of "translated literature." As Ning Wang puts it, modern Chinese literature is a kind of translated literature because it is via the translation of a myriad of Western literary works and cultural theories so that modern Chinese literature has formed its new tradition and a new standard of modern literary canons different from either the Western literary tradition or the Chinese inherent literary and cultural traditions (see Wang, Ning 62).

In fact, since the 1990s the publishing market in China has made the publication of translated literature more flourishing. After the implementation of the Chinese Copyright Law in 1991 and joining in the Bern Convention and the World Copyright Convention in 1992, China began witnessing a new

and larger wave of translation of Western canonical texts. In the past two decades, the enthusiasm of translation of Western canonical texts has been embraced by various presses in China and as Shouhua Qi observes, "In fact, almost every major, self-respecting press in China has since put out its own foreign or world literature series, which would include most of the classic authors" (146), but at this time "the focal point of excitement has shifted to the twentieth-century Western literature and the myriad of trends and isms associated with it: symbolism, expressionism, futurism, dadaism, cubism, surrealism, existentialism, absurdism, stream of consciousness, black humor, postmodernism, metafiction" (146). Take the Yilin Press for example. As a newcomer in the publishing market in the 1990s (it was founded in 1988), it has made its way into the leading publishing forces in publishing foreign literary works with its focus on award-winning works (including the Nobel Prize, Man Booker Prize, the Goncourt, etc.), popular literary works, and bilingual literary canons. Its *世界文学名著丛书* (World Literature Canons Series) is more widely accepted than those canon series of other presses in the same period (see Meng and Li 420). The series has presented over 100 books including texts by Proust, Salinger, Nabokov, and Naipaul. In addition, aiming at the readership of children and teenagers, the press has two different editions of literary canons: World Literature Canons Series for Students and World Literature Canons Series (A Teen Version). The new orientation to cater to the young readership has been shared by many other publishers including other publishing houses in China. This is not so much a coincident business behavior than an effect of national policy.

In 2000, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China enacted new editions of the Chinese Language Curriculum: The Chinese Language Curriculum of Middle School and The Chinese Language Curriculum of High School, in which, for the first time, it includes a list of recommended books as extracurricular reading materials for students, 10 books (one half Chinese literature and the other half Western literature) for middle school students and 20 books (one half Chinese literature and the other half Western literature) for high school students (see Table 8). As we can see, the list of recommendation is virtually a list of Western literature. Therefore, it is not surprising to note that the Western canons would become the welcomed publishing project of publishers in the following years. Interesting is that one of the standard texts of Soviet socialist realism—Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered*—remains a required text. In 2011, the Ministry of Education enacted the newest editions of curricula—The Chinese Language Curriculum Standard of Nine-year Compulsory Education (2011) and The Chinese Language Curriculum Standard of High School Education (2011) (see Ministry <http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s6489/201404/xxgk_167340.html>), which have kept the recommendation policy, but made a little change with regard to foreign literary texts (see * in Table 8):

Table 8: Foreign literary canons recommended in the national Chinese Language Curricula of 2000

title of book	author	target readership
<i>The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe</i>	Defoe	Middle School
<i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	Swift	
<i>Life of Celebrities: Beethoven, Michelangelo, and Tolstoy*</i>	Rolland	
<i>My Childhood</i>	Gorky	
<i>How the Steel Was Tempered</i>	Ostrovsky	
<i>Hamlet*</i>	Shakespeare	High School
<i>Don Quixote</i>	Cervantes	
<i>Notre-Dame de Paris</i>	Hugo	
<i>Eugenie Grandet</i>	Balzac	
<i>The Pickwick Papers</i>	Dickens	
<i>Resurrection</i>	Tolstoy	
<i>Selected Poems of Pushkin*</i>	Pushkin	
<i>The Old Man and The Sea</i>	Hemingway	
<i>Selected Poems of Tagore*</i>	Tagore	
<i>Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*</i>	Goethe, Eckermann	

Note: Books with * are those replaced by other foreign writers in the 2011 curriculum: Jane Eyre, Short Stories of Maupassant, Short Stories of Chekhov, and Short Stories of O'Henry.

The influence of Western literary canons is not only reflected in the publishing market, universities and high schools, and funding and scholarships, but also in contemporary Chinese literary writings. In the works of many contemporary Chinese writers we can find the traces of the impact of Western modern-

ist literature. The so-called "experimental writers" such as Suola Liu, Shaogong Han, Xue Can, and Mo Yan began their fictional works in 1980s in an avant-garde stance that is strange to the previous literary conventions, but familiar to Western modernism. In 1990s, writers such as Yuan Ma, Hua Yu, Fei Ge, Tong Su, Zhaoyan Ye, Ganlu Sun, and Cun Bei showed in most of their works a strong affinity with Western postmodernist literature (see Chen, Chuancai 246). Actually, there are very few contemporary writers who would deny they have been influenced by the Western literature. Kafka, for example, could be viewed as the "godfather" to a large number of Chinese writers like Pu Zong, Hua Yu, Fei Ge, Yuan Ma, Xing Xu, Sola Liu, and Xue Can (see Zeng). García Márquez's influence is also echoed among many Chinese writers including Mo Yan, the 2012 Nobel Prize winner (about Mo Yan's work, see Duran and Huang). In this sense, the reading and accepting of Western literary canons, especially the modern Western canons, has awakened the contemporary Chinese writers to be more sensitive to their writing, which can contribute to the formation of canons of contemporary Chinese literature. Significantly, in 2011 García Márquez took the first place on the yearly "List of Best Foreign Writers" released by *Western China Metropolis Daily* closely followed by the novels of British novelist Rowling (see Shi <http://www.china.org.cn/arts/2011-12/02/content_24061473.htm>). In this sense, the processes of the canonization of Western literary texts do not mean a simple repetition of those canons within another language; instead, it is determined by market mechanisms and literary institutions. But it is worth noting that in the age of globalization, a more intimate and subtle relationship has been established between Western literary canons and Chinese readership and scholarship. The publishing market, national policy, and educational institutions are not any more the only forces to dominate the canonization of literary works. Other factors like consumerism, new media, the change of the notion of canon, etc., are all important because the canon is never static and canonization, correspondingly, is always an unfinished project.

Works Cited

- Chen, Chuancai (陈传才). *中国20世纪后20年文学思潮* (Literary Trends in the Last 20 Years of 20th Century China). Beijing: China Renmin UP, 2001.
- Chen, Sihe (陈思和), ed. *中国当代文学史教程* (The History of Contemporary Chinese Literature). Shanghai: Fudan UP, 1999.
- Duran, Angelica, and Yuhuan Huang, eds. *Mo Yan in Context: Nobel Laureate and Global Storyteller*. West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 2014.
- Feng, Liming (冯黎明). *走向全球化: 论西方现代文论在当代中国文学理论界的传播和影响* (Toward Globalization: Dissemination and Influence of Western Modern Literary Theory in Contemporary China). Beijing: Chinese Social Science P, 2009.
- Fokkema, Douwe, and Elrud Ibsch. *文学研究与文化参与* (Literary Studies and Cultural Participation). Trans. Guoqiang Yu (俞国强). Beijing: Peking UP, 1997.
- Li, Ruiqing (李蕊芹). "近二十年文学经典化研究述评" ("Literary Canonization in the Past Two Decades"). *Literature and Art Criticism* 6 (2012): 36-9.
- Meng, Zhaoyi (孟昭毅), and Zaidao Li (李载道), eds. *中国翻译文学史* (A History of Translated Literature in China). Beijing: Peking UP, 2005.
- Ministry of Education China. *The Chinese Language Curriculum Standard*. [moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn) (2014): <http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s6489/201404/xxgk_167340.html>.
- Peng, Shuxiong (彭书雄). "文学经典问题研究在中国" ("The Study of Literary Canons in China"). *Academic Journal of Zhongzhou* 3 (2010): 232-36.
- Qi, Shouhua. *Western Literature in China and the Translation of a Nation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Qian, Aibin (钱爱兵). "对我国外国文学研究最有影响的国外学术著作: 基于CSSCI的分析" ("CSSCI Based Analysis of the Most Influential Foreign Scholarly Works in Foreign Literature Studies"). *Journal of Southwest University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Science)* 6 (2010): 267-80.
- Shi, Yanping. "China Needs Literary Giants, not Bestsellers". [china.org.cn](http://www.china.org.cn) (2 December 2011): <http://www.china.org.cn/arts/2011-12/02/content_24061473.htm>.
- Tötösy de Zepetnek, Steven. "Toward a Theory of Cumulative Canon Formation: Readership in English Canada." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 27.3 (1994): 107-19.
- Wang, Miaomiao. "Comparative Literature in Chinese: A Survey of Books Published 2000-2013." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 15.6 (2013): <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2370>>.
- Wang, Ning (王宁). *文化翻译与经典阐释* (Cultural Translation and Interpretation of Canons). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2006.
- Wang, Qiuyan (王秋艳), and Xuzhi Song (宋学智). "外国文学经典研究在中国" ("The Study of Foreign Literary Canons in China"). *Studies in Linguistics and Literature* 2 (2012): 143-55.
- Wen, Hua (温华). "学术期刊中的八十年代外国文学研究" ("Foreign Literature Studies in Academic Journals in 1980s"). *Journal of PLA Academy of Art* 2 (2013): 35-39.
- Wen, Hua (温华). "八十年代外国文学研究: 回顾与反思" ("Reflections on Foreign Literature Studies in 1980s"). *Journal of PLA Academy of Art* 1 (2013): 70-75.
- Xie, Jing (谢靖). "对我国中国文学研究最有学术影响力的历史文献及国外学术著作: 基于CSSCI (2000-2007)数据" ("CSSCI Based Analysis of the Most Influential Historical Documents and Foreign Scholarly Works in Chinese Literature Studies 2000-2007"). *Journal of Southwest University for Nationalities* 7 (2009): 81-90.

Xie, Tianzheng (谢天振). *译介学导论* (Introduction to Medio-translatology). Beijing: Peking UP, 2007.
Yuan, Kejia (袁可嘉). "前言" ("Preface"). *外国现代派作品选 (第一册)* (Selected Foreign Modernist Works I). Ed. Kejia Yuan (袁可嘉), Hengxun Dong (董衡巽), and Kelu Zheng (郑克鲁). Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi P, 1980.
Zeng, Yanbin (曾艳兵). "卡夫卡对当代中国文学的影响和启示" ("Influence and Enlightenment: Kafka and Contemporary Chinese Literature"). *Journal of Capital Normal University (Social Sciences Edition)* 2 (2013): 80-7.
Zheng, Kelu (郑克鲁). *外国文学史* (A History of Foreign literature). Beijing: Higher Education P, 1999.
Zhu, Weizhi (朱维之), and Li Zhao (赵澧), eds. *外国文学简编* (A Short Anthology of Foreign Literature). Beijing: China Renmin UP, 1980.

Author's Profile: He Lin teaches English and Chinese literature at the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China. Concurrently, he is working towards his Ph.D. in comparative literature at Sichuan University with a dissertation entitled *Li Po Studies in the English Speaking World*. His interests in scholarship include comparative literature, cultural studies, and cinema. Lin's recent articles include "电影'全民超人汉考克'中的身体意象" ("Body Images in *Hancock*"), *Film Literature* (2010), "'爱有来生'中的关键性视觉机制" ("Visual Representations in *Eternal Beloved*"), *Film Literature* (2012). E-mail: <linhe@uestc.edu.cn>