

Mapping Chinese Literature as World Literature

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Abstract: In his article "Mapping Chinese Literature as World Literature" Yingjin Zhang revisits the challenge of advancing Chinese literature as world literature in three steps: 1) he delineates of positions of view as proposed by Western scholars who engaged in rethinking world literature(s) in the age of globalization, 2) evaluates consequences of such a new mapping for Chinese literature and tests a different set of "technologies of recognition" (Shih) in the context of Chinese versus Sinophone studies, and 3) returns to the notion of world literature(s) by considering issues of language and translation and entertains a new vision of mobility via the trope of travel with an eye to local ecology. Writers Zhang discusses as examples include Xingjian Gao, Mo Yan, Dao Bei, Eileen Chang, and Yong Jin.

Yingjin ZHANG

Mapping Chinese Literature as World Literature

There has been a veritable boom in the last two decades in English-language scholarship about world literature(s) (e.g., Damrosch; D'haen; D'haen, Damrosch, Kadir; Lawall; Pizer; Tötösy de Zepetnek and Mukherjee), which involves remapping the field and foregrounding viewing positions and geographic locations. "For most of its history," Theo D'haen observes, "world literature has been not only an almost exclusively European, or by extension Western, concern—the discussion on world literature has also almost exclusively been conducted in just a few major European languages" (27). The participation of Chinese scholars writing in Chinese may have slightly tipped the global balance in linguistic terms; yet, with a few exceptions (see, e.g., Tsu), scholars of modern Chinese literature writing in English have shown little interest in the current debate on world literature.

In the study at hand, my objective is to bring China and world literature(s) together by examining two kinds of geopolitics of mapping which comprise two different sets of viewing positions on centers and peripheries. The first set derives from the modern colonial-imperial world system of nation-states, in which France was viewed as the center of an emerging "world republic of letters" (Casanova) and Germany, albeit still judged provincial by the French standards in the early nineteenth century, aspired to be part of an expanding European literary tradition. Despite decades of theoretical deconstruction since the late twentieth century, this old model of the West versus the rest in which focus remains on issues of geography is still functional in contemporary global literature, especially in its prevailing "technologies of recognition" (see Shih, "Global Literature"). Interestingly, a second set of geopolitics comes into play in a different context in which the politics of recognition is refashioned in a new debate on the Chinese versus the Sinophone (see, e.g., Shih, *Visibility*). Here, the contested status of "China" as a special kind of center or periphery—depending on one's viewing position from the West or from Mainland China—foregrounds the issue of language: if English is upheld as the major-power language worldwide, then Chinese—albeit a language of majority readers in terms of its users—can only be a "minor literature" whose representation in world literature is further contingent on a new mode of "distant reading" from the Anglo-American center (see Moretti, *Distant*). Chinese readership is deemed irrelevant when world literature is redefined as literature which gains in (English) translation and as a detached mode of reading and engaging distant lands (see Damrosch, *What*).

Because the West holds inevitably the exclusive right to setting the aesthetic and experiential terms of such reading, its correlated production, as well as the distribution of knowledge and values, China cannot but be the "other" to world literature: not only is China's millennia-long traditional aesthetics dismissed as incompatible with the modern world, its modern literature is doubly impeded—first by a persistent "obsession with China" (Hsia 533-54) or with the by-now theoretically bankrupt notion of nationalism and then by "a perpetual, and futile game of catch-up" with the West in literary fashions (Jones 184). Based on this double impediment, Bonnie McDougall diagnoses symptoms of "the anxiety of out-fluence" in modern Chinese literature, such as "impulses to imitation" (that is, "largely unreflexive adoptions of Western ideas"), "the quest for the correct," "the fallacy of the Zeitgeist," as well as a host of "foreign and domestic dogma," all of which has combined to make the quality of much of modern Chinese writing "so depressingly mediocre" in her judgment (99-112). Given complications of such entrenched or refashioned viewing positions, it is surely a daunting challenge to build a new—or even "perverse"—canon to insert China on the Western-centric map of world literatures (see Saussy). First, I delineate positions of view as proposed by some Western scholars who engaged in rethinking world literature(s) in the age of globalization. Second, I evaluate consequences of such a new mapping for China and based on Shu-mei Shih's notion of "technologies of recognition" test a different approach in the context of Chinese versus Sinophone studies. Third, I return to world literature by considering issues of language and translation and entertain a new vision of mobility via the trope of travel with an eye to local ecology.

It is no secret that inasmuch as writers and scholars are concerned, the modern world(s) of literature(s) is firmly grounded in the West and it has been so for almost two centuries now. In the geography of Western imagination, Paris used to occupy the center of literature in a competitive world of modern nation-states. As Pascale Casanova asserts, "It is plain that translation into French, owing to

Paris' unique power of consecration, occupies a special place in the literary world ... the greatest English authors enjoyed truly universal recognition during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries only through the translation of their writings into French" (146). This perceived centrality of Paris as the capital of the "world republic of letters" decorated as it were by such buzzwords as "consecration" and "universal," explains why Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the name most frequently associated with the term *Weltliteratur* (world literature) coined in 1827, would hide his "provincial anxiety" (due in part to the then suspected inferiority of German literature to French literature) by displaying an "imperial acquisitiveness" toward an obscured Chinese novel (Damrosch, *What* 10). Two other accounts affirm the centrality of France in world literature of the nineteenth century. First, writing in 1899, Georg Brandes conceded that "when an author is acknowledged in France, he is known across the earth" (25). Second, in David Damrosch's 2003 book on world literature, French literature has again emerged as "the center of sensitivity," as it was proudly articulated by Philarète Euphémon Chasles when she introduced a new course, "The Comparison of Foreign Literature" in 1835: "[France] directs civilization ... by going forward herself with a giddy and contagious passion. What Europe is to the rest of the world, France is to Europe; everything reverberates toward her, everything ends with her" (Damrosch, *What* 9).

A Eurocentric map of centers and peripheries was thus constructed for the world republic of letters with Paris positioned as the core of the center and other West European countries surrounding her, and the rest of the world in relatively close or distant peripheries: "First in the second rank are the English and Germans," who, along with the French, "can hope of being read in the original by the most educated in all nations"; then, "Italian and Spanish writers are much less advantageously positioned, but are nonetheless read by a certain public outside their homelands"; further out, those "who write in Finnish, Hungarian, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic, Dutch, Greek, and so on are in the universal struggle for world renown clearly positioned most disadvantageously" (Brandes "World" 25). While this concentric European view may be cosmopolitan in that it encourages viewing others beyond one's borders, the problems of asymmetry and inequality in such major-power cosmopolitanism are easy to detect. According to Barbara Herrnstein Smith: "in enlarging its view 'from China to Peru,' it may become all the more imperialistic, seeing in every horizon of difference new peripheries of its own centrality, new pathologies through which its own normativity may be defined and must be asserted" (54). The cosmopolitan display of curiosity for the distant other, in other words, functions to consolidate not only the "normativity" but also the centrality of the viewing subject. Damrosch's intervention is to rethink world literature as "less a set of works than a network" of associations, circulation, and reception (*What* 3). By moving from the assumed stability of the center to the "vagranity" of various peripheries along the meandering and crisscrossing routes of translation and reading, Damrosch seeks to undermine the foundation of three conventional concepts of world literature in the West: 1) an established body of classics, 2) an evolving canon of (modern) masterpieces, and 3) multiple windows on the world (*What* 15). However, the last of his new threefold definition—"World literature is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading: a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time" (*What* 281; emphasis in the original)—raises further questions on reading and Damrosch directs us to engage with the thought of Franco Moretti.

In contemplating the spread of the novel in world literature, Moretti argues that what we need is not close reading as perfected by New Criticism once dominant in the United States but "distant reading: where distance ... is a condition of knowledge: it allows you to focus on units which are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes—or genres and systems" ("Conjectures" 57). With an ever-increasing amount of literature produced around the world, Moretti's advice to scholars is not reading more literature but reading less, and he contends that "less" is actually "more" because, at least for him, years of analysis of individual texts do not compete, in terms of efficiency (a key value of capitalist production), with a day of synthesis through theory. In a way typical of the statistically driven natural and social sciences, Moretti surmises, "While recent literary theory was turning for inspiration towards French and German metaphysics, I kept thinking there was actually much more to be learned from the natural and the social sciences" (*Graphs* 2). One result of Moretti's notion of distant learning are the results of the Stanford Literary Laboratory he co-directed with Matthew Jockers and that produced a model of digital humanities based on computational systems capable of scanning a large amount of texts. However, some critics, for example Emily Apter posit that the re-

sults are a "quant-driven ecosystem [that] tends towards contraction of the economy of interpretation" (Apter 56). Unimpressed by his critics, Moretti insists on viewing world literature as "a system of variations" ("Conjectures" 64) and evokes two metaphors for tracking changes in world literature over time, across the globe: first, the metaphor of "trees" enables one to trace proliferation from unity to diversity, as is the growth of a national literature and second, the metaphor of "waves" urges one to return from multiplicity to uniformity, as is the logic of the market ("Conjectures" 66) or more specifically Hollywood ("Planet").

Damrosch explicates Moretti's two metaphors this way: "Individual works can be studied by specialists as offshoots of a family tree, an exfoliating national system; global comparatism, on the other hand, should concentrate on wave patterns of transformation sweeping around the world" (*What* 25). Indeed, in his subsequent study Moretti developed his conjecture that from a global perspective the foreign form (the Western novel or Hollywood cinema) is borrowed routinely for the local content, albeit oftentimes enhanced by the native narrative voice (see "Planet"). As Damrosch interprets it, Moretti's emphasis on distant reading is meant to posit the existence of world literature or comparative literature (both of them the believers of waves) as a permanent intellectual challenge to national literatures (the believers of trees), with a not-so-subtle suggestion that the tree model—especially in regards to minor literatures—has become increasingly irrelevant in the era of globalization as it sees merely trees instead of the forest (or nations instead of the world). Damrosch, nevertheless, is more tolerant than Moretti with the current academic division of labor: "we need to see both the forest and the trees" (*What* 26) and we therefore need both generalists (comparative literature) and specialists (national literatures).

Mads Rosendahl Thomsen summarizes the differences among three recent leading proponents of world literature in terms of their goals, units of analysis, and temporal orientations: Damrosch is interested in teaching single texts in a retrospective way, Moretti is oriented toward research with a prospective outlook on the evolution of genres, and Casanova is engaged in a sociological investigation of the contemporary organization of a wider literary field. For Thomsen, "the fundamental differences of approach could also be combined differently, as in a retrospective systemic analysis of the evolution of the international canons" (Thomsen 21). As for his own contribution to the study of international canon formation, Thomsen situates world literature in relation to other contested paradigms such as comparative literature and postcolonialism and proposes constellations as a new mode of analysis for world literature. Like his predecessors, Thomsen grounds his research in the West. On the one hand, he is aware that "the long history of world literature favours Western literature partly because of the long tradition of cultural exchange between Western nations" and on the other hand he admits that "the great traditions of China and India, both in terms of the magnitude of the countries compared with the many states of Europe, and with the stability of their art systems and canon, have paradoxically somewhat hindered their presence in world literature" (27). In Thomsen's study, world literature is a system of constant circulation and valuation, which displays preferences for exchange, migration, and interaction. Through analysis of constellations of themes and subjects, we are able to discern that "very different texts share features that make them stand out on the literary canopy" (Thomsen 4). In other words, such constellations—especially what Thomsen calls "the literature of denial of life" and that foregrounds matters of life, death, survival, trauma, memory, and representation (103-38), which easily translate into Chinese equivalents of the sheer necessity of surviving war, famine, disaster, and political persecution—are what make these writers from various nations transcend their particularity and enter the rank of world literature, as we see in the case of two Chinese Nobel Prize winners.

It is telling that China is mostly left out in a volume entitled *Debating World Literature* as recently as 2004. Apart from some passing references to China, the volume contains a few pages where John Sturrock discusses Victor Segalen who traveled to China in 1909 and subsequently published two novels about China (see Prendergast 262-71). What is telling is that, despite its huge population size and its millennia-long literary history, China could still be ignored in a critical reexamination of world literatures and it deserves mention only when a Frenchman became infatuated with China in the wake of imperialism. Admittedly, Christopher Prendergast's collected volume is an exception because subsequent books on world literature have featured China and China specialists, for instance Longxi Zhang (Damrosch, *Teaching* 61-72; D'haen, Damrosch, Kadir 81-88, 356-64; D'haen, Domínguez, Thomsen 135-41; Tötösy de Zepetnek and Mukherjee 239-53; 411-22). Still, the invisibility of Chinese literature

in the study of world literatures in Prendergast's volume deserves attention regardless of whether it is a consequence of a blind spot in the dominant Eurocentric view or a pervasive operation of the technologies of recognition in the global cultural arena centered in the West.

In her critique of the Western-centered power structure of theoretical thought Shih exposes the logic of what she calls the "technologies of recognition" operating in a wide spectrum of discursive fields in the contemporary world. "The politics of recognition involves the granting of universality to the exceptional particular—that is, Gao's works are exceptional in that they, in their particularity, transcend the particular and approach the universal" (Shih, "Global Literature" 25). Shih examines the ways Xingjian Gao, the first Chinese to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2000, may have benefitted from a Western-centric scrutiny and she asserts that despite the hyped value of transcendental universality, actually the national (that is, the particular or, in this case, the Chinese) is alive and well as an essential—if not essentialist—category in the selection of the Nobel Prize winners. In Gao's case, the local particularity of China comes in the form of fables, legends, myths, folk songs, religious rituals, shamanism, exoticism, Daoist mystique, and pristine landscapes, all of which are traceable to the alternative tradition of poet Yuan Qu and the ancient *Songs of the South*—alternative, that is, to orthodox Confucianism and the dominant culture of the Central Plain in China (see Kinkley 131; see also Lee <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2056>>). In *Soul Mountain*, a novel which took him seven years to complete, Gao thus anticipates a critical objection to his incorporation of diverse Chinese genres: "You've slapped together travel notes, moralistic ramblings, feelings, notes, jottings, untheoretical discussions, unfable-like fables, copied out some folk songs, added some legend-like nonsense of your own invention, and are calling it fiction!" (*Mountain* 452-53). What Gao deliberately does in his novel is to privilege the strange over the familiar thereby alienating his readers—Chinese, as well as Western—to the point where self-reflection on fundamental issues of literature and language would ensue. Nonetheless, Gao's localizing narrative has a remarkably redeeming quality and its transcendent universality is recognized in the Nobel Committee's validation: "Through its polyphony, its blend of genres and the scrutiny that the act of writing subjects itself to, the book [*Soul Mountain*] recalls German Romanticism's magnificent concept of a universal poetry" (Gao, "Nobel" <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2000/gao-lecture.html>). What is implicit in the logic of this validation is that Gao's immersion in the local particular acquires special significance of universality only when it recalls a "magnificent" German tradition, regardless of whether such connection was originally intended. Authorial intentions notwithstanding, Gao is eager to echo the rationale of universality in his Nobel lecture by envisioning his preferred type of "cold literature": "Literature transcends national boundaries—through translations it transcends languages and then specific social customs and inter-human relationships created by geographical location and history—to make profound revelations about the universality of human nature" ("The Case" 596).

In her effort to go beyond the national and the universal as two dominant categories in the global geopolitics of recognition, Shih recommends "Sinophone" as a category conceptually larger and more inclusive than "Chinese": "The affirmation of Gao by the Nobel committee should be an affirmation of Sinophone, not Chinese, literature" (Shih, "Global" 27). More recently, Shih has ventured further to distinguish Sinophone from Chinese, but her new concept of Sinophone has become exclusive as it now refers specifically to "a network of places of cultural production outside China and on the margins of China and Chineseness, where a historical process of heterogenizing and localizing of continental Chinese culture has been taking place for several centuries" (Shih, *Visibility* 4). As Shih formulates it, Sinophone is both a theoretical intervention and a historical formation ("The Concept") and its ramifications exceed far beyond Gao's career. Inasmuch as world literature is concerned, what deserves further attention is that Shih has brought into play a reversed politics of recognition. In the global system of world literatures where national literatures compete for recognition, Chinese literature has long been marginalized as illustrated by the apparent invisibility of China in debating world literature mentioned above. Nevertheless, within the system of national literatures, Sinophone literature has long been marginalized, because it is often produced and circulated outside the parameters of Chinese literature and academic institutions of knowledge production and dissemination. To paraphrase Chasles's expression cited above, this time referencing double marginalization rather than singular centralization: what China is to the rest of the world, the Sinophone is to the Chinese. Given this peculiar situation of periphery (Sinophone literature) within periphery (Chinese literature), it is easier to understand

why Shih intends to use the concept of the Sinophone "to delink language and nation" (*Visuality* 187), thereby restoring the legitimacy of those Sinophone articulations (for example, Asian American, Malaysian Chinese) which do not pretend or do not care to represent any particular nation-state or national culture.

Still, given the resilience of national literatures, it is difficult—if not impossible—to place the Sinophone as Shih defines it on the map of world literatures. Sure, being a Chinese French writer, Gao could be enlisted to support Shih's argument that "Sinophone articulations can take as many different positions as possible within the realm of human expression, whose axiological determinations are not necessarily dictated by China but by local, regional, or global contingencies and desires" (*Visuality* 30). In his post-China period when he has become multilingual (Chinese and French) and multimedial (fiction, theater, calligraphy, painting, and film) in his artistic pursuits, Gao claims his transcendence of national literature as such and thus fits Shih's Sinophone profile. However, Gao's elaboration of the importance of "exile" in his post-China years may contradict Shih's objection to diaspora as "a universalizing category founded on a unified ethnicity, culture, language, as well as place of origin or homeland" (Shih, *Visuality* 23). For Gao, "a person who is fully aware of his self is always in a state of exile" (No Isms 154). The issue of "exile," indeed, was a key point in the Nobel Prize controversy surrounding Gao, as evident in this observation: "Many Chinese intellectuals and writers ... wonder[ed] why the Nobel Committee, in awarding its first ever prize to a writer working in the Chinese language, would give it to an exile writer whose very 'Chineseness' was somehow in question because he had abandoned the homeland and become a French citizen" (Denton iii). Gao's dilemma is that despite his criticism of literary censorship and political persecution in China, his image of exile or diaspora evokes the idea of homeland and may therefore betray, in Shi's judgment a "Han-centrism" or "a China-centrism if it ... forever looks back at China as its cultural motherland" (*Visuality* 31).

A thorny question remains as to whether Gao would have received Nobel Prize if his works were not banned in China and if he were not classified as a dissident "Chinese" writer (see Zhang, Yingjin, "Witness"). Unlike Gao, Mo Yan's "Chineseness" is never in question when he became in 2012 the second Chinese to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. While Mo Yan's work belongs to Chinese literature proper rather than Sinophone literature according to Shih's territorial classification, Mo Yan actually challenges Shih's ideological distinction between the Chinese and the Sinophone more than Gao does. In Shih's exegesis, the Sinophone resists authenticity, "subverts fixed identities," "interrupts fixity," and "disrupts the symbolic totality" of China (*Visuality* 35) while "foregrounding the value of difficulty, difference, and heterogeneity" as well as multiplicity, contradiction, and contingency (*Visuality* 5-7). From *Red Sorghum* (1986) and *The Republic of Liquor* (1992) to his recent works, Mo Yan has consistently performed, oftentimes in hilarious and sarcastic fashions such acts of resistance, subversion, and disruption as Shih attributes to "Sinophone articulation," although Mo Yan has never doubted his grounding in China as his cherished cultural motherland. Indeed, in his Nobel Lecture Mo Yan dwells on memories of his mother and his hometown Gaomi in Shandong province and it is his fantastic reconstruction of a peripheral, native-soil China—in a powerful form of "hallucinatory realism [that] merges folk tales, history and the contemporary" which won Yan Mo a distinguished place in world literature

(<http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2012/yan-lecture_en.html#>; see also Duran and Huang). As Mo Yan's case illustrates, Shih's territorial concept of the Sinophone does itself a disservice because it has abandoned a rich field of cultural production inside Mainland China.

As native Chinese writers who have made it to the hall of fame in world literature, both Gao and Mo Yan benefitted from the translation of their works which Damrosch sees as indispensable to the concept of world literature: "*World literature is writing that gains in translation*" (*What* 281; emphasis in the original). Given the dominance of Western technologies of recognition, we may modify this second part of Damrosch's threefold definition as such: "World literature is writing that gains in translation when it is done in English or another major European language." Mo Yan's work gained in translation as some of his English translations (e.g., by Howard Goldblatt) allegedly read better than the Chinese original. Gao's works perhaps gained even more in translation because of his command of French, the *lingua franca* of global literary sensibility and his realignment with Western values is noticeable in his post-China plays in which he is seen as "striving for neutrality and universality, shying away from Chinese settings and characters" (Fong xviii). Indeed, hailed "as the first Chinese play-

wright to enter world theatre," Gao has seen his plays "performed more often outside China than inside it, in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, the U.S., and in overseas Chinese communities such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore" (Fong x). Gilbert Fong's term "world theatre" reminds us that Gao's avant-garde plays of the 1990s resemble Bei Dao's modernist poetry of the 1980s, which is criticized by Stephen Owen as "world poetry" for its easy translatability into a watered-down version of Western modernism. To the Western audience like Owen, Bei Dao's poems read like "translations of a poetry that originally grew out of reading translations of our own poetic heritage" (Owen 29). Although he discloses his viewing position in "our" Western cultural heritage, Owen does not see the West as the unproblematic site of universality. Rather, he observes, "although it is supposedly free of all local history, this 'world poetry' turns out, unsurprisingly, to be a version of Anglo-American modernism or French modernism," each of which is "an essentially local tradition ... taken for granted as universal" (28-32). Once the West is localized or provincialized, Owen resumes a China-centered position solidified by his professional training in Sinology and deplors that what is missing or abandoned in Dao Bei's poetry is the time-honored classical tradition of Chinese poetic language. Contrary to Owen, however, Torbjorn Lodén is not bothered by the problems of "world poetry" or "world theater" and remains optimistic about China: "For the culture of China which, no matter how illustrious, suffers from the ills of insularity, few things could be more promising than the appearance of first-rate writers of world literature. Gao Xingjian has now joined these ranks. So has Bei Dao. And many more are coming" (274).

In Damrosch's formulation both Bei's and Gao's works belong to world literature because their texts gain in translation. On the other end of the translation spectrum, Damrosch notices that "some works are not translatable without substantial loss, and so they remain largely within their local or national context, never achieving an effective life as world literature" (*What* 289). Although in many cases untranslatability is distinct from the value of a literary work (see Apter), it is worthwhile to note that such untranslatability sometimes may have more to do with culture than with language. This is the case of English writings and translations of Eileen Chang (aka Ailing Zhang), a young writer who achieved overnight fame in Japanese-occupied Shanghai in the early 1940s, but whose reputation decreased when she moved to Hong Kong in the 1950s and subsequently stayed in the U.S. A bilingual writer, Chang tried several times to break into the English-speaking world with her English novels (e.g., *The Rice-Sprout*), but she failed repeatedly, even in her rediscovered, posthumous publications in recent years (e.g., *The Book*). In Chang's case what remains puzzling is not simply that she contradicts the first part of Damrosch's threefold definition of "world literature as an elliptical refraction of national literatures," but also that her enduring popularity with Chinese readers around the world demonstrates that a writer can secure a "hypercanon" status and exert a global impact without representing a given national literature in the world republic of letters (Zhang, Yingjin "From Counter-canon"). In other words, while she may not represent China in world literature, Chang has commanded a worldwide fan base with Chinese readers for several decades. Her case supports Thomsen's modification of Damrosch's definition: "especially as national canonization has a different logic and different values than international canonization," world literature "is consequently not a reflection of national literatures" (Thomsen, *Mapping* 3).

Another Chinese case similar to Chang's is Yong Jin, a Hong Kong-based writer of martial arts fiction, who has enjoyed sustained popularity among Chinese readers around the world for decades, but whose writing apparently does not gain in translation—not even when his English editions were issued by a prestigious publisher like the Oxford University Press—and whose name is therefore virtually unknown in world literature (Jin's work see, e.g., Song <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/11>>). Interestingly, as a parallel project to my study, the topic of "mapping China in world cinema" would reveal the high profile of Chinese martial arts film in international screen culture—the exact opposite of the status of Chinese martial arts fiction in world literature. Not surprisingly, many of Jin's novels have been adapted into the big screen and enjoy recognition at international film festivals around the world. Returning to literary scholarship, Chang's and Jin's cases remind us that what we understand as world literature in the global arena is mostly canonized elite literature rather than popular literature. There are exceptions, of course. Different processes of national and international canonization, indeed, have yielded different results on a global atlas of literary maps. Further, precisely owing to their potential challenge to the divide between elite

and popular literature, Chang's and Jin's cases compel us to consider two questions: is the world that important to modern Chinese literature? Given China's persistent Nobel Prize complex since the 1980s (see Lovell; Tam), the answer is certainly yes, because Chinese writers and readers demand that Chinese literature be recognized internationally. It is refreshing to recall what Wendy Larson and Richard Krauss thought in 1989: "Can Chinese art join a 'world culture'? The answer must be 'not yet,' if we use the Nobel record of racist ignorance as a guide ... The search for Swedish recognition ultimately validates the West's claims to be the judge of 'world literature.' ... China's chance to win the prize may ultimately be determined by its importance, as a nation, in the eyes of a small group of Europeans who know little of its culture, history, or politics" ("160). In hindsight, we see that if Gao's case reconfirms the Nobel doctrine of transcendental universality, then Mo Yan's case proves the principle of local (or national) particularity at work in that the Swedish Academy has finally acknowledged China's importance as a nation in the new millennium.

The second question is this: has China entered world literature? The answer is both yes and no: yes to some types of modern Chinese literature, especially modernist (e.g., Bei, Gao) and realist (e.g., Lu Xun, Mo Yan), but no because the majority of Chinese readers may prefer other works (for example, Chang, Jin), which have failed or have not yet made it to world literature but which speak to them directly without the mediation of translation or authorization by international awards. Obviously, "China in world literature" and "literature in the world of Chinese readers" refer to two different positions of view and their difference has yet to enter our deliberation on world literature. To say the least, different positions of view entail different value judgments. As Haun Saussy observes, readers in the West tend to believe that "Chinese literature is valuable, interesting and important because *China* is important" (n.p.; emphasis in the original)—important, that is, because China has become the second largest economy in the world. However, what is problematic here is less the issues of importance than the kind of Chinese literature available to Western readers in the republic of (translated) world literature, which may differ from the kind of literature Chinese readers appreciate in their own selection regardless of its status in world literature. The problematic, in other words, is not necessarily the conflict between the global (the world) and the local or the national (China), because nowadays Chinese readers are well informed of the world republic of letters and translocally linked to a global network of experiences and values. A comparative study of the preferences of Chinese versus Western readers may point to different configurations of the global, the national, and the local in relation to world literature.

The relativity of global-national-local leads us to Damrosch's observation that "For any given observer, even a genuinely global perspective remains a perspective *from somewhere*" (*What* 27; emphasis in the original). This emphasis on the viewer's situated position certainly applies to Moretti's argumentation, whose preference for distant reading over close reading reveals his alignment with the global at the expense of the local. However, to move beyond Moretti's binary approach, we may entertain a different scenario in which localized close reading contributes to globalized distant reading. This scenario is made possible when we no longer take any position of view from the West or China as fixed, static, or overriding, but instead adopt a mobile tactic—what Dudley Andrew describes in the context of world cinema as the choice "to travel more than to oversee"—whereby "every local cinema is examined with an eye to its complex ecology" (19). Inspired by Moretti's work on the European novel, but avoiding his reliance on a single viewing position, Andrew recommends consulting an atlas of several types of maps—political maps, demographic maps, linguistic maps, orientation maps, topographic maps—each offering a different view, because every view is local and hence partial in a global perspective (20). It follows from this amalgamated vision of mobility that mapping China in world literature cannot succeed if one is confined to a single viewing position, no matter how global it claims to be.

In the current age of globalization, our world is as heterogeneous and diverse as before, if not more so than before: "The worlds of world literature are often worlds in collision," Damrosch cautions us (*What* 14). Yet, I would add that not all worlds are headed in a collision course, because there are alternative or parallel worlds which may or may not have been represented or refracted in our currently available atlas of maps on world literature. By "parallel worlds" I have in mind what the metaphor of (江湖 *jianghu*, rivers and lakes) evokes in popular martial arts fiction in China—an immense folk sphere (民建 *minjian*, the realm of folks) which contains alternative values in a third space outside the purview of the official and the elite (see Zhang, Yingjin "Witness"). To extend the metaphor of the atlas of

maps, we realize that instead of one single center in the world republic of letters there are several overlapping centers with Paris being only one of them (and an endangered one as the Anglophone centers such as London and New York are threatening to take over in a new age of globalization). Prendergast concedes that given its ambivalence, the idea of *Weltliteratur* is not exclusively Goethe's at all: "it belongs to no-one in particular by virtue of the fact that its determinate shape and content are as yet far from clear. By the same token, what we make of it today is necessarily open to indefinitely extended reflection and debate" (viii). In Longxi Zhang's opinion, it is precisely the "conceptual openness or flexibility" of world literature which "makes it possible for previously isolated or neglected regions to introduce their best works to join the traditionally well-established literary canon," thereby "expanding our horizon and effectively changing our views of the world and its richness in literature and culture" (247).

In conclusion, if world literature itself is open to reformulation, then we can design different maps and entertain different ways of viewing and mapping China in world literature as well as reconfiguring what Chinese literature represents both inside and outside China. I submit that Damrosch's question "What does it really mean to speak of a 'world literature'? Which literature, whose world?" (*What* 1) is worth pondering further. After all, exploring how and where China is mapped in world literature reveals various positions of view and modes of engagement open to readers and scholars. My intervention in this study is to reassert the importance of recognizing other maps and other modes of view which merit critical, if not global, attention precisely because of their apparently local or translocal exigencies and valences in real and imaginary worlds.

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