

Introduction to The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World

Shunqing Cao
Sichuan University

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

Cao, Shunqing. "Introduction to The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 17.1 (2015): <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2718>>

The above text, published by Purdue University Press ©Purdue University, has been downloaded 555 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 17 Issue 1 (March 2015) Editorial 1
"Introduction to *The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World*"
by Shunqing Cao

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/1>>

Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 17.1 (2015)**
Thematic Issue ***The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World*. Ed. Shunqing Cao**
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/>>

Introduction to *The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World*

Shunqing CAO

Given the internationality and influence of English as today's *lingua franca*, to explore translations and studies of Chinese literature in the Anglophone world becomes an important aspect of comparative literature specifically and the study of literature in general. One of the objectives of the collection of articles in *The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World* is to promote scholarship not only within China, but also the scholarship of Chinese-language literature outside of China. I should note that although the title of the collection is with reference to the "Anglophone" world, the scholarship presented in the collection is with regard to the US-American landscape of scholarship and, of course, there is the need to explore also what has and is occurring with regard to Chinese literature and the study of Chinese literature in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom and this remains a task for the future.

One task for authors of the collection represents attention to similarities and variations in the reception and study of Chinese literature between the Chinese world and the Anglophone world and to analyze its causes. The other task is to promote dialogue between heterogeneous cultures through mutual understanding and appreciation and then to change the "view" of the "Other" to the "view-point" of "Otherization" which may provide a new methodology for the study of comparative literature and comparative culture. The first group of authors in this thematic issue of *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature of Culture* <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/>> reflect on theoretical matters including the past and current situation of Chinese literature in English-language scholarship—also in relation to Chinese-language scholarship—in particular with regard to the disparity between English-language literature's reception and study in China and the reception and study of Chinese literature in English. The second group of authors discuss examples of the translation and reception of Chinese literature in the Anglophone world from the vantage point of comparative literature and world literature with focus on the history of international literary relations. And the third group of authors discuss topics such as humor in Chinese literature in its English context, nineteenth-century literature in Shanghai, 武侠 (wuxia) novels, and Mao Tzedong's thought on literature, culture, and politics. Further, the collection includes a review article and a thematic bibliography. The contributors to this thematic issue are all Chinese scholars (although some are working at US-American universities or at US-American, as well as Chinese universities) and this is an important aspect of the collection because the scholarship presented is by Native Chinese scholars trained in China instead of foreign scholars—as is often the case in Western publications about Chinese literature—whose studies are from Western perspectives by definition and hence the studies presented are in the spirit of bridging the scholarships of the East and the West, one of the objectives of *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*.

The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World includes the following articles:

In "Mapping Chinese Literature as World Literature"

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/2>> Yingjin Zhang revisits the challenge of mapping 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.

In "About the Chinese School of Comparative Literature"

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/3>> He Lin and Danqing Huang discuss the development of the Chinese school of comparative literature since the 1980s. Lin and Huang describe how based on traditions in Chinese literary history, comparatists constructed a system of theoretical frameworks and methods. They argue that the Chinese School should not be criticized as "Chinacentric" just for the fact that its practitioners perform Chinese-Western comparative studies within its own historical and cultural context. Further, they defend the Chinese School by examining the achieve-

ments it has made in comparative poetics and the study of reception of Chinese literature in English-language cultures.

In "Chinese Literature's Route to World Literature"

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/4>> Hongtao Liu argues that Goethe's theory of world literature based on the conflicting and unifying values of cosmopolitanism and localism has fueled Chinese literature's desire to join world literatures. Proposed by Zhenduo Zheng with the notion of the "unification of literature" at the beginning of the twentieth century and developed in the 1980s, the "global elements of twentieth-century Chinese literature" in the twenty-first century, this notion remains a feature of Chinese literature's global trajectory. Liu argues that although experiencing a number of transitions, China's pursuit remains relevant and translation remains a significant route for Chinese literature to join the spaces of world literatures. He also posits that other routes such as regional world literature and world literature in Chinese are gaining in importance.

In "Localization, Globalization, and Traveling Chinese Culture"

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/5>> Chengjun Wang and Junhong Ma discuss three main channels of the "traveling" of Chinese culture to the outside world. Focusing on the situation of bilingualism (i.e., Chinese and English) and the need of spreading Chinese literature and culture especially in the English-speaking world, Wang and Ma argue for "localization and globalization." Further, Wang and Ma argue that in order to narrow the gap of the cultural divide between China and the West. In addition to the need for bilingualism especially in the case of translation, they posit that especially the writing of the literary history of Chinese is needed in both English and Chinese (hence their argumentation with regard to bilingualism).

In "Variation Theory and Reception of Chinese Literature in the English-Speaking World"

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/6>> Shunqing Cao introduces "variation theory" he developed and suggests that the framework can be applied in studying the dissemination and reception of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world. Cao argues that cultural and literary differences produce variations in literary exchanges among different cultures and variation theory concentrates on these variations. With unique perspectives on variation in translation, cultural misreading, and domestication, variation theory is a useful theoretical framework and methodology for the study of the reception of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world.

In "Designations of Poetry in Translations of Liu Xie's (劉勰) Work on Literary Genres"

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/7>> Ying Liu discusses how Liu Xie (劉勰 465-521 AD) in his *文心雕龍* (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*) followed the tradition of *The Book of Songs* (宋書) and synthesized the original concept of *sung* (genre of classical poetry) in *the Book of Songs* with some later variations and thus constructed and shaped the notion of the genre *sung*. Liu analyses translations by selected scholars and explores the subtle nuances between *sung* and its English counterparts historically including "ode," "panegyric," "eulogy," and "hymn" in order to explain the change of the notion and inconsistencies in the translations of *sung*.

In "Rewriting, Ideology, and Poetics in Goldblatt's Translation of Mo Yan's *天堂蒜薹之歌* (*The Garlic Ballads*)" <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/8>> Ping Du and Lili Zhang analyze Howard Goldblatt's translation of the novel in order to explore literary "rewriting" in translation. Du and Zhang posit that Goldblatt's translation reflects ideology in concealing, discarding, rewriting, and even losing some part in his translation. Further, they argue that the translation of the novel has been performed based on specific aspects of poetics including the musical charm of Chinese ballads and their unique cultural images.

In "Han's (韓邦慶) Novel *海上花列傳* (*The Sing-Song Girls of Shanghai*) and Urbanity in Late Qing Shanghai" <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/9>> Xiaojue Wang discusses the relationship between the urban milieu in the foreign concessions of Shanghai and the late Qing courtesan culture through a critical reading of Bangqing's Han's (韓邦慶 1856-1894) novel *Sing-Song Girls of Shanghai*. Wang argues that Han's novel is a significant departure from traditional vernacular fiction three aspects: 1) its illustration of the connection between courtesan culture and the rising modern city, 2) its portrayal of emergent female subjectivity and female space in the late Qing, and 3) the significance of its narrative discrepancy. The novel is composed of two parts: one situated in Shanghai's concessions and the other in Yili Yuan, an imaginary classical Chinese garden. Wang discusses how in the novel

narrative disparity is a consequence of the Han's efforts to reshuffle ambivalent cultural and ethical values in a transitional age in China.

In "About English-language Scholarship on Humor in Ancient Chinese Literature"

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/10>> Peina Zhuang and Lei Cheng present an overview of scholarship by English-language Sinologists on humor. Zhuang and Cheng argue that while English-language scholars have played a path-breaking role in making prominent an important aspect of ancient Chinese literature, their studies also display weaknesses including questionable choices of source material, decontextualized analysis, or even mistranslation. They posit that the study of humor in ancient Chinese literature ought to be performed in a contextual perspective including linguistics, literary history, society, politics, etc.

In "Positions of Sinophone Representation in Jin's (金庸) Chivalric Topography"

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/11>> Weijie Song examines Yong Jin's post-1949 Hong Kong chivalric imagination of imperial Beijing and beyond during the Ming-Qing Dynastic transition and the dialects of inclusive exclusion and exclusive inclusion. In Cold War Hong Kong, Jin charted a wide range of chivalric activities: intruding into the political center embodied by the Forbidden City (the "Great Within") and fleeing to peripheral regions such as Xinjiang's Islamic community, the overseas kingdom in Brunei in Southeast Asia, and an unknown place somewhere inside Yangzhou. Song argues that Jin's literary topography suggests a frustrated yet flexible identity and a supplementary yet self-sufficient "republic of letters" in his remapping of China's past for the possible positions of contemporary Sinophone representations.

In "The Reception of Mao's 'Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art' in English-language Scholarship" <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/12>> Qilin Fu examines the three waves of the reception of Mao Zedong's 1942 text. Fu elaborates on the understandings of Mao's ideas about literature and art and discusses the changes depending on historical and political contexts. Fu argues that the changes are explicit or implicit representations of cultural politics ranging from an anti-communist criticism based on Cold War ideology to the concerns of literary theory and the cultural critique of discourse in the context of globalization.

The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World includes the review article "About Chinese-Western Comparative Poetics: A Review Article on Liu's, Miner's, Owen's, and Yip's Work" <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/13>> by Yina Cao and a "Bibliography for the Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World" <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss1/14>> by He Lin.

The authors of articles in *The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World* and myself as guest editor thank *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* for comments by reviewers of papers submitted to the journal and processed—in addition to external evaluations organized by the guest editor—in its double-blind process of evaluation. As required by the journal in the case of thematic and special issues (see <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweblibrary/clcwebbestpractices>>) institutional funding is required and I thank the Ministry of Education P.R. of China for the funding of the publication of articles in *The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World* in the much-reduced amount of a total of US\$ 2000.00. We thank *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* and Purdue University Press for the opportunity to publish our work.

Note: A number of authors of articles in *The Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World* are part of a research project (英语世界中国文学的译介与研究 (Research on the Translation and Study of Chinese Literature in the Anglophone World) funded by the Ministry of Education, P.R. of China (12JZD016).

Note: In articles of *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* and in the Purdue University Press print monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies "with regard to languages including Chinese in which the sequence of names is Surname Firstname, the journal and the Purdue print book series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies the journal is affiliated with follow in-text the Western sequence of Firstname Surname unless aka names, historical names, or established names" (<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweblibrary/clcwebstyleguide>>).

Guest editor's profile: Shunqing Cao teaches literary theory and comparative literature at Sichuan University and Beijing Normal University. His interests in scholarship include classic Chinese literature theory, comparative literature, comparative poetics, and world literature. In addition to numerous articles and books in Chinese and English, his recent book publications include *The Variation Theory of Comparative Literature* (2013) and the edited volume *中外文论史* (History of Chinese and Western Literary Theory) (2012). E-mail: <caosq@scu.edu.cn>