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International Conference for Ethical Literary Criticism (ICELC, since 2012) is an annual international conference for academics and research-oriented scholars in the area of literature and related disciplines. ICELC is the flagship conference of the International Association for Ethical Literary Criticism which is an international literary and cultural organization aiming to link all those working in ethical literary criticism in theory and practice and to encourage the discussions of ethical function and value in literary works and criticism.

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开拓社会历史批评的广阔前景：王守仁教授访谈录

Expanding the Horizon of Socio–historical Criticism: An Interview with Professor Wang Shouren

刘　洋（**Liu Yang**）　王守仁（**Wang Shouren**）

内容摘要：在本次访谈中，王守仁介绍和回顾了自己从英国文学到美国文学、世界文学的文学研究历程。在王守仁近四十年的学术生涯中，他遵循社会历史批评范式，深入思考文学与生活的复杂关系，注重将文学创作置于历史语境考察，在文学与历史–社会的各种关联中揭示作家对生活和时代的洞见。王守仁通过对现实主义文学原理的系统性研究，创新社会历史批评，指出文学在反映现实的同时建构现实，具有认知和审美价值。王守仁的外国文学研究在融通中外的同时，坚守中国批评立场，保持了中国学者的主体性。他翻译英语文学作品、编纂各类外国文学史、参与中国大百科全书编写、发表论文专著，形成扎根中国大地的实践品格，为建构中国特色外国文学知识体系作出了重要贡献。

关键词：王守仁；社会历史批评；外国文学研究；现实主义；外国文学知识体系

作者简介：刘洋，南京大学外国语学院英语系助理研究员，主要研究方向为早期现代英格兰文学、现实主义小说与理论；王守仁，南京大学人文社会科学资深教授、当代外国文学与文化研究中心主任，主要研究方向为英美文学、现实主义、英语教育。

Title: Expanding the Horizon of Socio-historical Criticism: An Interview with Professor Wang Shouren

Abstract: In this interview, Wang Shouren introduces and reviews the journey of his literary research on British literature, American literature, and world literature. In an academic career of almost 40 years, he is apt at applying the socio-historical approach to make nuanced contemplation on the complicated relationship between literature and life. Juxtaposing literature with its historical context, his studies illustrate the authors' insights into their life and time by relating literature to socio-historical factors. Wang Shouren's systematic study on the principles of literary realism brings new life to socio-historical criticism and predicates that literature creates cognitive as well as aesthetic values in its representation and construction of reality. Wang Shouren's research on foreign literature bridges the gap between

China and the West, meanwhile, he insists on the Chinese standpoint and maintains his own subjectivity as a Chinese scholar. Through translating literature in English, editing foreign literary histories and encyclopedia entries, and publishing articles and monographs, he demonstrates a character of praxis which is nourished by Chinese culture and history, and makes significant contribution to constructing China's systematic body of knowledge regarding foreign literature.

Keywords: Wang Shouren; socio-historical criticism; foreign literature studies; realism; body of foreign literature knowledge

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外国文学研究是认识世界的重要途径

刘洋（以下简称为刘）：王老师，您好！非常高兴和荣幸与您进行此次访谈。您是南京大学人文社会科学资深教授，是我国外国文学研究领域的著名学者，在外国文学的研究、教学、译介等多方面均做出了卓越贡献，许多后辈学人都对您的学术生涯非常感兴趣。您曾描述自己的学术研究经历了英国文学——美国文学——世界文学——现实主义文学的历程。请您首先谈谈作为您近 40 年学术旅程起点的英国文学研究。

王守仁（以下简称为王）：英国文学研究是中国外国文学研究的重要组成部分，历经百余年的学术史。自近代中国高校设置英语科目和专业以降，英国文学在课程设置中长期占据主导地位。我是在上世纪70年代末通过高考进入南京大学读本科的。当时的英语专业文学课比重大，但只开设英国文学，我上了两门必修课程："英国文学史"和"英国文学选读"。后来去英国伦敦大学留学，硕士和博士学位论文选题都是19世纪英国文学。读博期间给美国的*Studies in Browning and His Circle*期刊投稿，1988年发表的论文是讨论英国维多利亚时代诗人罗伯特·布朗宁（Robert Browning）的文学创作。1990年在英国麦克米兰出版公司出版英文专著*The Theatre of the Mind: A Study of Unacted Drama in Nineteenth-Century England*。我对英国文学有浓厚兴趣，在本科和研究生阶段受过严格的专业训练，一直在英国文学研究领域进行学术探索。从英国学成回国后我在《外国文学评论》《外国文学研究》《当代外国文学》《南京大学学报》等刊物发表英国文学研究论文，出版了

《英国文学简史》（2006）《20世纪英国文学史》（2006）《英国文学批评史》（2012）《英国文学史论》上下卷（2016）。作为英语文学的本源和重镇，英国文学历史悠久，传统深厚，保持着世界性影响。五四时期鲁迅的《摩罗诗力说》“别求新声于异邦”（68），介绍了以英国浪漫主义诗人拜伦为代表的“摩罗诗派”，郭沫若谈及雪莱对自己文学创作的影响时，声称“译雪莱的诗，是要使我成为雪莱”（19）。马克思关于狄更斯等英国批判现实主义作家的论述对中国现当代现实主义文学发展起到指导作用。我的导师范存忠先生研究18世纪英国文学，早在20世纪二三十年代就注意到中国文学对西方产生的影响，是中国比较文学和英国文学研究的开拓者。我致力于英国文学研究，是继承南大的学术传统。在历史长河中，世界各国文学文化是在相互联系、交流、借鉴、影响中向前推进的。英国文学是世界文学宝库中一颗璀璨的明珠，富有生机和活力，吸引着我不断地追索其中深刻的文学话题，并对其在新时代产生的新问题保持关注。

刘：您在研究英国文学的同时开展美国文学研究，取得同样甚至更为丰硕的成果。您曾担任全国美国文学研究会副会长，对推动中国的美国文学研究做出了历史性贡献。请问您为什么要研究美国文学？又是如何开展美国文学研究的？

王：我国哲学社会科学研究承担着认识世界、传承文明、创新理论、咨政育人、服务社会的职责。20世纪美国文学在世界文坛崛起，从过去英国文学的一个部分发展成为独立的、具有强大生命力的民族文学。研究美国文学，有助于我们认识创造了美国文学的美国人民，也可以借鉴美国文学的发展经验。改革开放前，由于历史的原因，我们国家对美国文学的研究比较薄弱。1980年代末我学成回国后，感到有必要加强我们国家的美国文学研究，便在开展英国文学研究的同时，研究美国文学。我在国外发表的第一篇学术论文的研究对象是英国文学，在国内发表的第一篇学术论文的主题则是美国文学，我用英文撰写“Thoreau and Confucianism”刊登在《外国语》1988年第2期。文学记录历史进程，反映社会生活。从这一基本立场出发，我始终将美国文学的发展与美国社会历史相联系，注重揭示其内在关联。如讨论20世纪上半叶美国作家威拉•凯瑟（Willa Cather）的小说《一个失落的女人》（*A Lost Lady*, 1923）的文章将女主人公视为“连接拓荒时代与金钱时代的中间人物”，认为她的故事“折射出历史的发展变化”，即美国正从农业社会向工商社会转形（“论《一个失落的女人》” 147）。发表在《当代外国文学》1996年第3期上的文章“汽车与50年代美国小说”以塞林格（J. D. Salinger）、纳博科夫（Vladimir Nabokov）、凯鲁亚克（Jack Kerouac）和厄普代克（John Updike）的作品为例，说明这些作家“通过描写汽车时代的社会生活来表现美国文学中‘出走’这一母题，从而赋予其作品社会批判意

义和鲜明时代特征”（112）。我对美国族裔文学关注尤多，发表了一系列关于美国非裔、华裔、墨西哥裔作家作品的研究成果。我撰写的《性别·种族·文化：托妮·莫里森与美国二十世纪黑人文学》（1999）是国内第一部研究诺贝尔文学奖得主莫里森（Toni Morrison）小说创作的学术专著。阅读莫里森的小说，读者可以了解到从17世纪一直到今天的美国黑人社会史。我在该书“绪论”中指出：“美国黑人文学是在历史、现实、非洲文化、白人文化等诸因素合力作用下产生、发展、壮大起来的”（3）。莫里森的作品“始终以表现和探索黑人的历史、命运和精神世界为主题，思想性和艺术性完美结合在一起”（25），因此，研究莫里森必须结合她所生活的时代，以挖掘其作品中蕴含的社会历史内涵。我和刘海平教授共同主持的国家社科基金“九五”规划重点项目四卷本《新编美国文学史》也充分体现了这种社会历史批评思想。正是这种关注现实生活的文学研究可以贡献出关于美国社会和历史文化的有用知识，而这是我们外国文学工作的价值所在。

刘：进入 21 世纪，您进入更为广阔的研究领域，即从英国和美国等国别文学拓展到世界其他国家的文学，从全球视角审视世界文学版图，获得对当代外国文学系统深入的认知。您是如何跨越国别疆界，在世界文学视域下开展外国文学研究的？

王：我虽然在英国接受研究生教育，后来又两度去美国访学，但较早就认识到英语文学并非都在英美，有意识地关注非英美国家英语文学的发展。2007 年我与北京大学、北京外国语大学、山东大学、中山大学的老师共同发起成立“中国外国文学学会英语文学研究分会”，并于 2011-2015 年间担任会长。2012 年 11 月我在《社会科学报》撰文，明确指出“促进英语国别文学的研究和教学，是中国外国外国文学学会英语文学研究分会的任务”。世界文学视域的形成与我参加的几个国家级项目有关。1996 年，中国社会科学院学部委员、时任社科院外国文学研究所所长的吴元迈先生启动五卷本《20 世纪外国文学史》撰写工作，邀请我参加并负责英国文学部分撰写。第二年该课题获批国家社科基金“九五”规划重大项目，吴元迈先生担任主编，北京大学陶洁教授和我担任副主编。该文学史著作于 2004 年问世，2008 年获第一届中国出版政府奖。我除了撰写每一卷中 20 世纪不同时期的英国文学发展史章节之外，还担任第 2 卷“1914 年至 1929 年的外国文学”主编，对这一时期的外国文学发展状况进行全方位考察。这一卷涉及近 40 个国家与地区的文学，涵盖现实主义、象征主义、超现实主义、现代主义、无产阶级革命文学、俄苏形式主义批评理论等主题。在编纂这一卷的过程中，一方面，我培养起了文学研究的全球视野，开始有意识地将外国文学视作整体，从世界范围看待问题，认识到从第一次世界大战到 20 年代末，现代主义成为了跨越国家与语言边界的世界性文学与文化现象。另一方面，我有意识地深入到具体

的社会历史状况当中，挖掘某种文学潮流生成和发展的经济、政治、思想和文化原因。吴元迈先生在全书的“绪论”中指出，五卷本《20 世纪外国文学史》的意义与价值在于为了“新世纪的前行，全面回顾、思考和总结”（1）已经逝去的 20 世纪，同时它是一部“涵盖 20 世纪亚非国家和欧美国家文学即东方和西方文学的全景文学史”（18）。整部文学史将展现外国文学的共性规律与各国别地区的个性特点相结合，又将扩展全球视野与联系中国实际相结合，内容详尽，气势恢宏。它是我进入世界文学研究领域的一个重要契机。

刘：您在第 2 卷“概论”中指出现代主义出现的社会历史原因之一是第一次世界大战。诚然，不仅仅是一战，两次世界大战都对全球政治、经济、文化版图产生了深远的影响。《战后世界进程与外国文学进程研究》四卷本中所称的“战后”即是第二次世界大战以后。可否请您谈谈这部著作的撰写情况？

王：国家社科基金重大项目四卷本《战后世界进程与外国文学进程研究》（2019）在一定意义上是“20世纪外国文学史”课题研究的延续，但在项目的目标规划、总体设计、内容安排、工作思路等方面都表现出明显不同的特点。我主持这个项目，将历史进程与文学进程并置考察，是基于对文学与现实生活关系的历史唯物主义认知，即一定时代的文学是在一定时代的社会生活和经济基础上形成和发展的。二战后外国文学具有与以往历史时期外国文学不同的艺术特征和时代风貌，而要揭示战后外国文学独特的艺术进程，最好的方式就是把后者放到生产它的战后世界历史进程中加以考察和辨析。

在具体操作层面，《战后世界进程与外国文学进程研究》一方面按照文学思潮、文学流派发生发展脉络，揭示其社会、历史和思想文化的深刻背景，分析外国文学的特点，另一方面按照社会历史发展阶段和标志性事件的事件节点，阐述战后外国文学在不同时期的发展。四卷本分别探讨战后现实主义文学、后现代主义文学、全球化视域下的当代外国文学、新世纪外国文学发展趋势四个领域的问题。这样的分卷本划分方式与此前的外国文学史著作具有明显不同。四个领域的提出是站在整体性的角度去观照世界文学，破除西方中心主义，以全球视域对外国文学进行考察的结果。在研究西方文学的同时，关注非西方国家的文学发展，从而展示波澜壮阔的世界文学全貌。有评论者提出，该书突破了美国中心主义或欧洲中心主义，“突显了战后文学差异化中的统一性与全球化中的区域性特征”（徐兆正 169），是一种“总体性”的外国文学研究方式。四卷本在横向比较和纵向梳理中展示战后外国文学发展的整体形态和特性，阐述其演变的普遍规律和特殊规律，对于我们借鉴人类优秀文明成果、深刻理解中外文学文化异同、促进中外文化交流具有重要的理论和实践意义。

二、创新社会历史批评理论与方法

刘：我注意到，您在谈论自己的上述研究时，经常提到“生活”、“社会”、“历史”这几个关键词，那么您是如何理解文学与上述几个关键词之间的关系的？

王：要厘清文学与生活的关系，就要明确我们对文学的定义。从我个人的文学批评和研究实践出发，我认为文学与生活之间存在着深厚联系。对于文学批评而言，生活是与意识形态、审美、语言、伦理、表演等同样重要的概念，不应该被文学的研究者忽视。文学作为一种书写艺术，是生活的审美表现，时代的文化表征；生活则是文学的源泉和土壤，是文学的表现对象。

生活（life）作为关键词，曾出现在弗吉尼亚•吴尔夫（Virginia Woolf）的《现代小说》（“Modern Fiction”, 1919）一文中。她讨论了与生活关系最紧密的文学体裁——小说，并表达了对生活的看法，认为“生活不是一系列对称的车灯，而是一圈光晕，一个半透明的罩子，它包围着我们，从意识开始到意识结束”，而小说家的任务则是“表达这种变化多端的、未知的、不受限制的精神”，它们才是“小说的适当材料”（128）。这说明生活难以被固定的艺术范式框定和描述，但其存在又不可被否定。这种幽微难言的玄妙正是文学表达的独特之处。文学以个体和个体的生活作为表征的对象，但个体和个体的生活不是自始至终恒定不变，个体也不仅仅生存在自我构筑的牢笼之中，而是时时刻刻与外界发生关联、产生矛盾，并且在关联与矛盾中运动、发展、变化。因此，文学在细致入微地表现生活肌理的同时也触及历史发展的脉搏。另外，文学作为“事件”，是历史的参与者，又积极干预生活，促使社会发生变革与进步。

刘：您在《战后世界进程与外国文学进程研究》的“总序”中谈到该书的研究思路时说道：“通过勾勒战后历史进程，分析战后政治、经济背景及重要社会文化思潮对文学创作的影响，在历史研究的基础上，解读具有重大影响的外国文学流派和作家作品，进而梳理和描述文学的产生、流通、变化与社会存在之间的复杂关系”。您的研究基本采用了社会历史批评的方法。请问您如何理解社会历史批评？

王：我的外国文学研究遵循的是社会历史批评范式，正如陈众议先生所说：“延承传统社会历史批评，同时对不同学科、不同学派兼收并蓄，不拘一格，具有鲜明的跨学科取向”（“话语之弧” 150）。社会历史批评将文学与历史-社会相联系，关注它们之间的影响与互动。俄国社会历史批评的奠基者别林斯基（Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky）指出：“现实与艺术和文学，正如同土壤与在它怀抱里所培育的植物一样”（428）。文学根植于社会现实的土壤之中。我认为，文学是作家从个体生命的角度出发，在讲述对生

活的具体感受和体验的过程中展现人性，描写生存环境。作家生活在特定的历史时代，作品中呈现的生存环境具有历史性和社会性，因此，文学被视为生活的审美表现和时代的文化表征，社会历史进程对文学的发生发展产生影响。我在《20世纪外国文学史》第2卷的“概论”中指出，“现代主义文学时代的到来有其深刻的历史社会原因和复杂的文化思想背景”（1）。“文章合为时而著”，文学折射了不同历史时代的社会现实。《战后世界进程与外国文学进程研究》涉及两个“进程”，即世界历史的进程和外国文学进程，分析两者之间的复杂关系。以后现代主义文学为例，它作为一种国际现象在各个国家的发展进程并不同步，并且因社会历史文化背景的差异而带上特有的民族性印记。如1989年柏林墙倒塌，后现代主义在美国风头已过，然而在俄罗斯却开始了以后现代主义为文学标志的俄罗斯文学新时代：俄罗斯后现代主义文学解构和颠覆的主要对象是以所谓的社会主义现实主义文化为代表的苏联官方文化，苏东剧变使后现代主义文学得以“走出地下”，“在俄罗斯的合法化、在广大读者中的流传是时代和文学发展的要求和结果”（413）。在讨论新世纪后现代主义的流变与影响时，我将“9·11”事件视为对后现代主义主义的“致命一击，这反映了历史进程对文学进程的决定性影响”：“9·11”事件中近三千人丧生，“这一血淋淋的现实向世人昭示，现实世界的客观性并非解构主义所宣称的那样可以消解，作家不能也不可能无视周遭生活而沉溺于文字游戏”（26）。这些论点都是建立在文学与历史进程之间的关联基础之上。

马克思、恩格斯曾指出：“人们的观点、观点和概念，一句话，人们的意识，随着人们的生活条件、人们的社会关系、人们的社会存在的改变而改变”（47）。马克思主义将文学艺术纳入经济基础与上层建筑的社会结构中，为人们认识和界定文学的社会性以及在各种社会关系中研究文学问题提供了宏观的解释框架和理论基础。与社会历史批评相对立的是形式批评。早在上世纪四五十年代，韦勒克（René Wellek）与沃伦（Austin Warren）合著的《文学理论》（*Theory of Literature*, 1949）曾倡导“阐释和分析文学作品自身”的“内部研究”（139），将有关历史和社会的研究隔离于“外部研究”。“新批评”作为“内部研究”的典型范式，专注于“精致的瓮”的文本结构，但实际上“新批评”本身亦是特定历史-社会语境的产物。文学文本内涵丰富，象牙塔里单一的形式批评将世界符号化，使外国文学研究脱离现实生活，面临中国之问、世界之问、人民之问、时代之问时，无法贡献有关当代外国的有用知识，而社会历史批评有助于扭转文学批评日益边缘化的趋势。将文本“嵌入”（embedment）特定的历史与社会语境，从历史必然性的高度，在文学与历史-社会的各种关联中揭示作家对生活和时代的洞见，也可以更加有效地分析作品的形式及其变化。

刘：您提到的现实主义文学，可否被认为是与生活、社会和历史联系最紧密的一种文学创作模式？文学研究中的现实主义何以成为创新社会历史批评理论与方法的突破口？

王：现实主义文学确实与生活、社会和历史的联系最为紧密。詹姆斯·伍德（James Wood）在讨论现实主义小说之时曾提出“生活性”（lifeness）概念，“真正的作家”应该能够“把握住生活的全部范畴”（179）。奥尔巴赫（Erich Auerbach）和卢卡奇（György Lukács）的现实主义理论均强调现实主义与生活、社会、历史之间的紧密关联。社会历史批评侧重研究文学作品与社会生活的关系，现实主义与社会历史批评的核心命题具有内在逻辑的自洽性和一致性，自然成为创新社会历史批评理论与方法的突破口。

现实主义这一概念本身具有复杂性和历史性，狭义的现实主义如韦勒克所言，是一个“时期概念”（2），指 19 世纪经典现实主义。广义的现实主义，是小写的 realism，泛指自觉或不自觉采用现实主义创作方法的作品。创作方法是作家艺术地认识和反映生活的方法。人类自文学艺术创作活动出现，就运用一定的创作方法。现实主义创作方法包含创作精神、创作原则和创作手段三个要素。现实主义创作方法的精神指作者所秉持的文学观，即在文学与现实之间建立起关联。现实主义创作方法的基本原则是追求真实，自觉或不自觉地践行这一原则的作品可视为具有现实主义倾向或特色的文学。作为具体手段的现实主义创作方法则是包容并蓄，多种多样，服务于作家表现生活、表征时代的目的。现实主义就其创作方法而言跨越了时间和空间维度，具有各种形态。

从社会历史批评基本立场出发，我不断地思考如何对现实主义进行体系性建构，试图整理出一套系统性的现实主义文学原理。现实主义的知识谱系建构可以沿核心概念与批评范式两条轴线展开——一方面是现实、摹仿、真实、虚构等需要纳入现实主义理论体系之内进行系统性辨析与考量的关键术语，另一方面是认知、审美、情动、跨媒介等多维度的批评范式。在现实主义知识谱系之中，这些结构性关键词相互渗透融通，互为支撑，构成一种对话关系。正是在这样一个对现实主义的重新审视、思考和探究过程中，社会历史批评理论与方法得以不断丰富内涵、创新发展。

三、努力建构中国特色外国文学知识体系

刘：我了解到现实主义文学原理研究是您近年来一直在做的研究课题，旨在建立起当代现实主义文学批评新范式。2022 年习近平总书记在考察中国人民大学时强调指出：“加快构建中国特色哲学社会科学，归根结底是建构中国自主的知识体系”。的确，文学研究领域的自主知识体系建构是近年来学界的热点问题。请问您是如何理解外国文学知识体系的？

王：外国文学知识体系中，“知识”是一个核心词。我们说，知识是指人

们通过感知、思考、学习等方式获得的信息、理解和认知，它是主体与他者交互作用所获得认识与经验的总和，包括了世界上的各种事实、原理、规律和技能。人类通过思维活动，从感性经验到理性思考，从具体到抽象，从表层到深层，不断地积累和扩展自己的认知和理解。随着知识的增加，人们对其进行分类，形成各个学科领域专门化、系统化的知识。个别的、具体的知识概念经过系统集成构成具有稳定结构、内在联系的知识体系，是对相关领域结构化的整体性认识和本质性理解，体现了知识的连贯性和系统性特点。外国文学，顾名思义，它“外”字当头，有别于中国文学，指外在于中国的世界各国文学。外国文学研究是在中国语境下研究世界各国文学，贡献关于外国文学的知识，建构外国文学知识体系。目前大部分外国文学研究成果是以中文为载体，外国文学知识体系是为中国读者服务的，“为了繁荣、发展和强健中国文学这个母体”（陈众议，“二为方向”6）。汉语中的“知识”两字可分开来解释：“知”是知道、了解，“识”是见识、思想观点，两者不可完全分割，相互关联，但大致还有所区别。我认为，外国文学知识体系在“知”的层面主要有译著、大百科全书、外国文学史等，在“识”的层面主要是论文专著，表现为学术研究的见识和思想观点。建构外国文学知识体系，需要关注四要素，即译著、大百科全书、外国文学史和论文专著，特别是后者涉及到文学批评思想。近年来各种批评理论层出不穷，如文学伦理学批评、女性主义批评、后殖民主义批评、生态批评理论等，而社会历史批评在当今文学理论中占据重要地位，是建构外国文学知识体系的理论基础和思想来源之一。

刘：外国文学知识体系中的译著要素包括外国文学作品和文学批评理论的译介，请您谈一谈翻译对于我们外国文学知识体系构建的价值，并介绍一下您的外国文学翻译实践。

王：外国文学作品和批评理论的翻译是外国文学知识体系的基础要素。翻译为中西方文化的繁荣、社会的发展、文明的进步做出了重要贡献。外国文学翻译丰富了中国文学的体裁、主题与形式，直接推动了中国新文学的发展。现在，一年一度的诺贝尔文学奖结果甫一公布，出版社即迅速推出获奖作家作品译著。诺贝尔文学奖的重要功能之一是拓展我们的阅读视野，去关注本来我们忽视的优秀作家作品。这一现象表明，外国文学翻译是一个“无涯”的知识体，其容量需要不断扩大，其疆界在不断突破。我主张外语教师，不论是研究语言还是文学，都要做点翻译。我自己进行翻译实践，发表了各类翻译作品。我的外国文学翻译涉及领域比较宽泛，既有英国经典作家哈代（Thomas Hardy）的小说《还乡》（*The Return of the Native*, 1878），也有加拿大当代作家阿瑟·黑利（Arthur Hailey）的畅销书《晚间新闻》（*The Evening News*, 1990），我撰写的莫里森研究专著《性别·种族·文化》书后附有作品节译，选自莫里森的《爱娃》（*Beloved*, 1987/ 又译《宠儿》）等 8 部小说以及她的获

奖演说全文。我担任《赛珍珠作品选集》副主编，译著有她的长篇小说《群芳亭》（*Pavilion of Women*, 1946/ 合译）和短篇小说《海浪漂来的女人》（“The Woman in the Waves”, 1976）。除了赛珍珠（Pearl S. Buck）和莫里森之外，我还翻译了另一位诺贝尔文学奖得主南非作家戈迪默（Nadine Gordimer）的短篇小说《闯入者》（“An Intruder”, 1993）。戈迪默的文学创作揭露种族隔离制度造成的社会不平等现象，描写了不同历史时期黑人与白人的命运。2005年她主编短篇小说集《爱的讲述》（*Telling Tales*, 2004），收选包括诺贝尔文学奖得主在内的21位当代作家的短篇佳作，将出版利润和作家所得版税全部捐献给艾滋病教育和防治事业。我有幸受邀翻译南非作家代表大会主席恩代贝尔（Njabulo S. Ndebele）的短篇小说《儿子之死》（“Death of a Son”, 1996），不仅促进了南非英语文学在我们国家的传播，还见证了外国文学翻译介入现实生活、直接帮助防治艾滋病事业发展所发挥的作用。我曾写过“论译者为创造者”文章，认为译者根据文学原著创造了一个新的“语言现实”：“翻译是一种创造性活动，每一个译文都是一个文本（text）”（46）。在“论译者的任务”一文中，我接受本雅明把译文看作是原著“来世再生”的观点，指出“原著在转胎投世过程中经受了变形，因此，译文尽管是原著生命的延续，它与原著必定不一样”，是可以与原著“平起平坐”（38）的新文本。总之，外国文学的译著是外国文学知识体系不可或缺的组成部分，外国文学作品和批评理论的译介是建构知识体系的基础性工作。

刘：您参与了中国大百科全书第三版外国文学学科条目的编写工作，您对中国大百科全书在建构外国文学知识体系中的作用有什么认识？

王：百科全书汇集人类一切门类知识或某一门类学科的知识，提供较为完备的概要解释。中国大百科全书第三版全面反映科学文化发展新成就、新发展、新变化，构建中华民族现代知识体系，其中包括了外国文学知识体系。作为第三版美国文学分支主编，我在编写过程中确保条目体现专业性、权威性和时效性。我们生活在网络时代，读者有多种渠道获得信息，如果条目内容不可靠、不完整、不权威，读者就不使用了。专业性和权威性来自条目的质量，质量是生命线。根据计划，第三版在一二版条目的基础上增加2倍，实际新增330多条，一二版修订30条。新增条目有作家作品条目，如近年获得诺贝尔文学奖的鲍勃•迪伦（Bob Dylan）和格吕克（Louise Glück）等，也有文学类别、重要文学现象、学派和流派条目，如少数族裔文学、科幻文学等，还有对作家进行重新评价，目的是能呈现美国文学的全景和新发展。我邀请术有专攻的专家参与这个基础文化工作，自己撰写了50多条，包括当代作家如德里罗（Don DeLillo）、多克托罗（E. L. Doctorow）、库弗（Robert Coover）、麦卡锡（Cormac McCarthy）以及科幻作家勒奎因（Le Guin）等。中国大百科全书是权威知识宝库，为建构外国文学知识体系提供了可靠的知识来源。

刘：您前面提到在外国文学史方面您做过许多工作。请问在文学史编纂的过程中，您是否也考虑到了外国文学知识体系的建构问题？

王：我在外国文学史编纂方面取得了较为丰硕的成果，主编或参与编写的外国文史著作涵盖通史、断代史、国别史、文类史。文学史是关于文学发生、发展、嬗变的历史叙述。在“知”的层面，文学史书写涉及大量文学史实，如同中国大百科全书，外国文学史是中国读者获得外国文学知识的重要途径。同时，文学史也包括了“识”，是文学史家依据一定的文学观和文学史观，对相关史料进行选择、取舍、辨析和组织而建构起来的一种具有自身逻辑结构的有思想的知识谱系。文学史作为对文学史实的表征和解释，会因文学史家的身份、立场、历史观不同而不同，会随着时代而发生变化。我曾为李赋宁先生主编的《欧洲文学史》撰写书评，指出文学史叙述具有历史性和建构性，“写文学史涉及对文学史实进行系统化、结构化，是一个概括、抽象、提炼的过程”（“我们时代的欧洲文学史”，146）。

我以社会历史批评的文学观为指导来书写外国文学史，强调社会历史与文学之间存在深层的关联。《新编美国文学史》第 4 卷重点讨论的部分作品是基于它们蕴含的社会历史价值。文学作品隐含着作者对生活的认识、态度和价值取向，因此，忽视社会存在和历史背景不足以深入理解作家、作品。但是，文学批评要避免将文学简化为对社会历史的机械反映的倾向。我创新外国文学书写方式，努力探索、理解和揭示出作家、作品与时代三者之间关系的复杂性，关于文学史的叙述隐含着从背景到作品的途径，但走的是曲径通幽的路子。

人们掌握世界的基本方式可分为三种，即实用的、科学的和审美的。文学作品是时代和生活的审美表现，在编纂外国文学史的过程当中，我将社会历史价值和审美价值相结合，作为评判作家作品的标准，注重把握文学思潮变革的动向与规律。如我撰写的《20 世纪外国文学史》第 2 卷“乔伊斯”（James Joyce）一节首先充分肯定了《都柏林人》（*The Dubliners*, 1914）等早期作品在表现爱尔兰民族精神与集体意识方面的意义，其后便将重心转向了他文学创作的艺术特色以及他对小说体裁的独特贡献。我将《一个青年艺术家的画像》（*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1916）放在作为整体的小说史中进行考察，赞扬“这部小说打破传统‘成长小说’的模式”（128），通过对《尤利西斯》（*Ulysses*, 1922）《芬尼根守灵夜》（*Finnegans Wake*, 1939）作品中词语、句式、叙述、结构、文体等比照分析，论证乔伊斯对传统的叙事范式进行变革，将意识流引进现代小说，创造出一种独特的小说语言和叙事方式，并从“乔伊斯的爱尔兰民族主义倾向与文体之间的关系”（135）出发，评价他对英语的使用。

作为扎根中国大地的当代外国文学工作者，在编纂文学史的过程中，我注意与西方文学史家保持批评距离，突出中国学者研究的主体性，力求对外

国文学的发展形成自己的理解、认识和结论。如《新编美国文学史》在编纂的过程中恰逢美国学界对文学史编写展开论争，以《哥伦比亚美国文学史》（*Columbia Literary History of the United States*, 1987）和多卷本《剑桥美国文学史》（*The Cambridge History of American Literature*, 1994-2003）为代表的新文学史书写受到后现代主义理论影响，摒弃了连贯性和系统性的编写原则，强调断裂性和多样性。然而我们编写的美国文学史有自己的出发点和读者受众，有自己的国情和文学史论背景，所以在对美国学界的文学史论争保持充分了解的同时，我们采用了自主的编写原则，努力保证四卷本的连贯、完整和系统性，建构起体系化的美国文学知识图谱。并且，我们对美国主流文学史较少关注的中美文学关系作为重点进行考察：爱默生（Ralph Waldo Emerson）与儒家学说的关系、惠特曼对中国文学的影响、艾略特（T.S. Eliot）诗歌在中国的译介、道家思想在奥尼尔（Eugene O'Neill）戏剧创作中的反映以及他的戏剧对中国话剧的影响、赛珍珠对重塑中国人在西方文学中的形象所做的贡献以及她的作品在中国的接受过程等，都有较为详细的论述。这在完全由美国学者作者主编的文学史作品中难得一见，是中文世界中关于外国文学知识体系的重要组成部分。

刘：您提到了中国学者研究的主体性，我想请问您，建构外国文学知识体系如何体现中国特色？

王：前面我将知识分为“知”与“识”两个层面，我们应该看到，以事实信息形态被人们所知道、了解的知识是有疆界的，具有局限性。我们以大百科全书为例。在英美世界被奉为经典的《大不列颠百科全书》（*Encyclopedia Britannica*）中，美国作家“赛珍珠”条目篇幅不长，对其反映中国抗日战争的重要作品《龙种》（1942）也只提了书名，一笔带过。读者从《大不列颠百科全书》中仅能获得关于赛珍珠非常有限的知识。相比之下，中国大百科全书第三版的“赛珍珠”作家条目向读者提供了较为完整的作家生平、文学创作成就、对促进东西方文化交流所做贡献的概要解释，还有《大地三部曲》《龙种》和《同胞》三部中国题材小说独立的作品条目。可见，关于世界的知识是人为建构的，受各种因素影响，存在差异性。我认为，构建中国特色外国文学知识体系，应该注意外国文学研究的中国立场与需求，这其中包括价值取向、中国元素、问题意识、话语系统等问题。我在《当代外语研究》2019年第 5 期发表的文章“走中国特色美国文学研究道路”中提出，要坚持以马克思主义为指导，这是价值引领；体现当代中国学者的主体性，这里涉及到中国学者的文化身份和批评立场，增强批判意识，做出独立判断；充分利用中国历史文化资源，做出原创性成果；深化中外文学与文化的理解和互鉴，推动构建人类命运共同体，“用全球视野审视研究对象”，“彰显世界文学的整体性”（9）。上述几点在推动中国特色外国文学知识体系建构的过程中或

可资借鉴。

刘：感谢您如此详细地介绍自己的学术历程并分享对于当下外国文学研究事业的看法。我在与您对谈的过程中，脑海里时常浮现出“旧学加邃密，新知转深沉”一句话。在您旧学与新知的启迪下，相信您的后辈学人一定会从此次访谈中有所收获，并继续开拓社会历史批评的广阔前景。

王：谢谢。

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继往开来：王守仁与英国文学研究

Wang Shouren and the Study of British Literature in China

何　宁（**He Ning**）

内容摘要：中国的英国文学研究在20世纪以来的社会发展中发挥着重要作用。作为中国著名学者，王守仁在20世纪90年代以其对19世纪英国剧诗的研究首次引起全球学术界的关注。在其近四十年的英国文学教学与研究生涯中，王守仁拓展了中国学界对英国经典作家的研究，推动了对当代英国文学的研究，考察了英国文学理论的发展，为中国英国文学研究的发展做出了卓越的贡献。他在研究中开拓社会历史批评与审美批评结合的英国研究范式，以关注社会和兼容并蓄的视野引领当代英国文学研究，以创新思想来深化英国文学理论研究。王守仁关注英国文学作品中的中国元素，在编写教材时融入比较视野，展现了中国学者敏锐的观察力和创造性，成为中国最具影响力的外国文学研究学者之一。

关键词：王守仁；英国文学；文学理论；中国文学学术；

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Title: Wang Shouren and the Study of British Literature in China

Abstract: The study of British literature in China played a significant role in societal development of the 20th and 21st centuries. As a prominent scholar in China, Wang Shouren first attracted the attention of global academic community with his study of the 19th century English unacted drama in the 1990s. In his almost forty-year career of teaching and research on British literature, Wang has made a remarkable contribution to the advancement of British literary studies in China by broadening the horizon of research on classic British authors, promoting the study on contemporary British literature, and revisiting the development of literary theory in Britain. In his works on British literature, he introduces a research paradigm combining social criticism and aesthetic criticism, examines contemporary British literature with an emphasis on representation of societal development, and provides new perspectives for the study of British literary theory. Focusing on the Chinese elements in British literary works and adopting a comparative approach in editing

textbooks, Wang Shouren demonstrates keen observation and creative intelligence of Chinese scholars, and establishes himself as one of the most influential scholars of foreign literature studies in China.

Keywords: Wang Shouren; English literature; literary theory; Chinese literary scholarship

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在中国现代历史上，英国文学作为国人了解和认识外部世界的途径，自20世纪以来始终具有着重要的影响。虽然19世纪中叶班杨（John Bunyan）的名作《天路历程》（*The Pilgrim's Progress*, 1678/1684）已经借由传教士的翻译出现在中文世界，但英国文学的众多经典还是到20世纪的林纾翻译才为中国读者所熟悉。英国文学作品在林译作品中超过总数的一半，也由此奠定了英国文学在外国文学研究中的地位。20世纪上半叶，中国现代文学的诸多学者将英国文学的重要作品介绍到中国，《英国文学史纲》（1937）《哈代评传》（1938）等研究著作相继问世。当时的中国学界与英国学界交流紧密，如徐志摩曾拜访哈代（Thomas Hardy），范存忠曾在英国发表论文等。从20世纪50年代到80年代，英国文学的研究以批判现实主义为主流，但与英国和世界学界的联系较少。随着20世纪80年代末一批中国学子赴英留学，中国英国文学研究的面貌也随之改变，而王守仁正是其中的代表。

20 世纪后期，中国学界与英国学界的学术交流日益增多，而英国文学研究方面的学术交流走在了中英学界交流的前列。1988 年，王守仁在美国《布朗宁研究》（*Studies in Browning and His Circle*）发表论文“论罗伯特 • 布朗宁的非上演戏剧”（“Robert Browning's Problems with Unacted Drama”），论述英国文学研究中一直被忽视的布朗宁所创作的非上演戏剧，指出非上演戏剧是布朗宁创作中的重要实践，为其最重要的诗歌艺术成就戏剧性独白（dramatic monologue）奠定了基础。[1] 这篇论文是中国大陆的英国文学研究者在多年之后再次在英语世界发声，也标志着中国的英国文学研究重新开启了与世界交流互动的篇章。两年之后，王守仁的博士论文《19 世纪英国剧诗研究》（*The Theatre of the Mind*）由麦克米兰公司（Palgrave Macmillan）出版，对于 19 世纪英国诗剧中的剧诗予以全面的研究，包括对拜伦（Lord Byron）、雪莱（Percy Bysshe Shelley）、布朗宁（Robert Browning）、克拉夫（Arthur Hugh Clough）、阿诺德（Matthew Arnold）、斯温朋（Algernon Charles Swinburn）和哈代作品的阐释，得到当时英美学界的关注。在学术期刊《16-19

1 参见 Wang Shouren, “Robert Browning's Problems with Unacted Drama,” *Studies in Browning and His Circle* 16 (1988): 52-71.

世纪英国文学研究》（*Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*）当年的研究回顾中，美国学者大卫·辛普森将这部专著作为当年19世纪戏剧研究的成就，并提到这是伦敦大学第一位来自中国的英语博士所著。[1]《19世纪英国剧诗研究》研究的是“经典作家的重要作品”（Wang, *Theatre* xxv），采用理论视角和生平研究相结合的路径，通过对这些作品深入的探讨，分析了19世纪英国剧诗中的发展历程，指出这些文本中潜藏的自我表达（self-expression）需求。从1988年发表论文，到1990年专著出版，王守仁在英国文学方面的学术研究，不仅拓展了英国文学研究的领域和范式，更代表着中国学者再次以自己的研究进入世界的英国文学研究之中，是中国英国文学研究的重要一步。

一、开拓社会历史批评与审美批评结合的英国研究范式

20世纪90年代以来，随着中国社会的发展，英国文学再度成为国人了解世界的重要一环。改革开放之后，众多的英国文学名著以书籍或电影改编的形式走入中国民众的生活。《简·爱》（*Jane Eyre*, 1847）《德伯家的苔丝》（*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, 1891）等经典作品风靡一时，英国文学研究随之蓬勃发展，“外国文学领域也在寻求一种新的研究模式”（周小仪 195）。学成归国的王守仁业已用英文论文和专著向学界展示了中国学者的研究成果，而此时更重要的显然是推动国内英国文学研究的发展。他将自己博士阶段的研究进一步延展提升，以一系列中文论文打开当代英国文学研究的新视野。在这一系列论文中，王守仁以社会历史批评和审美批评相结合的视角切入，来审视人们熟悉的英国文学经典，将对文本的审美考察融入对社会历史背景的关注，突破了中国学界统治英国文学研究多年的单一研究范式，开拓了英国文学研究的思路，中国的英国文学研究迎来了百花齐放的局面。

在这一系列关于英国19世纪经典作家的论文中，王守仁关注认知与审美，将对文学的研究重新回归到文学本体，并以此来思考和发掘作家对社会历史的哲学性书写。论文“论哈代的史诗剧《列王》”以哈代作品中最具难度，但同时也最能体现哈代思想的诗剧《列王》（*The Dynasts*, 1910）为研究对象，通过对哈代创作思想、作品形式、人物描写和细节内涵的讨论，揭示出哈代在这部煌煌巨著表达的“通过独立观察与思考形成的关于人生和宇宙的哲学思想”（王守仁，“《列王》” 112）。作为哈代展示自己毕生哲学思想的作品，《列王》虽然早在20世纪30年代就已经有了中译本，但相关的研究却几乎没有。作为国内首篇关于哈代《列王》的重要学术论文，这篇文章不仅让中国的英国文学研究者认识到哈代的作品不限于小说，更让学界全面了解哈代的思想体系，从而对哈代作品有了更为深入的认知。论文“赋予生存以美的形式——论马修·阿诺德的戏剧片断体诗”从戏剧片断体诗这

1 参见 David Simpson, “Recent Studies in the Nineteenth Century,” *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 4 (1990): 732.

一研究视角出发，关注维多利亚时代杰出诗人马修•阿诺德的诗学思想建构。作为对古希腊戏剧残本的一种模仿，阿诺德创作《迷途的狂欢者》（*The Strayed Reveller*, 1849）等戏剧片断体诗的目的在于从希腊文化汲取精神支持，让读者从中得到愉悦。他在创作中运用对人物对话的书写，既进入人物内心，又展现审美观察，体现对生活和美的不同态度。正是在这个意义上，阿诺德的“戏剧片断体诗体现了他所作的努力：在反映现代人困惑的同时赋予生存以美的形式”（王守仁，“《阿诺德》” 13）。同样的，在论文“论雪莱的‘必然性’思想——读剧诗《解放了的普罗密修斯》”中，王守仁所关注的是英国浪漫主义诗人雪莱代表作品《解放了的普罗密修斯》（*Prometheus Unbound*, 1820）的思想内涵和形式特征。论文指出《解放了的普罗密修斯》这部不适合上演的剧诗，表现的正是雪莱的“必然性”思想，是雪莱思想的基础，体现出雪莱对理想社会的憧憬和追求。在这一系列关于英国 19 世纪经典作家的论文中，王守仁对这些作家以往在中国英国文学研究里被忽略的重要作品予以研究，在一定层面上填补了研究的空白。更为重要的是，这些论文在承继中国英国文学研究的社会历史批评传统的同时，融入哲学、理论和审美的批评方法，引领了英国文学研究的进一步发展。

中国的英国文学研究始终重视著译结合，王守仁在专注 19 世纪英国经典作家研究的同时，还翻译了其中的一些经典作品，哈代的《还乡》（*The Return of the Native*, 1878）就是其中的代表。作为哈代“威塞克斯”系列小说的一部，《还乡》与《德伯家的苔丝》等一起构成了哈代所描绘的英国维多利亚时代乡村风貌，也是哈代小说创作的一个重要节点。《还乡》打破传统小说叙述的定式，将一般作为背景的自然环境——埃格敦荒原作为小说中具有和人物一样地位的元素。小说的第一章没有书写其他人物，而是专门书写埃格敦荒原。选择翻译这部关于个人命运与环境、历史之间复杂关系的小说，依然体现出王守仁对于英国文学研究中作家创作思想的关注。正如他在译序中写道的：“在这部小说里，我们看到了哈代在后来的悲剧小说中得到进一步发展的思想，即无法控制的外部力量和内心冲突决定着个人命运，并造成悲剧”（王守仁，《还乡》 2）。王守仁对埃格敦荒原、尤苔莎、克林和约布赖特太太等小说的主要构成元素都予以深入细致的分析，指出荒原作为外部力量的代表，与人物性格作为内部因素之间的矛盾，以及由此造成的无可挽回的悲剧。他关注到埃格敦荒原的象征意义，以及三位主人公悲剧的性格因素，对哈代中期的创作思想予以细致的铺陈。作为哈代小说创作的代表作之一，《还乡》是哈代对个人、环境与历史发展之间关系探索的重要作品，其中的思想脉络一直延伸到《列王》的创作之中。《列王》中的精灵人物所代表的力量，也隐含在埃格敦荒原之中，而《列王》对古希腊悲剧精神的应和在《还乡》中也可以找到明确的印记。在译本的选择上，也体现出研究者的用心，他特别选用杂志连载的手稿本，以再现《还乡》初版的原貌，也更加

贴合哈代 19 世纪 70 年代末的思想轨迹，而不是 19 世纪末期和 20 世纪初期修订本所体现出的哈代的创作思想。从《列王》到《还乡》，王守仁对哈代的研究以创作思想为主线，探讨作家在作品中展现的对个人与社会关系的思考，对哈代研究和英国文学研究都具有启迪性。

19 世纪是英国文学发展的盛世，也是中国英国文学研究长期关注的重点。王守仁对 19 世纪英国文学的研究以雪莱、阿诺德和哈代为主，但也关注到其他一些重要作家。如对于奥斯卡 • 王尔德（Oscar Wilde），就指出在其代表作《理想丈夫》（*An Ideal Husband*, 1895）中体现出的与评论界一般认知不同的女性观，认为“《理想丈夫》显示了王尔德对女性问题有着不寻常的认识，而这种认识与他个人身份的矛盾，以及他唯美主义的艺术主张密切相关”（段方 王守仁 14）。纵观王守仁对 19 世纪英国文学的研究，具有较为突出的特色：首先是同时用英文和中文进行研究，发表成果，促进国内国际的学术交流，推动中国英国文学研究的长足发展；其次是对经典作家重要作品的研究，视角独到，具有填补空白的意义；最后是对研究范式的丰富，融合多种研究方法，为英国文学的研究提供了各种可能性。

二、以关注社会和兼容并蓄的视野引领当代英国文学研究

随着中国的不断发展，学界和社会越来越需要对当代外国文学文化的了解和研究。王守仁敏锐地注意到这一点，开始在新世纪将英国文学研究的重点转向当代英国作家作品，并以对当代英国文学的深刻理解，将其中的重要作家作品和文学发展态势予以分析，从而带动了国内英国文学研究的当代化，提升了英国文学研究与社会生活的结合度，充分发挥英国文学研究的社会功用。在一系列的论文中，他对英国当代的重要作家，如罗伯特 • 格雷夫斯（Robert Graves）、戴维 • 洛奇（David Lodge）、马尔科姆 • 布雷德伯里（Malcom Bradbury）、阿妮塔 • 布鲁克纳（Anita Brookner）、V • S • 奈保尔（V. S. Naipaul）、扎迪 • 史密斯（Zadie Smith）等的创作加以研究，将这些作家的重要研究方面和趋势展现给中国研究者，进一步促进了中国英国文学研究的发展，加强了中国学界与世界在英国文学研究中的联系。在对英国当代文学的研究中，王守仁以文学的社会功用为研究重点，以现实主义研究为主要方向。研究范畴不仅涵盖众多具有影响的诺贝尔文学奖获得者，也关注深受读者欢迎的流行作家，从而对当代英国文学给予全面的呈现。

长期以来，罗伯特 • 格雷夫斯在国内的英国文学研究中并没有得到足够的重视，相关的研究较少，文学史中也基本上是简单予以介绍。王守仁关注到格雷夫斯具有在小说和诗歌方面同时具有出色作品和影响的特质，指出他是自哈代之后同时进行小说和诗歌创作，并取得成就的英国作家，并分析了他在历史小说和爱情诗创作方面的特色，认为格雷夫斯的古罗马帝国三部曲开创了现代历史小说，在气势恢宏的画卷中展现了历史人物的政治生活、军

事生涯和思想感情，“采用写实主义手法，力图再现历史，营造真实，在 20 世纪英国文学史上占有独特地位”（王守仁 何宁，“格雷夫斯” 30）。作为重要的现实主义作家，格雷夫斯的爱情诗歌细腻地表现了对时代和爱情的深刻体察。他具有与哈代类似的旺盛创作力，在大量的爱情诗歌中，以现实主义的艺术手法，表达出现代主义的非个人化色彩，同时还融入对玄学主义和浪漫主义诗歌艺术特色的思考，可谓 20 世纪诗人创作中最能够融会贯通多种艺术风格的诗人。通过对格雷夫斯历史小说和爱情诗歌创作的研究，王守仁将自己的研究领域延伸到哈代之后的英国文学重要发展。他在研究中关注到格雷夫斯创作中对现实主义的坚持，这也成为他对现实主义研究的契机之一。关于格雷夫斯的研究得到学界的关注，该论文后续被收入《当代欧洲文学纵横谈》（2003）之中，对英国文学研究界具有较为广泛的影响。

20 世纪 80 年代以来的文学研究，几乎都离不开对文学理论的阐释和运用。王守仁在对英国当代文学的研究中，突出了对文学理论的深入探讨，对英国当代最有影响的文学理论家戴维 • 洛奇和马尔科姆 • 布雷德伯里在文学理论方面的重要贡献都予以阐释和批评。作为英国当代最受欢迎的作家和文学理论家之一，戴维 • 洛奇的文学理论中有一个关键的小说批评概念“问题小说”，这是洛奇基于自己文学创作的实践提出的。[1] 王守仁的研究结合洛奇的代表作《校园三部曲》（*The Campus Trilogy*, 1975/1984/1988）对这一概念的背景、实质和实践加以分析，揭示出洛奇提出“问题小说”的原因和其中蕴含的文学理论思考。论文厘清了“问题小说”与“寓言体小说”、“非虚构小说”的区别，认为“问题小说”并非一个不值得关注的理论概念，而是寓示着当代小说的发展进程，反映出英国当代理论家面对“小说之死”的困境所做的创新努力。论文对“问题小说的创作”进行了全面的讨论，指出其“特点是在虚实之间穿梭，最终坚持语言再现现实的能力”，而洛奇本人则通过“一方面参与了先锋实验，在创作实践中故意暴露自己的虚构技巧，另一方面又坚持立足于自己所熟悉的环境，再现自己所熟知的校园生活”（王守仁 宋艳芳 97）来实现在虚实之间的穿越，实现虚实结合，以虚见实。

作为洛奇的同事兼好友，马尔科姆 • 布雷德伯里在当代英国文学研究界具有的影响与洛奇不遑多让。布雷德伯里的著作《现代英国小说》（*The Modern British Novel*, 1993）多次再版，对英国文学研究影响深远，至今依然是研究英国文学必读的书目之一。王守仁对布雷德伯里关于小说批评的《现代英国文学的社会语境》（*The Social Context of Modern English Literature*, 1971）《诸多可能性——论小说的现状》（*Possibilities: Essays on the State of the Novel*, 1973）《不，不是布卢姆斯伯里》（*No, Not Bloomsbury*, 1987）《现代英国小说》和《今日小说——当代作家论现代小说》（*The Novel Today: Contemporary Writers on Modern Fiction*, 1977）等著作予以全面

1 参见 王守仁、宋艳芳：“戴维 • 洛奇的‘问题小说’观”，《外语研究》1（2011）：94。

的考察，对他的小说批评思想加以细致梳理和讨论，分析其批评方式的特征，认为布雷德伯里的小说批评具有自由人文主义思想，重视文学的社会性，提倡批评的包容性。从社会对文学的影响、小说诗学、作家和批评家的共生关系这三个层面来解读布雷德伯里的小说批评，对他的批评整体予以总结："他紧跟时代潮流但并不随波逐流，对当代文学批评理论进行了批判性吸收"（宋艳芳 王守仁 73），具有兼容并蓄的特质。这种兼容并蓄的批评特质同样体现在王守仁对当代英国文学的研究之中。在这一系列论文中，他不仅关注文学理论的进展，也关注文学创作的走向；他所研究的不仅有经典作家，也留意到当代的流行作家。[1] 对 20 世纪八九十年代流行女作家阿妮塔·布鲁克纳的研究正突显出他对文学理论的娴熟运用，对当代创作趋势的深刻体察。

王守仁的研究将布鲁克纳置于简·奥斯丁（Jane Austen）以来的英国女性文学传统中来审视，探讨其小说创作对当代知识女性在传统婚姻制度造成的困境中挣扎的呈现，尤其是女主人公在事业与家庭、责任与自由之间矛盾的书写，分析她作为当代中产阶级女性的代言人对女权主义的反思。布鲁克纳的小说作品以奥斯丁式的现实主义来考察当代世界，关注女性的生存状态，与当代英国文学的主流女作家，如默多克（Iris Murdoch）、拜厄特（A. S. Byatt）等具有明显的不同。对布鲁克纳的关注体现出王守仁对当代文学中现实主义发展的思考，而对布鲁克纳创作思想和艺术风格的分析则表现出他对西方文学理论的批判运用。论文的研究指出，布鲁克纳的创作融合现实主义和后现代主义的艺术手段，"不是简单地在创作中体现女权主义，而是在更为深刻复杂的社会道德伦理架构中探讨女性的地位与自我"（王守仁 何宁，"布鲁克纳" 37），让英国文学研究界认识到布鲁克纳所代表的女性流行文学作品对当代文学发展的重要意义。

当然，从当代文学发展的重要性而言，布鲁克纳所代表的是作为基础的大众文学，而文学研究界一贯更为关注的无疑是影响广泛、广受瞩目的作家。作为诺贝尔文学奖的获得者，V·S·奈保尔毫无疑问是当代英国文学研究中的经典作家之一。奈保尔的身份多元，创作风格复杂，具有较大的研究难度。王守仁选择以想象、纪实和批评三个关键词来通观奈保尔的创作，将其后殖民写作所带来的评论界的分裂加以辩证分析，对奈保尔的代表作品《河湾》（*A Bend in the River*, 1980）、《到达之谜》（*The Enigma of Arrival*, 1988）以及重要的非虚构作品置于其思想发展脉络中来考察，认为"在长达约半个世纪的'写作之旅'中，奈保尔始终以一种独特的方式关注第三世界国家人民的

1 参见 王守仁、何宁："论格雷夫斯的小说和诗歌创作"，《外国文学研究》3（2002）：28-32；王守仁、宋艳芳："戴维·洛奇的'问题小说'观"，《外语研究》1（2011）：94-98；宋艳芳、王守仁："布雷德伯里的'兼容并蓄'批评思想"，《当代外国文学》3（2011）：67-74；王守仁、何宁："构建单身知识女性的世界——论布鲁克纳的小说创作"，《当代外国文学》4（2003）：33-39；王守仁、方杰："想象·纪实·批评——解读 V·S·奈保尔的'写作之旅'"，《南京大学学报（哲学·人文科学·社会科学）》4（2003）：105-113。

生存状态”（王守仁 方杰 112）。研究将奈保尔定位为“有机知识分子”，指出他的作品反映出第三世界生活的部分真相，而他的国际视野、对自身观点的坦率表达、对世界重大问题的关注和出色的语言表达则是铸就他成为当代文学经典作家的重要因素，也是可供中国文学走向世界作为参考的地方。面对作品众多、主题多样，且内涵极为丰富的后殖民作家奈保尔，王守仁的研究举重若轻，以想象、纪实和批评这三个概念词将奈保尔写作生涯中最突出的特质加以总结，并以此作为其思想发展线索，为研究者呈现出奈保尔复杂风格之下潜藏的意识形态变化。这样的研究需要对作家的作品极为熟悉，具有深厚的理论素养，才能够由点及面，将作家的创作思想和艺术风格之间的联系予以挖掘，从而在整体上把握作家作品的发展走向。

当代英国文学的突出特色之一是后殖民作家成为主流，奈保尔是其中的代表，而作为新一代作家中的佼佼者，扎迪·史密斯的创作也为王守仁所关注。《战后世界进程与外国文学进程研究》第四卷《新世纪外国文学发展趋势研究》设有“英美后现代现实主义文学走向”，在关于史密斯的研究中，将作者的创作思想和实践结合起来讨论，对史密斯的两部代表作《白牙》（*White Teeth*, 2000）和《论美》（*On Beauty*, 2005）的创作特色予以分析。两部作品同样具有现实主义的风格，但体现出史密斯对后现代之后的现实主义的理解在不断发展。针对评论家詹姆斯·伍德（James Wood）对史密斯《白牙》的批评，研究梳理了史密斯的回应和两人理论交锋之后的相互砥砺，尤其是史密斯在《论美》中，以经典重写的形式将现实主义精神的守正与现代主义形式的创新结合起来，在回归传统现实主义的同时，“仍坚持着后现代的主体观和对本真的‘自我’神话的警惕”（王守仁，《战后世界进程》 43 ）。史密斯对爱略特（George Eliot）、福斯特（E. M. Forster）创作的思考体现出当代作家面对纷繁复杂的世界如何呈现现实、如何与读者交流的问题，而她选择福斯特的《霍华德庄园》（*Howards End*, 1910）作为互文的经典，正反映出她对福斯特“联结”思想的认同和试图在当下予以发展的努力。

王守仁对当代英国文学的研究与他的英国 19 世纪文学研究具呈现出不同的特点。首先，他关注文学的社会功用，因此研究的出发点往往是促进对理论的深入理解和对作家创作风格的准确把握，以高度凝练的方式将作家作品的关键点予以呈现。其次，他对当代英国文学的研究具有兼容并蓄的价值取向，不仅关注诺贝尔获奖的当代经典作家，还对具有广泛影响的流行作家所代表的文学文化现象加以探讨，从而为研究界呈现出更为全面的当代英国文学光谱。最后，从他对当代英国文学的研究切入点来看，现实主义成为他考察文学现象和态势的重点，对现实主义的思想发展、创作实践和理论争论的研究贯穿他对当代英国文学的研究。这些特色与王守仁研究当代英国文学的初衷是一脉相承的，即在推动国内英国文学研究界关注当代的同时，更让英国文学研究服务中国的社会发展，成为中国建设社会主义文化的重要力量。

三、以创新思想来深化英国文学理论研究

在王守仁的英国文学研究中，对作家作品的研究占据了其中的主流，但他也没有放弃对文学流派和运动的整体性思考。他对英国文学中的重要理念，如现代主义和后现代主义，以及英国文学批评的整体发展都加以全面的研究。他将英国文学理论的发展与社会历史的发展相联系，在研究中提出了创新观点，让英国文学研究界重新认识了英国文学批评的起源。

对于当代英国文学中的现代主义和后现代主义，他结合相关的世界历史进程来予以全面地审视与研究。他提出第一次世界大战对现代主义产生重大影响。虽然伍尔夫将 1910 年作为英国小说从传统现实主义转向现代主义的开始，但“第一次世界大战无疑加速了这一过程”（吴元迈等 87）。人们的传统信念动摇，在幻灭感和危机感之下开始探索内心世界，而不是社会现实。对于后现代主义，他结合新世纪发生的“9 • 11”事件，指出：

> 后现代主义往往割裂语言和外部世界的联系。他们认为，文学作品是人工制品，所反映的现实不过是“虚构物”，而非客观世界。然而，“9 • 11”恐怖袭击事件中近三千人丧生，这一鲜血淋淋的现实悲剧向世人昭示，现实世界的客观性并非解构主义宣称的那样可以消解，作家不能也不可能无视周遭生活而沉溺于文字游戏。（王守仁，《战后世界进程》26）

在这里，王守仁在对后现代主义的理论视角深入把握的基础上，指出“9 • 11”恐怖袭击事件对后现代主义思潮的冲击，揭示出社会历史进程对文学发展的影响。无论是对现代主义还是对后现代主义的整体考察，王守仁都突出了对于文学社会功用的重视，将世界历史进程与英国文学的发展联系起来，让英国文学研究界进一步认识到作为社会思潮的文学流派发展具有其社会历史根源，从而加深对文学作品和作家创作思想的理解。

作为在英国文学中具有深远影响的文学理念，现代主义和后现代主义迄今依然是人们研究 20 世纪以来的英国文学的重要切入点。王守仁的分析高屋建瓴，深入浅出，以精要的论述让研究者得以掌握这两个重要理念的精髓。他对英国文学理论的研究不止于此，在《英国文学批评史》中，他对英国文学批评的发展加以全面的梳理和研究，提出了具有新意的创见，主要体现在关于英国文学批评起源的认识，以及对“苏格兰启蒙运动”的关注。传统的英国文学批评研究一般从文艺复兴开始，与此不同，王守仁在论著中的开篇就用一章的篇幅来讨论中世纪批评，对索尔兹伯里的约翰（John of Salisbury）、文索夫的杰弗里（Geoffrey of Vinsauf）和乔叟（Geoffrey Chaucer）的文学批评予以研究，“较为明确地将英国文学批评实践的开始和

批评意识的生发时间锁定在中世纪”（王守仁 胡宝平 2）。对于英国文学中的经典古英语诗歌《贝奥武甫》（*Beowulf*），也指出其中虽然没有文学批评，但包含了“关于诗人（作者）的地位、创作方式、功能等涉及文学批评基本要素的记载”（王守仁 胡宝平 3）。在中世纪文学批评中，论著对约翰的《元逻辑》（*Metalogicon*, 1159）、杰弗里的《作诗法》（*Poetria Nova*, 1200-1216）和乔叟的文学观都予以分析阐释，为学界展现了以往被忽视的英国中世纪文学批评的样貌。约翰在《元逻辑》中为写作和文本阐释提出反对纠缠细节、思考文本目的等原则，而这些原则正是在西方批评史上影响深远的作者意图观的基本原则。杰弗里的《作诗法》探讨的是修辞诗学，主要谈论诗歌的创作技巧，在理论方面并没有突出的观点。作为中世纪文学的代表人物，乔叟不仅以文学作品影响着英国文学数百年来的发展，他对文学批评的思考也非常值得关注。论著对乔叟的文学理论思想总结为以下三点：一是对于文学本质的认识强调对“权威”的模仿和对生活“经验”的呈现；二是对古希腊以来的悲剧精神的推崇；三是认为文学具有给人以教益、乐趣和心理慰藉的功用。三位作家的文学批评虽然并没有形成体系，但从他们的著作中可以看到，中世纪的确是英国文学批评的发轫阶段，为文艺复兴时期英国文学批评的发展奠定了基础。[1]

除了对中世纪文学批评的发掘，《英国文学批评史》与其他研究相比，另一重要贡献在于，在研究18世纪文学批评时对“苏格兰启蒙运动”中的思想家文学批评的研究，这在国内英国文学研究界尚属首次。“苏格兰启蒙运动”中的思想家，如休谟（David Hume）、霍姆（Henry Home）、亚当·斯密（Adam Smith）等人，在美学和文学批评领域都有各自的创见，并且对后世的文学批评产生了较为深远的影响。休谟的《论悲剧》（“On Tragedy”, 1757）从哲学和美学的角度来思考悲剧快感产生的原因，认为“悲剧的快感源自艺术创造的美”，而“艺术欣赏基本上是一种情感经验”（王守仁 胡宝平 94-95），观众为悲剧所震撼，从而获得独特的悲剧体验。而他的《论趣味的标准》（“On the Standard of Taste”, 1757）和《论文艺和科学的兴起与发展》（“Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”, 1742）中的观点也影响了之后的英国文学批评。霍姆的《批评的元素》（*Elements of Criticism*, 1762）系统讨论了情感与激情之间的区别，提出“理念在场”的观念，并对传统的戏剧“三一律”提出了自己的理解。斯密在修辞学框架内讨论文学，同样对“三一律”提出了自己的观点，更认同传统的时间、地点一致性原则。因此，霍姆和斯密两人对莎士比亚的剧作也持有不同观点。[2]《英国文学批评史》在关于“苏格兰启蒙运动”思想家的文学批评论述中，还涵盖了其他重要思想家的文学批评观点，为英国18世纪文学批评补上了重要的

1 参见 王守仁、胡宝平：《英国文学批评史》，南京：南京大学出版社，2013 年，第 6-20 页。

2 参见 王守仁、胡宝平：《英国文学批评史》，南京：南京大学出版社，2013 年，第 97-102 页。

一环。

关注文学经典，批评当代名作，梳理文学理论，启发研究方法，王守仁的英国文学研究从多个方面推进中国英国文学研究的前行，而在这些研究之中，始终不变的是中国元素的挖掘，中国视角的探索，和中国情怀的展现。在“论雪莱的‘必然性’思想——读剧诗《解放了的普罗密修斯》”中，他将雪莱的“必然性”思想与中国传统的“道”联系起来，指出“必然性”主宰万事万物，自身却又是无形无象，无表无里，如同中国道教中的“道”，“视之不见，听之不闻。若言有，不见其形；若言无，万物由此生”（王守仁，“雪莱” 82-83）。这不仅让中国读者更易于理解雪莱的思想，也发掘出中西文化的共通之处，有助于中西文明的交流互鉴。中西交流的重要方式在于通过彼此的比较而认识差异和相同之处，从而求同存异，促进交流。在编写《英国文学选读》（第五版）时，王守仁有意识地新增“比较视野”这一板块，引发对中外文学之间关系、思想交流、民族文化等问题的思考。每一单元的“比较视野”结合相关作家作品，与中国同时期的作家作品，或具有相关性的文学流派予以对比，启发中外文学之间的相似与差异对文学发展、社会文化的影响。挖掘中国元素，探索中国视角，最终的目的还是为了展现中国情怀，让中国文学文化走出去，为世界上更多的人能够认识、了解中国做出贡献。基于此，在论文“莎士比亚何以成为英国最具代表性文化符号——兼议我国代表性文化符号问题”中，王守仁分析了莎士比亚如何经由各种原因推动成为英国最具代表性的文化符号，并在世界各地产生重大影响的过程，并由此思考，中国在走向世界的过程中，应该选择怎样的代表性文化符号来推动中国文学文化走出去，认为比起孔子，李白也许是中国文化更为合适的代表。他指出，李白的创作与现实关联密切，“充满真性情，写的是真人性”（王守仁 林懿 89），同时也具有跨文化传播的优势，我们要提升他在世界文坛的影响，挖掘李白身上丰富的思想文化资源和人文价值，突出他的当下性和艺术性，让他作为中华文化软实力的杰出代表，在人类文明交流互鉴中发挥重要作用。

纵观王守仁从 20 世纪 80 年代以来的英国文学研究，在近 40 年的学术生涯中，他始终坚持构建中国英国文学知识体系，以译著、文学史、论文和专著对英国文学经典、当代英国文学、英国文学批评理论、英国文学与中国文学的比较研究等方面展开全方位的探索和研究，多有创见，并自成体系，实现了学科知识的再创新。他对哈代等经典作家的研究著译结合，为进一步研究拓展奠定坚实的基础，对当代作家的研究则为国内的英国文学研究打开了新的研究领域，促进英国文学研究的广阔发展。王守仁在研究中关注现实主义和文学理论，融入对英国文学研究的新观念、新认识，为英国文学研究不断注入活力，推进英国文学研究的持续发展。他以文学史研究的视角来审视和体察英国文学研究，从而对英国文学的整体发展和趋势予以探讨，并从比

较视角来认识英国文学经典，为中国的英国文学研究提供了方法论上的创新。王守仁的英国文学研究正是一部中国外国文学研究发展的民族志。在中国英国文学研究于 20 世纪 70 年代出现一定的停滞之后，他勇于探索，继往开来，立足中国，融汇中外，为中国英国文学研究开辟出新格局，体现出上世纪改革开放之后中国外国文学学者在中国语境下对学术的追求和探索，是中国外国文学研究四十年来发展与成就的重要代表。

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继承、发展、创新：王守仁建构美国文学知识体系的中国特色

Inheritance, Development, and Innovation: Wang Shouren and the Construction of Chinese-Characteristic Body of Knowledge of American Literature

郭英剑（**Guo Yingjian**） 宋晓涵（**Song Xiaohan**）

内容摘要：王守仁是我国改革开放以来最早一批从事外国文学研究的著名学者，在外国文学译介与研究领域取得丰硕成果，在美国文学翻译与研究领域的成就尤为突出。他以全面认知文学传统为出发点，在继承前辈成就的基础上审视东西方文化，探究美国文学研究之道，开拓出一条富有中国特色的创新学术之路。王守仁不仅从新的视角解读梭罗、凯瑟等经典作家的作品，而且持续关注莫里森等当代美国作家的创作，注重探索文学母题的新理解、新阐释。此外，他还开拓了美国少数族裔文学的研究领域，深入探讨其学术价值及现实意义。王守仁的美国文学史、批评史研究旨在重构学术传统，以评促介、史论结合；王守仁对于中国特色的美国文学知识体系的建构高屋建瓴、融汇中西，有助于传播好中国声音，阐释好中国特色，展示好中国形象。本文从中国对美国文学的译介与研究百年历史语境出发，试图全面论述王守仁在中国特色美国文学知识体系建构中的学术贡献，以期为中国当下建设美国文学研究自主知识体系提供有益的启发。

关键词：王守仁；美国文学；中国特色；学术创新；自主知识体系

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Title: Inheritance, Development, and Innovation: Wang Shouren and the Construction of Chinese-Characteristic Body of Knowledge of American Literature

Abstract: As one of the earliest and most renowned scholars engaging in the study of foreign literature in China since the reform and opening-up, Wang Shouren has achieved fruitful results in the translation and research of foreign literature, with particularly notable accomplishments in the field of American literature translation and research. Starting with a comprehensive understanding of literary traditions,

he has examined Eastern and Western cultures on the foundation of inheriting the achievements of his predecessors, explored the path of American literature research, and carved out an innovative academic route. Wang Shouren stands at the forefront of reinterpreting the works of classic writers, like Henry David Thoreau and Willa Cather, while also dedicating attention to modern American writers such as Toni Morrison. His work is centered on uncovering fresh interpretations and insights into literary themes. Moreover, he broadens the scope of his research to encompass American ethnic literature, exploring both its scholarly importance and practical relevance. Wang Shouren's investigations into the history of American literature and its criticism are characterized by a unique approach that blends critique with historical context, aiming to rejuvenate academic traditions. His efforts in developing a framework for an independent body of knowledge of American literature studies with distinct Chinese-Characteristic are visionary. This approach not only integrates Chinese and Western perspectives but also amplifies the Chinese voice, elucidates Chinese features, and effectively represents China's image on the global stage. This paper begins with the context of a hundred years of translation and research of American literature in China, attempting to comprehensively discuss Wang Shouren's academic contributions to the construction of a Chinese-characteristic body of knowledge of American literature, in the hope of providing useful inspiration for the current construction of an independent body of knowledge regarding American literature research in China.

Keywords: Wang Shouren; American literature; Chinese-Characteristic; academic innovation; an independent body of knowledge

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美国文学在当今世界文坛占有举足轻重的地位，特别是 20 世纪美国文学发展迅速，已成为具有民族特色和世界影响的重要国别文学。我们国家从 20 世纪 20 年代起开始较大规模地译介美国文学，进而开展学术研究，迄今已有百年历史。纵览中国百年美国文学译介与研究发展史，大致可以将其分为四个阶段，即：1920-1940 年代初创期，1950-1970 年代发展期，1980-2010 年代繁荣期，2010 至今的创新期。上世纪 80 年代中国进入改革开放时代，我国学

界的美国文学研究开始走上努力建构中国特色美国文学知识体系之路。应该说，正是从改革开放时期走过来的优秀学者，以他们三十多年骄人的学术成果，正在阔步进入我国的自主创新阶段，并将成为新时期的代表人物。王守仁就是其中的一位杰出代表。本文以王守仁为研究对象，探讨他作为改革开放时期我国美国文学研究界的杰出学者，是怎样探索美国文学的研究路径，如何以继承为根基、以创新为导向，不断成熟完善，进而走出了一条符合我国当下建设具有中国特色自主知识体系时代要求的学术之路。我们希望，通过探索王守仁的美国文学研究之路，让人们更加全面地理解，他们这一代学人已经在创建中国特色美国文学知识体系中做出了巨大的学术贡献。

一、继承南大传统：王守仁美国文学研究的基础

王守仁的美国文学研究大致可以分为三个时期：1980-1990 年代的继承成长期，2000-2010 年代的开拓发展期，以及 2010 年代至今的学术创新期。

在继承成长期，南京大学诚朴雄伟、励学敦行的风范对王守仁产生了深远的影响。王守仁不仅借鉴吸收美国文学研究传统与前人研究成果，而且用实际行动反哺母校，巩固了南京大学在全国美国文学研究中的重要地位。

只有扎根中国语境，秉承前辈优良传统，才能真正做到守正创新。南京大学是我国著名高校，其外语学科设立于 1910 年代。新中国成立前后，我国英美文学研究界的创立者陈嘉先生、范存忠先生等长期在此任教，为中国的外国文学研究奠定了基础。经过一个多世纪的办学历程，历代南大外院人文脉相继，形成了赓续传承、守正创新的优良传统，始终将自身发展与国家命运紧密相连。

王守仁对南大传统的继承，首先体现在学术思想上。单就美国文学研究而言，王守仁在学术之路伊始，就表现出将文学传统纳入文学整体进行考量的学术自觉。他的“从文学的整体性来认识文学的传统”（1991）一文批判了一味标榜新意而与传统割裂的单向度研究，揭示出前辈作家与后辈作家之间的复杂关系。文章进而由作品内在化及文学接受理论切入，提出读者对作品的主观阐释承载着文学的整体性，并以女性主义为例探讨了文学传统内容的相对性，主张在吸收文学传统精华的基础上进行创新与发展。[1] 王守仁所倡导的，既非机械复颂前辈硕果，亦非全然否定前人经验。可以说，他秉持否定之否定的辩证观，坚持有所扬弃，批判地继承。他的研究是在充分吸取前辈治学经验的基础上进行的，其创新的根基是扎实且深厚的。

其次，王守仁对南大传统的继承，还体现在知行合一。他在南京大学外国语学院任教期间，长期担任外国语学院院长之职，为南大外语学科的发展做出了巨大贡献。特别值得一提的是，在 1990 年代，王守仁一直担任美国文

1　参见 王守仁：“从文学的整体性来认识文学的传统”，《外国文学评论》2（1991）：86-89。

学研究会（下称美文会）的秘书长（1991-2000），后来又担任副会长（2000-2012）。正是在他担任秘书长的十年间，美文会成为了国家一级学会。1991年第一届理事会第6次会议（济南）决定南京大学为美文会的驻所单位。当时，应民政部、教育部的社团组织管理要求，王守仁尽全力准备所需材料，为美文会的注册登记奔走操劳。1992年8月18日，美文会在国家民政部正式注册登记，获得《中华人民共和国社会团体登记证》。更为重要的是，在王守仁等人的大力推动下，美文会成为我国改革开放后成立最早的高校外国文学研究一级学会，为其后开展相关学术活动创造了有利条件。[1]

王守仁凭借非凡的学术成就，成为了享誉海内外的著名学者。他的学术品格与处事风格，深受南大传统的影响，同时他也在身体力行，诠释着“宽德养士、至乐成学、吾道在国、与世恒新”的南大精神。

二、坚持学术创新：王守仁美国文学译介与作家作品研究的核心

王守仁从事美国文学研究的一个特点是微观与宏观相结合，微观是指对作品的细读，基于文本，探幽烛微，提出新的解读，宏观是指对作家或文学发展进程的整体观照，视角独特，总结提炼规律性认识，走出了一条学术创新之路。他主张社会历史批评的文学观，坚持文学的社会价值和审美价值的统一，持续开展文学创作思想内容和艺术特色的创新研究，注重探索文学母题的新理解与新阐发，挖掘作品中的中国元素与世界话题，为当下美国文学批评提供灵感与启迪。

美国文学作品和批评理论的译介是开展美国文学研究的一项基础性工作，王守仁对此给予充分重视。在1990年代，他就发表了“论译者是创造者”（1992）、“谈翻译的忠实——读本雅明《论译者的任务》”（1992）等文章，探讨翻译理论的建构，与此同时，他还躬行翻译实践，译介赛珍珠（Pearl S. Buck）的《群芳亭》（*Pavilion of Women*, 1946）等作品。到了21世纪的前十年间，他还在研究美国文化思想的学术著作《惯于赞同——美国象征建构的转化》（2006）中负责翻译第四章“科顿•马瑟与美利坚的远景”，详细引介美国第一部史诗的作者。

在文学评论方面，王守仁在国内的第一篇美国文学研究文章是刊登在1988年《外国语》的“梭罗与儒家学说”。1990年代以来，他先后撰文研究凯瑟（Willa Cather）、塞林格（J. D. Salinger）、纳博科夫（Vladimir Nabokov）、凯鲁亚克（Jack Kerouac）、厄普代克（John Updike）、福克纳（William Faulkner）、德里罗（Don DeLillo）、罗斯（Philip Roth）、多克特罗（E. L. Doctorow）、沃尔曼（William T. Vollman）等美国文学史上的经典作家作品。迄今为止，他已在高质量期刊上发表论文170余篇。其学术研究秉持继承与发

1　部分内容摘自全国美国文学研究会官网，详见 http://www.casal.org.cn/index.php?s=/List/index/cid/13.html Accessed 22 April 2024.

展的方法论，走出了一条创新之路。

王守仁在总结新中国成立以来的美国文学研究实践时，以改革开放为界，既对此前老一辈学者的成果给予了客观评述，又对此后国内美国文学研究的进展加以全方位分析。他认为，改革开放前，我们对美国文学的认知主要是围绕阶级性、人民性的角度开展的，这在一定程度上配合了反对美帝国主义的方针政策；改革开放后的中国学者则继续吸收前期经验，注重凸显主体性，在细致分析、阐释的基础上加以比较、评估，争取有突破、有所创新。正如他在“外国文学研究呼唤创新”（2002）一文中所指出的，创新一方面可以概括为发现新问题、拓展新领域；另一方面则体现为在老生常谈的语域中总结新规律、提出新见解。[1] 比如，他在“梭罗与儒家学说”中就独辟蹊径地论证了儒家思想对梭罗（Henry David Thoreau）的影响，体现出一种贯通中西的国际视野与学术思维，可谓弘扬中华优秀传统文化的有益实践。可以说，这种文化自信与文化自觉贯穿了他美国文学研究及教学的整个过程。

赛珍珠曾于 20 世纪二三十年代在南京大学的前身金陵大学、东南大学任教，在此度过了她创作生涯中最重要的岁月。王守仁注意到这位南大校友在中美文学与文化交流方面所做工作的意义，是国内改革开放之后最早开展赛珍珠研究的学者之一。1998 年他与刘海平共同策划出版《赛珍珠作品选集》，担任全书副主编，并参与翻译赛珍珠作品《群芳亭》，这在当时具有重要的开拓意义。赛珍珠具有中美双重生活经历，深切关注中国普通民众命运，曾凭借中国题材的小说获得诺贝尔文学奖与普利策奖。终其一生，赛珍珠以向西方讲述、阐释中国故事为己任，纠正了长久以来对中国人带有偏见的刻板印象。但是在建国初期，中美关系紧张，国内对赛珍珠的研究走向低谷，以至于其作品在很长一段时间内都无人问津。直至 20 世纪末期，学界才开始重新审视赛珍珠文学创作的价值。《群芳亭》着力塑造了勤劳勇敢、自尊自强的中国女性形象，传达出反对战争的人道主义精神，以及东西文化碰撞交融的独特精神内涵。王守仁等人敏锐捕捉到这部作品中的先锋元素，以充满诗意的文笔将其译为中文引介至国内。这一方面宣传了自由进步的女权主义等思想，另一方面也深化了国人对于塞珍珠的理解，为后续开展赛珍珠文学批评提供了宝贵的素材，铺垫了坚实的基础。

除了译著，王守仁还积极开展对赛珍珠文学创作思想和艺术特色的创新研究。在批评界纷纷将眼光投向赛珍珠的《大地》（*The Good Earth*）三部曲时，王守仁撰文深入评析其传记《异邦客》（*The Exile*, 1936）和《战斗的天使》（*Fighting Angel*, 1936），客观公允地展示了赛珍珠的传教士父母身上体现出的悲剧色彩。而且，他由书中第一人称叙述视角切入，解析出赛珍珠本人对各种形式殖民统治的质疑，强调赛珍珠在情感认同上与中国的天然亲近。这种认同感奠定了赛珍珠创作的基调，把握了这一内核，在研究赛珍珠

1　参见 王守仁：“外国文学研究呼唤创新”，《文艺报》2002 年 12 月 3 日，第 4 页。

众多其他文本时便有了着力点。此外，王守仁还评述了赛珍珠其他一些相对被忽略的作品，包括《同胞》（*Kinfolk*, 1949）《梁太太的三个女儿》（*The Three Daughters of Madame Liang*, 1969）等小说以及《感谢狄更斯》（"Thanks to Dickens", 1936）等文章，系统分析其中海归派知识分子命运、抗战历史、土地情节、人性之美等多重主题，梳理赛珍珠与狄更斯的现实主义渊源。王守仁推陈出新，发掘赛珍珠从中国传统文化中汲取的智慧，将作品中反映的中国历史和文化置于全球化语境下加以分析。他指出，赛珍珠所一直倡导的文化平等、文化自主、文化尊重和文化宽容，与打造和谐、合作、互补、互惠原则基础上的人类家园是一脉相承的。在当下继续深化赛珍珠研究，有助于增强文化自信，促进中西文化交流，推动人类文明共同体的构建。

王守仁秉持社会历史批评的文学观，将文学与历史、社会相联系，关注它们之间的影响与互动。"论《一个失落的女人》中的双重视角"一文讨论了凯瑟对于有限视角与全知视角的整合，进而挖掘女主人公命运转化背后所反映出的"拓荒时代与金钱时代"（147）。这一时代转型，是将文学文本与社会历史语境相结合的绝佳范例。王守仁的学术创新还体现在对美国文学母题做出新的阐释方面。通过将文学作品置于社会语境，发掘传统主题中的新亮点，使经典作品焕发新生机。对于塞林格的《麦田里的守望者》（*The Catcher in the Rye*, 1951）、纳博科夫的《洛丽塔》（*Lolita*, 1955）、凯鲁亚克的《在路上》（*On the Road*, 1957）以及厄普代克的兔子系列小说，美国文学界多集中于探讨其中某位主人公的逃离意识，抑或是作品的旅行文学形式。王守仁的论文"汽车与 50 年代美国小说"视角新颖，说理严谨，不仅将四位经典作家综合起来考量，凝练出作品中所体现的"出走"的母题，而且还把这些 50 年代创作的作品与美国的"汽车时代"这一特定社会背景与时代风貌联系在一起，深入分析了传统文学母题在美国 50 年代小说中的全新具象化展示。1950 年代，美国汽车经济的发展催生了生活方式与思维模式的变化。主人公们驱车出走，不仅是对复杂社会关系与家庭责任的逃离，也蕴含着在"西部情结"引领之下探索新可能的勇气。通过对汽车这一交通工具的深刻考察，王守仁见微知著，反思了垮掉派的生活理念与浮躁社会风气，将"出走"类文学作品的文化意蕴娓娓道来。他秉持历史唯物主义方法论，强调文本中的"物"描写在表现现实中的作用，体现出鲜明的现实主义批评的倾向。

考虑到建国以来，由于中美关系的特殊历史原因，我国美国文学研究偏重 19 世纪至 20 世纪上半叶的部分经典文学，而对于当代美国文学的研究则略显薄弱这一状况，王守仁敢为人先，针对莫里森（Toni Morrison）、厄普代克等一系列当代美国作家持续开展创新性研究，出版发表了诸多著作与论文。可以说，当代美国文学研究的勃勃生机，离不开王先生早期的身先垂范与潜心耕耘。

王守仁在与前人观点的跨时空交锋中展现出卓越的学术韧性，他不仅在

继承中保留了前人的精华，更在扬弃中勇敢创新。从最初适应整体学术环境进行美国文学译介开始，到后来踏上前人未曾涉足的探索之路，王守仁的研究呈现出了一条从继承到发展、再到创新的学术轨迹。他传承前人的优秀成果，汲取丰厚的学术遗产，并在这个基础上着手建构自己的学术体系。王守仁勇于挑战传统，以不同的视角审视美国文学，为美国文学领域的发展注入新的思想动力。

三、开拓研究领域：王守仁美国族裔文学研究的关键

王守仁充满预见性地洞察到了美国族裔文学的活力与潜力。他在美国非裔、华裔、拉美裔文学等领域辛勤耕耘，深入探讨不同族裔文学的独特风格、历史渊源、学术价值及现实意义，开拓了美国少数族裔文学的研究领域。

早在 1995 年，他就著文分析华裔作家汤亭亭对花木兰故事的运用，指出《女勇士》打破时间空间限制，将现实与梦幻、历史与虚构揉和在一起，“两股叙述流汇成一股，形成一个声音——一个与压抑进行抗争的女性的呐喊作品”（“女性的呐喊——简析金斯顿的《白虎篇》”126）。1999 年，王守仁在《南京大学学报》上发表文章，细致评述美国非裔小说家艾里森（Ralph EIlison）的《看不见的人》（*Invisible Man*, 1952），认为这部小说的谋篇布局受到爵士乐的影响，是“一部勾勒认识自我心路历程的成长小说，亦是一部反种族歧视的‘抗议小说’”（“一部听得见的小说——读艾里森的《看不见的人》” 8）。

特别是，王守仁对美国非裔作家莫里森做了系统的综合研究。莫里森是第一位获得诺贝尔文学奖的美国黑人作家，也是继赛珍珠之后第二位获得该奖项的美国女性作家。王守仁时刻关注学术前沿，在莫里森荣获诺贝尔文学奖之后，于 1999 年推出专著《性别 • 种族 • 文化》。这是“中国第一本系统研究莫里森的专著”（Du 95），标志着我国的莫里森研究迎来了一个新的阶段。

不同于以往有关作家作品的评介专著，《性别 • 种族 • 文化》没有局限于作家生平、创作主题与艺术技巧的罗列，而是把莫里森置于特定历史文化背景中加以考察，“把莫里森研究同整个世纪美国黑人的历史命运和文化、文学的发展有机地结合起来，这样就为深入探究莫里森提供了一个切实可靠的思想文化和历史的框架”（杨博华 174）。这本书从点到面，以莫里森创作的长篇小说为切入点，系统论述了莫里森在美国文学发展史上的卓越贡献，对于把握黑人历史以及多元文化的排斥与融合具有重要价值。王守仁在书中告诫读者，在考察种族歧视时，要超越蓄奴制度继续刨根究底，探寻造成种种不公的根源，如此方可从底层发力冲破种族壁垒。《性别 • 种族 • 文化》第六章至第八章“美国黑人百年历史画卷（一）：从奴隶到自由人”、“美国黑人百年历史画卷（二）：从南方农村到北方城市”、“美国黑人百年历史画卷（三）：从排斥到融合”选用对仗式标题，依次对应赏析莫里森的历史三部曲《爱娃》

（*Beloved*, 1987）《爵士乐》（*Jazz*, 1992）《乐园》（*Paradise*, 1999），总结概括出三部小说对于美国黑人历史的反思，揭示奴隶制给美国黑人带来的持久心理创伤。此外，王守仁还注重莫里森作品的叙事艺术评析，显示出较为成熟的批评架构思路。无论是形式还是内容上，该论著都尽最大可能追随还原小说原貌，再现了莫里森通过小说重构历史的蓝图。

始终依据作家最新动态作出回应，这也是批评家创新意识的一大体现。王守仁与时俱进，在莫里森推出新作后及时跟进后续研究，聚焦国际前沿，不断产出新成果，以飨国内读者。2003年，莫里森的长篇小说《爱》（*Love*）问世，广受好评；翌年，王守仁便推出修订版《性别·种族·文化——托妮·莫里森的小说创作》，新增第九章“对爱进行新的思考”，集中对莫里森的《爱》进行深入评析。2008年底，莫里森推出第九部小说《慈悲》（*A Mercy*）；紧接着王守仁便在《当代外国文学》2009年第2期发表“超越种族：托妮·莫里森新作《慈悲》中的“奴役”解析”一文。这篇文章的关注点由黑人群体扩展至包括印地安土著和白人契约劳工等在内的北美殖民地初期奴隶，深入探讨了“奴役”的本质。王守仁持续跟进莫里森新作，发表了“国家·社区·房子——莫里森小说《家》对美国黑人生存空间的想象”（2013）、“走出童年创伤的阴影，获得心灵的自由和安宁——读莫里森新作《上帝救助孩子》”（2016）等论文。

由于语言障碍、译介不足、地缘文化差异等原因，我国对于美国拉美裔文学的研究起步较晚，而且存在不系统、不平衡的问题，早期相关研究多集中于墨西哥裔希斯内罗丝（Sandra Cisneros）、安提瓜裔金凯德（Jamaica Kincaid）和多米尼加裔迪亚斯（Junot Diaz）几位作家。王守仁较早发掘了美国墨西哥裔作家莫拉莱斯（Alejandro Morales）的研究潜力。2006年，他在《当代外国文学》上发表“历史与想象的结合——莫拉莱斯的英语小说创作”一文，由莫拉莱斯的英语小说扩展开来，归纳出当代美国墨西哥裔文学的特征。文章进而追溯了西班牙殖民、阿兹特克帝国、迪亚斯独裁统治等时期的墨西哥历史，尝试为墨西哥裔文学特征的历史文化根源给出合理解读。莫拉莱斯的小说通过再现墨西哥早期移民的生存困境以及预示未来社会的多重挑战，强调了墨西哥民族对美国社会所作出的不可磨灭的贡献。文学虽具有虚构性，但这虚构之中孕育着真实。莫拉莱斯的文学叙事作为史书材料的副文本，促进了读者对于墨西哥裔乃至拉美裔移民经历的理解与共情。由此，王守仁对于莫拉莱斯的引介是独具慧眼的，他对于美国墨西哥裔文学的评价、定位是令人信服的。

上述研究成果印证了王守仁在美国族裔文学领域的开疆拓土之功，他在美国非裔、华裔、拉美裔文学的传播、吸纳及研究等方面功不可没。王守仁的族裔文学研究亦呈现出继承 — 发展 — 创新的路径。他从一众美国少数族裔优秀作家中汲取养分，吸收其作品中的人性哲思与人文关怀，并通过对这

些文学作品的独到解读，突破了传统族裔文学批评中囿于身份探讨的范式，为世界族裔文学研究打开了更加深广、更有新意的格局。

四、重构学术传统：王守仁美国文学史、批评史研究的宗旨

除了在微观层面上对美国文学开展扎实研究，王守仁对美国文学的发展脉络也不乏宏观考量。他在美国文学史、文学批评史等领域的研究体现了诸多首创之功。他对文学史、文学批评史的书写，以评促介、史论结合，是在继承传统的基础上，对学术传统的重构。

鉴于美国文学研究属于外国研究，已有的学术规范多由西方学者制定，西方主流话语权由来已久。因此，中国学者编写文学史，是重构学术传统的不二法门。建国以前，我国的美国文学史编撰较少，曾虚白的《美国文学ABC》（1929）、张越瑞的《美利坚文学》（1933）以及赵家璧的《新传统》（1936）“反映了中国学人编写美国文学史的最初愿望与尝试性努力”（赵一凡 84）。改革开放以来，我国出版的美国文学通史或断代史有所增多。由董衡巽等专家合著的《美国文学简史》（上册，1978）是我国第一部比较全面的美国文学史著作，弥补了我国过去“从没有一部美国文学史”（王佐良 306）的空缺。此后，钱满素等编撰的《美国当代小说家论》（1987）、毛信德独撰的《美国小说史纲》（1988）、张子清的《20世纪美国诗歌史》（1995/2018）等相继出版，研究领域更加精细。我国百年美国文学史写作主要以编译及简要评述为主，且针对某一特定时段、特定体裁的文类史居多。相关论著大致厘清了流派、代表作家作品，以及其所处的时代背景，起到了智识科普之用，是那个时期美国文学研究的重要组成部分，体现了那个时期的研究特点。

考虑到时代发展的新要求与国内美国文学研究的新诉求，对美国文学史的界定亟待摆脱美国主流框架，需要站在中国学者的立场上重新建构美国文学史。针对国内一些美国文学史著作中观点相对陈旧，甚至存在一些谬误的现象，王守仁与刘海平教授一道，领衔主编了四卷本《新编美国文学史》，于2000 年至 2002 年由上海外语教育出版社出版。《新编美国文学史》作为国家社科基金重点项目成果，系迄今为止中国学者编写的规模最大、最能体现中国特色的美国文学通史，被誉为改革开放以来“美国文学史研究的标志性成果”（申丹 王邦维 176-177）。该书一经出版，即获学界好评，深受读者喜爱，曾获“教育部高等学校人文社会科学研究优秀成果”二等奖、“江苏省哲学社会科学优秀成果”一等奖。编者根据美国文学演进以及我国美国文学研究的动态，在 2002 年版《新编美国文学史》的基础上进行了多年的修订、优化及精进，于 2019 年推出了第二版，受到广大师生以及文学爱好者的高度认可和广泛好评，印证了《新编美国文学史》持久的学术生命力。

该文学通史有三大特点，一曰“推陈出新”。《新编美国文学史》“继

承了董衡巽领衔的《美国文学简史》的传统，又学习美国当代学者的创新，从而把美国文学史研究推向新的高度”（韩加明 76）。文学史书写最易重经典而忘新作，《新编美国文学史》之所以“新”，首先就在于它引入了诸多国内首次使用的新材料。该书在选录过去被遗漏的重要作品时，也不忘大量引入 20 世纪以来的最新作品，更新经典作家的名单和书目，较为完整客观地展现了美国文学嬗变与发展的历史进程。文学史易机械罗列作品、简介与注释而大大削减阅读趣味，但该文学史前有特定时段的文学现象概览，每章节有针对不同主题展开的作者简介、背景介绍、作品提要及注释，后有大事年表等附录，辞趣翩翩，鞭辟入里，对作品与其所处时代的相互关系给出了独到的见解。“新”的另一表现则为视角新。编者们借鉴国内外最新研究观点与方法，突破了美国学界对于美国文学史研究的既有知识谱系。要论述美国文学史，首要任务就是追本溯源，界定美国文学的源头。不同于以往文学史从北美殖民开发写起的惯例，《新编美国文学史》将美国文学追溯至北美印第安传统文学，这在国内美国文学史界算是首创。第四卷第三章“当代美国文学”也将“本土小说”单独列出，展示出编者的溯源意识，有助于凸显这一文学的完整发展脉络与蓬勃生机，为开展美国本土文学研究提供了宝贵的素材与思路。

二曰“综合全面”。面对浩如烟海的美国文学作品及文学现象，《新编美国文学史》秉持开放包容的理念，尽可能全面地展示美国文学图景。所谓全面，既包括纵向时间跨度上的完整性，又包括横向作品选取上的丰富性。《新编美国文学史》全书四卷，总篇幅约 220 万字，参照美国内战、第一、二次世界大战，将美国文学发展划分为四个时期。其中，王守仁主撰的《新编美国文学史》第四卷分析了战后美国小说从现实主义、实验主义到新现实主义的沿革路径，归纳了美国诗歌从“垮掉派”、“自白派”到新超现实主义的演变过程，并开辟专门章节讨论异军突起的美国非裔、华裔、本土裔文学。与此同时，也注重给被埋没的女性作家以足够的话语空间，兼顾文学批评理论的评述，体现了兼收并蓄、尊重包容的学术之道。这种包容还体现在看待通俗文学的态度上。针对美国现代主义文学加剧了精英文化与大众文化脱节这一现象，王守仁反对这种所谓阳春白雪与下里巴人的二元对立，并在《新编美国文学史》第四卷中将“当代美国通俗文学”单章列出，批判高雅与庸俗之分的偏执思维。他主张减少过于艰涩枯燥的排他性叙事，发挥美国通俗文学的愉悦性，从而陶冶大众情操。他在为《英美通俗小说概述》这本论著作序时还提及，通俗小说“贴近时代脉搏，探讨现实世界生活中人们普遍关注的社会问题或是近距离的暴露实录，或是高强度的灵魂叩问之声”（《英美通俗小说概述》 2），进一步为通俗文学正名。大众文化体现着中产阶级意志及文化需求，王守仁对大众文化的重视有助于解构以经典为中心的外国文学史，消解严肃文学与通俗文学的界限。《新编美国文学史》比西方同类著作

更加尊重差异性和多样性，这一综合性的研究方法不仅为文学史研究增添了新的思想动力，也为当代美国文学研究夯实了基础。这部美国文学通史在美国文学研究，包括国别研究、族裔文学研究等方面取得了一系列重大突破，几乎是每位英语专业、美国文学爱好者及研究者案头的必备书目。

三曰“中国特色”。外国文学史书写易受西方已有批评模式裹挟，潜意识进入西方主流话语所搭建的领地。《新编美国文学史》极具中国特色，编写理念和设计方案都是从我国美国文学研究实际出发来确定的。编者从中国学者的中国视角、中国立场出发，特别关注了美国文学在中国的吸纳过程，以及中国文化元素对美国文学的影响，剖析中美文学文化中相互交流、相互促进的趋势，为树立民族文化自信、培养跨文化视野提供依据。一方面，《新编美国文学史》精妙论述了爱默生与儒家学说的渊源、奥尼尔戏剧创作与道家思想的互文、中国古典诗词在庞德创作中的印记，仔细阐述了惠特曼、艾略特等人的作品在中国的传播及其对中国文学的影响。该文学史对赛珍珠等相关作家的讨论也修正了过去的观点，对赛珍珠与中国人民的深刻友谊和她为讲好中国故事所做出的努力给予了足够的重视。另一方面，由于长达半个世纪的排华浪潮，美国主流文化对中国移民、中国文化存在严重认知偏差甚至故意扭曲，这一偏见也会映射到美国华裔文学创作之中。编者正视这些带有反华排华趋向的误征误现，从逻辑裂痕切入，思索其叙事逻辑中的主观谬误及意识形态影响，并对此加以剖析纠正，使既定的东方主义知识体系分崩离析。第四卷专门追踪了美国华裔文学从产生到繁荣的历史进程，凝练中美文化碰撞与融合的主题，极大拓展了我国国别文学史写作的范域，进而丰富了中国人自己的美国文学景观。简言之，编者将鲜明的中国学者立场贯穿始终，他们所追寻的目标，是为中华民族的文化建设贡献力量。

《中国大百科全书》第三版作为国家重大出版文化工程，全面反映科学文化发展的最新成就，全面覆盖人类文明成果及基本知识。2015 年王守仁应邀担任《中国大百科全书》第三版外国文学卷“美国文学”分支的主编。他在大百科全书第二版“美国文学”的基础上加以整体规划与修改完善，补充新的内容，使其能够充分反映美国文学的新发展。比如，在少数族裔文学方面，王守仁从纷繁复杂的美国文学史中抽丝剥茧，增加了非裔美国文学、美国犹太文学、华裔美国文学、亚裔美国文学、美国本土文学、墨裔美国文学等条目，提纲挈领，条理清晰。王守仁对优秀族裔作家作品如数家珍，并且专门请专家学者撰写了美国华裔文学、美国拉美裔文学等条目，拓宽了美国文学研究的深度与广度，体现出极高的学术水准。第三版“美国文学”分支追求理论、文本、语境相结合，力求展现美国文学的学科特点以及完整的学科框架体系，呈现蔚为壮观的美国文学发展图景。《中国大百科全书》第三版提供的美国文学条目具有专业性、权威性和准确性的特点，成为知识查询的首选和最可靠的来源。

与绚烂多彩的美国文学相伴相生的，还有粲然可观的文学批评实践。《英美文学批评史》（2021）借鉴国内外文学批评史的写作实践，勾勒出英美文学批评的历史概貌。在编纂批评史的过程中，王守仁主张“对第一手资料细致辨析、甄选，站在今天研究者的立场上与之保持批评距离，对批评家论著的价值与影响作出较为客观的评述”（《英美文学批评史》 3）。该书思路开阔，理论扎实，聚焦主要批评流派，在中国语境下重新定位诸多文学批评家与他们的思想主张，精准解读了不同理论流派的演变进程及其内在关联。

五、建构知识体系：王守仁中国特色美国文学研究的使命

王守仁中国式美国文学知识体系的构建是高屋建瓴、融汇中西的。他主张国内学者从读懂外国故事向传播中国故事转化，勇于承担起外语人的使命，传播好中国声音，阐释好中国特色，展示好中国形象。

2022 年 4 月 25 日，习近平总书记在中国人民大学考察调研时提出了“加快构建中国特色哲学社会科学，归根结底是建构中国自主的知识体系”的重大论断。他强调要不断推进知识创新、理论创新、方法创新，使中国特色哲学社会科学真正屹立于世界学术之林。美国文学研究是哲学社会科学的重要组成部分。近年来，王守仁在“外国文学研究要做出无愧于伟大新时代的工作”（2017）、“建设具有中国特色的一流外国语言文学学科”（2018）、“走中国特色美国文学研究道路”（2019）等一系列文章中阐发关于建构中国特色美国文学知识体系的思路，显示出鲜明的中国立场、中国方法、中国元素与跨文化交流的特征。

建构中国特色的美国文学知识体系，首先，要有先进的思想指引。王守仁坚信，走中国特色美国文学研究的道路，建构中国特色美国文学知识体系，要坚持以马克思主义为指导，“这是中国哲学社会科学区别于其他哲学社会科学的根本标志。坚持以马克思主义为指导，核心是解决好为什么人的问题”（“走中国特色美国文学研究道路” 9）。我国包括文艺工作在内的精神文明建设，归根结底是为人民服务的。王守仁将自己所学与人民的需求紧密结合，从中国国情出发，重构美国文学史、文学批评史的学术传统，从人民的立场考察文学作品的认知价值，进而确定美国文学的新经典，使美国文学研究以我为主、为我所用。

第二，建构中国特色的美国文学知识体系，要在完整的学科体系之中注入中国文化特色。习近平总书记提出“坚持把马克思主义基本原理同中国具体实际相结合、同中华优秀传统文化相结合”，这为新时代外国文学研究提供了指导。中华优秀传统文化源远流长，王守仁以此为依托，致力于将中华文明的智慧与结晶融入美国文学研究。通过传承、弘扬中华优秀传统文化，他不断“汲取中国历史文化的丰富资源和中国智慧，用比较和跨学科的眼光审视外国的小说、诗歌和戏剧作品”，这不仅有助于深化对中外文学文化关系

的认识，而且也是“构建中国特色外国文学研究体系的关键所在”（何宁 王守仁 6）。在“外国文学研究要做出无愧于伟大新时代的工作”（2017）一文中，王守仁以习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想为指导，针对目前外国文学研究出现的难题，提出“外国文学研究要更加关注文学文本、关注现实需求、关注中国视域，以加快构建中国特色外国文学研究体系”。这里的“中国视域”，包括了“中国视角、中国立场、中国智慧、中国需求、中国资源等要素”（1-3）。王守仁认为，中国文学文化是英美文学研究工作的出发点与落脚点，从事外国文学的学者要学贯中西，增强中国文学文化的素养，从了解外国向传播中国过渡，而且要加强“国家目标导向”意识，使自己的课题研究融汇于时代发展潮流，服务于国家整体战略目标，如此方能为国内美国文学研究的发展提供源源不断的动力。[1] 王守仁用实际行动践行了自己的学术主张，无论是著书立说、开展科研项目还是传道授业，他始终热切关注着人民与国家的命运，展示出扎根祖国大地、讲好中国故事的使命感。

王守仁在“建设具有中国特色的一流外国语言文学学科”（2018）一文中进一步阐明，要通过“协调推进的策略”建设具有中国特色的一流外国语言文学学科，具体而言，要做到“人才培养与学术研究并重、研究外国与关注中国并重、国际化与本土化并重”（29）。其中，“人才培养与学术研究并重”强调了打造一流师资队伍在建设一流学科中的关键地位，主张培养学生对文本的感知能力、思辨能力、分析能力和语言表达能力，从而让外国文学课程成为跨文化交际和人文素质教育的重要场所。而“研究外国与关注中国并重、国际化与本土化并重”则指出了中西合璧、融汇贯通的重要性。开展包括美国文学在内的外国文学研究，一方面，要立足中国，增强中华文化认同，汲取中国理论、中国思想中的智慧，将文化自觉、文化自信融入具体研究；另一方面，也要培育国际意识、开拓全球视野，将针对民族文学或国别文学的阐释置于世界文学的语境下进行。王守仁组织召开了“新时代现实主义文学研究国际研讨会”等多场国际学术会议，致力于搭建中外文化文明交流的多边国际学术平台。不同文明互学互鉴，才能有助于彰显世界文学的整体性，推动构建跨学科、跨国别的“学术共同体”[2]。协调推进中外文化交流，用构建人类命运共同体的努力破解文明冲突，才能服务于人类文明新形态，打造人类共同的美好未来。

第三，建构自主知识体系，从根本上讲要增强自主性、原创性成果的产出。王守仁认为，美国文学的研究要注重问题意识与问题导向，无论是作品阐释，还是理论建构，都要守正创新，勇于得出原创性研究成果，致力于回

1 参见 李霄垅：“英美文学研究现状一瞥——专访南京大学王守仁教授”，《英美文学研究论丛》2（2011）：8-9。

2 20 世纪初，英国哲学家迈克尔 • 波兰尼（M. Polanyi）在“科学的自治”（“The Autonomy of Science”）一文中首次使用“学术共同体”（academic community）的概念。它起初指具有共同信念、共同价值、共同规范的科学家群体，后来内涵不断延展，不再局限于科学语域。

答好“中国之问”、“世界之问”、“人民之问”、“时代之问”。增强推进原创成果“走出去”的能力，是引领国内美国文学研究走向自主知识体系建设的关键一环。在我国的美国文学研究中，翻译引介相对多于有影响力的原创成果，且后者多用中文撰写。这确实推动了国内的思想文化建设，但与此同时，我们也要注重对学术成果的国际化阐释，打造哲学社会科学高端国际化学术期刊群，解构传统的主流批评范式，让世界听到中国学者的声音。我国美国文学研究未来的发展方向，必将是建构具有中国特色的美国文学知识体系，进而为构建中国特色哲学社会科学助力。

王守仁立足中国，秉持“以我为主、为我所用”的原则，打造中国特色学科体系、学术体系、话语体系，致力于在国际舞台上发出中国声音。他的中国特色的美国文学知识体系的建构思路与实践紧紧服务于国家战略，有助于促进中国文学文化发展，凸显中华传统文化源远流长、博大精深的底蕴，为建设社会主义文化强国作出新的贡献。

王守仁从事美国文学研究 30 余年来，先后经历了传承成长、开拓发展与学术创新的阶段。通过梳理王守仁在美国文学领域的代表性译著、学术论文、专著，不难发现，王守仁兼具国际视野与家国情怀，融汇中外文化精华。在美国文学译介与文本研究方面，他不仅发掘经典作家的学术价值，也注重剖析现当代作家的现实意义，为我国改革开放早期对美国文学优秀作品的引介打下了坚实基础。王守仁善于批判性思考，积极捕捉学术前沿，深耕现实主义文学，并对美国文学母题进行新阐释，开辟出一条学术创新之路。尤其在美国少数族裔文学的研究，极具引领性和先进性。他对美国非裔文学、美国华裔文学、美国拉美裔文学等的传播与吸纳进一步开拓了国内的美国文学研究领域，丰富了世界族裔文学研究的新格局。除了对美国文学的作家作品进行独到解析，王守仁也对美国文学的整体发展脉络进行宏观综合的考量。他在美国文学史、文学批评史等领域的研究也体现了诸多首创之功，在一定程度上重新定义了美国文学史、文学批评史的书写。他以推动我国文化事业与教育事业为己任，以中国为观照、以时代为观照，稳步前进，不断沉淀，在增强历史自觉中把握历史主动，体现出重构学术传统的魄力，在世界舞台上发出了中国学者的声音。

王守仁始终坚持马克思主义的立场、观点和方法，坚持习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想在建构中国特色美国文学知识体系中的核心地位，使科研探索高度契合于国家需求，一以贯之地践行外国文学研究“求创新、寻真理、为人民”的使命，展现出美国文学研究的中国立场。他融通中外，撷英采华，洞幽烛微，强力推动了中国特色美国文学学科体系、学术体系、话语体系的建设与创新。

王守仁知行合一，他的中国特色美国文学知识体系建构依然在路上，其

富有中国特色的外国文学研究之路必将越走越宽广。

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Holism, Representation and Realism: Wang Shouren's Writing of the History of Contemporary Foreign Literature in China

Ren Haiyan

Abstract: The emergence and subsequent predominance of instrumental rationality catalyzed a paradigm shift, bringing the utilitarian aspect of literature to the forefront, thus elevating the issue of "use of literature" to prominence in China. The four-volume *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* written by Professor Wang Shouren and his colleagues is a Chinese response to this paradigm shift. It redefines the Chinese perception of literature from a perspective that transcends eurocentrism, marking a significant stride in interpreting literatures of the world. By advocating holism and value judgment, the dynamic representation theory of literature and taking realism as epistemology, this *History* affirmed the value of literature. Meanwhile, one of the most noteworthy contributions of *History* lies in its introduction, as implied by the title, of a new concept for periodization: post-World War II literature. And the layout of these four volumes corresponding with the logic and method of the "beam-column style assembly" in traditional Chinese architecture, sets up a unique model for literary history writing, one that based on relational philosophy. In this sense, *History* is a landmark in the continuation and renewal of the tradition of the writing of the history of foreign literature in China.

Keywords: Wang Shouren; literary history; holism; representation theory; realism

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标题：整体性、再现论与现实主义：王守仁与中国当代外国文学史书写

内容摘要：随着工具理性带来的社会发展范式的转变，文学的功利性问题凸显，继而令文学之用在中国语境中也如在美国一般变得问题化。王守仁教授等撰写的四卷本《战后世界进程与外国文学进程研究》是对这一问题的中国回应。丛书以超越欧洲中心主义的视角，重新审视中国之外的世界文学，通

过倡导整体性和价值判断，文学动态再现论，以及将现实主义作为认识论，肯定了文学的价值。此外，该四卷本的一个重要创见是提出了一个新的历史分期概念：“战后外国文学”，而四卷书的布局与中国古建筑中的“梁柱式装配”的逻辑和方式颇为契合，构成一套基于关系哲学的别具一格的文学史，这是对中国的外国文学史书写的继承和创新。

关键词：王守仁；文学史；整体论；再现论；现实主义

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Confucius said, “Poetry can stimulate, observe, gather, and complain” (Yang 183). Having garnered a consensus among Confucian intellectuals, this assertion affirms the multifaceted values of literature. Due to this consensus, the “use of literature” did not surface as an essential issue within the Chinese intellectual tradition, albeit the influence of Daoist advocation of *wuwei*, meaning non-action and the transcendent ethos of the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Nevertheless, the emergence and subsequent predominance of instrumental rationality catalyzed a paradigm shift, bringing the utilitarian aspect of literature to the forefront, thus elevating the issue of “use of literature” to prominence in China. In multiple senses, the four-volume *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* (hereinafter referred to as “*History*”) written by Professor Wang Shouren and his colleagues responds to the shift. He thus states at the start of the “General Introduction” to the *History*:

> literary creation is a reflection and representation of social life, as well as an active response to real-life politics and culture milieu. Consequently, literature assumes a pivotal role in shaping the zeitgeist of an era, in cultivating core societal values, in forging national identity, and in perpetuating national cultural heritage. (vol. 1, 1)

Wang Shouren’s affirmation of the theory of representation in literature, its intrinsic historicity, and its dynamic interplay with reality from a socio-historical standpoint forms the basis of the *History*.

History consists of four volumes: *A Study of Postwar Realist Literature*, *A Study of Postmodern Literature*, *A Study of Contemporary Foreign Literature from the Perspective of Globalization*, and *A Study of Trends in the 21st Century Foreign Literature*. As is revealed by the titles, this is a contemporary reflection on the contemporary. If history reflects changes over time as what is generally believed, the chronicling of literary developments outside of China within the broader context

of historical and cultural shifts in *History* marks an effort to respond to the evolving global order, an effort from Chinese scholars to update the coordinate for observing and understanding the world and for gaining better self-insights.

Holism and Value Judgment

History-writing is a deeply-ingrained tradition in China. Zhao Tingyang equates history to "the foundation of the Chinese spiritual world" (1), thereby elevating historicity to a stature comparable to that of religion. In the Chinese context, history writing is meant to identify and then reinforce the tradition through chronological recounting of events; it is an intricate process of reevaluation so as to discern trends in social development, and ultimately it serves as a medium for history writers to articulate their worldviews and assert their philosophical stances. Qian Mu once remarked, "In the pursuit of knowledge, one must first have an intention. Different intentions will lead to different choices of materials and different ways of using these materials" (1). This principle is particularly pertinent to the writing of this history of contemporary foreign literature. The criteria for the selection of materials and the process of compilation are imbued with the compiler's presuppositions, revealing underlying intention, and more importantly, value judgments.

In this vein, *History* stands as a laudable endeavor. It aims to reconstruct value judgments and reemphasize the concept of holism in literary studies. This objective is particularly salient in an era where post-structuralism has profoundly fragmented traditional value systems. With *History*, Wang Shouren reaffirms the value of literature in a world where established norms and structures are constantly being questioned and reinterpreted.

The deliberate positioning of "history" ahead of "foreign literature" in the title of *History* reflects Wang Shouren's acute concerns with the fundamental issues in literature studies. The rise of post-structuralism has rigorously scrutinized and challenged the notion of certainty as a presence. While the liberating forces released by post-structuralist thought cannot be dismissed, its propensity to engender a sense of fragmentation and a history vacuum is equally undeniable. It is in this context that *History* makes a bold assertion of its intent to "return to the historical scene" (vol. 1, 5). This approach is not merely about placing literature within a broad social and historical milieu; it is about delving into the origins, trajectories, and contexts of global literary phenomena, thereby tracing their evolutionary paths in historical contexts.

Indeed, *History* exemplifies a meticulous fusion of history and critical comment, adhering to the guiding principle of "using history to support critical comment and

using comment to illustrate history" (vol. 1, 6). It follows two lines of thought:

> Firstly, it traces the evolution and context of literary trends and schools of thought, delving into their profound social, historical, and intellectual underpinnings. This approach facilitates a nuanced analysis of the characteristics that define foreign literature. Secondly, a chronological framework is used, elucidating the development of foreign literature in post-World War II era according to key stages of societal and historical progression and pivotal events. (vol. 1, 5)

Within the framework thus created, *History* provides close-up studies on different authors. By intertwining macroscopic overviews with microscopic analyses, *History* achieves a balanced synthesis of broad historical contexts and individual literary contributions, thereby offering an enriched perspective on the complex interplay between literature and its historical milieu.

This endeavor represents a concerted effort to restore a sense of totality and historical consciousness on a global scale. Wang Shouren emphasizes the intrinsic link between literature and the socio-economic foundations of its era, asserting that "literature of a certain era is formed and developed on the basis of the social life and economic foundation of that era" and that "literature is one of the ways in which humans understand the world [...] and historical processes are the basis of literary aesthetics, a decisive factor in driving literary processes" (vol. 1, 4). In highlighting this symbiotic relationship, *History* not only reaffirms the cognitive and social value of literature but also champions the idea that literature is an integral part of the historical narrative, shaping and being shaped by the ebbs and flows of societal transformations.

The symbiotic relationship between literature and history highlights the significance of periodization in history writing. There is a prevailing tendency in the academia to categorize the literary outputs that emerged in Western Europe and the United States after World War II under the label of "postmodernism." This categorization serves to demarcate them from the modernist literature prevalent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Intrinsically, the prefix "post" in postmodernism signifies a sequential timeline; it denotes the termination of the modern era. If the world after World War II witnessed the birth of postmodern, how should we define literary movements or schools of thought comes after postmodernism? Debates regarding the post-postmodern era surfaced at the end of the 20th century. However, these discussions have largely been inconclusive, failing to reach a consensus or coin an umbrella term that aptly generalizes the literary period succeeding

postmodernism. This absence of a definitive term has resulted in a conceptual void in literary periodization.

One of the most noteworthy contributions of *History* lies in its introduction, as implied by the title, of a new concept for periodization: post-World War II literature. Published in 2019, *History* regards the time span from the conclusion of World War II up to 2019 as a distinctive epoch in human history. This is "an era of unprecedentedly rapid development in human history" (vol. 1, 3), characterized on one hand by the entrance to a post-industrial society marked by advancements in intelligent technology and the ascendancy of information and knowledge as core structural elements; it, on the other hand, is distinctly shaped by the pervasive influence of globalization.[1] Literature produced in this era exhibits distinct artistic characteristics and a zeitgeist that diverges markedly from earlier historical periods.[2]

In addition to periodization, the layout of the *History* experimented with a new model of holistic history writing. Ge Zhaoguang points out that the Chinese tradition of historiography is significantly shaped by "tradition of history and biography writing and the study of catalog" (8). When drafting literary histories, there is a tendency to adhere to a chronological framework, threading the lives, literary works, or accomplishments of eminent personalities. Chinese-authored histories of foreign literature often stay true to this paradigm, striving to depict a seamless and seemingly predestined narrative of progress. Nonetheless, the layout of *History* deviates from such conventional templates, aspiring instead to capture a richly layered and multidimensional view of literary history which is not bound by linear progression. While temporal components are acknowledged, they are not the sole organizing principle; biographical listings of authors are eschewed in favor of situating literary movements and genres within broader socio-historic contexts.

Milan Kundera, in his seminal work *The Art of the Novel*, laconically generalizes the essence of character creation as an intricate tracing of several key words.[3] This strategic approach finds a parallel in the layout of the four-volume *History*: the underlying structure is meticulously crafted to highlight four pivotal concepts that define foreign literature in the post-World War II era: realism, postmodernism, a global perspective, and evolving trends. These concepts serve as foundational pillars, illuminating the "internal order" of the literary processes that have shaped foreign

1 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 4.

2 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 5.

3 See Milan Kundera, *The Art of the Novel*, translated by Dong Qiang, Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Press, 2004, 38.

literature during this significant period. Wang Shouren's articulation of the objective of *History* corresponds to this approach: it is "not about pursuing an exhaustive national literary history but a study that focuses on certain key aspects. Through an in-depth research on important schools of thought, trends, and phenomena that concern the whole, *History* is committed to unravel complex and diverse interactions between the global historical process and the literary process Post-World War II" (vol. 1, 2).

The first volume *A Study of Postwar Realist Literature* is comprised of ten chapters. Anchored in the theoretical framework of realism, this volume situates literatures from various countries and areas within their respective traditions and historical contexts. Thus realism is investigated in the plural form. Significantly, the authors endeavor to adopt the impartial stance of a historian. For instance, in the discussion of socialist realism literature in the former Soviet Union, they argue that its evolution is intrinsically linked to the political and societal vicissitudes from the inception to the dissolution of the Soviet state. The literature of this era necessitated the "depiction of life through a historical and concretely realistic aesthetic lens, whilst concurrently underscoring the infusion of socialist ideology within the creative expression" (vol. 1, 263). Consequently, Soviet socialist realism literature manifested distinctive traits over various phases. The second volume *A Study of Postmodern Literature*, including seventeen chapters, endeavors to answer the question "what was postmodernism." The initial seven chapters delve into the theoretical foundation of postmodernist literature, while the ensuing discourse delineate the distinctive features of postmodernist literature across different nations and areas outside of China. Of particular note is the second chapter, which addresses the complexities inherent in defining postmodernism, specifically engaging with the concept's inherent ambiguity. This portrays the variegated landscape of uncertainty that aligns with the complexities of value judgment amid the ascendancy of post-structuralism, a movement that questions traditional tenets. This volume does not shy away from these entanglements of definition. Instead, it transcends the prevailing perplexity, thus contributing an examination and critique from an elevated vantage point.

The third volume, entitled *A Study of Contemporary Foreign Literature from the Perspective of Globalization* sets itself apart from previous historical inquiries by tacitly embedding globalization as its context. It posits the notion that "globalization is transforming the disciplinary demarcations, epistemic structures, and theoretical methodologies pertinent to literary studies" (vol. 3, 23), as well as asserting that "globalization, being a historical agent, is reshaping the existential and conceptual spheres of individuals" (vol. 4, 20). Situated within the framework of globalization,

this volume attempts to re-evaluate authors and their literary outputs with concepts such as ecology, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and post-colonialism as analytical lenses, thus offering a multifaceted and enriched view of contemporary literary discourse.

Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce's comment on all true history as contemporary history is much favored and frequently referenced by Chinese scholars. Within the ambit of literary history study, this adage signifies a pronounced consciousness of the present era and a concentration on current affairs in the composition and examination of literary history. *History* however extends its concern beyond the immediacy of the present, reminding readers that the emphasis on contemporaneity stems from a concern for the future. The future dimension is what concerns the fourth volume, *A Study of the Trends in the 21st Century Foreign Literature*. Authors of this volume propose that the innovation in the 21st century lies in the adoption of novel modes of expression, the rejuvenation of conventional methods such as realism.[1] They perceive the emergence of a tendency to "intentionally obscure demarcation lines between literature and other branches of knowledge [...] This approach integrates human intellectual life as an entirety within the narrative framework, thereby expanding the narrative possibilities in literature" (vol. 4, 20).

Ostensibly, realism, postmodernism, global perspective, and literary trends are four heterogeneous strands of inquiry. While they may intersect with each other, they each possess the capacity to stand on its own. This quartet layout indicates that all four strands are concurrently addressed. Notably, different from a polyphonic discourse that typically accentuates the parity of each constituent voice, ensuring that no single voice assumes a position of dominance, the accomplishment of *History* is predicated upon the artistry of historical spatial analysis with each installment in this four-volume collection bears distinct emphases, investigative directions, and functional purposes. Therefore, characterizing it with parity would be somewhat reductive.

Instead, the layout of the four volumes bears striking resemblance to the logic and method of "beam-column style assembly" found in ancient Chinese architecture. The notion of "assembly style," a fundamental concept borrowed from ancient Chinese construction practices, conveys the principle whereby individual components are independently fabricated yet when joined together, fits with precise interlocking, forming an integrated whole. While the wholeness is reflected in the thematic continuity of the four volumes, in their investigation and delineation of

1 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 4, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 19.

how literature mirrors and re-acts to the historical process of reality, each volume is led by an independent thematic thread, with the dynamic theory of representation serving as the joint in the assembly style that connects essential segments, thereby facilitating the coherence for this scholarly endeavor.

The assembly-style layout turns *History* into a work predicated on relationality, through which the complexity of the global historical process is examined. In an era marked by the subversive and deconstructive tendencies of postmodernism, *History* stands as a remarkable attempt at restoring totality and order amidst fragmentation.

Notably, the emphasis on a holistic worldview does not seek to obfuscate difference; instead, it aims for a holism that honors and encompasses diversity. A pivotal underpinning of this endeavor is the belief in the "togetherness" in living together, the tolerance towards difference and diversity. In a section entitled "Don't Talk to Strangers" in *Liquid Modernity*, Zygmunt Bauman discusses how modern fluidity disrupts traditional societal constructs and collective identities, leading to scenarios where individuals may avoid "togetherness" even in face-to-face encounters.[1] The foundation for such togetherness is a communal framework of conviviality, one that encourages communication, interaction, and the establishment of bond-like connections.

The 19th century witnessed a surge of interest in the composition of literary histories in the West. However, by the 20th century, the practice of drafting literary history was under close scrutiny due to the alert to master narratives implied therein. Contrary to these endeavors, Wang Shouren's focus on historical and cultural milieus, alongside the concept of the "historical scene," serves as a counteractive measure to the relative erosion of historical consciousness that has pervaded Western society in the postmodern era. He contends that to truly comprehend the principal trajectory and traits of post-World War II foreign literature, it is imperative to revisit the "historical scene" of literature's genesis. Such a retracing is intended to "elucidate and articulate the intertwined relationship between the origination, distribution, transformation, and societal existence of literature" (vol. 1, 5). This pivot towards the restoration of value-based critique and the recognition of literature as a representation of the zeitgeist—acknowledging the fluid interplay between literary works and the contemporary settings out of which they arise—offer a corrective to the prevalent challenges within Western historical narration.

A Dynamic Theory of Representation

Against the backdrop of diverse post-structuralist theories, conventional theory of

1 See Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity, 2000, 104-109.

literature-as-representation, considered obsolescent, has been relegated to the margins of literary scholarship. Underscoring representation as literature's intrinsic attribute, however, *History* advocates a dynamic theory of representation by highlighting literature's intervention in reality. In so doing, it transcends the dichotomy of "mirror" and "lamp" as metaphorical frameworks for the contemplation of the relationship between literature and history. Thus, literature may and can act as an "event," actively contributing to history. To quote Wang Shouren, literature encompasses "an active participant in historical process, consciously intervening in life, and fostering societal transformation and progress" (vol.1, 5).

This dynamic representation is present in post-World War II literary creation at a TransAreal scale. Taking the United States as an example, its literature embodies a dualistic approach of "realistic referencing and intervention" (vol. 1, 115). Differentiating early US American realism from its European predecessors, *History* claims that US American realism in the post-World War II era had undergone an introspective turn. This shift fulfills literature's function of intervening into reality in addition to representation and critique. Anti-war literature for instance was at the vanguard of this development. It became an exemplary manifestation of realist literature actively engaging with social and political transformations. Authors represented by Irwin Shaw, Norman Mailer, James Jones, and Tim O'Brien illustrated the ruthlessness of modern warfare. Their potent voices of dissent intermingled with broader societal protest movements. Realist writers during such period veered to "highlight engagement with reality as opposed to mere replication and representation of reality" (vol. 1, 117).

East Asian literature, particularly post-liberation North Korean realism, provides another lucid illustration of the intervention of literature with reality owing to its accentuation of the social function of literature. As is pointed out in the *History*, North Korea has consistently grappled with austere social realities throughout the modern era. Since the latter half of the 19th century, it has sequentially endured Western military repression, Japanese colonization, and the Korean War. This series of historical events catalyzed realism's absolute ascendancy in contemporary North Korean literature, leading some North Korean critics to contend that modernism constitutes an "expansion and deepening of realism" (vol. 1, 525). Literary creation in North Korean after the liberation, under the sway of national ideology and the political climate, gravitated towards "realism as the sole endorsed method of literary creation in North Korea" (vol. 1, 523). The literary chronology—from "noble realism" said to "contribute to the construction of a new society" to "socialist realism," and then to "subjective realism" propagated since the 1960s, as well as the introduction

of the theory "literary works as seeds," the value of literature as a tangible and active mechanism intervening in reality and acting on reality is emphasized and amplified.

In Asia, the evolution of realist literature in the Arab sphere is also intimately interwoven with reality. *History* argues that significantly influenced by European traditions, Arab realist literature however is primarily an outcome of the modern Arab cultural and literary renaissance. Realist literature played an active role in the Arab national liberation movement. The inception, development, and maturation of Arab realist literature align with the decolonization process of Arab nations. Hence, literary themes in the Arab world have chiefly centered on three domains:

> first, conflicts and confrontations, such as the Palestinian plight, revolution and independence, the Lebanese civil war, among others; second, the relationship between the Arab world and Western political shifts; third, societal transformations of Arab nations post-independence, such as the impact of oil, urban-rural relations, women's status, individual liberties, among others. (vol. 1, 551)

In this context, Arab realism novels, exemplified by Naguib Mahfouz's "Cairo Trilogy," have emerged as "tools for establishing national identity and fostering revolutionary alliances" (vol. 1, 550).

In Africa, the intervention of literature into reality assumes a palpably direct form, as African writers, particularly those at the height of their creative prowess during the decades following World War II, frequently partook in the construction of their nations' respective cultural institutions through holding administrative positions in either governmental or non-governmental organizations. This is a "distinctly African phenomenon" (vol. 1, 433). African literature in post-World War II era exhibits a close bond with the surge of national independence movements in the 1950s and 1960s. *History* points out that despite the multitudinous ethnicities and languages in Africa, within the historical context of the transformation of African identity consciousness, anti-colonialism, anti-racial segregation, and the reconfiguration of cultural identity emerged as the three most significant thematic precincts of post-war literary creation.[1] As an illustrative example, consider Leopold Sedar Senghor, the Senegalese poet, whose anthology of poems, *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*, published in 1948, signified the zenith of the "Negritude" movement. Subsequently, in 1960, following Senegal's

1 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 424-425.

successful bid for independence and transition into a republic, he was elected as the inaugural president. His leadership was characterized by active engagement in nation-building and persistent literary output, thereby leaving an "indelible" impression on subsequent generations of African authors.[1] Léopold Sédar Senghor's experience was not an isolated case; the Egyptian writer Nawal El Saadawi also held a public office, serving as the Director of the Health Education Department in the Ministry of Public Health.

The seismic geopolitical shifts instigated by the two World Wars of the first half of the 20th century resulted in a major transfer in global power forthwith; the presumptive authoritative control transferred from Europe led by front-runners such as the United Kingdom and France, to the United States in North America. Along with this shift of power, the self-positioning of the vast pre-colonial world underwent fundamental changes in its interaction with European traditions. These changes are all reflected in literary creation.

Take English-speaking countries such as Australia and Canada as examples. Their realist literatures are "fragmented and hybrid," and "lack diachronic integrated systematic relationships" (vol. 1, 566). The origin of Australian realism can be traced back to "potent nationalist sentiments" (vol. 1, 567). As the historical process changed, it metamorphosed from left-wing realism around the 1950s to urban realism in the 70s and 80s, and then to diverse realisms emerged in the 80s and 90s in the post-war period.[2] Despite the diverse forms, Australian realism characteristically sought to give voice to those on the periphery, sought to survive in the struggle against the mainstream, while concurrently offering insightful elucidations of Australia's sociopolitical life that reverberated with the voices of its populace in the new era.[3] Unlike Australia, Canada's propensity towards realism harks back to the nation's early federal years, yet its espousal as a dominant literary genre did not gain momentum until the 20th century where it was often classified under the heading of "modern." The post-World War II realism that emerged in Canadian literature is believed to have unravelled "the spiritual logic of its era" and subsequently transmuted into varied subgenres inclusive of prairie realism, urban

1 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 427-429.

2 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 569.

3 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 569.

realism, and social realism.[1]

Likewise, the emergence and metamorphosis of postmodern literature in the two Commonwealth nations of Australia and Canada correspond to the changes in their respective self-identifications in the post-World War II era. While such literary movements are deeply informed by Western European and American influences, it is the unique blend of social, historical, literary, and cultural traditions of each former British colony that fundamentally determines the trajectory of postmodern literature after the war.[2] In Australia, this era witnessed the advent of New Writing, championed by notable figures such as Frank Moorhouse and Michael Wilding. Conversely, Canadian literature departed from the typical paradigm with a developmental trajectory that bypassed the stage of full-fledged modernism rendering the "post" in its postmodernism less of a continuity indicator and more of a critical divergence.[3] Eschewing similarities with European and American postmodernism, Canadian postmodern literature is distinguished by an indelible regional characteristic.[4] The relatively constrained geographic habitation within the country, separated by topographical features such as mountains and rivers, has indicated a customary compartmentalization in terms of national identity, politics and culture, devoid of the conception of a center. This induces a potent regionalism in Canadian literary expressions, characterized by "the emphasis on difference, the description of fragmented experiences [...] and the disruption of traditional power structures and centralized narrative modalities" (vol. 2, 463-464).

These aforementioned examples demonstrate from a TransAreal perspective how post-World War II literature has played a pivotal role in reflecting and changing reality, and intervening in social and political transformations. Accordingly, as Wang Shouren argues, literary works become literary events that exert profound influence over historical trajectories. The conceptual framework of "world" embodied in these TransAreal works as well as the global perspective that informs the *History* correspond with the burgeoning trend in contemporary world literature studies.

This global and TransAreal perspective enables the *History* to transcend the confinement of national literature, regional literature, and language-specific

1 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 609.

2 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 2, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 426.

3 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 2, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 452.

4 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 2, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 455.

literature. The broad scholarly vision it thus gained helps to deliver insightful and inspirational observations. For instance, in the discussion of the origins of modernism and postmodernism, *History* adopts the view that these literary currents emerged initially in Latin America. It acknowledges modernism's advent in 1890, a precedent by three decades relative to the Anglophone world, and postmodernism's emergence within the Hispanic critical circle during the 1930s, also predating its recognition in British and US American academic circles by some thirty years. Furthermore, in response to the diversity in the post-World War II world, Wang Shouren advocates for a pluralistic appreciation and acknowledgment of myriad -isms. This conceptual pluralization is presented not only as a value presupposition but also as a judgment. The localization of the -isms epitomizes this commitment to a pluralistic ethos.

Literature represents reality, encapsulating the zeitgeist as well as historical context of a specific epoch. Nevertheless, literature does not merely adopt a passive or static role in representation; rather, it can actively interpose itself within this reality, resonating with the historical and cultural context from which it emerges. In this development and enrichment of traditional literary theory of representation, Wang Shouren recognizes and affirms the value of literature.

Literature as Epistemology

Informed by an expansive historical viewpoint and a dynamic theory of literary representation, Wang Shouren arrives at a significant judgment: in an era marked by profound structural changes and diverse evolving forms, realism stands out as a most effective, and possibly the most dependable, cognitive approach. He views it as the "optimal entry point for analyzing the post-World War II foreign literary process" (vol. 1, 6). This perspective leads to an essential inquiry: What precisely constitutes realism? Wang Shouren asserts that "realist literature is not bound by predetermined formal standards, and realism in creative endeavors does not exclude innovation in style or methodology" (vol. 1, 55). This implies that the task of identifying and defining realism, if solely based on its forms of expression and creative techniques, is inherently constrained. Instead, a deeper engagement with the core and trajectory of realism is necessary.

Approaching realism as if it were a continuously flowing river, *History* attempts to understand realism within the context of the novel tradition that originated in the 18th century Western Europe. It starts with a discussion on the 18th century realism marked by authenticity (objectivity), representativeness, and historicity, realism that "posed a challenge to the artistic norms of Romanticism

and stood in opposition to all that was deemed unrealistic" (vol. 1, 30), and then moves on to various realisms that emerged in the 20th century, among which are the so-called psychological realism, another term for stream-of-consciousness novels, and the socialist realism defined at the First Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934. It also analyzes the debates over the "death of realism" in the 1960s as well as the paradoxical relationship between the constructiveness and objectivity in literature. In an attempt to decode the shifts in the perception of reality and realism, *History* uncovers the roots of these changes: the crisis of representation.

History argues that this crisis stems from the changes in the perception of language's inherent nature. The concept of arbitrariness in the relationship between the signifier and the signified disrupted the once-assumed direct link between language and reality. Theorists as represented by Roland Barthes and J. Hillis Miller, who regarded language as an enclosed system of signs, challenged its capability to accurately represent reality, effectively cutting off the connection between language and the actual world. They scrutinized, and at times outright rejected, the ability of texts made up of language symbols to reference reality in a meaningful way.

With the help of Marxist theories, *History* reintroduces literary studies back to the external world by dissolving the barrier between external reality and the textual real. Wang Shouren posits that "literature, as a manifestation of aesthetic ideology, is shaped by social existence, akin to other ideologies" and he emphasizes that "the capacity of language to signify and to reference reality is a fundamental necessity for everyday communication" (vol. 1, 19). Underpinning this argument is the conviction that while literature may be a construct of fiction, it is not solely self-referential. More importantly it references reality. Thus, "realism" must engage with "the interaction between language and the actual world" (vol. 1, 7). Typical examples of this interaction are the aforementioned cases in which realist literature becomes literary events that intervene with reality. Viewed in this line, the so-called "crisis of representation" is but a metaphysical play and creating a divide between language and reality is inherently restrictive.

Undoubtedly, focusing on the constructive power of language and the critical examination on language inevitably alters and enriches traditional understandings of realism. In this vein, while acknowledging the consensus among researchers regarding the core attributes of realism, specifically the conception of realism as the "impulse to imitate and focus on external reality," *History* advocates for "the integration of textuality and constructiveness into realism, without compromising its essential principles" (vol. 1, 48). To accomplish this, *History* suggests that it is "imperative to steer clear of the propensity for the widely abuse of fictionalization

that characterizes postmodernism" (vol. 1, 48-49). This critique of widely abuse of fictionalization addresses the key issue in the ongoing discussions and debates about the nature and scope of realism.

The crisis of representation is but one of the numerous challenges that post-World War II realism has faced. The advent of the internet as a dominant medium and the progression of artificial intelligence technology have ushered in a significant transformation in the mediums through which we experience life. This shift is fundamentally altering the nature of human experience. The once-clear demarcation between virtual and physical reality is becoming increasingly blurred. In this new context, the very definitions of "reality" and "truth" are being called into question, opening up avenues for further inquiry and exploration.

Discussions of truth is at the heart of Western philosophical thought. Traditional discussions often use the rhetoric of tautology to equate reality with truth. This is exemplified in Plato's argument for expelling poets from his republic since their descriptions of the world are thrice removed from truth. However, the notion of "reality" itself is fraught with paradoxes. The quest for a "reality" that aligns perfectly and objectively with the "truth" of the world is, in essence, a pursuit of an illusion. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is an example. While applauded as an autobiography, the novel faced contemporary charges of being fictional. Often hailed as the inaugural work of realist fiction in British literary history, it paradoxically creates a utopia. In the preface to *Serious Reflections during Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, the final part of the Robinson Crusoe trilogy, Defoe delves into the intricacies of truth. He defends his narrative by invoking two kinds of truths. He contends that the story of Robinson aligns with the historical aspect of truth while simultaneously embodying an allegorical truth, the latter suggesting a mythological dimension to the truth portrayed in the novel.

Discussions on truth also capture the attention of Chinese thinkers. Zhao Tingyang for instance introduces a bifurcation of truth: one being "truth in time," and the other as "historical truth." For him, these two forms of truth coexist with "one type of truth constructing knowledge, whereas the other shaping spirit" (35). Zhao also raises the notion of "scientifically true" (33), a concept rooted in the repeatable nature in scientific findings. This differentiation, underscoring the multi-dimensional nature of truth, raises the pivotal question about the the dimensions of truth. That is what turns the exploration and discussion of truth into an ongoing and multifaceted endeavor.

György Lukács and Bertolt Brecht once offered distinct interpretations of "truth" in literature. In "Cognitive Dimensions of Realism" (14), a collaborative work

by Wang Shouren and Liu Yang, the dynamic and paradoxical essence of Lukács's realism is thoroughly examined. Contrasting to this view, Brecht's understanding of realism emphasizes its social function. While they stood as intellectual opponents, both Lukács and Brecht both distinguished realism from mere modes of representation, thus contributing varied but profound insights into the nature of literary truth.

Wang Shouren, anchoring his approach in a dynamic socio-historical critical theory, moves beyond metaphysical discussions to suggest that the truth pursued in realism is "an essential reality." This redefined reality draws upon historical facts while striving to achieve a more elevated "artistic reality" (vol. 1, 22). The introduction of the concept of "artistic reality" validates the quest for truth in literature and art. Consequently, realist literature, acting as a bridge between historical and artistic reality, is a cognitive tool. Through the use of language (literature), it seeks to convey an understanding of truth (reality), thus adopting the role of an epistemological instrument.

Realist literature as a genre culminates in the discussion of novels whereas realism as an epistemology clearly encompasses a much broader scope. As is demonstrated in *History*, the discussion covers not only drama, such as I. M. Dvoreckij's play *An Outsider*[1] and Mikhail Shatrov's two plays on Vladimir Lenin[2], but also poetry, including Yevgeny Yevtushenko's lyric poem "Mom and Neutron Bomb" (vol. 1, 310). With realism as the epistemology, *History* introduces realism in the plural form, bringing to light writers and traditions that are less known in China. For instance, the 2nd section of Chapter 9 in Volume 1 is devoted to the discussion of North Korean realism.

Indeed, literature is a translation of life. The power of literature lies in its capacity to encapsulate the spirit of the times and to depict human existence. In this sense, writers, irrespective of their chosen medium, are explorers of existence. The morality of literature lies in its imaginative exploration of life's myriad possibilities. Discussions on the essence of literature, whether rooted in traditional mimesis or traditional representation theory, often draw attention to the distance between literature and life. But this distance disappears in Wang Shouren's dynamic representation theory, with art and life being in a mutually "constructive" relationship, each profoundly influencing and shaping the other.

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1 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 306.

2 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 316.

The disappearance of distance enables a shift in focus from the dichotomy of truth and fiction to the interplay between reality and imagination. Focusing solely on the reality-fiction binary can be misleading, as reality, from a human perspective, is inherently intertwined with imagination. Therefore, realist literature can be viewed as the construction of reality in the domain of imagination. In this context, discussions about reality veer away from ontological debates towards questions of epistemology, questions of boundary. Truths in this sense diverging from the Platonic ideal of transcendence, represent in the plural form identifications, diverse, recognized truths that "aligns with people's perceptions and expectations of the world" (Wang and Tang 4). As Wang Shouren suggests, realism constructs a "reference" to the real world within the realm of imagination.[1] This assertion confirms the idea that imagination is the bridge between reality and literature, and that literary imagination should ultimately point to reality.

Each era, nation, and area develops its own form of realism, congruent with its social and historical contexts. Be it impersonal reality, psychological reality, pathological reality, magical realism, structural realism, or Mo Yan's hallucinatory realism, each form belongs to the realism of its specific time and place. These literary movements "reflect the profound influence of historical processes on literary developments" (vol. 4, 19), unveiling various dimensions of human existence. In an age where the influence of religion and philosophy is diminishing, literature emerges as a conduit to truth.

Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature redefines the Chinese perception of world literature from a perspective that transcends Eurocentrism, marking a significant stride in interpreting literatures of the world through a Chinese lens. Although the title merely mentions foreign literature, Wang Shouren's global viewpoint is eloquently articulated in the "General Introduction": "The study of foreign literature is not merely about comprehending other cultures; it also facilitates the enhancement, development, and promotion of our own culture" (vol. 1, 1). This perception resonates with the principles for research proposed by Qian Mu: "Analyzing similarities and differences, evaluating gains and losses, and understanding both ourselves and others are integral to our collective pursuit of progress" (130).

The title of *History* reveals its presupposition in research: delving into the dynamic interaction between literary development and historical process with a socio-historical approach, so as to discover the inherent logic. The adoption of this

1 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII History and the Development of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 20.

approach indicates the authors' aspiration not only to capture a sense of reality but also to imbue a profound sense of history. As a result, *History* adeptly melds meticulous academic rigor with a keen understanding of the zeitgeist and a vivid historical imagination. It stands as a testament to its comprehensive embrace of historical depth, active engagement with reality, and foresight into the future. Furthermore, the implied concern and care for the state of the world and the human condition, as conveyed between the lines, especially the efforts to construct a holistic view and establish a sense of order, is of immense value.

School of Foreign Studies at Nanjing University, where Wang Shouren works, has developed a tradition of compiling foreign literary history. Esteemed works such as *Outline of British and American Literature* and *British and American Historical Outline* by Fan Cunzhong and the four-volume *History of British Literature* by Chen Jia are read and consulted as text books by generations of Chinese scholars. Wang Shouren himself also has contributed significantly to this field, co-editing the four-volume *Literary History of the United States* and serving as the deputy editor of the five-volume *A History of Twentieth-Century Foreign Literature*. Compared with these, *History* stands out from traditional methods of compiling and presenting foreign literary history, which often emphasize listing and showcasing. It surpasses its predecessors by offering broad coverage and a multidimensional perspective. More importantly, it sets up a new model, the assembly style model for literary history writing. The comprehensive and dynamic interpretation *History* offers showcases the distinctive approach of Chinese scholars to foreign literature studies.

Conventionally, historical writing is an endeavor where the present engages with the past, marked by a distinct temporal distance between the historian and the historical subject. Yet, the composition of contemporary history transcends this chronological divide, facilitating a more immediate interaction with its subject. *History* epitomizes this transcendence, not merely by its contemporaneity but by its forward-looking perspective. It is poised to serve as a critical sample for historiography, offering substantial and tangible evidence from this specific epoch. Such a resource is invaluable for future scholars seeking to reinterpret and critically evaluate this segment of history with fresh insights.

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Wang Shouren and the Realist Turn in Contemporary World Literature: Foundational Theory, Postmodern Realism and Glocality

Xu Lei

Abstract: Amid mounting discourse on contemporary literary realism in international academia, Wang Shouren, a leading Chinese scholar of foreign literature stands out as a championing figure in marshalling the recent academic turn to realism in China. In the past few decades, he has made unremitting endeavor towards constructing a systematic body of knowledge regarding literary realism. Weaving his way through voluminous scholarship on realism and histories of the 20th century and contemporary literature, he proposes a set of keywords (truth, mimesis, reality, fiction) and pathways (cognitive, aesthetic, affective, intermedial) to set up the theoretic foundation of realism for more meaningful academic exploration. At the same time, being a historian of postwar foreign literature, he teases out a steady strain of realism running through a variety of postmodern literary texts—first mainly sourced from postwar Anglo-American literature and later from a much wider scope of world literature including contemporary Chinese authors. As a result, Wang Shouren's outlook on realism extends both along the global and local axes towards a glocalized perception of literary realism as a pluralistic form open to proliferation and permutation in the remapping of the world literary system. In particular, his Chinese identity equips him with a distinct Chinese scope of view which consists in Chinese perspective, Chinese stance, Chinese insights and Chinese resources, enabling him to be an outstanding spokesperson for realism's contemporary manifestations in world literature.

Keywords: Wang Shouren; the Realist Turn; foundational theory of literary realism; postmodern realism; glocality

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标题：王守仁与当代世界文学的现实主义转向：文学原理、后现代现实主义与全球地方性

内容摘要：近年来，当代现实主义文学越来越受到国际学术界的关注，多年

致力于建构现实主义知识体系的王守仁则是在这波浪潮中推动中国的外国文学研究界走向现实主义转向的引领者。为从学理上重新评估现实主义在当代文学发展中呈现出的特质与要义，他基于大量现实主义研究以及20世纪与当代文学史，提炼出现实主义作为基本文学原理的四个关键词（现实、摹仿、真实、虚构）与四个维度（认知、审美、情动、跨媒介）。与此同时，王守仁对现实主义的理论层面研究根植于他对战后后现代文学的全面把握与深入解读——从战后英美文学作品逐步拓展到包括当代中国文学在内的更加广阔的世界文学范畴。他的学术视野因而在全球性与地方性两条轴线上不断延伸，汇聚呈现出的“全球地方性”推动现实主义成为重绘世界文学体系过程中一个不断增殖、嬗变的复数概念。尤为重要的是，王守仁的中国学者身份赋予他包含着中国视角、中国立场、中国智慧、中国资源的中国视域，这一独特视域的赋能使他成为现实主义在当代世界文学中多元表达的杰出代言人。

关键词：王守仁；现实主义转向；现实主义文学原理；后现代现实主义；全球地方性

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Amid the burgeoning western discourse on contemporary realism, Wang Shouren, a leading Chinese scholar of English literature and literary realism stands out as a championing figure in marshalling the recent academic turn to realism in China. In a recent interview “The Realist Turn and Other Related Issues” (2020), he envisions the new prospects of contemporary realism in world literature and boldly suggests that “the twenty-first century may be called an era of realism” (12). His anticipation for the emerging realist turn delivers an unambiguous message about the enduring significance of literary realism which has been time again acknowledged by such renowned critics as M. H. Abrams for being “a recurrent mode, in various eras and literary forms, of representing human life and experience in literature” (260) or by Malcolm Bradbury who believes realism to be a term “that is constantly rearguing itself into existence” (“Neorealist Fiction” 1134).

But if literature’s unique project “is nothing other than the fulfillment of its unique promise to represent reality realistically” which perpetually defers a definitive closure as “reality is construed as consisting of a human nature that is historically inflected” (White 88), then literary realism will have to embrace an open, experimental, and even pluralistic position in order to “smuggle more of what the artist think is reality into the work of art” (Shields 1). The position that David Shields prescribed is exactly the one that Wang Shouren has maintained over the years in his steadfast endeavor to unravelling realism’s entanglements with literary history. Keenly aware of realism’s

pluralistic and multifarious expressions especially in contemporary literature, he increasingly finds it of paramount importance to frame the rationale for his research, i.e. a foundational theory for the study of literary realism. In recent years, based upon careful scrutiny of past and current scholarship on literary realism and his on-going studies of contemporary literature, he proposes a set of keywords and pathways to reconceptualize realism for more meaningful academic exploration. At the same time, being a historian of postwar foreign literature, he teases out a steady strain of realism running through a variety of postmodern literary texts—first mainly sourced from postwar Anglo-American literature and later from a much wider scope of world literature including contemporary Chinese authors. As a result, his outlook on realism extends both along the global and local axes towards a globalized perception of literary realism as a pluralistic form open to proliferation and permutation in the remapping of the world literary system. Meanwhile his quintessential identity of a Chinese scholar whose distinctly Chinese stance somehow adds to the ineluctable process of worlding realism beyond the compass of Paris and London axis in Lauren Goodlad's description.[1]

Remapping the Foundational Theory: Key Concepts and Pathways

Based on comprehensive comparison and integration of Chinese and western theories of literary realism, Wang has elicited four key concepts undergirding the conceptualization of literary realism, i.e. reality, mimesis, truth and fiction. With the four key terms as theoretic cornerstones, he suggests four major pathways in his foundational approach to realism, i.e. the cognitive, aesthetic, affective and intermedial, hence breaking new ground in contemporary scholarship of realism.

When commenting on the pressing issues and emergent tendencies in world literature as well as the study of foreign literature in China's academia since the new millennium in 2021, Chen Zhongyi, research fellow at Institute of Foreign Literature of Chinese Academy of Social Science and member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, cited Wang Shouren's research into literary realism as a paragon for a socio-historical outlook on literature which "inherits the traditional socio-historical criticism and opens up to multi-disciplinary studies and various academic schools of thinking," thus "demonstrating a clear orientation towards interdisciplinarity" (Chen 150). What features prominently in his socio-historical literary criticism is his decades' endeavor towards constructing a systematic body of knowledge regarding literary realism. Insisting on the connections between the

1 See Lauren M. E. Goodlad, "Introduction: Worlding Realisms Now," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 2 (2016): 183-201.

word and the world which constitute the very foundation for people's everyday communication despite the heavy blows dealt from structuralism since the linguistic turn in the 1960s, he takes special recourse to Marxist historical materialism which essentially sees literature as an ideology of aesthetics determined likewise by the social existence. Although realism is an illusion wrought by fiction, it simultaneously alludes to reality which "need only be 'interpreted' to discover the reality of the world behind their imaginary representation of that world" (Althusser 162). Therefore, making a departure from structuralist critique of realism, Wang Shouren believes that realism is committed to the real through representation of life and signification of cultural symptoms of an era. At the same time, his socio-historical outlook upholds literature's concrete rootedness in life whose innate subtlety and growing complexity pose challenges to every generation of writers who would have to come up with different methods and tactics to distill the very "lifeness" (Wood 247) out of the life they variously lead. Such inextricable correlations between life and literature hence provide the working logic for literary realism as well as for his outlook on literature and the world.

Wang Shouren's interest in realism dates back to his early exposure to a wide range of realist literature written by Charles Dickens, Honoré de Balzac, Leo Tolstoy—some of the canonical 19th century realists, as well as those by Chinese realist writers as a young man. But to his regret, he finds a sharp incongruity between the popularity that realist literature has enjoyed with the public readership and the scant attention it has received from the academia in general. Such a gap is indubitably circumscribed by the twentieth-century western aesthetics which is fundamentally dominated by modernism and postmodernism, and perhaps more importantly, ideologically fostered by the western ideology during the cold war era which pitted modernism and postmodernism against the USSR's socialist realism. The same oddity can also be found between China's warm reception of western realist literature ever since the beginning of the twentieth century and the cold shoulder that the academic circles have given to it especially since the late 1980s when the intellectual wave of postmodernism was ushered in by Fredric Jameson after his lecture series at Beijing University and Shenzhen University in 1985.[1] In contrast to the mounting attention to postmodernism among Chinese writers and academics, literary realism has often been sidelined, or "treated as a foil or target for criticism" (Liu and Wang, "The Realist Turn" 8). The evident lack of interest in literary realism among Chinese literary scholars has somehow prompted Wang

1 See Zeng Jun, "Forty Years of the Chinese Reception of Western Postmodernism: The Process and its Problems," *Chinese Literary Criticism* 3 (2020): 101.

Shouren to choose the road less travelled by—in order to do literary realism full justice, he has launched an overall reevaluation of it not simply as a literary school or period term as evinced by 19th century European realists and their masterpieces, but more pertinently, as a body of knowledge firmly grounded in contemporary literary expressions and theoretical ramifications.

In "On Constructing the Basic Theory of Literary Realism," an article coauthored with Liu Yang in 2023, he encapsulates his fundamental approach to literary realism into four concepts and four pathways in an attempt to reconfigure the theoretic foundation for the lower-cased "realism" which is disparate from the capitalized "Realism" specifically referring to the literary movement between 1830s and 1890s. In his theoretical framework, *reality* or the way that reality is constituted sets the epistemological cornerstone for literary realism. Derived from the Latin word "realis," the word "reality" points to a double-fold antithetical interpretation as being defined either as "what is autonomous, independent of subjective conditions and the process of knowledge—in short, external to the knowing subject and therefore endowed with an extramental being" (Courtine 884) or what is empirically perceived through the senses and "a priori modes of knowledge" (Kant 157). While giving both classic interpretations their proper due, Wang Shouren and his coauthor replace the conventional clear-cut division of objective and subjective realities with a dynamic understanding of the Real or "the strange shapes of the unwarped primal world" (Zizek 207) through the psychoanalyses and ideological criticism rendered by Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Zizek, Terry Eagleton.

As Shields observes in the same manifesto that "[t]he mimetic function in art hasn't so much declined as mutated" (73), the age-old term *mimesis* transfigured as such is deemed the second pillar concept in Wang Shouren's reconstruction of literary realism. Tracing the development of mimesis along the timeline of western aesthetics from the classical philosophers like Plato, Aristotle to the 20th century seminal figures like Erich Auerbach, Tzvetan Todorov, Paul Ricoeur, Richard Walsh, Lubomír Doležel, he brings to light the mutability of the aesthetic term which has gained a new lease of life through crossing paths with stylistics, semiotics, epistemology, possible world theory and so on. It has to be noted that the term mimesis in his theorization has gone a long way from the myth of one-to-one correspondence between the word and the world and is reinterpreted as a "dynamic and expansive" (Liu and Wang, "On Constructing the Basic Theory of Literary Realism" 17) discursive realm open to reevaluation.

The idea of *truth* or staying true to life is made another cornerstone in Wang Shouren's edifice of literary realism. To pin down the concept of truth in the

evolving history of literary realism from its early manifestation in the 19th century European literature, theoretical travel during China's New Cultural Movement, metamorphoses in the twentieth-century high modernism as well as postmodernism, and current shape in the post-truth era, his article "Realism and Truth" (2023) argues that truth in literature, as a synthesis of empirical perception and rational cognition, should be gauged primarily from the perspective of Marxist materialism which sees literary truth as "a transcendent true knowledge based upon faithful depiction of humanity and real life" (15). It hinges upon a contract of common understanding between the author and the reader regarding the real life. On the one hand, it is upon the author to seek out the "experiences to which the fixed forms do not speak at all, which indeed they do not recognize" (Williams 130); while on the other hand, the real life depicted by the author is capable of resonating with the reader's state of mind.

Although standing seemingly opposite to truth, the notion of *fiction* is treated on par with its antithesis in Wang Shouren's reconceptualization. Diametrically different from falsehood, fiction has been discovered as a literary discourse in concordance with the rise of the English novel in general and the realist novels in particular according to Catherine Gallagher. Although fiction was used "as the diacritical mark of its[the novel's] differentiation" (Gallagher 340), it was nevertheless depended upon to tell "what may happen, —what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity" (Aristotle 35). The era of modernity which sees the burgeoning of the middle class also encourages disbelief, speculation and credit among the same group of people who enjoy the imaginary space or recognizably "frank fictionality" in realist fiction. Therefore the claims to truth and fiction are in fact mutually conducive to enhancing the novel's emotional and textual appeals. In the eyes of Terry Eagleton, few things exemplify the interweaving between utterances and activities than realist fiction for "they act as a kind of phenomenology, reinvesting language with a wealth of experience which mainstream philosophy tends to abstract from it" (159). Fiction, in the last analysis, enriches life experience and constitutes a form of truth.

Building on the four key terms as theoretic cornerstones, Wang Shouren also proposes four major pathways in his foundational approach to realism. The cognitive dimension of realism has been repeatedly confirmed by Karl Marx and his followers since the heyday of the 19th century realism. In the light of their advocacy for realism's extraordinary cognitive value, he picks up a formalist line of critique on two fronts. On the one hand, he focuses on the subtle changes of visual description as the core index to gauge the shifting valences of literary realism as an epistemological discourse

in his article "On the Cognitive Dimension of Literary Realism" (2022). With the advent of photography towards the end of the 19th century which endorses literary realism as "partners in the same cultural project" (Armstrong 26) or practically owes its emergence to "the coming of realism in the visual and literary arts" (Brooks 86), a more creative and dynamic engagement between literature and the world is hence made possible to supersede a conventional reflective relationship which often turns on the age-old metaphor of mirror. On the other hand, he highlights the metonymic/metaphoric axes of language functioning raised by Roman Jakobson (1956) and later developed by Pam Morris (2013) so as to explore the cognitive pattern characterizing realism till the present day.

The aesthetics of realism, the second pathway listed on Wang Shouren's theoretic agenda, has drawn divided opinions in the western academia in the past century. Although Fredric Jameson saw realism essentially split apart between its cognitive and aesthetic statuses, [1] Wang Shouren's co-authored article "On the Aesthetic Dimension of Realism" (2022) presents a rewarding attempt to tackle with the two contradictory claims of realism at once. He returns to the subject of visual description as the ground zero of the aesthetic controversy over realism. By making a departure from Georg Lukács's oft-quoted "Narrate or Describe?" (1936) which codified the aesthetic superiority of narration to description as the royal road for literary realism to follow, the article traces the development of post-Lukács criticism on the subject of description exemplified first by Auerbach's exaltation of everyday life down to minute details in charting the course of western literature's representation of reality, and then through the rise of thing theory amid the recent turn of New Materialism which restores the vitality and agency to things that are otherwise ostracized through Verdinglichtung, fetish or commodity fetish in the milling machine of the capitalist economy. Drawing on more recent scholarship by Peter Brooks (2006) who anchors realism in the description of the phenomenological world through "significant things" (Brooks 211) and Frédéric Neyrat (2020) who teases out "a materialism of the excess" (Neyrat 121), the article sheds a dialectical light on the new prospect of realist aesthetics in and beyond the description of things in the 21st century.

The affective turn spearheaded by Brian Massumi, Eve Sedgwick, Gilles Deleuze and others inspires Wang Shouren and his research team to embrace it as the third pathway to realism. Among the theorists of affect, they pay particular attention to Fredric Jameson who takes the lead in galvanizing academic attention

1 See Fredric Jameson, "Reflections in Conclusion," *Aesthetics and Politics*, edited by Ronald Taylor, London: NLB, 1977, 198.

toward the affect of realism as evinced by his *Antimonies of Realism* (2013). Identifying affect as one of the twin sources of realism, Jameson taps into it as a register for the rise and fall of the 19th century realism. In Wang Shouren's theoretic conception, the ebb and flow of realism in the long river of literary history could be likewise charted from the perspective of affect. Chen Bo, an affiliate with his realism project, boldly extends the affective perspective to draw the contour of realism from the rise of the novel in the 18th century to the present day. In the article she contributed to the special issue of *Studies in Linguistics and Literature* on "Reality and Representation" guest-edited by Wang Shouren and Xu Lei in 2022, Chen conducts a symptomatic reading into the affective manifestation of realism which took its origin in the 18th century, came into fruition in the 19th century and now enjoys proliferation and multiplication in contemporary literature.[1]

Last but not least, Wang Shouren's theorization of literary realism also involves an intermedial dimension in the context of the rapid development of media studies accelerated by interdisciplinary momentum in the recent decades. Indeed, it is almost a platitude for critics to acknowledge the mediality as a substantial property of realism. One recent example might be found with Dorothee Brike and Stella Butter who call attention to realism's "media-specific forms and traditions" (3) in their introduction to *Realisms in Contemporary Culture: Theories, Politics and Medial Configurations* (2013). For them it is necessary to keep in mind that "'realism' in the theatre does not necessarily mean the same as 'realism' in film or in the novel" and yet meanwhile "evolving notions of what should be seen as 'realistic' in different media can be related in interesting ways" (3). However, despite the editors' professed interest in finding out the relations among variously configured realisms through different media, most contributors to their edited book volume merely dwell on the realist expression through a distinct medium such as reality theatre and mockcumentary. In Wang Shouren's reconceptualization of realism, the "interesting ways" for medium-specific realisms to interact or counteract with one another will be brought into sharp focus because "intermediality equips readers with more means to approach the semiotic network of reality through mixing, referring, transcribing, etc." (Liu and Wang, "On Constructing the Basic Theory of Literary Realism" 20). For him, the pathway of intermediality holds the key to the prospects for the study of literary realism which he firmly believes resonates with the present epoch of digital media featuring cyberspace, virtual reality, AI technology, etc..

1 See Chen Bo, "The Affective Dimension of Realism," *Studies in Linguistics and Literature: Reality and Representation*, Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2022, 41.

Traversing Postmodern Realism: Crossing the Realism/Modernism Divide

Although Wang Shouren gets down to systemically reconceptualize literary realism only in recent years, his academic forays into realist literature actually started from the end of the last century when he set out to examine the transformation of 19th century realism in postmodern fiction. His textual analyses point to a new continuity rather than rupture of the realist tradition in post-war western literature, hence crossing the divide between realism and modernism which is otherwise deemed antithetical by many literary historians.

Being an established scholar trained in the study of English literature, Wang Shouren's ambition to outline the development of realism in foreign literary history was even shown in his first articles about realism. In this early research published between 1998 and 2007, his discussion on literary realism was mainly based on his extensive readings into postwar Anglo-American literature sidelined with occasional examples from Italian (e.g. Umberto Eco) and Latin American literature (e.g. García Márquez). With a host of English and American authors ranging from John Fowles, Amy Tan, Toni Morrison, Robert Coover, Don Delillo, Philip Roth, E. L. Doctorow, to William Vollmann in perspective, he intends to override "the death sentence" passed by the modernists on the 19th century European realism by delving into the realist momentum variously and tactfully continued in postmodern literature.

In the article "On Literary Realism in the Twentieth Century" (1998) published in *Foreign Literature Review*, the most influential peer-reviewed academic journal of foreign literary studies in China, Wang Shouren emphasizes realism not as "a period concept" (Wellek 2) applicable only to the 19th century European realism, but rather, as a constant mode of writing which has spanned the development of western literature for centuries. As a general principle underlying creative writing, realism, or the impulse to the go after the real, bears witness to a variety of literary approaches to reality in the twentieth century, i.e., socialist realism in former USSR, "D'un Réaliseme Sans Rivages" (Realism without borders) in France, neo-realism in the US, magic realism in Latin America, etc.. He holds that literary realism ultimately hinges upon the notion of "the real" which can be best illustrated by Louis Althusser's analysis of ideology for all its sophisticated relations to reality. Poised between illusion and allusion, ideology in the last analysis is intended to represent objective reality although the real is never a simplistic reflection of truth but a recognition of the internalized notion of the real as a result of ideological interpellation. Therefore the real that writers hanker after is deeply entrenched in the dominant ideology of the given historical moment and kept in constant conversation

with fictionality and illusion.

In the next article "Realism, Modernism and Postmodernism" (1999) coauthored with He Ning and published one year later, Wang Shouren continues his exploration into the shifting notion of the real as seen through the trajectory of realism, modernism and postmodernism. In 19th century classical European realism, authors like Balzac and Dickens set high store by minute depiction of material life as well as linear and coherent progression of plot in order to entice the reader to take the story for real, whereas for modernists who found traditional realists incapable of capturing life itself, by breaking away from the linearity, stability and closure of plot movement, they redefined the real as the authentic representation of characters' psychologies and inner personalities. As a corrective to modernism, postmodernist literature rose in the late 1950s and early 1960 which "interrogates the real for its realness" and revels in "laying bare the fictionality of the text" (Wang and He 194).

His first two articles on realism were later reprinted in *Xinhua Digest* No. 2, 1999 and No. 4, 2001 respectively and exert wide influence on scholars of foreign literature in China. It has to be noted that what underlies Wang Shouren's impressive erudition in postwar American literature is a major national research project of compiling *Literary History of the United States* (2002; 2019) in four volumes which he undertook with his colleagues from the English Department of Nanjing University and has been highly esteemed as "the largest-scale study into American literary history so far" (Fang 172) and "a landmark work of the scholarship on American literary history since China's Reform and Opening-up" (Shen and Wang 2015). In particular, he was responsible for writing the fourth volume which chronicles the development of American literature from 1945 to 2000. Based on extensive readings into post-war American fiction, he believes that realism has found special relevance to the literary imagination of many prominent American writers since the 1960s when the experimentalists gradually gave way to a new wave of realist writers ranging from Saul Bellow, John Cheever, Bernard Malamud, Jack Kerouac, John Updike, Robert Stone, Doctorow, Coover, DeLillo, etc. Even with leading experimentalists like John Barth and Thomas Pynchon, a stylistic switch from dedicated formal innovations to growing concerns over real life and societal issues are manifest in their novels published in the 1970s.[1] Such a turn is never a simplistic revival of conventional realism, but emerges as a new development which integrates "innovations with traditional perspective on the real and narrative mode" while showing full respect for "complete plots, coherent narratives and readable

1 See Wang Shouren, *Literary History of the United States* Vol. 4, Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Languages and Education Press, 2002, 243.

stories" (244). By taking stock of the rise of neo-realism in contemporary American literature, he also identifies three factors that are contributive to the new trend, i.e. close attention to changing social life, women's growing awareness of their living conditions, and the rise of the American ethnic literature.

Drawing on the survey of neo-realism in contemporary American literature, Wang Shouren and his coauthor Q. S. Tong make a step further to use the new term "postmodern realism" to characterize some of the American novels published in the early 21st century in the article "On American Postmodern Realist Fiction" (2007). This time, he approaches DeLillo, Roth, Doctorow again, but for their more recent works: *Cosmopolis* (2003), *The Plot Against America* (2004), *The March* (2005), etc.. He especially enlarges upon the concept "postmodern realism" proposed by Jose David Saldivar in *The Columbia History of the American Novel* (1991) who took it as a result from Magic Realism's influence on contemporary American literature, and identifies it as a common denominator for the novels under scrutiny. Sharing a serious attitude towards real life and a dedication toward the art of story-telling vested with an instructive import, these novels eschew the language games, absurd episodes and deliberate estrangement from everyday life favored by the former avant-gardists; instead, they "continue the convention of the 19th century realist novel while imbibing the self-consciousness and self-reflexivity upon the process of writing itself as often seen in modernist and avant-garde fiction" (Wang and Tong 50), thus turning over a new leaf in the development of literary realism.

Malcolm Bradbury ascribes such combination in postmodernist fiction to the dialectical nature of the novel as "[it] especially bear[s] on polar distinctions that have long been made—between, on the one hand, the novel's propensity toward realism, social documentation and interrelations with historical events and movements, and on the other hand with its propensity toward form, fictionality, and reflexive self-examination" (*The Novel Today* 8). The oscillation of the novel between the two reputations in the twentieth century is perhaps most drastically shown in the swerve of modernism; but postmodernism in American literature confirms the way that the novel is capable of treading between past realism and naturalism in American fiction and the experimental ground it has broken. Or seen from David Lodge's structuralist point of view, two polar modes of modern writing, i.e. the metaphoric and the metonymic, somehow both find ways into the écriture of the postmodernist fiction (Lodge 270) but operated by subversive strategies like contradiction, permutation, discontinuity, randomness, excess and short circuit in order to work out "a certain balance or symmetry" (296). On account of the de facto role that realism plays in sustaining postmodernism's rule-breaking status, Wang

Shouren's textual approach to the Anglo-American literary histories shows that, instead of taking a stand in the realism-versus-modernism polemics such as the one waged in the mid-twentieth century by Lukács, Bertolt Brecht, Ernest Bloch and others, it is perhaps more rewarding and meaningful for a contemporary literary scholar to examine the mimetic impulse that has actually shaded into the poetics of postmodernism.

Toward a Glocal Vision of Realism: Building the Chinese Scope of View

As a preeminent Chinese scholar of foreign literature, Wang Shouren is always keenly aware of his academic mission to build the world-class discipline of foreign language and literature with Chinese characteristics. To achieve that end, he believes it necessary to broaden one's scholarly scope to a global scale while staying firmly attentive to the local needs and cultural development in China. For him, the study of literary realism presents the best opportunity to arrive at a global vision from the Chinese scope of view, hence enacting the integration of internationalization and localization of literary studies.

In the world republic of letters charted by Pascale Casanova (2007), the dominance of the major literatures over the minor ones is most evident in the hegemony of European realism which see its fruition in "the modern bourgeois realist novel [that] emerged and flourished in a literary world-system dominated by the cultural capitals of London and, preeminently, Paris" (Cleary 258). However, viewed in the context of Franco Moretti's "conjectural" use of Leon Trotsky's theory of combined and uneven development to reflect on "world literature," the conventional mode of literary realism turning on the Paris-London axis is no longer deemed adequate to accommodate its proliferation and permutation in contemporary world literature. For one thing, scholars find that "the great traditions of English and French realism nurtured in the earlier Franco-British world-system had always been in some respects blinkered and even provincial" (259). And for another, "literary realism has contemporary homes well outside of its nineteenth-century British and French strongholds" (Lye 246), which has been increasingly demonstrated by academic efforts to world realism in a post-colonial context or through the prism of comparative literature. Literature from China, Japan, Africa, Latin America are increasingly put on canvas for comparative study, especially as entities of the geographical pathways into contemporary realism. Moreover, to overhaul the traditional method for the study of realism, a variety of perspectives informed by feminism, post-colonialism, intermediality, historiography, etc. are introduced to enliven the discursive arena.

Against such background, it is no mere coincidence that Wang Shouren has

concentrated on literary realism as an overarching topic in his key national research project "*Post-WWII World History and the Development of Foreign Literature*" (2011-2019). As he admitted in an interview that "dedicated to representing social life and the pursuit of the real, realist literature expresses a deep concern about the real world and therefore presents the best entry point to delve into postwar foreign literature" (He and Wang 4), his choice seems most natural which eventually leads to the first volume of the book project *A Study of Post-War Literary Realism* (2019). Divided into ten chapters, the book presents a panoramic view of literary realism across the globe in the postwar era encompassing not only French and Anglo-American literatures, but also German, Russian (USSR), African, Asian, Arabic, Australian and Canadian authors. Just as he wrote in the preface, "postwar realist literature inherits and transcends the time-honored tradition of literary realism while bearing witness to people's changing perception of it" (17). Postwar realist literature takes on a plural form which can be crystalized in multiple shapes as moral realism, self-conscious realism, neo-realism, regional realism, magic realism, socialist realism, subject realism and so on. For him, the flourishing of postwar realism can be attributed to three factors. Firstly, literature enjoys a special claim to reality which warrants the raison d'etre for realism. Following a Marxist line of materialist thinking, he insists on the empirical foundation of literature in everyday life as well the referential function of language in keeping with the objective world.[1] Secondly, realism calls for an active and creative role played by the writer whose agency transforms realist literature into an act to engage with the historical process in the postwar era. Breaking apart from the mechanist mimesis or reflection, contemporary realism accentuates the mediation between the economic base and superstructure as manifest in realist literature. Last but not least, the drive for innovation inherent in realism sets it in a perpetual mode of change, hence "flexible, wide-ranging, unstable, historically variable, and radically open-ended" (Gąsiorek 14). Wang Shouren points out that given its internal mechanism and historical situatedness, "literary realism finds itself in constant challenge to and transcendence over old prevalent literary modes; while sublating outworn conventions, it either reforms traditional means of representation or create new methods in recounting historical reality" (Wang, *A Study* of *Post-War Literary Realism* 23), giving rise to the plurality of postwar realism in world literature.

It has to be specially noted that the compass of Wang Shouren's realism project has covered an unprecedented range of third-world nations and "minor literatures."

1 See Wang Shouren, et al., *Post-WWII World History and the Development of Foreign Literature Volume I: A Study of Post-War Literary Realism*, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2019, 19.

Apart from magic realism in Latin American literature and post-colonial realism in African literature shaped by Négritude as well as Apartheid and post-Apartheid, Asian realist literature garners particular attention, such as Japanese writers of critical realism and Kenzaburo Oe in particular, subject realism of Korean literature, etc.. Arabic literature from north Africa and the Middle East also enters the discussion of the Asian chapter. Surveying Arabic writers like Naguib Mahfouz, Abdel Rahman al-Sharqawi from Egypt, Hanna Mina from Syria, Khaled Barakat from Palestine, the book finds their writings "not confined to the imitation of European realism but rather turns it into an instrument for promoting national identity and revolutionary alliance which can be categorized into a kind of social realism whose theme closely bears on a variety of intense conflicts during the process of decolonization and social life in the Arab world" (550-551).

Obviously in Wang Shouren's research project, realism holds the common key to unpack the kaleidoscopic pattern of post-war world literature and more pragmatically, it sends the rallying call for convening two international symposiums on world literature in 2018 and 2023 respectively. Both conferences draw over one hundred participants from China, Denmark, the US, Singapore, Sweden, Vietnam, Germany, France, Portugal, Croatia, etc., creating an international forum par excellence for rewarding academic communication. Invited keynote speakers include Svend Larsen and Steen Bille Jørgensen, general editors for *Landscapes of Realism*, Ottmar Ette from the University of Potsdam, Philippe Dufour from the University of Tours as well as distinguished guests of honor—Nobel Prize laureates Jean-Marie Le Clezio and Annie Ernaux. To mark the first international conference on postwar realism, an essay collection *Representation and Reproduction: Literary Realisms Across the Boundaries* coedited by Wang Shouren and Xu Lei was published, comprising twenty-three articles on realist literature which stretches all the way across the Pacific Ocean to the European continent, i.e. from China, Japan, the US, Columbia, Chile, to the UK, France, Norway, and Germany.

As his orbit of academic communication on the subject of literary realism broadens internationally, it has never been clearer that being a Chinese scholar, he has to adopt a Chinese position while carrying out foreign literary studies. In a number of essays, he has reiterated the necessity for a Chinese scholar of foreign literature to enhance his/her awareness of "the Chinese scope of view" in order to make academic innovation and serve the socialist course of our country. By "the Chinese scope of view," "it primarily means perspective, the scope that the eye can reach," or in other words, "the Chinese landscape, spectacle, region" (Wang, "On Foreign Literature Research in a New Era" 2); it is all about one's outlook

and horizon. At the same time, the "scope of view" also means the structure of understanding from which one makes sense of the world; "it is about point of view and perspective," including "Chinese perspective, Chinese stance, Chinese insights and Chinese resources" (3). When applied to the study of literary realism, the Chinese scope of view therefore consists in tapping into contemporary Chinese literature to step up the project of worlding realism on the one hand, and maintaining a Chinese scholar of interpretation of the world atlas of literary realism in response to China's practical needs for academic and cultural development.

To build the Chinese scope of view is what has prompted Wang Shouren to investigate into some of the leading contemporary Chinese authors like Yan Lianke in the past few years. In the co-authored article "Mythology, History, and Reality: Mythorealism in Yan Lianke's *The Explosion Chronicles*" published in *Orbis Litterarum* in 2021, he takes Yan Lianke's *Explosion Chronicles* (2013) as a case in point to analyze the writer's loaded concept of "mythorealism" which paradoxically and simultaneously rivets upon the ultimate claim for truth and firm belief in stylistic innovations.[1] Per mythorealism, Yan Lianke seeks to "abandon the superficial logical relations of the real life, pursuing a reality that is 'non-existent,' not visible to the eyes, and covered up by reality" (Yan 181). While acknowledging the play of "the foreign stimuli" transported from Latin America's Magic Realism in Yan's novel, the article incisively reveals the Chinese literary tradition of manifesting reality inherited by the Chinese author to "tell the local story of China to the world" (Liu and Wang 188).

The article on Yan is actually one of the six topical essays in addition to five other pieces written by Chinese and European scholars from the special issue of *Orbis Litterarum* on "Realism in the Post-Truth Era" hosted by Wang Shouren in 2021, representing one of many successful moves for him to cut a Chinese figure in the international academia. In the introduction to the special issue, he outlines the contemporary development of literary realism against the backdrop of a post-truth era when the mass media, cramming audiences with superfluous information from celebrity gossips down to the infinitesimal details of quotidian life, are no longer capable of telling the true story about the world as it is, but participate in playing up "the visceral over the rational, the deceptively simple over the honestly complex" (d'Ancona 4). Literary realism with its confirmed commitment to the revelation of truth, finds it increasingly challenging to separate the real from the fake while boldly perseveres in adhering to truth and the craft of fiction. Theorists

1 See Liu Yang and Wang Shouren, "Mythology, History and Reality: Mythorealism in Yan Lianke's *The Explosion Chronicles*," *Orbis Litterarum* 4 (2021): 181.

across different cultures have come up with different strategies to approach the vortex of reality in the post-truth era, among which the theory of speculative realism postulated first by Quentin Meillasoux and subsequently substantiated by Graham Harman's Object-Oriented-Ontology cast a new light on our way to perceive man-nonhuman connections. For creative writers, the perennial task to tease out the connections between the word and the world is never intended as a question but an imperative to mobilize them under the banner of experimental realism from which springs magical realism, hallucinatory realism, mythorealism, cinematic realism, ghostly realism, etc..

Conclusion

If for Balzac, Champfleury, Edmond Duranty and other 19th century realists, realism is grounded in a truthful representation of the world which entails studies into "contemporary life and manners by observing meticulously and analyzing carefully" (Wellek 4) as a pronounced departure from "faithful imitation of the masterworks of art" (3), then contemporary realism nurtured by "the relative notion of the real" (Wang, *A Study of Post-War Literary Realism* 21), is strategically poised between truth and fiction, illusion and allusion, whose protean state can be fairly compared to "many heads of the hydra" (Furst 1). The pluralistic nature of realism which has unfolded a scintillating array of possibilities for writers from far corners of the world in turn give rise to a growing momentum among scholars of east and west to zoom in on the ramifications of realism in world literature.

In fact, Wang Shouren's scholarship on literary realism has predated the so-called "new realist turn" (276) hailed by critics like Jed Esty and Colleen Lye from the post-colonial perspective about one decade ago. When editing the second volume of *Twentieth-Century Foreign Literary History* (2004) in the beginning of the century, a book project in five volumes led by Wu Yuanmai who sees realism "holding half of the literary sky in the twentieth century" (Wu 6), he already detects a realist trend which is persistently looming large on the literary horizon in Britain. In his eyes, the connotations of the current realist turn do not merely reside in the application of the post-colonial perspective on peripheral literatures, but more importantly they ineluctably call for a set of conceptual approach to facilitate an overall revaluation of realism's foundation in terms of four underpinning keywords and from four major pathways. At the same time, such a realist turn does not remain in theory only, but surfaces as the backbone in his whole-range accounts of the post-war literary history of the world in general and of Anglo-America in particular.

And yet a question still needs to be answered before the closing of the present

article: why has it to be the research on literary realism that can particularly bear out the spirit of glocality, a life goal that Wang Shouren has set for his literary scholarship? Being the hallmark of the pinnacle of European literature in the 19th century, the free travel of realism in the atlas of world literature more than anything else speaks volumes for the current context of globalization and renders it possible for present-day literary scholars to confront and reconfigure the existing world literary system largely shaped by world economic system. On that account, literary realism unquestionably merits his attention over the decades for carrying out dedicated and fruitful dialogues with the international academia. And perhaps more to the point, it is not that he has repeatedly found realism on top of his academic concern at different stages of his scholarly career, but quite the other way around: realism has chosen Wang Shouren, a Chinese scholar of foreign literature whose literary upbringing bears the distinct stamp of realism inherited from Chinese modern literature in the revolutionary era, to be an outstanding spokesperson for its contemporary manifestations and transmutations in world literature.

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The Place of History in Wang Shouren's Writings on Foreign Literature

Jonathan McGovern

Abstract: Over the course of his distinguished career, Wang Shouren has published on a wide range of subjects, from traditional literary criticism to reflections on the place of literary studies in China and the rest of the world. Much of his work has drawn on insights from a range of cognate fields, not least from history. This article discusses the role of history in Wang Shouren's writings, focusing mainly on his English-language works. The article begins by discussing his use of biographical analysis to explicate literary works, before moving on to explore his use of literary genealogy to throw light on nineteenth-century English unacted drama. The article then analyses how Wang Shouren's literary scholarship has drawn on cultural history, and it concludes by explaining how he has applied historical and literary knowledge to provide insights into contemporary social and political issues. Overall, the article provides a glimpse into a richly impressive scholarly career which has contributed a great deal to the study of literature both in China and around the world.

Keywords: Foreign Literature; Chinese humanities; English and History; interdisciplinarity

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标题：历史在王守仁外国文学研究中的地位

内容摘要：王守仁的教学与科研成就斐然，其研究领域广泛，不仅涉及传统的文学批评，还包含了对中国和世界各地文学研究地位的思考。他的著述涵盖诸多主题。他的许多学术成果汲取认知场域各学科的深刻见解，其中特别重要的就是历史。本文基于王守仁的英文论著，论述历史在其文学研究中的作用。首先讨论他采用作家生平传记分析来阐释文学作品，然后探讨文学谱系对于19世纪英国剧诗研究的应用，接着分析他借鉴文化史开展文学研究，最后阐释他利用历史和文学知识，提供对当代社会和政治问题的洞见。总体而言，本文管窥王守仁令人印象深刻的学术生涯，展示他为中国和世界的文学

研究做出的重要贡献。

关键词：外国文学；中国人文学科；英语和历史；跨学科性

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Professor Wang Shouren received his BA degree in English from Nanjing University in 1983 and obtained his MA and PhD degrees from the University of London in 1985 and 1988. Pursuing advanced study at an elite university in the United Kingdom was a very rare path for a Chinese scholar to take at the time.[1] At London, he received rigorous training in traditionalist literary studies under the supervision of John Woolford, a notable expert on Robert Browning. Throughout his subsequent successful and productive career at Nanjing University, Wang Shouren has authored numerous groundbreaking books and articles. Rather than allowing himself to be confined to a narrow specialism, Wang Shouren has had a wide range of scholarly interests, publishing on themes as diverse as British poetry and literary criticism; American realism; Chinese mythorealism; translation studies; literature and cognition; language learning; and much more besides. When he returned to China in 1990, he decided that he could make a greater contribution to the academy and to society by publishing predominantly in Chinese.

Still, Wang Shouren continued to publish in English too, and this article focuses in particular on his English-language writings. In the 1990s, China and the USA were in a honeymoon phase, and the study of American literature in China was rather underdeveloped. Wang Shouren helped to remedy this situation by serving as co-editor for the Chinese-language *Literary History of the United States* in four volumes, published with Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press in 2002. Due to the success of this project, he was then invited to coedit the five-volume work *A History of Twentieth-Century Foreign Literature*, published with Yilin Press in 2004. These monumental works illustrate the ever-broadening perspective of his career as a scholar and teacher. The present article cannot hope to do full justice to the range and depth of Wang Shouren's scholarship. Rather, it focuses on a single thread that can be found woven throughout many of his works, namely the application of historical insights to the study of literature. It is divided into four sections, each of which approaches the main topic from a different angle. The first section discusses Wang Shouren's use of biographical analysis to explicate literary

1 It was noted that he was "the first Chinese Ph.D. in English from the University of London." See David Simpson, "Recent Studies in the Nineteenth Century," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 4 (1990): 732.

works, particularly in his early work on Henry David Thoreau. The second section examines his use of literary genealogy in his pioneering work on nineteenth-century unacted drama. The third section analyses how Wang Shouren's literary scholarship has drawn on insights from cultural history. The fourth and final section explains how Wang Shouren has applied his knowledge of history and literature to provide insights into contemporary social and political issues. Overall, a picture emerges of a richly impressive scholarly career, along with the conviction that Wang Shouren has made exceptional contributions to the study of literature both in China and around the world.

Wang Shouren's Application of Biographical Insights to the Study of Literature

Biography was a form of writing familiar to the ancients, from Ancient Greece and Rome to Han China. In England, the modern conception of biography is largely a product of the eighteenth century, though biographical writing can be traced much further back. One thinks, for example, of the written 'lives' of eminent statesmen such as Thomas More and Cardinal Wolsey that were produced in the sixteenth century. Wang Shouren has long maintained that biography is a form of historical writing that is indispensable to literary scholarship. In an article published in 2021, he argued that biography "has its nature in both history and literature" (Wang, "Pearl S. Buck Talks About Her Parents" 197). The classification of biography as a form of literature is uncontroversial. Similarly, most would agree that a knowledge of biography contributes immeasurably to the study of literature. The relevance of biography to literary criticism has only ever been seriously challenged by the New Critics, who enjoyed their high point of influence in the 1940s, but even the New Critics admitted that biography cannot be wholly dispensed with.[1] However, some scholars have questioned the extent to which biography also has a historical nature. In 1911, Sidney Lee, the eminent editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, claimed that biography should be independent of history.[2] One assumes that Lee meant to say that biography should be independent of political history as it was understood in the early twentieth century. Otherwise, it would be a strange claim. Wang Shouren's practical and common-sense view is surely correct: biography, after all, is nothing more or less than the history of an individual. This fact is nicely encapsulated in the words of the 1911 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which defines biography as "that form of history which is applied, not to races or masses of men, but to an individual" (Gosse 952).

1 See Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*, New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947.

2 See Sidney Lee, *Principles of Biography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911.

The application of biographical knowledge to the study of literature is a thread that is woven throughout Wang Shouren's entire career, and it well illustrates his practical and fact-based approach to literature. Wang Shouren's earliest contributions to literary scholarship already demonstrated a tendency to make productive use of insights drawn from biographical study. In his first published article on American literature in English, "Thoreau and Confucianism," Wang Shouren made a convincing case for the influence of traditional Confucian thought on the writings of Henry David Thoreau. Earlier scholars had downplayed the Chinese influence, emphasizing instead that Thoreau acquired his fondness for asceticism, meditation and isolation from Indian philosophy and religion. As Wang Shouren pointed out, Thoreau's belief in the virtue of simplicity has just as important parallels in the Chinese as in the Indian tradition. For example, "Confucius attaches great importance to the simple mode of life because he believes that one does not live in order to eat but eats in order to live" (Wang, "Thoreau and Confucianism" 38). Thoreau was a reader of the Chinese as well as the Indian classics. He quoted from Chinese sources quite extensively. In *Walden*, there is a story (from the *Daxue*) about King Tang, who founded the Tang Dynasty in around 1600 B.C.: "They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of king Tching-thang to this effect: 'Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again'" (Thoreau 63). Thoreau used this story to illustrate the importance of renewing one's life of simplicity each day—never mind the original meaning of the injunction, that the emperor should renew himself in virtue each day to remain worthy of the Mandate of Heaven.[1] A writer can quote from a work without being really influenced by it. However, Wang Shouren supports his argument with a further observation: Thoreau did not spend his entire life in quiet reflection, but was socially and politically engaged. Even during his famous two-year stay at Walden Pond, he found time to oppose the Mexican—American War (1846-1848). His intervention in the affairs of the world harmonized with the teachings of Confucius, who argued that philosophers ought to engage with human society and concern themselves with human welfare. They should take a full share of the problems and blessings of society, not lock themselves away like anchorites.[2]

Wang Shouren's argument received additional empirical confirmation in 1993, when Hongbo Tan presented his discovery of a notebook in Thoreau's hand containing twenty-three pages of translations from the Confucian Four Books,

1 See Lyman V. Cady, "Thoreau's Quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden," *American Literature* 1 (1961): 20-32.

2 See Wang Shouren, "Thoreau and Confucianism," *Journal of Foreign Languages* 2 (1988): 37-40+67.

translated from French to English by Thoreau himself. This finding showed that Thoreau had been more intellectually engaged with Chinese writings than was previously known.[1] More recently, Mathew A. Foust has revisited the subject of Chinese influence on Thoreau's philosophy, lamenting that this influence is often still downplayed despite much evidence to the contrary.[2] Wang Shouren was certainly right to observe that the virtue of simplicity, so beloved of Thoreau, is fundamental to much traditional Chinese thought. In *The Importance of Living* (1920), the celebrated writer Lin Yutang argued that simplicity was one of the essential qualities, not only of Chinese culture but also of life itself:

> Speaking as a Chinese, I do not think that any civilization can be called complete until it has progressed from sophistication to unsophistication, and made a conscious return to simplicity of thinking and living[...]Surveying Chinese literature, art and philosophy as a whole, it has become quite clear to me that the philosophy of a wise disenchantment and a hearty enjoyment of life is their common message and teaching—the most constant, the most characteristic and most persistent refrain of Chinese thought. (Lin, *Importance of Living* 12)

A better summary of the ideal scholarly attitude can hardly be imagined: knowing, not cynical; otherworldly, and yet part of society; discerning, and yet able to enjoy life's simple pleasures.

In an article published in 2013, Wang Shouren reemphasized the Chinese influence on American transcendentalists like Emerson and Thoreau, as well as on other authors such as Allen Ginsberg. In this article, he observes that cross-cultural encounters go both ways: Chinese culture has influenced Western literature, and Western literature has influenced modern Chinese culture. This is a win-win situation that enriches the culture of the whole world. As he puts it, "[t]he translation, transmission and reception of foreign literature are closely related to China's modernization drive, and to the development of Chinese modern literature and culture" (Wang, "Teaching and Study of American Literature" 272-273). He cites some interesting examples of this phenomenon in practice, including the fact that Lu Xun avowedly drew political and literary inspiration from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As he observes, American literature was not taught in

1 See Tan Hongbo, "Confucius at Walden Pond: Thoreau's Unpublished Confucian Translations," *Studies in the American Renaissance* May (1993): 275-303.

2 See Matthew A. Foust, *Confucianism and American Philosophy*. Albany: SUNY University Press, 2017.

Chinese universities until the 1980s, whereas today it is a compulsory component of English degrees. He notes that, over the course of his career, no less than 20 of his PhD students have chosen to focus on American literature, and he suggests that Chinese students know more about American literature than American students know about Chinese literature—a claim which is almost certainly true, though indeed regrettable.[1] It is ironic, in the era of a supposed "global turn" in literary studies, that most Western students are not afforded the opportunity to study *Outlaws of the Marsh*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, or many other characteristic works of Chinese literature. But to leave that aside for now, we can say that Wang Shouren has set an excellent example in establishing a dialogue between Western and Eastern literature and scholarship, always a productive line of enquiry, and one which has interested him throughout his whole career. More importantly, they demonstrate Wang Shouren's understanding of the value of biographical analysis to the study of literature.

Wang Shouren's Use of Literary Genealogy to Explicate Literary Works

Another form of historical analysis on which literary scholars depend, and of which Wang Shouren has made particularly effective use, is genealogy: that is, tracing the origin and development of ideas, forms and genres. This procedure is stock-in-trade for literary scholars and historians of ideas alike, as Wang Shouren's work makes abundantly clear. A good case study is provided by Wang Shouren's research on unacted drama. His PhD degree was awarded in 1988, and he published an article based on one of his thesis chapters in the same year.[2] In 1990, he published a monograph based on the thesis, entitled *The Theatre of the Mind: A Study of Unacted Drama in Nineteenth-Century England*. This book is a sympathetic study of drama that was never designed to be acted on the stage. Wang Shouren describes this type of genre as "unacted drama" rather than "closet drama"; both terms were in use by the nineteenth century.[3] The first unacted dramas in England were written in the sixteenth century, such as Samuel Daniel's rather dull five-act poem *Cleopatra* (1594). A famous early example is Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (1671). Unacted

1 See Wang Shouren, "Teaching and Study of American Literature in Nanjing," *A Binational Conversation on Bridging Cultures: The Context: Place, People, History*, edited by Jia Leilei, Beijing: Culture and Art Publishing House, 2013, 272-276.

2 See Wang Shouren, "Robert Browning's Problems with Unacted Drama," *Studies in Browning and His Circle* 16 (1988): 52-71.

3 See F. G. Tomlins, *The Relative Value of the Acted and the Unacted Drama: A Lecture*, London: C. Mitchell, 1841; Anon, "Byron's Deformed Transformed," *The British Critic*, New Ser., 22 (1824): 403-414.

drama reached its highest point of success in the nineteenth century, a fact which Wang Shouren attributed to a range of historical causes, including a widespread belief in the overriding importance of dramatic character, as opposed to plot; the decay and vulgarization of the English theatre; and, most importantly, the rise of romantic expressive poetry.[1]

Wang Shouren identified Goethe's *Faust* (of which the first part was finished in 1801 and published in 1808) as the most important model for the English unacted drama of the nineteenth century: "The success of *Faust* as an unacted drama promoted the popularity of the form[...] In many ways, *Faust* was the progenitor of unacted drama" (Wang, *Theatre of the Mind* xiv). He was certainly right to emphasize the importance of Goethe as an exemplar. Goethe himself gave considerable thought to the differences between acted and unacted drama, as illustrated by a comment he made in conversation with friends in 1829: "Things may be very pretty to read, and very pretty to think about; but as soon as they are put upon the stage the effect is quite different, and that which has charmed us in the closet will probably fall flat on the boards" (Eckermann 362). Like many of the English unacted dramas, *Faust* is deliberately lacking in action—except for a few memorable scenes, such as the wine springing from the tables in Auerbach's Cellar—and instead replete with abstruse metaphysics, lyricism and introspection. Philip Hobsbawm, who served as external examiner of the original thesis, commended Wang Shouren for going beyond "source-hunting" and instead establishing the English poets' debts to Goethe in a more sophisticated manner: "These references are not merely source-hunting but a successful attempt to show that Byron's interests and predilections make for the creation of this curious form, the unacted drama." Hobsbawm also commended the author's "down-to-earth" style and his tendency "towards the no-nonsense stand of the empirical philosopher."

Wang Shouren began *Theatre of the Mind* with an analysis of Lord Byron's unacted dramas *Manfred* (1817), *Marino Faliero* (1820) and *The Two Foscari* (1821), paying the most attention to *Manfred*. *Manfred*, a dark play that explores the guilty conscience of an incestuous count, was not staged until 1834, a decade after Byron's death. Wang Shouren challenged the opinion, commonplace in the nineteenth century, that Byron was determined to prevent his plays being staged because he feared popular ridicule, attributing his attitude more plausibly to his aristocratic temperament and also to the decline of the theatre, which made it an unattractive venue for a man with high literary pretentions. This was another

1 See Wang Shouren, *The Theatre of the Mind: A Study of Unacted Drama in Nineteenth-Century England*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990.

successful application of the biographical approach which I outlined in the first section. As Wang Shouren well observed, *Manfred* is deeply indebted to *Faust* in form, style and content. Goethe himself remarked upon this fact in a 1920 article praising *Manfred*: "This singular but highly gifted poet has absorbed my own *Faust* into himself[...] Those motives and ideas which suited his purposes he has made use of, but in his own original way, so that everything seems different" (Goethe, "Byron's *Manfred*" 202). Compare, for instance, the imperiousness with which both Faust and Manfred speak to spirits and devils:

> Damnable villain, go your cursèd ways,
> Nor dare to speak that lovely creature's name. (Goethe, *Faust* 148)
> Ye mock me—but the power which brought ye here
> Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will!(Byron, *Manfred* 14)

Wang Shouren followed up his readings of Byron with detailed analyses of unacted dramas by Percy Bysshe Shelley, Robert Browning, Arthur Hugh Clough, Matthew Arnold, Algernon Charles Swinburne and Thomas Hardy, concluding with an analysis of Hardy's epic drama *The Dynasts* (1903-1908). *The Theatre of the Mind* was praised by reviewers for its comprehensiveness.[1] Its enduring influence is clear from the fact that it is still widely cited today.

Wang Shouren's Analysis of Intersections between Cultural History and Literature

Wang Shouren's scholarship has also expertly drawn on cultural history in order to shed light on literary works. The value of cultural history for students of literature has been recognized by a variety of schools of thought, including new historicism and, in the UK, cultural materialism (new historicism's poor relation). The new historicism originated in the writings of Stephen Greenblatt and his associates in the 1980s and reached quite extraordinary levels of academic influence in the 1990s. Even the inventors of new historicism were bewildered when they looked at university job boards in the USA and saw English departments suddenly clamoring to hire new historicists.[2] The fundamental claim of the new historicism was that literary works

1 See Felicia Hardison Londré, "Virtual Theatre from Diderot to Mallarmé [by] Evelyn Gould; A Mental Theater: Poetic Drama and Consciousness in the Romantic Age [by] Alan Richardson; The Theatre of the Mind: A Study of Unacted Drama in Nineteenth Century England [by] Shou-ren Wang," *Nineteenth Century Theatre* 1 (1993): 50-55.

2 See Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practising New Historicism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

are embedded in the social and cultural contexts of their time—hardly a novel or surprising insight—though this main claim was itself embedded in many thousands of pages of clever theory. Though Wang Shouren would no doubt acknowledge the innovative nature of the new historicism, he never became a new historicist. He shared some interests with the practitioners of this movement, including as a curiosity about the intersections between cultural history and literature, but he retained his fundamentally practical approach to the study of literature, and he never embraced the new historicists' complex (and arguably abstruse) doctrines.

One example of Wang Shouren's independent approach to this subject is an article he published in 1996 in the Chinese journal *Contemporary Foreign Literature*, entitled "Automobiles and American Fiction of the 1950s." In this piece, he began by describing the burgeoning American car industry in the 1950s. Noting that cars are the paramount symbol of industrial society, he argued that car ownership had a great influence on American individualistic culture. Wang Shouren then discussed the role of automobiles in four classic American novels: J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955), Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) and John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (1960). He pointed out that in each of these novels the automobile serves as a symbol of escape or freedom. Whereas Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn whiled away the time by rafting down the Mississippi, Holden Caulfield "drifts around by car" (Wang, "Automobiles and American Fiction" 113); and in *On the Road*, the automobile typifies the desire for escape that characterized the Beat Generation.

The most notable fact about the methodology of this article is that it is based on a practical foundation. Rather than getting drawn into grand-scale theories, Wang Shouren relies on common-sense reasoning, traditional literary analysis and historical facts. For example, in order to provide background information to the close readings of the literary texts, he cites figures to illustrate the increase in car ownership between the 1920s and 1960s, as well as the proliferation of roadbuilding in the 1940s and 1950s. That is not to say that the article is all facts and figures; Wang Shouren still found space for more philosophical reflections. For example, he makes the following observation:

> Traveling by air, rail, and sea is a collective behavior: passengers share the same destination and are classified into different classes. By contrast, as a private behavior, traveling by car enables people to decide their own routes and does not assume the hierarchical pattern. Automobiles give rise to a mobile and dynamic civilization, creating a spatial experience of illusionary absolute

freedom[...] (Wang, "Automobiles and American Fiction" 112)

Here, the author clearly grasps the profound implications of his discussion. Transport is not just a way of getting around: it shapes society itself. Collective transport methods can give rise to collectivist thinking and culture, and the same is true of more individualistic methods of transport. Technology shapes human behavior, just as human behavior shapes technology. This insight helps him to cast new light on the literary texts under discussion. More importantly, the article sets the reader thinking about other examples in which technology can influence social and cultural behavior. Could Wang Shouren's comments on the social implications of transport also be applied to architecture, for example, or media? In summary, this article effectively demonstrates the fruitful interchange that can exist between literary scholarship and cultural history, especially when scholars begin from a practical foundation.

Similarly insightful on this score were Wang Shouren's recent contributions to a 2021 special issue of the journal *Orbis Litterarum*, entitled *Realism in the Post-Truth Era*. This special issue, edited by Wang Shouren and featuring contributions from scholars from around the world, was a culmination of his long-held interest in the subject of realism. He has published many books and articles in Chinese on this subject, including the 2019 edited collection *Representation and Reproduction: Literary Realisms Across the Boundaries*, published by Nanjing University Press. In the introduction to the special issue, he established the theoretical foundations of the volume: in the modern world, "when rational thinking is often substituted by emotions; or when rational thinking does exist, it is easy to succumb to the power of influence or manipulation" (Wang, "Introduction: Realism in the Post-truth Era" 155). He expressed an interest, above all, in exploring how various forms of literary realism have responded—and still are responding—to the challenges of an environment in which truth and reality are contested. This theme has a cultural historical component because it also takes into account the historical conditions in which realist literature flourished in its classic, nineteenth-century form.

Wang Shouren contributed an article to the special issue himself, cowritten with the Nanjing University scholar Liu Yang, entitled "Mythology, History, and Reality: Mythorealism in Yan Lianke's *The Explosion Chronicles*." Born in Henan Province in 1958, Yan Lianke is one of China's foremost living novelists. *The Explosion Chronicles* (2013), longlisted for the Man Booker International Prize in 2017, is a satirical novel which charts the meteoric rise of a town called Explosion in the post-Mao era, which "metastasizes from a modest village into a town, a county, a city,

and finally a provincial-level megalopolis" (Yan, *Explosion Chronicles* vii). Wang Shouren and Liu Yang approach the novel from the perspective of "mythorealism," a critical term invented by Yan Lianke.[1] Tracing the birth of Chinese mythorealism to the 1980s, Yan Lianke has defined the concept as "a creative process that rejects the superficial logical relations that exist in real life to explore a kind of invisible and 'nonexistent' truth—a truth that is obscured by truth itself." Yan Lianke also explains that much Chinese literature has not managed to catch up with "contemporary China's richness, complexity, strangeness, and absurdity" (Yan, *Discovering Fiction* 99, 101), and that mythorealism attempts to do just this. This is all somewhat unclear, but perhaps mythorealism can be summarized as follows: a style of literature which uses myth to see past apparent truth and to grasp the real truth.

In this article, Wang Shouren and Liu Yang clearly explain Yan Lianke's views on the differences between mythorealism and magical realism, which is particularly useful because this would be one of the first questions to occur to readers unfamiliar with mythorealism. They note that many Western literary works can be placed in a continuum in terms of their treatment of causality. Traditional realist novels demonstrate "full causality," where every action is explained through credible antecedent causes, while magical realist novels demonstrate "half-causality," offering a credible narrative with some fantastical elements. Literary works with "zero-causality," such as Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915), commit a "total violation of the law of nature or society in the real world." Mythorealism is an attempt to transcend this continuum altogether, establishing the "inner truth" and "inner causality" of reality (Liu and Wang, "Mythology, History, and Reality" 183). It aims for the "establishment and confirmation of the deep logic of a story's inner causality" (Yan, *Discovering Fiction* 117).

Wang Shouren and Liu Yang conclude that mythorealism's "chief appeal for Chinese intellectuals is its power to reveal and manifest, its call for the transformation of society, and its potential to lead China onto the road of a modern nation" (Liu and Wang, "Mythology, History, and Reality" 188). This comment indicates the authors' belief in the transformative power of literature. They would no doubt cite Milton's words in confirmation of their view: "Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are" (Milton 16).The printed word, in their view, can

1 The word had been used before, but not with precisely the same meaning. For example, Ann Moseley has referred to the "mythorealistic" approach of the 1913 novel *O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather. See Ann Moseley, "Mythic Reality: Structure and Theme in Cather's *O Pioneers!,*" *Under the Sun: Myth and Realism in Western American Literature*, edited by Barbara Howard Meldrum, Troy: Whitston Publishing Company, 1985, 93.

reveal new truths, reshape society and spur cultural development. This is a salutary reminder and one which should always be borne in mind as one of the highest purposes of literary study. This article is a culmination of Wang Shouren's hard-won expertise on realism, as also illustrated, incidentally, in his recent review of a massive, international essay collection on the same subject.[1] Finally, to reemphasize the main point of this section, the 2021 article on mythorealism is a successful continuation of Wang Shouren's long-held interest in the intersection between cultural history and literature.

The Integration of History, Literature and Society in Wang Shouren's Writings

In a similar vein to his interdisciplinary work on realism, Wang Shouren has also applied his knowledge of literature and world history to provide sage insights into contemporary issues. He understands that literary knowledge and taste can have a real-world application; their operation is not confined to the rarefied world of scholarship. In the early 2000s, he served as co-editor of three volumes of essays entitled *Critical Zone: A Forum of Chinese and Western Knowledge*, jointly published by Hong Kong University Press and Nanjing University Press. These volumes take a critical look at the globalization of humanities research. Wang Shouren contributed an article to the first volume entitled "English and the Humanities in China," co-written with Zhao Wenshu, then an associate professor at Nanjing University. Taking a historical approach, authors trace the fortunes of English as a foreign language in China, observing that English teaching was encouraged under the republican Kuomintang government (1912-1949); suppressed in favor of Russian-language teaching from the 1950s to the 1970s; and then restored to a place of importance in the 1970s.[2] The three volumes of *Critical Zone* contain much good common sense in their discussions of the relationship between history, literature and society. For example, the third volume features an interview with the historian Zhu Xueqin, who argues that history must be written and taught from "a historical outlook" (Zhu 182, 184). Western scholars, who for decades have been flailing around for workable historical philosophies, would do well to bear this practical point in mind.

Wang Shouren presented further insights from his study of history and literature

1 See Wang Shouren, "Book Review: *Landscapes of Realism: Rethinking Literary Realism in Comparative Perspectives Volume II: Pathways Through Realism*," *Orbis Litterarum* 2 (2024). Published ahead of print.

2 See Wang Shouren and Zhao Wenshu, "English and the Humanities in China," *Critical Zone: A Forum of Chinese and Western Knowledge* Vol. 1, edited by Q. S. Tong, Wang Shouren and Douglas Kerr, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004, 69-78.

in a 2006 article coauthored with Zhao Wenshu entitled "China's Peaceful Rise: A Cultural Alternative." In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), the American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington presented a vision of China developing into an aggressor and triggering a world war between the USA, Europe, Russia and India on one side and China, Japan and Islamic countries on the other. Wang Shouren and Zhao Wenshu critique this vision, arguing that China has always been a peace-loving country; that Confucianism emphasizes the importance of harmony rather than conflict; and that the belief that a rising China will inevitably become expansionist is based on erroneously applying an unsuitable European model. They quote from *The Battle of China*, an American film from 1944, that describes the Chinese as an inherently peaceful people: "[I]n all their 4,000 years of history, they have never waged a war of conquest. They are that sort of people" (qtd. in Wang and Zhao, "China's Peaceful Rise" 121). Anticipating the objection that Communist theory stresses the necessity of conflict, the authors point out that Confucianism continues to exert an influence in China despite having been formerly suppressed, and that it now enjoys official endorsement. They conclude that "China may provide a viable alternative to the conflict-dominated pattern, contributing positively to the diversity of the multicultural world" (Wang and Zhao, "China's Peaceful Rise" 127).

Wang Shouren developed some of these themes further in an article entitled "Foreign Literature and the Shaping of Modern Values in Chinese Society". In this article, he argued that foreign literature has played different roles in modern China at various stages of her history. In late Qing and Republican China, foreign literature was translated into Chinese in an attempt to "waken the slumbering Chinese, and to mobilize them to resist foreign encroachment on the Chinese soil," with scholars of the May Fourth Movement actively promoting the social function of foreign literature and advocating "science, democracy and liberty with unprecedented passion" (Wang, "Foreign Literature and the Shaping of Modern Values" 238-239). Following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Western literature was supplanted by Russian literature, of which over 82 million copies were printed in China between 1949 to 1958.[1] When the decade-long Cultural Revolution came to an end in 1976, China began to open up to the rest of the world, and Chinese readers began to devour Western literary works, from Agatha Christie to high modernist novels. In the twenty-first century, foreign literature has somewhat declined in importance, due to competition from television, film and other media; and also to

1 See Wang Shouren, "Foreign Literature and the Shaping of Modern Values in the Chinese Society," *Nanda Review* 1 (2009): 238-250.

a new national pride and consciousness in China's native cultural traditions.[1] The most striking fact that emerges from this historical narrative is that the reception of foreign literature in China has long been collectivist and influenced from the top down by national politics. Today, perhaps, readers may choose their books based on personal whims and preferences.

Conclusion

Throughout his distinguished career, Wang Shouren has always strived to foster excellence in the study of foreign literature in China. Working both individually and in collaboration, he has been prolific in publishing on a wide range of themes in Anglophone literature, culture and society. The present article has examined just one aspect of his scholarly oeuvre, namely the role that historical study has played in illuminating the study of foreign literature. Wang Shouren's work has always been productively interdisciplinary, which is evident even in his earliest writings on British and American literature. More recently, his work on mythorealism has demonstrated that he remains at the forefront of literary research, helping to promote and explain cutting-edge developments in literature and scholarship. On a personal note, he showed a great deal of kindness to me while I was working at Nanjing University. It is a fitting honor that his work and career should form the subject of this special issue.

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1 See Wang Shouren, "Foreign Literature and the Shaping of Modern Values in the Chinese Society," *Nanda Review* 1 (2009): 241-248.

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Wang Shouren's Cross-cultural Vision and Technology-Enhanced Teaching of Foreign Literature in the Chinese Context

Song Yanfang

Abstract: In contemporary China, Wang Shouren has been widely acclaimed not only as a leading scholar in the field of foreign literature studies, but also a national outstanding professor of English and foreign literature. His pedagogical ideas of teaching foreign literature in the Chinese context are all-encompassing and up-to-date, reflecting an open-minded call for diversity, strong local awareness, and broad comparative vision. Furthermore, his teaching practice exhibits wholehearted embrace of cutting-edge information technology, resulting in significantly enhanced effectiveness. This paper contends that Wang Shouren has consistently adhered to his pedagogical ideas and teaching methods: understanding both our own culture and the world at large; disseminating Chinese and foreign cultures; cultivating well-rounded individuals with cross-cultural awareness through literary exploration. Wang Shouren's such teaching ideas have been widely recognized and resonated in the field of foreign literature teaching. His teaching practices have also achieved remarkable results, worthy of learning and reference by future educators.

Keywords: Wang Shouren; teaching of foreign literature; cross-cultural vision; technology empowerment; Chinese context

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标题：王守仁中国语境下外国文学教学中的跨文化视野与技术赋能实践

内容摘要：王守仁是外国文学研究领域的著名学者、国家级教学名师。他在中国语境下的外国文学教学思想兼容并蓄、与时俱进，体现出开放的多元诉求、强烈的本土意识和宽广的比较视野；他的教学实践则充分利用信息技术，大大提高了教学效果。王守仁的教学思想和实践一以贯之，即通过文学认识世界、了解自己、传播中外文化，培养具有跨文化意识的复合型人才。他的教学思想在外国文学教学领域得到广泛认可和共鸣，教学实践成绩斐然，值得后来者学习和借鉴。

关键词：王守仁；外国文学教学；跨文化视野；技术赋能；中国语境

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As a well-known professor, scholar and literary critic, Wang Shouren has dedicated his life to the teaching of foreign literature for over 35 years. His unique pedagogical ideas, critical insight and teaching practice are worthy of scrutiny. During his many years of teaching and research, he has not only published several monographs and numerous papers on literary works, but also compiled many textbooks, including *British and American Fiction* (1994)—which was later revised into *British and American Short Stories* (2012), *History of 20th-Century English Literature* (2006), *Selected Readings of British and American Literature and Culture* (2017) and *Selected Readings in British Literature* (2001; 2023). These textbooks, with their acclaimed high-quality and authority, have won the favor of teachers and students all over China. In addition, Wang Shouren has also played a significant role in the compilation of such authoritative literary history books as *A History of Twentieth-Century Foreign Literature* (2004) and *History of Foreign Literature* (2015; 2018), providing prefaces, overviews, or relevant chapters to them. Based on these textbooks and his teaching practice, this paper is devoted to the demonstration and analysis of Wang Shouren's contribution to the teaching of foreign literature in the Chinese context, with highlights on his call for diversity in introducing and teaching foreign literature in China, his comparative and cross-cultural vision in curriculum design, and his embrace of digital technology in teaching foreign literature.

Championing Diversity in the Introduction and Teaching of Foreign Literature

One of the primary objectives of university education is to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in society and navigate the global landscape. Foreign literature is one of the subjects provided by most universities in China to achieve this. Wang Shouren, a distinguished university professor and literary scholar, has formulated his own guiding principles for introducing and teaching foreign literature, which can be succinctly summarized as follows: Firstly, a multifaceted and all-encompassing approach is necessary for the introduction and instruction of foreign literature to effectively present its diverse spectrum. Secondly, heightened attention should be directed towards the meticulous analysis of complete texts to facilitate students' holistic comprehension. Thirdly, the integration of

contemporary materials within literature textbooks and pedagogical strategies is indispensable to ensure students remain abreast of the latest developments in foreign literary discourse.

The first principle is demonstrated by Wang Shouren's call for diversity on selecting materials for study and teaching. In his opinion, literature is not only about language learning and appreciation of beauty, but also about knowledge and culture. To put it in other words, literature performs an epistemological function: to know the world, which is always in flux. The changes of the world, the collision and interactions between nations, peoples and cultures have always been one of the hot topics in the field of foreign literature creation, study, and teaching. In the "Overview" at the beginning of Chapter 10 in *History of Foreign Literature* (Vol. 2), he puts his ideas into such words:

> In the second half of the 20th century, world politics, economy and culture underwent tremendous and profound changes, mankind's knowledge and understanding of natural and social laws reached an unprecedented depth and breadth, and scientific and technological achievements and material wealth created exceeded any previous era. With the development of economic globalization and frequent exchanges between various regions and nationalities, the literature of the East and the West has strengthened their collision, exchange, and integration, and mutual penetration/absorption have become increasingly obvious. During this period, all kinds of literature from different corners of the world are blooming like flowers, competing for color and fragrance, and no literary genre could dominate the literary scene of a certain period, country, or region as before, and world literature showed vigorous vitality for diversified development. (Nie 158)

These comments from a commanding height reveals the tenet for Wang Shouren's wide-ranging selection of works from different countries in his study and teaching of foreign literature for one thing, and for another, airs his ideas about one of the goals for Foreign Literature courses: to know the world.

Nobel laureate Toni Morrison expresses similar ideas in one of her articles, saying that "the practice of great art is the practice of knowledge unseduced by its own beauty. We should understand it as rational because whatever its origin, masque, or style, it is memory, it is perception, it is imagination, and it is knowledge" (717). As a Toni Morrison expert, Wang Shouren agrees with this idea of seeing art/literature as a source of knowing the world. Literature from different

nations bears with it specific history, individual imagination, collective perception, and particular culture. Therefore, in his career of studying and teaching foreign literature, Wang Shouren is careful not to limit the materials to the West, but instead incorporate literatures from the non-Western countries.

This concern with comprehensiveness and diversity in selecting teaching materials has manifested itself quite early in Wang Shouren's career. He has served as president of "The National Association for the Study of Literature in English," which is a branch of China Association of Foreign Literature, between 2011 and 2015. During this period, Wang pointed out that in China, scholars paid too much attention to Anglo-American literature while literature from other countries had been relatively neglected. He called on scholars and teachers to spend more time and energy on the introduction and teaching of literature from such countries as Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India and South Africa. He argued: "Within the framework of today's English-language literature, the literature of major English-speaking countries other than the United Kingdom and the United States has a relationship of inheritance and transcendence with English and American literature, and has become a national literature with distinctive characteristics, maturity and strength" ("Calling for Attention to English-Language Literature Outside the UK and the USA" 5). In the "Overview" in *History of Foreign Literature*, Wang Shouren puts this idea into practice by introducing not only literature from the UK and the USA, but also that from France, Russia, Germany, Latin-America and many other Eastern and Northern European countries, as well as literature from Canada, Australia, India, Arab and Africa. He believes that literature from all these countries "blends in parallel development, learns from each other, promotes each other, is intertwined with each other, and develops together" (Nie 161). The study of literature from various countries can contribute to the advancement and scholarly exploration of Chinese literature.

This emphasis on diversity in introducing foreign literature can also be seen in the books compiled by Wang Shouren and his colleagues. For instance, as one of the chief editors of *A History of Twentieth-Century Foreign Literature Vol.* 2*: Foreign Literature from 1914 to 1929*, when introducing literature in the modernist period, Wang tries to cover literature not only from such often-mentioned countries like Russia, Britain, America, France and Germany, but also from central and eastern European countries, Latin America, Japan, Indian and Arabian countries. In the overview of this book, he also draws the readers' attention to the diverse development of literature in different countries in the modernist period and provides brief introduction to modernist literature in countries that have been neglected in

previous books of literary history of foreign literature.[1] Moreover, in *Post-WWII World History and the Development of Foreign Literature*, Wang Shouren invited experts on literature of various countries to contribute to this four-volume study, which features in inclusiveness and diversity in its coverage of foreign literature.

Taking diversity as the guiding principle in introducing foreign literature, Wang Shouren also encourages students to probe into different cultures behind the literary works in his teaching practice. This idea is also shared by his students and colleagues. In the "Preface" to *Selected Readings of British and American Literature and Culture*, his co-editor He Ning says, "In today's ever-changing society, the demands placed on higher education extend beyond imparting specialized knowledge and encompass fostering a robust cultural foundation for university students, thereby nurturing future leaders who will contribute significantly to their nations" (He and Wang 1). Therefore, in this book, there are not only selected passages from classic and contemporary literary texts, but also such information as the cultural background and critical comment on cultural elements embodied in these texts. For instance, in Chapter 15 titled "Multiculture: Toni Morrison," an introduction to the "cultural background" is provided prior to the selected passages from *Beloved*. This introduction elucidates the concept of "multiculturalism" and its impact on American society, as evidenced by the increasing attention given to Afro-American literature. Moreover, the questions for discussion at the end of this chapter are strategically designed to stimulate readers' contemplation regarding both the extent of multiculturalism's contribution to minority self-expression and its influence on mainstream culture. Such thought-provoking inquiries effectively prompt readers to delve into the cultural implications inherent in literature.

While exploring culture and knowing the world through literature is undoubtedly valuable, it should be noted that this is not the sole purpose or ultimate objective of studying literature. In an article discussing the essential components of English and American literature courses, Wang Shouren also underscores the ethical dimension, the connection to China, and the pursuit of artistic/aesthetic elements in conducting such courses.[2] Such concern with the ethical and aesthetic function of literature is consistent with many classic ideas about university education. For example, the ethical dimension is emphasized in the Chinese classic *The Great Learning* (*Daxue*): "What the Great Learning teaches us, is—to illustrate illustrious

1 See Wu Yuanmai et al., *A History of Twentieth-Century Foreign Literature Volume II: Foreign Literature from 1914 to 1929*. Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2004, 5-8.

2 See Wang Shouren, "What Kind of British and American Literature Courses Do We Need," *2012 Symposium on the Teaching of Literature to Undergraduate English Majors*, edited by Guo Yingjian, Beijing: China Minzu University Press, 2014, 3-7.

virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence" (Legge 356). Wang Shouren innovatively uses the idea "to illustrate illustrious virtue" in one of his articles about English teaching and divided the "virtue" into three dimensions: great virtue, public virtue, and private virtue[1], which shows that he strongly supports the idea that one of the essential goals of university education is to cultivate one's virtue. In terms of the aesthetic dimension, while he concurs with Toni Morrison regarding the significance of literature's epistemological aspect, he firmly asserts that beauty is an indispensable nature of art. He once remarked on Toni Morrison and her works by stating, "Fiction, like all art, embodies ideological content and beauty at the same time" (Wang, "Toni Morrison" 215). This means, knowledge, ideology, ethical concern, and aesthetic quality are important elements of great literature and the criteria for the selection of works in teaching and research.

While striving for diversity in the introduction of foreign literature, Wang Shouren asserts that greater emphasis should be placed on analyzing complete literary texts rather than solely focusing on their chronological development within history. In an article addressing literature courses in higher education, he expresses dissatisfaction with the conventional approach of outlining the historical progression of foreign literature without providing students with any complete works. He believes that encouraging students to read and appreciate original literary pieces and directly engage with the text is an effective means to foster logical reasoning skills and independent thinking abilities.[2] The emphasis on the organic unity of literary works is evident in numerous textbooks compiled by him. In the preface to *British and American Fiction*, Wang Shouren and co-editor Zhao Yu stated that they deviated from the traditional approach of selecting fragmented passages for students to read, opting instead for complete works (primarily short stories) by renowned British and American novelists, "the objective of which was to enhance the teaching quality of English and American literature courses while fostering students' ability to analyze and comprehend texts as cohesive entities" (Wang and Zhao "Preface"). Such a stress on the organic whole of literary texts is evident not only in the textbooks he compiles, but also in his own teaching practice. While it may not come as a surprise for him to select complete stories in *British and American Short Stories* (2012), it is this consideration of providing students with a comprehensive understanding of specific literary texts that has motivated him to include as many

1 See Wang Shouren, "On 'Illuminating Bright Virtue' to Foreign Language Courses: With Views on Compiling *New Era Mingde College English*," *Foreign Languages in China* 2 (2021): 4-9.

2 See Wang Shouren, "From Literary History to Literary Works: On the Design of Literature Courses for Senior Students of English Majors," *Shandong Foreign Language Teaching* 2 (1991): 18.

complete poems and short stories as possible in his *Selected Readings in British Literature* (2001; 2023), which, as reviewed by Chen Yong, features in "wholeness, typicality, comparativeness, and contemporariness" (Chen 100).

The final point in Wang Shouren's introduction of foreign literature to China is the emphasis on updated materials, which is manifested in his choice of materials for literature courses and in his research. Wang Shouren is a professor and researcher who has been keeping current in the field of literary studies. Alongside his profound appreciation for classical literature, he has conducted extensive research on numerous contemporary writers and their works. This inclination is showcased in his study of Toni Morrison. Furthermore, when selecting teaching materials, he meticulously chooses updated texts from contemporary authors, exemplified by *Selected Readings in British Literature*. Notably, this textbook has undergone five editions to date, with each edition being refined based on feedback from educators and students who have utilized it; certain texts have been replaced or supplemented with newly published ones accordingly. In its fifth edition, the final chapter of this textbook now features an excerpt from *The Buried Giant* (2015), authored by Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro.

Wang Shouren has gone to great lengths to provide the best materials and up-to-date foreign literature for Chinese students to learn and study. The three points mentioned here—the call for diversity in selecting materials, the emphasis on the organic whole of the works and the timely update of selected texts—might not be able to illustrate all his ideas about learning and teaching foreign literature, but they are valuable advice for teachers and students of foreign literature in China.

Taking a Comparative and Cross-cultural Perspective in Curriculum Design

Wang Shouren puts a lot of emphasis on knowing the world and learning about different cultures through literature. At the same time, he stresses the necessity for Chinese educators and researchers to cultivate a sense of local consciousness, gain self-awareness, and effectively communicate stories of China to the global community. This is evident in his comparative and cross-cultural perspective in curriculum design.

To emphasize the significance of cultural communication between different nations, he takes a comparative and cross-cultural perspective when selecting teaching/study materials. This is in line with his initial plans of introducing and teaching foreign literature. The comparative and cross-cultural perspective is shown in the following aspects: while being committed to diversity in introducing and teaching foreign literature, he tries to make a connection between different

nations and their literary works; while introducing and teaching foreign literature, he stresses the Chinese perspective, which is unique among the study and teaching of foreign literature in the global context; while illustrating the influence of foreign literature on Chinese literature and culture, he also gives prominence to how Chinese literature and culture have influenced and enriched foreign literature creation and appreciation.

While striving for diversity in selecting teaching materials, Wang Shouren also tries to make connections between different nations in the development of their literature. For instance, in the "Overview" to the second volume of *A History of Twentieth-Century Foreign Literature*, he compares a variety of literary works from different nations in the modernist period. Through his research, he reveals that while modernist literature in Russia, America, Britain, Germany, and Austria flourished, literature in Italy, due to World War II and the Fascist despotism, did not reach such a high level of development and had to catch up later.[1] Also, while modernist movement overwhelms the European countries and America, it "had little gain in the Indian subcontinent, where poetry was influenced by Tagore and Romanticism still dominated" (Wu 7). Through this comparative analysis of literature from different nations, Wang Shouren and his colleagues offer a panoramic overview of global literary works, thereby providing Chinese students with an invaluable opportunity to broaden their horizon.

The comparison and contrast between foreign literature from different countries is only part of the story in Wang Shouren's study and teaching of foreign literature. His aspiration lies in narrating the Chinese perspective on foreign literature, thereby amplifying the voice of China within the realm of global literary discourse. He has been airing such opinions for many years. In a paper published in *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*, he says, "The core of the localization of China's English teaching reform and research is based on China's national conditions, that is, it is necessary to fully consider China's cultural and historical traditions, economic development, social structure and natural environment" ("Individualized English Language Teaching (ELT) in the Context of Contemporary China: Notions and Practices" 1). In another paper published in 2019, he also provides some suggestions for the educators on how to cultivate Chinese students' intercultural competences, like integrating Chinese and foreign cultures and help students to enhance their awareness of cultural identity, learning to tell our own stories, promoting research-based teaching, and making use of information technology to

1 See Wu Yuanmai et al., *A History of Twentieth-Century Foreign Literature Volume II: Foreign Literature from 1914 to 1929*, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2004, 5.

facilitate international collaboration, etc.[1]

With these persistent ideas and efforts, he emphasizes the localization of the study/teaching of foreign literature and the unique contributions Chinese students and scholars can make in this field, which has always been his major concern. The questions he puts forward are: how can Chinese scholars contribute to the study and teaching of foreign literature? What is unique in the Chinese perspective while reading, teaching, and studying foreign literature?

This keen concern about localization of the study and teaching of foreign literature can be seen through various books and academic papers by Wang Shouren. However, it is most evident in the 5th edition of *Selected Reading in British Literature*, wherein there's a newly added "Comparative Perspective" in each chapter. As to the purpose of this design, Wang Shouren explains:

> Through providing such teaching steps as "comparative perspective" and instructing students to learn Marx and Engels' expositions on English literature, this design guides students to adhere to the correct political position, interpret literature from within the culture, so that they will deeply understand the British people and British historical society that created British literature, and to observe the similarities and differences between British literature, Chinese literature and other European literature from the perspective of world literature, to think about and analyze the correlation and influence between them, and to read the text critically. This reflects the value of professional teaching materials in the process of education. ("Preface" xviii-xix)

For this purpose, questions for discussion have been provided at the end of each chapter, instructing students to make a comparison and contrast between British literature and Chinese literature of the same historical period. For instance, while introducing Shakespeare and his works, a question is designed to ask students to compare Shakespeare with Tang Xianzu, the well-known Chinese playwright in Ming Dynasty; while providing selected passages from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, a questions is given to compare and contrast between this play and *Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai*, one of the four great love stories in China, which urges students to "reflect on the humanistic spirit and tragic views shaped by different cultural traditions contained in these two tragic stories" (25). These well-designed questions will no doubt simulate students to think about similarities and differences

1 See Wang Shouren, "On Cultivating Foreign Language Students' Intercultural Competencies," *Journal of Northwestern Polytechnical University (Social Science Edition)* 4 (2019): 48.

between literature across culture and to make a connection between different literary works or cultures.

This comparative analysis can encompass temporal and spatial dimensions, exemplified by the selected excerpt from Thomas Hardy's *Tess of D'Urbervilles* and accompanying discussion questions, followed by an essay question that explores a comparative perspective:

> Hardy's novels are mostly set in the Wessex countryside, portraying the lives of peasants amidst the encroachment of capitalism while conveying a sense of pessimistic fatalism. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* serves as an exemplary work that encapsulates this notion. Shen Congwen's *Biancheng (The Border Town)* is set against the rustic backdrop of Xiangxi's countryside and, while depicting a simple existence, it unveils the idea that individuals there are bereft of agency over their own destinies. Please compare the view of fate expressed in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Biancheng* and the regional color of the novels. (203)

This essay question is designed to prompt students to establish a cultural connection between 19th century Britain and early 20th century China, highlighting the multidimensional nature of literature encompassing stories, history, culture, humanity, and fate. To address this inquiry effectively, students are required not only to engage with *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Biancheng* but also conduct thorough research on their respective historical and cultural contexts in order to discern Hardy's and Shen's perspectives on human destiny as influenced by local culture.

Furthermore, this comparative analysis extends beyond the comparison between British and Chinese literature/culture to encompass various national literatures/cultures. For instance, in Unit 9, after introducing Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and her novel *Frankenstein*, students are prompted with an essay question that instructs them to compare *Frankenstein* with Kazuo Ishiguro's science fiction works, particularly *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*. These three novels all explore the interplay between science and ethics. The essay question urges students to critically examine "the manifold impacts of scientific advancements on human existence and the ethical principles governing their application" (134). This thought-provoking question is highly relevant to contemporary life.

Wang Shouren's such meticulous attention to culture and thorough comparison and contrast across different periods and regions greatly facilitates students in establishing connections between literary works, a crucial attribute for an English major. In his research, Wang Shouren also underscores the significance of situating

literary works within their historical and cultural contexts:

> Post-war foreign literature exhibits distinct artistic characteristics and era-specific styles compared to previous historical periods, and the most effective approach to elucidate the fundamental trends and features of post-war foreign literature is by situating it within its historical and cultural context for thorough investigation and analysis, thereby comprehending the literary development in the backdrop of post-war history. (*Realist, Postmodernist Literature in the Course of Postwar History* 2)

This culture-oriented teaching and research of foreign literature has gained widespread recognition for its benefits to students and scholars, as evidenced by numerous publications in reputable Chinese journals.

Wang Shouren's article, titled "American Literature Teaching and Research in Nanjing," provides valuable insights into his local perspective and deep pride for the profound influence of Chinese literature and culture. As a distinguished scholar and educator primarily based in Nanjing, he effectively establishes the intricate connection between Nanjing and American literature by presenting compelling examples that highlight the vibrant cultural exchange between scholars from Nanjing and prominent figures in American literary circles. For instance, he emphasizes how early translations of renowned American writers such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Washington Irving, and Harriet Beecher Stowe demonstrate China's longstanding openness to embracing American literature. Furthermore, Wang Shouren highlights the warm reception, commemoration, and scholarly exploration of Pearl S. Buck, a Nobel Prize-winning American writer, in Nanjing. These instances underscore the existence of dedicated institutions and communities comprising scholars, teachers, and students who eagerly engage with the study of American literature. In this process, the Chinese elements in American literature have garnered significant attention from researchers. Wang Shouren enumerates several esteemed writers, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, who have been profoundly influenced by Chinese literature and culture. Additionally, he cites Allen Ginsberg as a contemporary exemplar of Chinese influence on American literature. Notably, Ginsberg's visit to China in 1984 played a pivotal role in inspiring his creation of a series of poems centered around China. His "Reading Bai Juyi" series are charming and unique, which "provide a way for American readers to learn about China" ("Teaching and Study of American Literature in Nanjing" 271).

As a Chinese scholar and teacher, Wang Shouren consciously stresses his Chinese position in studying and teaching foreign literature, which features in the comparative and intercultural vision he has formulated in his years of research and teaching. This vision not only benefits Chinese students, but also provides a good reference for international students of foreign literature. The students are asked to consider who they are and what unique ideas they can offer as citizens of their nation.

Embracing Digital Technology in Teaching Practice

In addition to his call for diversity and his comparative/intercultural perspective in introducing/teaching foreign literature, Wang Shouren has consistently embraced the use of technology, including computers, the internet, digital devices, to achieve desired effects. Well before the widespread adoption of digital resources, he incorporated online information into the textbooks he compiled as evidenced by the inclusion of links and websites at the end of each unit in *British and American Short Stories* published in 2012. Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequent surge in popularity of online courses, Wang Shouren developed an online course titled "British Fiction" which was successfully launched on China University MOOC platform. Taken together, his proactive involvement in technology-enhanced teaching practices is characterized by foresight, quality implementation, positive impacts, and ongoing improvement.

As is widely recognized, the Covid-19 pandemic expedited the adoption of digital technology on a global scale. In the realm of education, it posed significant challenges for teachers in terms of instruction delivery, yet it also presented crucial opportunities that urged them to swiftly adapt to online teaching. As Tenhunen says, "Online-teaching opened up as a smart solution for future education. In the field of education, a digital leap had been made in a short notice which has encouraged universities in the development of creative and innovative solutions" (85). According to Kuswardi and Sanny, "the development of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) from year to year in the world is increasing so that it is true that the need for learning is real, followed by increasingly rapid technological developments" (Kuswardi and Sanny 2451) as displayed in a figure (nearly zero in 2021 and about 20 thousand online courses in 2022) on Class Central, a website providing the latest news and trends in online education. Fischer and his team members, quoting from previous studies, also lists several benefits of online courses: online courses present opportunities for "differentiated instruction" so that the students are able to go at their own pace; they are more flexible and allow universities "greater capacity to accommodate non-

traditional students" who might need "additional preparatory work" or flexibility of the schedule; they are cost-effective and time-saving for both universities and students (Fischer et al. 2). Jiang Chengyong also points out the various advantages of online courses, believing that their outstanding characteristics are "concentration, high quality, mobility, convenience, openness and popularity" (267). These studies all show that online courses have gained great popularity in recent years.

Wang Shouren's foresight is evident in his early recognition of the educational opportunities brought by digital technology, as demonstrated by his launch of the online course "British Fiction" in 2018, even before the outbreak of the pandemic and the surge in popularity of online courses in education. This indicates that Wang Shouren's preparation for this course predates the European Committee's plan for digitizing education, which "prioritized the aim of making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning to improve education" (Beardsley et al. 1456).

Therefore, when the Covid-19 outbreak occurred in China in 2019, he encouraged educators to embrace the challenge and seize the opportunities with courage, passion, and innovation. Consequently, online courses began to thrive in China from that year onwards. According to his perspective, these high-quality online educational resources "can effectively supplement the existing curriculum by offering students additional options for enrolling in courses with good content taught by competent instructors" ("Individualized English Language Teaching (ELT) in the Context of Contemporary China: Notions and Practices" 4). He has successfully implemented this concept throughout his teaching career.

As a pioneer in China's development and implementation of the MOOC "British Fiction," Wang Shouren demonstrates meticulousness in restructuring the content and designing online learning, ensuring the course's exceptional quality. With extensive experience, and renown as a professor, Wang Shouren is joined by two outstanding researchers and educators, He Ning and Xu Lei. The design concept of "British Fiction" revolves around learner-centeredness, aiming to popularize English literature knowledge among the public while enhancing their overall educational attainment. Social learners often lack supervision, possess limited understanding of English literature, and engage in unstructured learning approaches. "British Fiction" strives to integrate fragmented knowledge into a cohesive framework, systematically reconstructing it to emphasize its linear system within fragments. This approach constitutes the fundamental elements for reading and appreciating fiction while serving as an exemplary model for both English majors and non-professional readers. Also, the course is designed "not only to help students understand the characteristics of British fiction and its development, but also to cultivate their skills

in analyzing and appreciating English literature, while deepening their understanding of British history, culture, and language" ("British Fiction" at icourse163. org). This implies that the course goes beyond mere introduction of British fiction writers and stories, instead emphasizing the importance of delving deeper into the relevant texts and gaining a comprehensive understanding of their historical and cultural context. Furthermore, in comparison to similar MOOCs led by foreign instructors, "British Fiction" possesses a notable advantage: it actively promotes local and cross-cultural awareness by providing materials or posing questions that encourage students to compare British literature/culture with its Chinese counterpart. In doing so, it guides students towards exploring Chinese literary/cultural treasures more closely while fostering a sense of national self-confidence.

There are numerous instances in the online course "British Fiction" that serve as illustrations for this point. For example, in section 1.4 titled "The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe and China," Wang Shouren contextualizes Defoe's work within the realm of intercultural communication and offers insightful commentary on Defoe's derogatory portrayal of China. According to Wang Shouren, Defoe demonizes China in *The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* due to several reasons: firstly, as a puritan, Defoe expresses his apprehension towards China as an unfamiliar entity by considering Chinese people as "barbarous pagans"; secondly, during that period, China was not as developed as England and thus depicted as a place lacking wealth, orderliness, and grandeur; thirdly, Defoe's satirical depictions of China and its people reflect his belief in racial superiority. Overall, being an author who never visited China himself, Defoe's disparaging portrayals can be seen merely as imaginative representations of "The Other" with orientalist undertones. Such interpretations shed light on Defoe's motivations of demonizing China and its people and help students to read the popular adventure story in a critical way.

A further enlightening example of the depth and breadth of this online course can be found in section 4.4 titled "*Mrs. Dalloway* as a Stream-of-consciousness Novel" in the course "British Fiction." In this section, there is a discussion question that prompts students to compare the use of stream-of-consciousness in Mrs. Dalloway and Chinese novelist Wang Meng's "The Sound of Spring." Students are encouraged to express their thoughts on the similarities and differences in the utilization of this modernist writing technique. According to some students, while both authors employ stream-of-consciousness in their works, Wang Meng's usage appears more logical compared to Woolf's tendency for random transitions between different characters' perspectives. This undoubtedly fosters Chinese students' interest in our national literature and culture. These discussions serve as evidence

that cross-cultural comparison and contrast within foreign literature education have proven effective and fruitful.

The MOOC course "British Fiction" has garnered high praise from both educators and students alike. The positive impact of this online course can be observed through the students' feedback on the website. To date (May 2024), over 85,000 students have enrolled in this course and given it a rating of 4.9 out of 5 points. Analysis of the comments (totaling over 600 by May 2024) reveals that many participants consider this opportunity to learn from esteemed instructors as rare and invaluable. Multiple participants express amazement at its profound "depth and breadth," noting that the teachers' concise explanations are remarkably insightful and exceptional. One student provides a comprehensive comment highlighting the strengths and effectiveness of this course, emphasizing its provision of expert knowledge on British novels, particularly information typically inaccessible or overlooked by ordinary readers such as historical contexts, psychological perspectives of protagonists, and authors' intentions behind specific works. "At the same time, this course recommends numerous renowned and representative British novels which saves us valuable time otherwise spent searching for truly meaningful literary pieces" ("British Fiction" at icourse163.org).

These positive effects are also ensured by the innovative teaching and assessment methods employed in this online course, as well as the continuous updating of materials and improvement in all possible aspects. The course ensures students' active engagement through extracurricular reading, video watching, supplementary readings, online discussions, and assessments. When evaluating students' learning outcomes, a variety of formats such as multiple-choice questions, true or false questions, and discussion questions are provided. Moreover, more than 70% of the content is assessed using automated systems. The assessment and evaluation methods are diverse and include student evaluations, peer reviews, teacher comments to foster interaction between teachers and students as well as among students from different universities.

Compared to conventional classroom teaching methods, online courses offer a significant advantage in terms of their ease of iterative updates. Over the course of five years since its inception, the "British Fiction" course has undergone several adjustments based on student needs and learner suggestions. Notably, a dedicated unit exploring science fiction and fantasy was introduced during the summer of 2023, earning enthusiastic reception from students and avid readers alike, particularly those with an affinity for science fiction.

Wang Shouren's technology-enhanced teaching practice has reaped fruits and rewards. He is the recipient of the first prize for national teaching achievement,

recognized as a National Outstanding Teacher in the first term of the contest, and honoured with the prestigious Grand Prize of Baogang Education Fund for Excellent Teachers. These accomplishments serve as compelling evidence of his esteemed reputation and prominent position within the field of foreign literature in China.

Conclusion

Foreign literature provides Chinese students with a window into the diverse peoples and cultures of different nations. Since embarking on his journey of studying and teaching foreign literature, Wang Shouren has continuously contemplated the contributions he can make to this field as a Chinese scholar and educator. Rooted in China, he aims to examine the social and cultural context surrounding the production and consumption of foreign literary works from a cross-cultural perspective. He pays particular attention to comparing foreign literature with Chinese literary works, offering insightful commentary on their connections or differences. Additionally, he embraces recent advancements in information technology and excels at translating theory into practice, benefiting an increasing number of students across China through high-quality online courses. With his unwavering dedication and remarkable accomplishments, Wang Shouren undeniably merits the esteemed title of National Outstanding Teacher, serving as an exemplary role model for educators in the realm of foreign literature.

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伟大的学者、诗歌评论家和理论家：悼念玛乔瑞·帕洛夫教授

A Distinguished Scholar, Poetry Critic, and Theorist: In Memory of Marjorie Perloff

聂珍钊（**Nie Zhenzhao**）

内容摘要：玛乔瑞·帕洛夫教授是一位杰出的学者、诗歌评论家和理论家。她对美国现代和当代诗歌的深刻洞察和独到见解，赢得了国际学术界的高度认可。她不仅是美国斯坦福大学和南加州大学的荣休教授，还是美国艺术与科学院的院士和美国哲学会的会士。她的研究横跨多个领域，尤其在先锋派诗歌以及现代主义和后现代主义理论方面取得了卓越成就。她的著作《不确定诗学：从兰波到凯奇》《激进的艺术：媒体时代的诗歌创作》和《微观：微诗学实验》等，不仅为理解现代诗歌提供了新的视角，也推动了诗歌理论的发展，建构了具有引领性意义的不确定诗学、微诗学等现代诗学理论。帕洛夫教授还长期担任中美诗歌诗学协会会长，积极推动中美文化交流，促进了双方在诗歌研究领域的深度合作。帕洛夫教授虽然离开了我们，但她给我们留下了宝贵的学术遗产。我们会永远把她记在心里。

关键词：玛乔瑞·帕洛夫；庞德；艾略特；激进的艺术；不确定诗学；微诗学

作者简介：聂珍钊，广东外语外贸大学教授、外国语言文学学科建设云山工作室首席专家，欧洲科学院（Academia Europaea）外籍院士，国际文学伦理学批评研究会会长，主要从事英美文学与比较文学、文学理论与批评、文学伦理学批评理论研究等。本文系国家社会科学基金重点项目“文学伦理学批评跨学科话语体系建构研究”阶段性成果【项目批号：21AWW001】、国家社科基金重大项目“文学伦理学批评的理论资源与对外传播研究”【项目批号：21&ZD264】的阶段性成果。

Title: A Distinguished Scholar, Poetry Critic, and Theorist: In Memory of Marjorie Perloff

Abstract: Professor Marjorie Perloff was a distinguished scholar, poetry critic, and theorist. Her profound insights and unique perspectives on modern and contemporary American poetry have earned her high recognition in the international academic community. She was not only an Emeritus Professor at Stanford University and the University of Southern California but also a member of the American Academy of

Arts and Sciences and a fellow of the American Philosophical Society. Her research spanned multiple fields, with outstanding achievements particularly in avant-garde poetry and modernist and postmodernist theory. Her works, including *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*, *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media*, *Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics*, have not only provided new perspectives for understanding modern poetry but also advanced the development of poetry theory, establishing leading theories such as the poetics of indeterminacy and micropoetics. Professor Perloff also served as the long-term president of China-American Association for Poetry and Poetics, actively promoting cultural exchange between China and the United States and fostering deep cooperation in the field of poetry research. Though Professor Perloff passed away, she has left behind us a valuable academic legacy. We will always keep her in our hearts.

Keywords: Marjorie Perloff; Ezra Pound; T.S. Eliot; radical artifice; the poetics of indeterminacy; micropoetics

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引言

玛乔瑞·帕洛夫（Marjorie Perloff, 1931.9-2024.3）是美国斯坦福大学和南加州大学的荣休教授，美国艺术与科学院的院士和美国哲学会的会士。她是美国当代极具影响力的现代诗歌和当代诗歌评论家和理论家，曾担任过美国现代语言学会和美国比较文学学会的会长、中美诗歌诗学协会的会长（2008-2024）。2024 年 3 月 24 日，帕洛夫教授在加利福尼亚州太平洋帕利塞德的家中逝世，享年 93 岁。帕洛夫的去世震动了世界，大量媒体发表文章对她表达敬意。斯坦福大学高度评价了她，称她“无疑是斯坦福大学有史以来最重要的诗歌评论家之一”。[1]《纽约时报》（*New York Times*）称她为“当代诗歌领域的世界领军学者”[2]，芝加哥大学出版社称她为“美国最具影响力的文学评

1 参见 “Poetry scholar and critic Marjorie Perloff has died,” 29 March 2024. Available at: https://humsci.stanford.edu/feature/poetry-scholar-and-critic-marjorie-perloff-has-died. Accessed 1 June 2024.

2 参见 Clay Risen, “Marjorie Perloff, Leading Scholar of Avant-Garde Poetry, Dies at 92,” *New York Times*, 26 March 2024. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/26/books/marjorie-perloff-dead.html.Accessed 1 June 2024.

论家和现当代诗歌学者之一”和“国际上广受欢迎的演说家和学者”。[1]《英国和爱尔兰创新诗歌杂志》（*Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetry*）对这位编辑部创始成员的逝世深感悲痛，誉其为“一代创新诗歌的杰出评论家”，认为“如果没有帕洛夫数十年的持久贡献，很难想像美国对创新诗歌的接受”。[2]

玛乔瑞·帕洛夫原名加布里埃尔·明茨（Gabriele Mintz），出生于维也纳的一个犹太家庭，祖父和父亲都是当时著名的律师。她的外祖父理查德·舒勒（Richard Schuller）在杜尔菲斯担任奥地利总理期间曾出任外交部长以及国际联盟的代表。她的外祖母精通法语、英语、意大利语和西班牙语等多种语言，热爱文学艺术，深刻影响了她的成长。她虽然出生在一个犹太家庭中，但是家庭的大部分成员并非犹太教徒，许多人都信奉天主教或新教。1938 年，纳粹德国吞并奥地利，年仅六岁半的玛乔瑞不得不在反犹太主义浪潮中随同家人逃离奥地利，移民美国，最后在纽约河谷区定居。幼年的她在纽约布朗克斯的公立学校接受启蒙教育，然后获得全额奖学金进入菲尔德斯顿中学读书。1944 年，她把自己的名字改为玛乔瑞（Marjorie），自此“说德语的加布里埃尔”转变成了“讲英语的美国女孩玛乔瑞”（Marjorie Perloff, *The Vienna Paradox: A Memoir* xv）。

1953 年，帕洛夫从纽约的巴纳德学院（Barnard College）毕业，同在纽约西奈山医院（Mount Sinai Hospital）担任医生的约瑟夫·帕洛夫（Joseph K. Perloff）博士结婚。约瑟夫·帕洛夫教授是美国成人先天性心脏病学科创始人，被誉为“成人先天性心脏病之父”，在国际医学界享有崇高地位。他的两部经典医学著作《心脏和循环系统体格检查》（*Physical Examination of the Heart and Cirrculation*, 2010）和《成人先天生心脏病临床实践指南》（*Congenital Heart Disease in Adults*, 2010）已在中国翻译出版。[3] 玛乔瑞·帕洛夫后来的学术研究同科学结合，不能不说受到丈夫的影响。玛乔瑞婚后进入位于华盛顿特区的美国天主教大学（The Catholic University of America）读研究生，于 1956 年和 1965 年分别获得硕士和博士学位。1966-1967 年，她在美国天主教大学担任教职，先后被聘为助教和副教授。1971-1976 年，她受聘于马里兰大学（University of Maryland），担任全职英语教授。此后，她分别担任过南加利福尼亚大学（University of Southern California, 1976-1978）和斯坦福大学

1　参见 Thomas Alan, “In Memoriam: Marjorie Perloff (1931-2024),” 25 March 2024. Available at: https://pressblog.uchicago.edu/2024/03/26/in-memoriam-marjorie-perloff-1931-2024.html. Accessed 1 June 2024.

2　参见 Scott Thurston, “Marjorie Perloff (1931-2024),” 27 March 2024. Available at: https://poetry.openlibhums.org/news/696/. Accessed 1 June 2024.

3　参见 约瑟夫·帕洛夫：《心脏和循环系统体格检查》，张华译，北京：人民卫生出版社，2010年；约瑟夫·帕洛夫、约翰·察尔德、贾敏·阿伯豪森：《成人先天生心脏病临床实践指南》，周新民等译，北京：人民军医出版社，2010年。

（Stanford University, 1986-1990）的英语与比较文学教授。1990-2000 年，她担任斯坦福大学的人文讲座教授（Sadie Dernham Patek Professor），2001 年荣休。

一、帕洛夫 20 世纪的诗学研究

自 20 世纪 70 年代以来，帕洛夫就是美国现代诗人眼中的守护者，她通过自己的著述和精辟的见解，引领着现代诗歌创作的发展。早在 20 世纪初，美国的现代小说和戏剧创作形成了一股影响世界的文学潮流，挤压了诗歌创作与批评的空间。正如卡西米（Ghasemi）所说：“文学与科学之间存在着如此激烈的矛盾，以至于它们的边界被划上了一条红线，以至于跨越到对方领域被认为是异端”（320）。到了 20 世纪后期，美国的现代诗歌仍然在结构主义、解构主义的批评热潮中没有得到应有的重视。帕洛夫认识到了伴随小说和戏剧而生的现代诗歌的生存困境和批评危机，于是从研究小说转而研究现代和当代诗歌。她以博大的胸怀和超前的视野，不仅对叶芝（William Butler Yeats）、庞德（Ezra Pound）、艾略特（T.S. Eliot）等一批现代诗人细心地加以研究，对从黑山派到语言诗派的美国诗歌认真地加以总结，让读者和学术界对现代诗歌保持着阅读兴趣和研究热情，而且她还把批评的视野扩大到加拿大以及英国、法国等欧洲其他国家和地区的先锋派诗歌，用世界的眼光看待先锋诗歌的发展。正是帕洛夫的研究和对先锋诗歌的价值发现，西方以先锋诗歌为主体的现代诗歌，才迅速繁荣起来并在文学史上获得应有的地位。可以说，如果没有帕洛夫自 70 年代以来诸多关于先锋派诗歌艺术的专著出版与论文发表，当代先锋诗歌在美国学界与商界的成功是不得而知的。

早在 20 世纪 70 年代，帕洛夫就崭露头角，出版了《叶芝诗歌的韵律与意义》（*Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats*, 1970）《罗伯特·洛威尔的诗歌艺术》（*The Poetic Art of Robert Lowell*, 1973）和《画家中的诗人：弗兰克·奥哈拉》（*Frank O’Hara: Poet Among Painters*, 1977）三部著作。从她的著述中可以看出，帕洛夫主要致力于对个别诗人的专门研究，在学术立场上恪守传统，强调在不同的文化环境中对文学作品进行细致分析，对当时在美国盛行的解构主义持批判态度。在 80 年代，帕洛夫的研究在美国诗歌界获得了高度认可，她也因此成为美国学术界的知名人物。她于 1981 年出版的《不确定诗学：从兰波到凯奇》（*The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*）是她的诗学理论的奠基著作。这部著作在借鉴巴尔特、托多洛夫和德里达的哲学与诗歌理论的基础上，把“不确定性”（indeterminacy）作为诗歌创作的主要美学原则，在特定的文化语境中结合具体的诗歌文本，揭示凯奇（Cage）、斯泰恩（Gertrude Stein）、W. C. 威廉姆斯（W. C. Williams）、庞德、贝科特（Samuel Beckett）、阿什贝利（John Ashbery）、安廷（David Antin）等诗人创作中的“不确定性”模式，分析后期象征主义诗歌的主要特征。帕洛夫在这部著作中重新解读了几位有争议的美国当代诗人的创作，逐渐形成她的不确定诗学，对

美国的诗歌理论与批评影响深远。

1985 年，她出版论文集《智力的舞蹈：诗歌中的庞德传统研究》（*The Dance of the Intellect: Studies in the Poetry of the Pound Tradition*）。1917 年，庞德在评论米娜 • 罗伊（Mina Loy）的诗歌时使用了“诗道”（Logopoeia）一词，并将其定义为“词汇中的智力舞蹈”（Pound 25）。帕洛夫借用“智力的舞蹈”重点研究了史文朋（Algemon C. Swinburne）、叶芝、斯蒂文斯（Wallace Stevens）、乔伊斯（James Joyce）、威廉姆斯（William Carlos Williams）、凯奇、庞德等诗人的创作，讨论了文本的拼贴、诗歌视觉形象、诗行的形态、语言诗的词语等诗歌中使用的激进技巧，揭示出后现代诗歌的发展轨迹。她认为叶芝所拒绝的象征主义技巧如断片、纯粹的韵律或视觉印象、理论概念等，对于后来的诗人日益重要，并最终导致诗歌新潮流的出现。这部著作全面梳理了自庞德以来美国先锋派诗歌的谱系，奠定了帕洛夫在庞德研究中的地位。[1]

1986 年，她的《未来主义：先锋派艺术及断裂语言》（*The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant-Guerre, and the Language of Rupture*）出版。这部著作从总体上对整个欧洲文学艺术的最新发展进行了一次“前卫”考察，不仅对“未来主义”的各种体验进行了广泛研究，而且还对 20 世纪 20 年代前的先锋运动作了详尽的总结。帕洛夫发掘出大量的新材料，以卓越的分析技巧重新阐释了批评史上一个关键时期，在解读英语、法语、意大利语和俄语文本的基础上，分析了“机器时代”艺术家的文字与视觉素材对当代作家的影响，指出未来主义导致了当代文化中许多重要艺术形式的诞生。[2] 评论家高度评价了这部著作。史蒂文 • 康纳（Stephen Connor）认为：“对帕洛夫来说，未来主义时刻的重要性在于它已经预示和渴盼着当代文化中许多最为重要形式的诞生”（904）。维纳德 • 波恩（Vinayd Bohn）也认为：“本书不仅是已出版的早期先锋派研究作品中最好的作品，也是有史以来有关这个主题最好的著作”（200）。在帕洛夫最初 20 年的学术生涯里，她广博的知识，深邃的思想、细腻的分析、深刻的见解，在文学界尤其在诗歌界，为她赢得了广泛的声誉。

在 20 世纪 90 年代里，帕洛夫笔耕不缀，新作迭出，其研究进入纯熟完美的境界。1990 年，《诗的破格：现代主义和后现代主义抒情诗论文集》（*Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric*）出版，她的研究对现当代诗学研究的价值与示范作用是不可替代的。在这部著作中，她打破语言学界限，对从庞德到斯泰因、从默温（W. S. Merwin）到路易斯 • 朱科夫斯基（Louis Zukofsky）、从艾伦 • 金斯堡（Allen Ginsberg）到西尔维亚 • 普拉思（Sylvia Plath）、从史迪夫 • 麦卡弗里（Steve McCaffery）到苏珊 • 豪（Susan

1 参见 Marjorie Perloff, *The Dance of the Intellect: Studies in Poetry of the Pound Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

2 参见 Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Howe）等一批主流与非主流现代主义诗人进行了深入研究，正确指出“现代派和后现代派之间存有深层联系和共鸣”（Perloff, *Poetic License* 5）。

1992 年，《激进的艺术：媒体时代的诗歌创作》（*Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media*）一书出版。这是 20 世纪以来美国诗歌领域的一部经典著作，帕洛夫以诗歌为例对大众传媒影响人类文明进行了深入分析，揭示了科学时代诗歌的跨学科新特点。中国有学者正确指出，“文学研究的跨学科性质是与生俱来的，从最初借助社会学和历史学方法对文学作品进行阐释，到后来‘语言论转向’背景下强调意义阐释过程中语言的作用，以及‘文化转向’兴起后将目光投向艺术与人生、文本与历史、文学与权力话语的关系等，无不显示了文学研究的跨学科属性”（Ren 735）。1996 年，《维特根斯坦的梯子：诗歌语言和日常语言的奇特》（*Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language And The Strangeness of The Ordinary*）出版。这部被视为世纪之交美国四大研究维特根斯坦哲学最佳范本的著作[1]，将哲学引入现当代诗学研究领域，将维特根斯坦的抽象哲学与文学批评具象联系起来，形成了一部以维特根斯坦的语言哲学为基础深入研究先锋派文学的范式。这部著作详细论述了维特根斯坦（Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein）对斯泰因（Gertrude Stein）、贝克特（Samuel Beckett）、巴赫曼（Ingeborg Bachmann）和伯恩哈德（Thomas Berhard）等作家的影响，对先锋派文学进行了全面细致的解读，揭示了以日常语言为核心的西方当代诗学特征。至此，帕洛夫在诗歌界的崇高地位得到确立。

三、帕洛夫 21 世纪的诗学研究

就当代美国文学批评理论而言，从帕洛夫出版的有如百科全书式的著作中，可以看出她在许多领域都有杰出贡献，对于诗歌贡献尤其突出。克里斯•穆雷（Chris Murray）主编的《文学批评家和文学批评百科全书》（*The Literary Critic and Literary Criticism Encyclopedia*, 1999）中的“玛乔瑞 • 帕洛夫”条目显示：“她的著作致力于阐释实验派和先锋派诗人的创作，致力研究现代主义主流，尤其是研究包括视觉艺术和文化理论在内的后现代创作活动”（832-835）。可以说，她的著作加在一起，就是一部现当代美国诗歌批评史。

21 世纪以来，帕洛夫对诗歌的研究继续表现出时代性特点，这就是她始终把最新的文学现象纳入自己的学术视野中，用未来的眼光审视美国诗歌的发展。在《21 世纪的现代主义：新诗学》（*21st-century Modernism: The "New" Poetics*, 2002）这部研究新世纪美国诗歌的著作中，她通过对艾略特、斯泰因、杜

1 其余三部分别是：David Edmond and John Eidinow, *Wittgenstein's Poker: The Story of a Ten-minute Argument between Two Great Philosophers* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2001); Martin Cohen, *Wittgenstein's Beetle and Other Classic Thought Experiments* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004); Susan G. Sterret, *Wittgenstein Flies a Kite: A Story of Models of Wings and Models of the World* (New York: Penguin Group, 2005).

尚（Marcel Duchamp）和赫列勃尼科夫（Viktor Vladimirovich Khlebnikov）等诗人的研究，充分肯定了语言派诗歌的实验与革新意识对当代诗歌发展所做的贡献，明确指出现代主义、后现代主义和当代诗歌相互间的联系和发展演变。[1]2004 年，帕洛夫出版论文集《诗歌、诗学和教学辨微》（*Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy*）。这部著作展示了她解读现当代诗歌的非凡技巧与杰出洞察力，又一次彰显了她的博学、慎思、严谨与示范精神。书中尽管涉及到广泛的题材和多样的文本，但帕洛夫始终能够专注于对诗学特性的分析，聚焦于她所关注的诗学问题。她提倡细微阅读的方法，强调把文本阅读和文化背景结合起来，以避免细读往往脱离文化、政治、历史的弊端。[2] 帕洛夫对当时英美比较文学研究领域跨学科研究的重视与预测，不仅体现了她作为一位教育工作者的道德责任，而且也表现出她对整个人文学科面临的危机所感到的忧虑。

2010 年，帕洛夫又推出新作《非原创的天才：用其他方法创作的新世纪诗歌》（*Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*）。她晚年在科学影响下写作的这部著作，是 21 世纪美国最重要的诗歌学术著作之一。这部著作从历史和科学技术的角度多方面追溯了“非原创性”（unoriginal）的诗学传统，对现当代诗人的各种实验和革新进行梳理和总结，揭示了现代诗歌特有的独创性和复杂性，系统地构建了她的当代诗歌理论并进行了诗歌批评实践。[3] 现代信息技术如流媒体（streaming video）、博客、短信、网络搜索等改变了“人如何表达自己”这一命题，因此，20 世纪和 21 世纪美国文化中出现了新的诗歌创作特点，这就是通过重组、重构、挪用、引用、限制、转录、复制、拼贴、可视化或可声化现存的词汇和句子进行创作，丰富了“原创”一词的固有内涵。普林斯顿大学的鲁本·加洛（Rubén Gallo）评论说：“玛乔瑞·帕洛夫的新作将读者带入了一次难忘的诗歌之旅，让他们领略了瓦尔特·本雅明笔下的‘巴黎的拱廊街’、哈罗多·德·坎波斯笔下的‘具象诗’、多和田叶子笔下深受日本文化熏陶的德国散文、肯尼斯·戈尔德斯密斯笔下的‘纽约交通广播’等。这次极具原创性的诗歌之旅让读者领略了 20 世纪及 21 世纪文化中一些最富创新性的诗歌策略，即引用、转录、复制等写作手法，真是奇遇连连”（Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius,* Backcover）。《非原创的天才：用其他方法创作的新世纪诗歌》揭示了现代诗学变化的规律，即不失神秘魅力的当代诗歌如何从以前的“原创”观念转换成如今的对话性“非原创性”活动的演变过程。这部著作再一次表明，帕洛夫是当今最权威也是最前沿的先

1　参见 Marjorie Perloff, *21st-century Modernism: The “New” Poetics*, Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2002.

2　参见 Marjorie Perloff, *Differentials: poetry, poetics, pedagogy*, Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2004.

3　参见 Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

锋派诗歌阐释者和理论家。

帕洛夫一共出版了 20 多部学术著作，发表了大量学术论文，然而在她的全部著述中，我主持翻译成中文出版的《激进的艺术：媒体时代的诗歌创作》具有特殊的地位。[1] 在确定“美国艺术与科学院院士文学理论与批评经典”翻译书目时，应我的要求，帕洛夫自行挑选了这部著作。她的每一部著作都是当代诗学领域中的杰作，闪耀着作者智慧的光芒，值得翻译介绍给中国的读者。但是，她为何不挑选 21 世纪以来出版的著作反而挑选一部 20 年前出版的旧作供我们翻译出版？虽然当时心存疑惑，但是考虑到这是一部当时在诗歌界产生了深远影响的著作，因此我并没有向她寻求解释。

现在看来，帕洛夫选择《激进的艺术：媒体时代的诗歌创作》是有其深意的，因为不仅在这部著作出版以来的数十年里，而且在未来相当长的时期内，媒体时代的诗歌创作仍然是我们讨论的中心话题。在一个电子和信息技术尤其是人工智能主宰我们生活的时代，我们应该怎样去看待诗歌？怎样看待我们传统意识中的文学艺术？这是必须讨论和需要回答的问题。帕洛夫曾经在序言中说：“如今，已经找不到一片未受到声音或电脑污染的土地，找不到可以避开手机讯号覆盖和盒式磁带播放器的声音的山峰和空谷。接着，越来越多的诗人舞台就是电子世界，即由多纳休表演和MTV构成的世界，由《人民》杂志和《国家讯问者》杂志构成的世界，由互联网和通过调制解调器传达到世界各地的MCI邮件构成的世界，这同推陈出新的杂志《后现代文化》（*Postmodern Culture*）是一样的，即通过电子邮件发布小说、文学和文化批评”（Perloff, *Radical Artifice* xiii）。在信息技术时代，离开了各种媒体，诗歌是很难存在的。由于科学的影响，我们关于诗歌的传统观念已经遭遇到巨大挑战，诗歌的艺术形式、表达技巧以及存在的方式，正如苏珊·豪、查尔斯·伯恩斯坦（Charles Bernstein）等语言派诗人的创作那样，已经不是我们按照传统的观念所能理解的了。阅读诗歌不能只是看到印刷在书页上的词汇，还要看到与这些词汇紧密相连的电子文化。而有关这些问题，帕洛夫早在20年前就以超凡的前瞻性思想以及对美国诗歌未来发展的深刻洞见，在《激进的艺术：媒体时代的诗歌创作》中进行了深入讨论并作出了回答。

有学者指出：“科学二元论导致了科学和文学领域之间的鸿沟，几乎阻碍了两种文化中新研究和新思想的探索”（Ren 735）。显然，帕洛夫已经先于他人找到了 20 世纪 80 年代以来美国先锋诗歌的核心问题，这就是科学时代诗歌创作与媒体的联系。这一思想对传统文学观念提出了巨大挑战，对 20 世纪 90 年代以来文学观念的发展有着重要启示。她通过对美国诗歌尤其是语言诗的分析和解剖，认识到在一个科学高速发展的时代，我们必须为诗歌与

1 参见 玛乔瑞·帕洛夫：《激进的艺术：媒体时代的诗歌创作》，聂珍钊译，上海：上海外语教育出版社，2013 年。

媒体的关系定位，因为不管我们喜欢与否，媒体不仅对于诗歌创作，而且已同阅读、欣赏和批评融为一体，不可分离了。先锋派文学是“走在时代前头”的文学，先锋派作家是时代的前卫作家，尤其是它同现代科学的结合，使它变得不同于传统的艺术，让我们在理解它时不能不考虑科学时代影响它发展的媒体因素。这些诗人一再地拒绝使用“常规的”词序或保留句子结构的完整性，他们引入神秘难懂的词汇、让人困惑的暗示、大量的媒体图像，用以说明诗歌与图像的关系。帕洛夫通过对现实中诗歌艺术的细致观察，在著作中引用大量绘画、照片、广告画以及一些艺术作品，说明强有力的图像不仅挑战了诗歌话语，而且也解构了诗歌话语。

虽然《激进的艺术：媒体时代的诗歌创作》包括图片在内只有 248 页，然而就其前沿话题、诗学理论、跨学科领域以及学术开拓性而言，却堪称一部鸿篇巨制。作为译者，我为有幸翻译这部著作感到荣幸。通过翻译这部著作的过程，我们不仅对科学时代的文学发展有了新认识，而且对帕洛夫这位当代伟大的诗歌批评家有了更多了解。帕洛夫在 30 年前出版的《激进的艺术：媒体时代的诗歌创作》是一部从事文学研究不可不读的入门书。她的深邃思想、伟大智慧和前瞻眼光，决定了这部著作的永久学术生命力。尽管 30 年过去了，但是这部著作仍然同我们今天的时代紧密相连，指引着新时期新文学的研究方向。即使在 30 年之后，它也是一部不会被遗忘的学术经典。

四、帕洛夫诗学研究的科学转向

2021 年，帕洛夫的新著《微观：微诗学实验》（*Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics*）由芝加哥大学出版社出版。这部著作对于帕洛夫的学术人生具有里程碑的纪念意义。一方面，这部著作可以看作帕洛夫在研究当代诗歌 50 年中形成的科学诗学的标志。另一方面，它也可以看作是对帕洛夫 90 岁人生的纪念。帕洛夫对诗歌尤其是美国当代诗歌抱有巨大热情，不仅是潜心甚至是醉心于诗歌研究，直至她去世之前，从没有停止过在诗歌王国的自由耕耘，每一年都有新的研究成果发表。

“微观”（Infrathin）是艺术家马塞尔·杜尚（Marcel Duchamp）提出的一个概念，用以描述物体之间微妙的、难以捉摸的、几乎无法被感知的差异和联系。这个概念指那些不能通过常规方式来感知或界定的细微差别，是介于“thin”（薄）和“thick”（厚）之间的一种状态。“Infrathin”强调诗歌中最小粒子（如音节、字母等）的重要性，以及它们在诗歌形式、意义和感觉上的价值。因此，“infrathin”在中文的表述中可以理解为“微观”、“超薄”、“微细”、“超微”或者“极微”，用以表示那种难以捉摸的微小差异。帕洛夫使用“infrathin”这个词，是为了说明不能用常规解释和理解诗歌，而要研究

和讨论诗歌细微的差别和特点，并将这种研究称之为“微诗学”（Micropoetics）。[1] 帕洛夫以马塞尔·杜尚的艺术实践为引子，探讨微诗学的概念，致力于对诗歌语言最小单位（如字母、音节、单词）的细致研究。诗歌不仅仅是表达情感或描绘景象的工具，更是一种对语言和形式进行探索的艺术形式。杜尚通过对日常物品的重新命名和展示，挑战了传统艺术观念，为诗人对诗歌语言和形式开展新的思考带来启发。

帕洛夫的热情不仅体现在持续的学术发表上，更彰显在她对诗歌内在韵律、意象、结构的敏锐洞察中。她提出“微诗学”的概念并努力建构微诗学理论，目的在于让我们从全新的角度去解读和分析诗歌的细微之美。在过去，学者们往往更关注诗歌的宏观结构和主题，而忽略了其中的微观元素。帕洛夫通过《微观：微诗学实验》告诉我们，正是这些微观元素，构成了诗歌真正的魅力和生命力。帕洛夫认为，诗歌中的美感往往隐藏在字里行间，是那些看似微不足道却富含深意的细节。这些细节可能是一个字的选用，一个标点的放置，或是行与行之间的空白，但它们共同构建了诗歌的深度和层次。在《微观：微诗学实验》中，帕洛夫用她独特的视角和细腻的笔触，带领读者进入了一个前所未有的诗歌微观世界。这本书在帕洛夫 90 岁生日之际出版，无疑是对她学术贡献的最好总结。它不仅展示了帕洛夫在诗歌研究领域的卓越成就，更体现了她对诗歌艺术的无尽追求和伟大奉献。

在《微观：微诗学实验》一书中，帕洛夫主要讨论了埃兹拉·庞德、T.S. 艾略特、华莱士·史蒂文斯（Wallace Stevens）等美国诗人的作品，揭示他们在处理文字、声音和空间布局上的创新方法，分析他们如何通过对语言、声音和视觉设计的精细处理，创造出具有微观美感的诗歌。她强调声音在微观诗歌中的重要性，认为诗人们通过对音节的精心安排、重复和变化，营造出了独特的韵律和节奏。庞德等诗人通过独特的文字选择和组合，以及对古典文学和语言的引用，创造出富有张力和深度的诗歌文本。帕洛夫通过对庞德《诗章》（*The Cantons*）中具体页面的分析，说明庞德如何通过空间布局、字体大小、中文字符等表现方法，创造出独特的视觉和听觉效果。她认为庞德的这部史诗级作品通过对多种语言和文化的引用、对中国字符的创造性使用以及对文字、声音和空间的精细处理，展现了微观诗歌的无限可能。

帕洛夫在讨论史蒂文斯晚期诗歌的转向时，认为史蒂文斯晚期诗歌对自然景观的关注以及通过“岩石”等类似的主题描写，探索了人类与自然、存在与虚无之间的关系。在她看来，史蒂文斯和苏珊·豪等诗人的作品展示了如何通过诗歌的排版、布局和空白运用，增强了诗歌的视觉美感和深层含义。例如，她认为史蒂文斯在她的晚期作品《岩石》（*The Rock*）中，转向对自然和日常生活的观察，通过对细节的敏锐捕捉和对文字、声音的精致处理，呈现

1 参见 Marjorie Perloff, *Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021.

出一种内敛而深刻的诗歌风格。

帕洛夫在《微观：微诗学实验》中深入探讨了微诗学在当代诗歌中的应用和发展，通过对庞德、艾略特、史蒂文斯和苏珊·豪等诗人作品的分析，展示了微诗学在增强诗歌表达力、深化诗歌主题方面的巨大潜力，揭示了微观诗歌的创作实践在在现代诗歌发展中的重要地位。通过对文字、声音和视觉设计的精细处理，诗人们创造出了具有独特美感和深刻意义的诗歌作品，为后来的诗歌创作提供了宝贵的经验。通过对具体诗歌作品的分析，帕洛夫深入探讨了诗歌语言的特点和作用，强调诗歌语言不仅是传达信息的工具，更是诗人表达独特艺术见解和情感的重要媒介。通过细致的语言分析，她在细微之中发现了诗歌的宏大世界，指出微诗学和现代诗歌的发展是相互促进的，认为对诗歌语言最小单位的研究不仅丰富了诗歌创作的手段，也推动了现代诗歌向更广阔领域的拓展。每一字、每一句、每一韵，都是诗人内心世界的反映，是情感与思想的交织。她通过对这些微观元素的剖析，让我们看到了诗歌背后的深层含义，也让我们重新认识了诗歌的魅力和力量。当然，帕洛夫的学术贡献不仅仅局限于《微观：微诗学实验》一书，她的每一篇研究论文、每一次学术演讲，都是留给我们的宝贵学术遗产，给我们带来深刻的思想启迪。《微观：微诗学实验》无疑是她学术生涯中的一个重要节点，不仅总结了帕洛夫过去的研究成果，也预示着她未来研究方向的可能性。帕洛夫关于微诗学的研究，反映了她对诗歌形式、声音和视觉效果的敏锐洞察力和深刻理解，展现了她对诗歌语言的丰富性和复杂性特点的新理解、新认识，体现了她晚年诗学研究向观念诗学的转向。

《微观：微诗学实验》不仅仅是一本书，它更是一个时代的缩影，一个学者的心声，一个对诗歌的热爱者的深情告白。就帕洛夫的学术思想而言，这部著作还通过微诗学把她的研究同数字人文结合起来，找到她的诗学思想科学转向的发展轨迹。

早在 1991 年，帕洛夫在《激进的艺术：媒体时代的诗歌创作》一书中对诗歌艺术同多媒体的关系进行了讨论，表现出她的诗歌研究同现代科学技术相互融合的趋向。2006 年，Adelaide Morris 和 Thomas Swiss 共同编辑的 *New Media Poetics: Contexts, Technotexts, and Theories* 一书收录了帕洛夫撰写的第七章“Paging the Screen: Digital Poetics and the Differential Text”。在这篇文章中，帕洛夫讨论了数字诗歌的定义与特点，指出数字诗歌不仅仅是传统诗歌的电子版，而是一种新的依赖于数字技术和多媒体环境的诗歌形式。数字诗歌结合了文字、图像、声音和动画等多种元素，形成了丰富的多感官体验，往往具有多模态特征。在她看来，超链接、互动界面和多媒体整合等技术为诗歌创作带来新的可能性。数字诗歌的文本不是固定的，而是可以根据读者的互动、算法的变化等因素不断变化，呈现出不同的版本面貌，读者的角色也从被动接受者转变为主动参与者。她特别强调了技术对诗歌形式的影响，认

为数字技术不仅提供了新的创作工具和平台，也改变了诗歌的传播方式和接受方式，提出“差异文本”概念解释数字诗歌的动态性和互动性，将数字技术与文学艺术结合在一起，开拓了一个新的诗学研究领域。[1]

数字诗歌不仅是技术发展的产物，而且具有深刻艺术价值和文化意义的文学创作，这就是中国学者指出的“科学技术同艺术结合”（Yang and Woody 501）。帕洛夫这篇文章是早期研究数字诗歌的重要文献之一，为理解和分析数字诗歌提供了新的理论框架，突破了传统诗学的局限，为数字人文研究提供了有力支持，促进了文学、技术与文化研究的交叉融合。

从“Paging the Screen: Digital Poetics and the Differential Text”可以看出，帕洛夫后来发展了她的微观诗学理论，提出了许多具有创新性和前瞻性的观点，为数字诗歌和数字诗学理论的研究提供了宝贵的理论资源。她对数字诗歌的定义、“差异文本”的概念、读者与文本的互动以及技术对诗歌形式的影响等方面的探讨，推动了数字人文学科的发展，提升了数字诗歌的学术地位，具有重要的学术价值和实践意义。帕洛夫从现代科学立场发现了媒体对诗歌产生的革命性影响，重新诠释了视觉诗学。在科学的时代，人们同计算机之间的交流导致的“计算机焦虑”，这对文学艺术的影响是显而易见的。

计算机介入诗人和读者的生活，不仅改变了诗歌文本的形态，而且还导致诗人创作诗歌和读者阅读诗歌时同文本的互动。20 世纪 80 年代以来，更激进的视觉诗歌开始解构传统上被认为是诗歌本质特征的意象，从对意象的迷恋转而寻找用于诗歌创作的更为新颖的技巧。在现代媒体社会里，诗歌从单纯的文字符号作品变化为媒体作品，诗歌创作不只是供人阅读的按照一定规则排列的诗行，而且也是供人“看”的图像和让人听的媒体。帕洛夫当时已经充分预见到文学同科学结合而导致的诗歌文本视觉化的趋向，这不能不让我们感到钦佩。

在今天的 AI 时代，人工智能不仅改变了诗歌创作，也改变了我们阅读诗歌的方式，更将改变诗歌的理论与批评。在信息时代，无论创作诗歌还是阅读诗歌，已经不能脱离媒体而存在。电子科技是否因此从根本上改变文学，即是否会因此改变我们对于文学的观念？我们现有的文学理论是否能够有效地用来阐释当今的甚至是过去的文学？这个让人难以回答的最前沿的问题，帕洛夫已经在 20 年前为我们做出了回答。作者当年解剖先锋诗歌所表现出来的对科学影响文学的伟大预见，她对文学发展趋势的敏锐洞察力，对信息时代文学新特点的发现，无一不被今天的文学现实所证明。时至今日，她当年所关注和讨论的先锋诗歌，业已发生了很大变化，有些诗歌更加前卫地挑战传统诗学，甚至诞出一些在传统诗学观念中无法接受的文学怪胎。但是，我们今天不能不接受这些文学现实，不能不用发展的眼光去理解过去诗歌和未来

1 参见 Adalaide Kirby Morris and Thomas Swiss eds, *New Media Poetics: Contexts, Technotexts, and Theories*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006.

的诗歌，不能不去建构人工智能时代的诗歌理论。

五、帕洛夫同中国

帕洛夫是一位永远年轻的长者、教授和诗歌批评家。她对诗歌的热情没有因为年龄的增长而消退，反而愈发炽烈。即使在她 90 高龄之后，仍然保持着对诗歌研究的热情，每年都有新的研究成果问世。这种精神，不仅让人敬佩，也给了我们后辈学者无尽的激励。

作为美国现代语言协会的前会长，帕洛夫的学术地位不言而喻。她对诗歌的深刻理解和独到见解，使她在当代诗歌理论和批评领域做出了重大贡献。她的研究不仅深入剖析了诗歌的内在结构和韵律美学，还从文化、历史和社会的多角度对诗歌进行了全面解读。她的学术著作被广泛引用，是该领域的重要参考文献。

帕洛夫不仅在诗歌理论和批评方面有着深厚的造诣，更以其开阔的国际视野和不懈的努力，促进了中美两国在诗歌研究领域的深度交流与合作。2006 年，她的中国之行不仅是为了参加“20 世纪美国诗歌国际学术研讨会”，更是开启了一段跨国界的学术对话。这次访问，她与丈夫——美国现代医学成人先天性心脏病之父——约瑟夫·帕洛夫教授同行，两人的结合仿佛象征着文学与科学的交融，而他们的中国之行也为中美文化交流注入了新的活力。

在随后的几年中，帕洛夫的名字与中国学术界紧密相连。2009 年，她与中国学者共同创立了“中美诗歌诗学协会”（Chinese/American Association for Poetry and Poetics, CAAP）并担任会长。这个协会不仅为中美两国的诗歌学者提供了一个交流与合作的平台，更是推动了双方在诗歌研究领域的共同进步。在她的领导下，协会举办了多场学术会议，促进了学术思想的碰撞与融合，也为两国的文化交流注入了新的动力。她多次访问中国，被邀请到各高校讲学和参加学术会议，分享她的研究成果和学术见解。她以渊博的知识和高贵风度赢得了中国学者的尊敬和喜爱。在她和我们共同的朋友查尔斯·伯恩斯坦的引荐和帮助下，许多中国学者得以作为 CAAP 学者前往美国高校访学和进行学术研究，体验美国的学术环境，拓宽学术视野。同时，她们也多次邀请中国学术团体前往美国进行学术访问和交流。这些互访活动极大地增进了两国学者之间的了解与友谊，无疑对提升中国在国际学术界的地位和影响起到了积极的推动作用。帕洛夫积极为中美文化交流搭建桥梁，以开放的心态和不懈的努力，促进了中美两国在诗歌领域的相互理解和尊重，开展学术交流与合作。在她的影响下，越来越多的中国学者开始关注和研究美国诗歌，也有越来越多的美国学者对中国诗歌产生了浓厚的兴趣，积极参加中国的学术活动。帕洛夫同中国学者建立起来的跨越国界和文化背景的友谊，不仅体现了她的个人魅力和国际学术影响力，也体现了她对中国的深厚感情。

2008 年 5 月 12 日，四川汶川发生了 8 级大地震，给汶川人民带来了巨大

的灾难。为了表达对遇难者的哀思，送上对生者的慰藉，在中美诗歌诗学协会会长帕洛夫教授和副会长伯恩斯坦教授的支持下，我同中美诗歌诗学协会执行理事罗良功教授决定向广大中外诗人征稿，编辑出版诗集《让我们共同面对灾难——世界诗人同祭汶川大地震》，希望用诗歌表达普天之下的人类共同之爱，用诗歌熨平心灵的创伤。在短短一个月的时间里，我们就收到了数十位国际诗人专门为汶川地震创作的诗歌。为这本诗集提供作品的诗人，不仅具有强烈的同情心，而且也有写作诗歌的高超技艺，在诗歌界享有盛名，如美国最有影响力的先锋派诗人之一、著名的诗歌表演艺术家安·瓦尔德曼（Ann Waldman），美国新百德福市桂冠诗人、格温朵琳诗歌奖得主、马萨诸塞大学文学教授埃弗瑞特·侯格兰（Everett Hougland），2008 年美国手推车诗歌奖得主蔚雅风（Afaa Weaver），芬兰著名诗人、翻译家利维·莱托（Leevi Lehto）等。在大爱的道德旗帜下，同情和爱心把所有的人连接在一起，共同面对大自然带给人类的灾难。帕洛夫教授在给我的电子邮件中说：“我们一直在通过电视和报纸关注着这个可怕的悲剧，希望能够表达安慰。在加利福尼亚，我们也经历过可怕的地震，但是却不如这次地震可怕。我深感悲痛。”这位年逾 8 旬的诗歌评论界领袖，还同她的丈夫约瑟夫·帕洛夫一起，通过全球性慈善组织（Global Giving）向中国灾区捐款，以此表达他们对中国人民的心意。

在与帕洛夫的长期交往中，我们建立了深厚的友情。在学术上，她无私地给予我帮助和指导，对我来说，她既是一位尊敬的导师，也是一位真诚的朋友。我无比珍视这份以学术研究为基础同她建立起来的跨越太平洋的友谊。值得一提的是，在 2016 年的中美诗歌诗学协会第五届年会上，帕洛夫特意为参加会议的中外学者举行了隆重的家庭宴会，尤其这个“family party”是以“in hornor of Professor Nie Zhenzhao”为名举行的，让我内心充满感动。那一刻，我又一次深深感受到了她的真诚和热情，也更加坚定了我们继续深化中美诗歌诗学交流与合作的决心。

帕洛夫是一位真正的学者和文化交流的使者，她用自己的智慧和热情为中美文化交流搭建了一座坚实的桥梁。她在诗歌理论与批评方面的重大贡献，以及在中美诗歌诗学领域的交流与合作方面的不懈努力，都值得我们铭记和学习。在推动中美文化交流与合作方面，她的努力将永远被铭记。尽管她永远离开了我们，但她对学术做出的伟大贡献，她对中国学者的真诚和热情将永远留在我们心里。

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三评 21 世纪现代主义：玛乔瑞·帕洛夫的诗学遗产

21st-Century Modernism: Marjorie Perloff's Poetics Legacy

钱兆明（**Qian Zhaoming**）

内容摘要：现代主义诗歌诗学批评家玛乔瑞·帕洛夫教授素以阐释难解的现当代实验诗歌而著称。这种抽丝剥茧的阐释才能可见于她早期评叶芝等诗人的专著、中期论 20 世纪现代主义诗歌运动的名篇，亦可见于她晚年探讨当代实验派与早期现代主义渊源关系的力作之中。本文聚焦于《21 世纪现代主义》《非原创天才》和《虚薄：微观诗学实验》等帕洛夫晚期著作对 21 世纪现代主义的回应和评价，探讨了帕洛夫晚期的诗学思想和遗产，揭示了她的一个重要观点，即：新世纪的先锋派已接过并完善早期现代主义的物质性诗学实验。

关键词：玛乔瑞·帕洛夫；诗歌与诗学；21 世纪现代主义；虚薄

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Title: 21st-Century Modernism: Marjorie Perloff's Poetics Legacy

Abstract: The Chinese academia's old friend, the world's leading scholar of avant-garde poetry, Marjorie Perloff died on March 24. Perloff was celebrated for her ability to explain difficult experimental poetry. This ability is seen in her early work on Yeats, middle works on 20th-century modernist movements as well as in her last books, *21st-Century Modernism:* (2002), *Unoriginal Genius* (2010) and *Infrathin* (2021), comparing the new century's experimental poetry with early modernism. This paper, focused on the books of her later years, demonstrates her responses to the 21st-Century modernism and foregrounding the ideas and legacy in poetics of her later years, and reveals one of her major ideas that modernism is back in the forms of Eliot's verbivocalvisual complex and Duchamp's ready-mades, delays in glass, and the infrathin.

Keywords: Marjorie Perloff; poetry and poetics; 21st-Century Modernism; infrathin

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玛乔瑞·帕洛夫教授（Marjorie Perloff, 1931-2024）是国际学界在现当代实验诗歌诗学研究领域的翘楚。她于 1965 年获博士学位，历任马里兰大学和南加州大学教授，1986 年加盟斯坦福大学，1990 年成为斯坦福大学塞迪·帕泰克讲席教授，1997 年当选为美国艺术与科学院院士，曾任美国现代语言协会、美国哲学学会等极具学术影响力的学术组织的会长。帕洛夫著有 28 部专著，其中前三部分别论一位诗人：《叶芝诗歌的韵律与涵义》（*Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats*, 1970）《洛厄尔的诗歌艺术》（*The Poetic Art of Robert Lowell*, 1973）《画家群里的奥哈拉》（*Frank O'Hara: Poet Among Painters*, 1977）；她 1981 年至 1999 年的著作大多聚焦诗歌潮流，其中最著称的是《不确定诗学》（*Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 1981），《思维的起舞》（*The Dance of the Intellect*, 1985）和《未来主义时刻》（*The Futurist Moment*, 1986）。帕洛夫 2001 年退休后笔耕不辍，以八九十高龄完成六部专著、一部译作。六部专著中有三部专论 21 世纪现代主义：《21 世纪现代主义》（*21st-Century Modernism*, 2002）、《非原创天才》（*Unoriginal Genius*, 2010）和《虚薄》（*Infrathin*, 2022）。

帕洛夫早期和中期的多部著作都深度探讨了英美诗歌的现代主义问题。在《不确定诗学》中指出，英美现代主义诗歌有两派，一派以叶芝、艾略特和史蒂文斯为代表，传承法国象征主义传统，另一派以斯泰因（Gertrude Stein）、庞德和威廉斯为代表，与法国象征主义背道而驰。帕洛夫管反象征主义那派的诗学叫“不确定诗学”。她在《思维的起舞》的开篇“庞德 / 史蒂文斯：谁的时代？”（“Pound/Stevens, whose era?”）中，揭示了美国学界对谁最有资格被称为美国现代主义诗歌的倡导者存在重大分歧。凯纳的《庞德时代》（*The Pound Era*, 1971）问世六年后，布鲁姆（Harold Bloom）抛出《华莱士·史蒂文斯我们风貌的诗》（*Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate*, 1977），昭示史蒂文斯才是我们时代的最强音。此后美国学界但凡论庞德就不提史蒂文斯，但凡论史蒂文斯就不提庞德。帕洛夫论文在文中提出“谁的时代？”，无疑是对美国学界关于现代主义诗歌既有观念的质疑和反思。她在 21 世纪三评现代主义，正是她的这一质疑和反思的结果。

《21 世纪现代主义》（*21st-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics*, 2002）是帕洛夫教授退休后发表的第一部论著。在《21 世纪现代主义》中，帕洛夫教授抨击了上世纪末流传甚广的“分期说”“断裂说”和“现代主义过时论”。她指出，“早期现代主义播下了物质主义诗学的种子，这种诗学日益成为我们这代人的诗学，它让我们更容易接受马塞尔·杜尚（Marcel Duchamp）的现成品、玻璃中的‘眷留’和文字游戏，格特鲁德·斯坦的超常规抽象文体、韦利米尔·赫列勃尼科夫（Velimir Khlebnikov）的音诗、具象诗、诗歌宣言和特制艺术书”（3-4）。什么是物质主义诗学？物质主义诗学就是凸显本来不显眼的微交际元素——词素（morpheme）、音素（phoneme）、韵律、标点

乃至诗歌断行分节等等，以传递“弦外之音”的诗学。帕洛夫用了艾略特《阿尔弗瑞德·普鲁弗洛克的情歌》（*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*）6-7 两行诗来解释注重用词素、音素、韵律等微元素表意的物质性诗学：

> Of réstless níghts in óne-nîght cheáp hotéls
> And sáwdûst réstaûráants with óyster shells （Eliot 11）

其“restless”就是一个精选的微观成分。试用“restless”的同义词“troubled”“anxious”取代之，取代后原有的效果就没有了。该词 -st 音素重复出现在下行“sáwdûst réstaûráants”、“oyster”中。该词 -le 音素重复出现在“hotels”和“shells”中。更重要的是，该词与下行“réstaûráants”押头韵，让人似乎听到“半冷清的街上”（“half-deserted streets”）回响着脚步声（21）。就这样，帕洛夫在讲清了什么是物质主义诗学的同时，让我们学会了怎样欣赏现代主义诗歌微观成分的美。

帕洛夫此书的策略是先论早期现代主义的艾略特、斯坦和杜尚，再论 21 世纪的苏珊·豪（Susan Howe）、伯恩斯坦（Charles Bernstein）、赫吉尼安（Lyn Hejinian）和麦卡弗里（Steve McCaffery）。论及当代美国诗人时，她同样通过细读微观成分，一步步论证他们的实验诗歌继承了艾略特、斯坦、杜尚注重的物质主义的倾向。结论是：“日趋强大的当代先锋派已促成新一波现代主义的到来”（5）。

帕洛夫教授在《非原创天才》（*Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*, 2010）一书中二论 21 世纪现代主义。该书标题是一个颠覆认知的词汇搭配（oxymoron）。按传统的艺术观，优秀的原创才堪称天才之作，非原创怎能说是天才之作？法国艺术家杜尚《带胡须的蒙娜丽莎》（*Mona Lisa with Mustache*,1919）等现成品艺术显示，再创造经典原创也必须有天才的想象力。杜尚的现成品艺术激发艾略特以其天才的想象力铸但丁（Dante Alighieri）、莎士比亚（Shakespeare）、韦伯斯特（John Webster）、瓦格纳（Richard Wagner）、波特莱尔（Charles Baudelaire）等诗人、剧作家经典原创于一炉。他拼贴 36 部经典而成的现代主义诗歌杰作《荒原》可谓非原创天才之作。然而，在《非原创天才》中，帕洛夫教授没有用《荒原》，而用了《机械复制时代的艺术作品》作者本雅明（Walter Benjamin）未完成的巨著《拱廊街计划》（*Arcades Project*）为例来论证非原创天才诗学。据统计，这部凝聚本雅明 13 年心血、用德法两种语言与图版再现 19 世纪巴黎之繁华的书稿有 75% 篇幅为非原创，摘引自 300 余种经典文献。这样一部浩瀚如烟的现成品艺术书稿，究竟有没有出版的价值？学术界争论了二三十年。1982 年，德法文原版《拱廊街计划》（*Passagen-Werk*）终于在德国法兰克福问世。1999 年，英文版《拱廊街计划》（*Arcades Project*）在哈佛出版。

随着 21 世纪人们对艺术的认识日趋开放，不少诗人、作家开始关注并尝试杜尚的现成品艺术和艾略特、本雅明等人实践的非原创诗学。帕洛夫在《非原创天才》中讨论的新世纪非原创天才之作有巴西诗人坎普斯兄弟（Augusto and Haroldo de Campos）的具象诗、苏珊·豪的《午夜》（*The Midnight*, 2003）、伯恩斯坦的《影子时光》（*Shadowtime*, 2005）、戈德斯密斯（Kenneth Goldsmith）的《交通实况》（*Traffic*, 2007）。这些作品中最典型代表新世纪博客、串流时代精神的非戈德史斯密斯莫属：他将纽约某周末 24 小时交通实况音频转成文字，并删节编织成的《交通实况》。在《非原创天才》中，帕洛夫通过详析《午夜》《交通实况》等当代现成品艺术诗，证实新世纪的先锋派已接过杜尚、艾略特、本杰明在 20 世纪启动的大胆实验，开始着手构思自己的‘杰作’，不再一味地追求‘原创’”（Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius* 22）。

帕洛夫三论 21 世纪现代主义的代表之作是《虚薄》（*Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics*, 2021）。该书题名“虚薄”出自杜尚。有人问维特根斯坦，“相同的东西是不是真相同？”维特根斯坦的回答是“不”；杜尚称相同事物中的细微差别为“虚薄”。该著共七章，分别论杜尚和斯坦为杜尚所作晦涩的《肖像》、艾略特精妙的视觉 - 听觉 - 语言复合体《小吉丁》（“Little Gidding”）与 21 世纪现代主义具象诗（Concrete Poetry）、庞德《诗章》与 21 世纪现代主义具象诗、史蒂文斯的虚薄文字游戏与豪、阿什贝利（John Ashberry）的微观诗学与伯恩斯坦 / 阿曼特劳特（Rae Armantrout）、贝克特（Samuel Beckett）的音韵诗、贝克特与音韵诗先驱叶芝。

在这部力作中，90 高龄的帕洛夫教授再次把我们的注意力引向现代主义诗歌开拓者和他们继承人在诗歌微观层面作出的大胆创新实验。这里，她把这种实验称为“微观诗学实验”（experiment in micropoetics）。她提供的佳例中最令人难忘的是艾略特《荒原》首句“April is the cruelest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land”。试用“harshest”或“worst”替代艾略特精选的“cruelest”，原有的效果就丢失了。诗歌是视觉、听觉、语言的综合体。有“cruelest”就有 -pr、-cr、-br 的连用，就会吸引读者反复玩味，从而联想到此诗指涉的深重灾难的第一次世界大战这一历史背景。重读此诗的读者还会联想到下节要出现的强奸菲洛墨拉（Philomela）并割去其舌头的色雷斯国王忒柔斯（King Tereus of Thrace）。没有“cruelest”与“April”“breeding”连用，就没有此种效果。由此帕洛夫推断出了关系到如何阅读和批评不同时期现代主义诗歌的有效方法：现代主义诗歌特别注重“虚薄”，“不仅诗人，就是欣赏诗歌的读者，也要有敏锐的目力和听力，能识别虚薄的差异。诗歌确实可被定义为一种注重虚薄的艺术，在这种艺术之中相异性要比相似性更为重要”（6）。这句话在一定程度上概括了“虚薄”诗学，亦是现代主义物质性诗学，亦是现代主义物质性诗学的实质。

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“Poetry Is the Discourse that Could Only Be Re-read”: An Interview with Professor Marjorie Perloff

Wang Songlin & Liu Xuelan & Marjorie Perloff

Abstract: This interview covers extensive topics about poetry and poetics, ranging from the language of poetry to the principles of formalism, from performance poetry to visual poetry, from digital humanities to cognitive poetics in the age of data, from the problems of “theory” to the conditions of humanities in American universities, and above all from Marjorie Perloff’s own insightful understanding of the essence of poetry to her endorsement of the ethical literary criticism initiated by Nie Zhenzao. According to Marjorie Perloff, poetry is “the art of relationship” as well as “the discourse that could only be Re-read, because you notice other things when you read it again.” In this interview, Marjorie Perloff cited modern and contemporary poets like Ezra Pound, Alan Ginsburg, Charles Bernstein, and the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein to demonstrate her opinions on poetry and poetics.

Keywords: Marjorie Perloff; poetics; art of re-reading; ethical criticism

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Wang Songlin (hereafter Wang for short): Professor Marjorie Perloff, welcome to Ningbo University and thank you for giving us the chance to have an interview with you. As we all know, you are a great critic of contemporary poetry and poetics. In many places of your writings, you speak highly of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, who considered poetry as “the neighbor of philosophy.” In your book *Wittgenstein’s Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary* (1996), you illustrate how Wittgenstein’s philosophy greatly influenced the Avant-garde po-

ets like Stein, Becket, Ingeborg Bachmann, specifically in terms of their awareness of the significance of ordinary language in writing poetry. I am wondering why you stress so much the "strangeness of the ordinary" in writing poetry and in what way you would disclose the "poetics" of ordinary language?

Marjorie Perlof (hereafter Perloff for short): Thank you. Well, I became interested in Wittgenstein，he is such a wonderful writer, and he himself said: Philosophy should really be written as poetry; philosophy should only be written as poetry. Now what does that mean? He meant that he didn't have a systematic philosophy. There wasn't any theory, and he hated theory, no theory to be learned，but there is a method, and the method is in a way of poetic method. What he said is that ordinary languages are alright. What he meant was that how strange the languages that we use every day and in a way that poets and other ones who deal with. So, Wittgenstein developed that elaborate theory, and all it really means. And here he is similar to the Russian formalists. I think this is the most important thing. He said: do not forget that although poetry is written in the language of information, it is not used in the language game of giving information. In other words, you don't write a poem to give information, but the language you may use may be exactly the same. You may use perfectly ordinary language in a way, but it would be used in a way so that it is interesting in its own right and important in its own right. That is the reason why I was interested in ordinary language and looked at writers like Wittgenstein and Becket whose ordinary language is so much made by the metaphor in poetry, imagery in poetry. You don't have to have metaphor or imagery, you often do, but you don't have to, but you do have to have language used in a special way, language that is extraordinary. Wittgenstein was one of the first to say that the language itself can be perfectly normal.

Liu Xuelan (hereafter Liu for short): Oh, yes, "the strangeness of ordinary language" is closely related to the Russian formalists, whose principal founder was Roman Jakobson. Jakobson extended the theoretical and practical concerns of the Prague School into the areas of poetic study. The Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky coined a very important term called "defamiliarization," which means almost the same with "the strangeness of ordinary language."

Perloff: Yes, Jakobson is certainly one of my heroes. The idea of "defamiliarization," making strange (you know, Viktor Shklovsky, who first said), means what a poet can do is "to make the stone stony," to make a stone seems stony, to make a tree seem like a tree, so that you have to think twice and look at it, and so the "defamiliarization" is the most ordinary things. The writer that the Russians talked

about was Tolstoy. So, as a prose writer, Tolstoy has the ability to take the most ordinary scene and describe it, so you see it as if you've never seen that before, and that is a wonderful thing.

Liu: It seems that people sometimes put you in the range of Formalists.

Perloff: I AM a formalist critic. I consider myself a formalist critic. That is a bad word today. Consider the dirty words today: formalist, close reader. But I am indeed a formalist. I would be the first to say so. The only difference I would say is that I am also a historian. I believe literary history is very important. And so, I think, I think of myself as a literary historian which the formalists don't on the whole. So, I always like to look at things in their historical context, which to me is very important, and intertextuality is very important.

Wang: Would it be somewhat too simplified if you are merely included in the formalist circle. Do you totally agree you are a formalist? What about the relationship between the sound and meanings or values of poetry?

Perloff: I do, I do. I mean, it's considered today there is a huge difference between the so-called new critics, the American new critics in the 1950s and 1960s. I don't consider myself one of the new critics. They were always looking for meanings beyond meaning. I'm much closer to Roman Jakobson. The basic argument of his was that sound equivalence always means meaning equivalence. In other words, if you change your sound, even slightly, it will change the meaning, sound and syntax too. The way something you said is crucial, and you'll have to look both sound and syntax and these things very closely, and that is the only way you can read poetry, instead of just going through and saying: it's about this, or it's about that, and so on. That really isn't criticism much at all. So, I do think about sound, I work a lot on sound, and I'm writing on sound now. I've just given a talk in Hangzhou on the sound of Ezra Pound. Sound is so important and would make all the difference, you know, to hear how something is said. I realize it very difficult to hear a foreign language. It is very difficult to understand how sound works, you know, it's hard for me, for French and so on. It is difficult, but you can try to do it and the best way to do it is to listen to recordings. We now have the Internet, so many recordings of poets reading, PennSound, for example. It is a wonderful website at the University of Pennsylvania where you can pick any poem here to read, so that you can listen to what it would sound like, and now we could do that with poets of all languages. I am sure there are good Chinese recordings.

Wang: Yes, this reminds me of what Alexander Pope said: "The sound must seem an echo to the sense." You also mentioned in one of your interviews about the performance of sound in poetry. Charles Bernstein, for example, would suggest that sound has the value of performance. Can you further illustrate the meaning of performance poetry?

Perloff: Of course, you have Charles Bernstein, a wonderful performer of his own poetry. The way he reads it is very special. That is not true of every poet, though. There are some poetry that are very good when you hear it read, and other poetry may be less so. But even then, Wallace Stevens is a poet who, I wouldn't say rehearing it, is all that important, but if you look at it closely, and you look at what words go together, sound is a way of relating, so that I just talked in Hangzhou about why we should have poems in front of us. But I've talked about Pound's poem, "The coming of war: Actaeon," where goes "the image of Lethe" and "fields," and also visual process is very important:

THE COMING OF WAR: ACTAEON
An image of Lethe,
and the fields
Full of faint light
but golden,
Gray cliffs,
and beneath them
A sea
Harsher than granite,
unstill, never ceasing;

So that you only see it as you go along. So that lineation must always mean something, there's no use lineating a text if it isn't going to mean something, as Ezra Pound said, "Do not retell in mediocre verse what has already been done in good prose." And I think it is one of the truest things, I always think of it when I see people's poems. You know, what's the point? There is no point in writing a poem, and that is going to be somehow better than the prose version or newspaper article, right? So, this is the trick and it is not easy to do.

Wang: As we know, Ezra Pound was greatly influenced by ancient Chinese poetry, specifically the poetry of Tang Dynasty. Do you think his principles of Imagism are still meaningful for writing poetry in the age of media?

Perloff: Yes. Professor Wang, you are referring to Ezra Pound's manifesto of Imagism, where there were three principles: first, direct treat of the thing； What is the second one? Yes, use no word that doesn't contribute to the presentation; and the third one is to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of the metronome. Yes, I think these principles ARE very important, because as Pound says, poetry is "news that stays news." You can't really make that definition better, it's "news that stays news," think about that. There are many things we read, and that a year later you wouldn't want to read it again. Let's say you are reading an article, an essay or something, and you read it for the information, and once you have read it, and you don't want to reread it. Poetry, though, is the art of relationships. So, there was a very good thing that was said by the Brazilian poet Augusto de Campos who said now in natural, in normal speech, there is no relationship between (this would be the two French words) "Estra étoiles" and "désastreux." The first word means "star" in English, and the second word means "disaster." Now for most ordinary people, there's no relationship between star and disaster. There might be a star; you might say this was a disaster. But for the poet, those words go together because they sound alike and the fact is that they do go together, because the stars used to predict disasters. So, the poet is the person who can take things that sound similar and show how they are somehow related, and if they rhyme, for instance, if two words rhyme, then they should be related. Yeats was the great master of that: how to do, how to write poetry. He can really achieve that. So, there is a kind of vertical relationship, as well as horizontal relationship. You don't just read like this, you read down and see what things relate, and that's just a wonderful thing.

Liu: Now we have learned much more from you about the relation between sound and meaning of poetic language. As I remember, while commenting the musicality of poetic language, you once said that "good poetry is not good enough to be read only once." Can you further illustrate this statement?

Perloff: Poetry, I think, is the discourse that could only be Re-read, because you don't see the first time. That is why I don't like poetry readings very much. I don't go to many poetry readings because you just hear them once, you know, and it's fine, and they tell a little joke, and so on, but I don't really like that very much, because it's true, that is the art that could only be Re-read, because you notice other things when you read it again. And so, in the best poetry, that is very striking: how that works. For any period, whether it is a Renaissance sonnet or whatever the Victorian poems, you know how that works in poetry.

Liu: "Poetry is the discourse that could only be Re-read." Yes, this is indeed a very thought-provoking observation. I remember in your dialogue years ago at Yunnan Normal University (China) with the Chinese poet Yu Jian from Yunnan, you mentioned there is nearly no love poetry in the United States now.

Perloff: That's true, well, I think it's hard to write love poetry today because we are so swarmed with all the phrases. You know everybody has them. So that just writing a straightforward love poem seems not a very likely thing to do. That's been true for maybe 100 years by now in certain ways. Of course, it could be a kind of poetic version. In that way, you mentioned Charles Bernstein before when we were in Hangzhou. Professor Nie wanted him to write a poem about the West Lake. He is collecting poems about the West Lake. So, Charles said I can do that. I may have the poem on the West Lake. It is more of a joke. So, I said: "I don't walk well. My walk is very bad now because of old age." So, I said when we were going:" I can swim better than I can walk." Let's see. I think I may have it here. Wait a minute. Oh, yes, here it is: "On West Lake: A Pastoral." I said: "I can swim better than I can walk." He made it a kind of parody of Pastoral: "I Can Swim Better Than Talk": "I can swim better than talk, / And walking is just the same if I remember how. / Swim against tide, tire quicker. / When you let tide rule at your paws under, / The echo of the mountains on the lake, just like for oodles of years, /But at your back, the lake is bound by metro /Anywhere, it is local versus universal/ to belabor the shape of it. / A few blocks away, shirts blowing in ten minutes' line, / Just like the home I thought I imagined." And it ended with: "No one will understand why this is of great importance to the nation." That's a line from William Carlos Williams.

Liu: Very interesting! I remember the dialogue you had with Mr. Yu Jian who mentioned to you that love poem writing has a long tradition in China. But in your dialogue, you also questioned why Chinese poetry describe less about darkness or sadness.

Perloff: Yes, I think you have the great Chinese tradition of classical Chinese poetry, which of course was love poetry, so beautiful, and I think that tradition is wonderful. I've always said that Chinese poetry is really great, while the American poetry is always sarcastic in that way. And Allen Ginsburg once said to me when I asked why there is little love poetry, but there is a lot of gay love poetry? He said because there is so much sublimation, so therefore it goes to poetry. Maybe today that's no longer true.

Wang: Prof. Perloff, you have rich experience of writing poetry, teaching

literary criticism in many universities around the world. I am just wondering whether you have always in your mind the same philosophy of poetry. Or any change in your view of literary criticism, specifically poetic criticism?

Perloff: I have a new book now. A new book just came out in two volumes which collected my book reviews from 1969 to 2019. So, when I was reading the early ones, I mostly haven't changed my mind or changed my philosophy. But there are some things that I have, that I no longer like what I liked in the past. In *Radical Artifice*, for instance, Johanna Drucker has this in the visual poetry. I don't think she is so good anymore.

Wang: Johanna Drucker is a writer and scholar who has published many volumes of creative and critical work on visual poetry, writing, and contemporary art. She is Professor of English, Robertson Chair of Media Studies, and Director of Media Studies at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. But I am sorry up to now I have not found many Chinese translation of her books.

Perloff: Yes, she is a good critic on visual poetry. I am not so crazy about it anymore. I don't think it's so interesting anymore. So, I have changed my mind to some extent, but on the whole not, but I get very upset, what makes me very unhappy and upset is that today in the United States it is as if the poets have forgotten everything that they have ever learned, which is an art, and it always is about, a poem about Donald Trump, a poem about complaining about this, a poem against that, and most of it, I don't think they are poets at all. I just don't think it's poetry, and so I think you know you are not allowed to say that or criticize that, especially if it is a poem written by any minority group. You are not allowed to criticize it, and so, there are a lot of materials coming up. It's just really pretty bad, you know, badly written and about very trivial subjects.

Wang: We had the sad news that Harold Bloom died on Oct.14th, which I think is an enormous loss for the academia of literary criticism. Harold Bloom was born in 1930. He might have witnessed the same phenomenon of literary criticism as you did in America. So, I think you are the most suitable scholar to comment on Harold Bloom. Can I know your comments on Bloom and his contribution to literary criticism?

Liu: Harold Bloom was once a professor in Yale and Harvard, and he is a well-known critic in the Chinese academia. We know that he wrote and edited numerous books for the study of literary classics, books like *Western Canon*, *How to Read and Why*, and *The Anxiety of Influence,* his early influential work. Unfortunately,

he passed away a month ago. Critics in China have published many articles in remembrance of him.

Perloff: Well, I have a terrible incident with him. Back in 1985 when I was young, I was invited to Washington, DC. to the Shakespeare Library to have a conference called "After the Flood" and I was the only woman invited […] (a long passage omitted here) But over the years, I felt that I got to like his work better, I got to like his criticism better. I don't know whether he even cared about me at all. But he was always complaining about what he called "the school of resentment," which he meant Feminists and anybody looking at poetry differently. I think that is a misunderstanding on his part, because he himself, from my point of view, never looked at poetry from a literary point of view, it was always Freud, Psychoanalytic, and if it was not psychoanalytic, it is theosophy, religious things, all kinds of symbols, invented all this language, so it isn't as if he was so literary till later in his life, then he was talking about Shakespeare and all that. But he was very embattled, very angry, and now everybody seems to love him, and when he died now, everybody wrote these incredible things about him, but they are all men, a hundred percent men. There's not a woman that ever said that. Only men, I notice it on website. They have at least thirty eulogies for Harold Bloom, but does anybody notice they are all by men? There is not one by a woman. That wouldn't be, because he was awful to women.

Wang: I guess Harold Bloom hated theories, especially those of "politically correct," theories that he would call "the school of resentments," as you have just mentioned.

Perloff: That is true, I don't like that either, but he was very exaggerated about it, and very didactic. Then, also, by the way, Harold Bloom had no use for Eliot and Pound，my favorite poets, at all ,and he would say things like " There is no good, and Wallace Stevens is the great poet, and Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, I don't love Emerson as a poet, I don't think he is an interesting poet particularly." He would just say these things and then he also said, this is interesting, that you cannot be influenced by a foreign poet. Now, I don't believe it. That is what he says. You cannot be influenced by poets in another language, only by somebody in your own language, because it's impossible. Well, I said, how about Charles Baudelaire, the French poet and Edgar Allan Poe? He said, oh, my dear, you know, you can't be influenced by it.

Liu: How about Dante and his *Divine Comedy*? Professor Bloom have read a

lot such classics.

Perloff: That's right. I mean, why can't you be influenced by somebody in another language?

Liu: So, as you have mentioned, it seems your literary views remain almost unchanged for about half a century. But things changed, like it or not, like about ten years ago, Andrew Delbanco from Columbia University, who is well known, among other works, for his humanistic exploration in *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be* and also William Chace from Stanford who published in 1990 an essay "The Decline of the English Department." Both of them have shown deep worries about the position of humanities. So, what is the condition now in American universities?

Perloff: Well, it's very complicated, I think we're guilty, everybody says it's only because students just want to earn money, so they don't want to take literature to get jobs. And so, they're going to become engineers or lawyers, so everybody blames STEM, the subject of science. I think that's really only partly true. I think we are to blame, the literary people, the professors are to blame because they're so scared of somehow nothing relevant. They stopped teaching students how wonderful literature is, how important literature is, even if it doesn't help you get a job and it never helps to get a job. When I went to college, it was true even then, it would never help you to get a job, it just helps you think, you learn how to think. And then if you go to law school or medical school or whatever, maybe you know, you will be better in that way, too. So, I think that they started, you know, not teaching literature, only doing cultural studies. And cultural studies then get very boring. So instead of studying literature, you study highways and road signs or things like that, or shopping malls. I directed a dissertation (I didn't direct it but I was on this committee for dissertation) on teenagers in shopping malls, and it was all about what books they buy in shopping malls or don't, teen romances and all that. Now we don't even have shopping malls anymore because people buy things online. So that's really dated. You see how quickly that is dated. So now who wants to write or read about shopping malls? Or you write about video games. You know there are all these things about, you know, no novels but video games. I think it is very silly. My husband, who was a cardiologist physician, but he has been an English major as an undergraduate and he always thought that was ridiculous. He loved literature and thought literature was very important and should be studied. But in the United States now, we've come almost to rock bottom that in many universities they partly don't teach any literature at all. They are all about race. Race is the big topic, race, gender, queer theory. But what the effect of all that has been that people just don't take any

literature courses and I know it from my own grandchildren. My granddaughter, who came to China with me twice, is an art history major at Harvard. She managed to graduate without having any English course. She didn't want to because she tried to take a few but didn't seem to be very good. You don't really learn anything. So, we have succeeded in kind of killing the field. And sooner or later, it will get better again, but I think it is much better in China, but this is what has happened. It is that they have diluted it to the extent that you don't read any important writers, and you only read neglected writers. As I said in Hangzhou, sometimes people are neglected for a reason, maybe they shouldn't be neglected. So, you don't always have to teach neglected writers. Now it is true that it is hard today to get people to read long novels.

Wang: Our mutual friend Professor Claude Rawson wrote me a letter last week from Cambridge. He is going to make a written Presidential Address to the Hangzhou Ethical Conference. And I am glad I will have the privilege to read this Presidential Address on behalf of him. In his letter he also complains that nowadays readers and critics don't read the text, saying that people are (I quote) "in pursuit of diversionary disciplines which bypass the text in favour of abstract political, or economic or psychological, or other systems, in which the literary scholar is often unlikely to possess specialist expertise, while evading the specialist challenge of the discipline of reading books in which he or she is presumed to be expert."

Perloff: They just look for something in the text, they don't know how to read. How to read is the hardest thing you can do. It's very hard to learn how to read. And by that, I mean that most people just sort of read for something. But they don't really pay attention that much. So, when I went to college, I thought I knew how to read, but I really didn't. That is, what English Department can do is to teach people how to read, it doesn't even matter so much which things you cover. But you have to also cover some things historically, because if not, you always think that things were invented last week. You know everybody thinks this is so new, what was done in the seventeenth century or what was done much earlier. So, I think I have very little to defend in the United States, I mean I am retired now, but I think it is really terrible. The way we have sort of stopped teaching things, and I can catch the moment when it all happens, for instance, it used to be true, in the United States, that everybody studied the romantic poets, Blake (Everybody loved Blake), Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelly, Byron, Keats...they are all men, Okay? So, the next step was to say: we can't study men, and those poets, by the way, were all studied by Paul de Man, you know, all the theorists, the romantic poets. Then the next step

was to say: we are going to, instead, read Ms. Humphry Ward. Someone may say that she is not interesting, they are not very good poets, and I remember being at a meeting where a girl raised her hand, and she said, why are we supposed to? I don't like these poets. And the third step is that they didn't want to do romantics at all, you see that's what happens. If you don't do good literature, now what upsets people is that literature is not like science, you can't measure it. You can't measure taste. You can't say, absolutely, this is good and this isn't good. And we should do this, we should do that, there are many possibilities. Even so, there are some once you graduate from school, when you finish your graduate work, and if you get a PhD, and you have an expertise that other people don't have. And the problem with what we do today is that we pretend there is no expertise. In the United States now, athletes have expertise in sports. In sports, everybody agrees that it takes expertise to be a great tennis player, nobody would deny that there is an expertise, but when it comes to literary study, people think there is no expertise. It is like that anything goes. And that has a very bad effect, and I hope it will change again. I think it's different here. First of all, you are working in a foreign language, and it is itself making it much harder and much better. My former student Bryan Reed, who is a dean in the University of Washington, he thinks the English Department there is terrible. I said which department is good, he said East Asian Studies, because you have to know something. If you learn Chinese, you have to know something. And so just the very fact of doing a foreign literature is already a big thing because you are learning something that you didn't know before.

Wang: This weekend we will go to Hangzhou to attend the International Conference on Ethical Literary Criticism. As I understand, there will be over 500 participants from home and abroad gathering in Hangzhou for this big event. Do you think there is a growing ethical turn of literary criticism? You mentioned yesterday while we were having dinner that China has a great tradition of ethical literary criticism, which could be traced far back to Confucius and many other ancient philosophers. In what way do you think the West and the East can have a better dialogue, especially in the field of ethical literary criticism?

Perloff: Well, I think it is great to have this new Ethical Society, because you could use Confucius, you could refer to your philosophers, and not always refer to western theorists like Derrida. But I noticed (I hate to say it), I noticed when looking at the conference program there are lots of things on Derrida. I don't know. I think ethics is a very difficult thing to talk about. When the Society first began, I think the papers were rather simple, so they might be on the ethics of the characters

in the novels. And I don't think you can talk about that so readily, because after all they are just characters, they are not real people, and so talk about did they do the right thing, that sort of extra literary kind of thing, which I don't like so much, but there are issues that are very important. And I think at least Prof. Nie felt it: what is the ethical effect of literature itself? What is the ethics of reading? I am skeptical about it in many ways, because literature does not make you a better person ever. Think of the Nazis, they were very interested in all the best of literature, and writers are often very nasty people. It is rare to find writers who are nice people. You know most examples of most writers. They were very self-centered and did things that weren't very good. The best one, I think, is Samuel Beckett, a writer who was very admirable, because in WWII he didn't have to do anything, he could have stayed in Ireland. He went to France and worked with the resistance. He was a very ethical person. I have said to somebody, but he treated women very badly. He wasn't so ethical that way, you see.

Liu: Is there also a kind of ethical turn for literary criticism in the United States in recent years?

Perloff: No really. They all said to me what ethical criticism is. I don't think so. Everything is political. We have, you see, we have so much more politics so that all that has been politicized. As the very first question is, who is allowed to say something? If a poet says something, are you allowed as a white man? Are you allowed to say this or that? Can a man speak for women? Can a male novelist create a female character? Could Jane Austen create male characters? I mean, it is ridiculous. Everything is so politicized that I don't think ethics comes up so much. It is always social, just talk of social justice. Of course, you can say that is ethical in a way, but I tend to agree with Wittgenstein who said that, there are no ethical ideas, there are only ethical actions. That sounds very illuminated, which is really true, he meant that we intuitively know certain things. So, he gives this example, if I say I don't play tennis well, but I don't really care to play any better, OK. That is a reasonable statement, perhaps, but if you say I don't treat people well, but I don't care to treat them any better. That's a very different kind of statement, and sort of unethical statement, so we know in a way that ethics is something that's very hard to define, of course, and yet we intuitively sense many things about it; on the other hand, in novels, for instance, by Henry James, it's very interesting to try to think, how sometimes the ethics of the characters the novelist thought they would be, in *The Portrait of a Lady,* where you're supposed to believe that Isabel Archer is disillusioned, and her stepdaughter Pansy, you can also argue she is a kind of

wicked stepmother to Pansy, because she really hurts her rather than helps her, and so on. So, there are many very interesting issues, and I think it's wonderful for what is going on here.

Wang: Nowadays it's getting very popular to talk about the issue of digital humanity in the age of data and posthumanism. Again, I would like to know your opinions of whether the changing idea of humanity will affect the philosophy of poetry and /or poetics in the age of posthumanism?

Perloff: I don't think the basic things do change. And the age of data does mean we are buried under overwhelming information and we are already in the age of data. Knowledge is not the same thing as information. We now have tons of information, but that's not knowledge, that's just information. And if you are just buried up in the information, you can't do very much, you can say that humanity can sort out what's important and what isn't, so that you know what to pay attention to, and not just anything, everything doesn't have equal weight. One thing that I think is interesting is much more attention is paid now, I think not so much in history, but geography. Geography is very important, to say, literature and poetry, where something comes from, how is something related to something else. In geographical terms, which we now see is so important, what came to whom, how did things travel, I find that very fascinating to try to think of how that works. You know, how it works in particular ways that every period is different, for instance, when you study Asian American, you study it across the United States. Asian American poetry has certain characteristics, and I would argue that there may be, of course, subject matter, these different subject matters, but I have not seen that, either the poetry or Asian American fiction is different in kind from any other American fictions. I don't know why it would be, either. It's just a subject matter, and subject matter is never really the central thing in literature. It has to be how, the how not the what. So as far as being in an age of data, if it is a total age of data, we don't need the humanity at all, we don't need literature and we have science. But science can only answer so many questions, and the interesting thing is now people are beginning to say: yes, we can define exactly what anything is made out of, or we can do neurological criticism of the brain, but it only goes so far, it doesn't take very much. I think cognitive poetics is interesting, but it can only go so far. It never explains the mystery of consciousness itself and thinking itself. My husband used to be very excited when these things first started with a diagram in the brain, if you're sophisticated in music, if you have studied music, the brain waves will be very different from people who haven't studied music. And so, you can show that, okay, so you've shown that, but

that still doesn't show how or what makes the music, what is this, how does it work. There are so much that you can't show and remains mysterious, and the basic literary things, or philosophical issues or art issues remain very mysterious. How is that and how does it work, and I don't think we can ever answer those questions. And data，I'm not so interested in big data.

Wang: So many thanks for this interview, Prof. Perloff. Your talk covers a wide range of topics, from the language of poetry to the poetics of formalism, from the performance poetry to visual poetry, from the problems of "theory" to the condition of humanities in American universities, from digital humanities to cognitive poetics in the age of data, and above all from your understanding on the essence of poetry to your endorsement of ethical literary criticism in China. I am sure the audience have already greatly benefited from your view on poetry and poetics. Once again, on behalf of Ningbo University and the audience here, thank you for this wonderful interview.

Liu: Thank you, Professor Perloff, for this informative and insightful interview.

Perloff: You are welcome. Thank you all, thank you for your questions.

In Memoriam: Critic par excellence of Creative "Unoriginal Genius" & Marjorie Perloff's Arcades Project of Poetry by "Other Means" (1951-2024)

Youngmin Kim

Abstract: Wittgenstein reflects on memory, saying that photograph is not reliable, and the memory-image cannot convince us either, since "memory does not show us the past, any more than our senses show us the present," and "memory is itself conditioned by the specificity of context." Reading closely the conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth's large art exhibition, called "The Play of the Unsayable," Marjorie Perloff relates Wittgenstein's theory of language game to Kosuth's art text of *Abridged in Ghent,* and argues that the language game initiated by a sentence like "I see us still, sitting at the table" is charged with possibilities for "philosophy" as a "form of poetic composition." Wittgenstein's Ladder is an apt figure for Marjorie Perloff's radical aesthetic which is ethical as well, doing the right thing for the individual poets, moving up the ladder which Gertrude Stein called "beginning again and again," but with changes with repetition in a spiral way. Later in her preface of *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (2010), Marjorie provides her rationale to update her earlier work, *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media* (1991) in terms of a "new citational and often constrained-bound poetry" in an environment of "hyper-information." Since *Unoriginal Genius* (2010), Perloff traces her poetics of "unoriginal genius" from a Benjamian Arcades Project, made up of creative citations, discussing the processes of choice, framing, and reconfiguration. It is my contention that Marjorie Perloff as the critic par excellence has been dedicating her own Arcades Project to explore the intriguing development in contemporary poetry, creatively embracing the "unoriginal" writing of uncreative poets.

Keywords: Marjorie Perloff; Wittgensteinian ladder; Walter Benjaminian arcades project; unoriginal genius, critic par excellence

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Introduction

Wittgenstein reflects on memory, saying that photograph is not reliable, and the memory-image cannot convince us either, since "memory does not show us the past, any more than our senses show us the present," and "memory is itself conditioned by the specificity of context." Reading closely the conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth's large art exhibition, called "The Play of the Unsayable," Marjorie Perloff relates Wittgenstein's theory of language game to Kosuth's art text of *Abridged in Ghent,* and argues that the language game initiated by a sentence like "I see us still, sitting at the table" is charged with possibilities for "philosophy" as a "form of poetic composition." Wittgenstein's Ladder is an apt figure for Marjorie Perloff's radical aesthetic which is ethical as well, doing the right thing for the individual poets, moving up the ladder which Gertrude Stein called "beginning again and again," but with changes with repetition in a spiral way. Later in her preface of *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (2010), Marjorie provides her rationale to update her earlier work, *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media* (1991) in terms of a "new citational and often constrained-bound poetry" in an environment of "hyper-information." Since *Unoriginal Genius* (2010), Perloff traces her poetics of "unoriginal genius" from a Benjamian Arcades Project, made up of creative citations, discussing the processes of choice, framing, and reconfiguration.

The purpose of this essay is to memorialize and celebrate her great achievement during the period of 1951-2024 when Marjorie Perloff as the critic par excellence has been dedicating her own Arcades Project to explore the intriguing development in contemporary poetry, creatively embracing the "unoriginal" writing of uncreative poets.

Critic Par Excellence: Marjorie Perloff's Arcade Project of Poetry

In a notebook entry of *Zettel*, Ludwig Wittgenstein ponders the role of memory:

> 650. Memory: "I see us still, sitting at that table."—But have I really the same visual image—or one of those that I had then? Do I also certainly see the table and my friend from the same point of view as then, and so not see myself?—My memory—image is not evidence for that past situation, like a photography which was taken then and convinces me now that this was how things were then. The memory-image and the memory-words stand on the same level." (*Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary*, 1996, 241)

Wittgenstein further reflects on memory, saying that photograph is not reliable, and the memory-image cannot convince us either, since "memory does not show us the past, any more than our senses show us the present," and "memory is itself conditioned by the specificity of context." Reading closely the conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth's large art exhibition, called "The Play of the Unsayable," Marjorie Perloff relates Wittgenstein's theory of language game to Kosuth's art text of *Abridged in Ghent,* and argues that the language game initiated by a sentence like "I see us still, sitting at the table" is charged with possibilities—possibilities for "philosophy" as a "form of poetic composition."

Marjorie elaborates this as follows: "In the case of *Abridged at Ghent,* the seemingly simple device of the photograph, placed on the page as a screen that occludes the actual words beneath it, is used, paradoxically, to bring out those words' latent meanings. It is a language game Wittgenstein himself would have found tantalizing, demonstrating, as it does, the intricate relationship of 'family resemblance' to difference. 'The problem,' as he put it in the *Philosophical Investigations*, 'are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always shown.' Arranging what we have always known": here is the legacy Wittgenstein has given to artists and poets" (242), says Marjorie, summarizing Kosuth's particular conceptualism as the lesson that "Ethics and aesthetics are one."

Wittgenstein's Ladder is an apt figure for Marjorie Perloff's radical aesthetic which is ethical as well, doing the right thing for the individual poets, moving up the ladder which Gertrude Stein called "beginning again and again," but with changes with repetition in a spiral way or "transductive" way in the context or "feedback loops" of the context in which words and sentences define their meanings.

Later in her preface of *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (2010), Marjorie provides her rationale to update her earlier work, *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media* (1991) in terms of a "new citational and often constrained-bound poetry" in an environment of "hyper-information." In *Unoriginal Genius*, Marjorie begins with T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* , "Poetry of the Pound Tradition," and Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project.* And further, "From Avant-Garde to Digital: The Legacy of Brazilian Concrete Poetry, with the example of Augusto de Campos's digital versions of his own poem in 1997 for Casa das Rosas in Sao Paolo; Charles Bernstein's opera libretto *Shadowtime* and Walter Benjamin's life, explicitly citing by a literary means linking concrete poetry to the work of Oulipo. Susan Howe's "lyrical montage" of *The Midnight* in sections of prose and poetry with interwoven photographs of books and pieces of Howe's family memoir, crossing the borders of genre; "Language in Migration: Multilingualism and Exophonic Writing in the New Poetics" dedicates to the Japanese-born Yoko Tawada's language games and the French-Norwegian Caroline Bergvall, contrasting them with Eliot and Dante's and Pound's *Cantos*; and finally, Kenneth Goldsmith's uncreative and conceptual writing in his 2007 work *Traffic*, showing and revealing Perloff's own Arcades Project.

The Arcades in Paris had been constructed around the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Walter Benjamin linked them to the city street life in which the *flâneur* was strolling or loafing, observing modern urban life, like French poet, Charles Baudelaire. At first, the *Arcades* began as a small article he would finish in a short period time, attempting to use collage techniques in literature. However, Benjamin's *Arcades Project* grew bigger, like Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*. It includes sections or c*onvolutes* on Arcades, Fashion, Catacombs, iron constructions, exhibitions, advertising, Interior design, Baudelaire, The Streets of Paris, Panoramas and Dioramas, Mirrors, Painting, Modes of Lighting, Railroads, Marx, Photography, Mannequins, Social movements, Literary History, the Stock exchange, Lithography, the Paris Commune, and what not. The Project's structure is unique, and the convolutes correspond to letters of the alphabet. The individual sections of text in the form of individual lines or multi-paragraph analyses are ordered with square brackets, starting from [A1,1]. This numbering system comes from the pieces of folded paper that Benjamin wrote on, along with Benjamin's own cross-references at the end of some sections. The sections of text are composed of Benjamin's own thoughts and consecutive quotations. These two types of textual sections include a large typeface for his writing and a smaller one for citations.

In fact, Marjorie Perloff argues that Benjamin's "citational material" of

"the endless quotations in the Arcades" took on a life of its own—a life, not of historiography or of philosophical treatise but of poetic construct" of "literary appeal" (28). It is not difficult to see that Benjamin's inclusion of popular songs, poems, travel-guides, literary narratives, and commentary reminds us a rich and poetic mélange or Deleuzean "assemblage" of text. What's at stake in Benjaminian citation theory is the act of citing, recycling, mediating other people's words and sentences, and entire texts, thereby implying Marjorie's critical texts before and after the conceptualization of "Unoriginal Genius" which has been developed from *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media* (1991) till *Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics* (2021), I dare presume.

> *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media.* University of Chicago Press, 1991; *Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary.* University of Chicago Press, 1996; *The Dance of the Intellect: Studies in the Poetry of the Pound Tradition*. Northwestern University Press, 1996; *Poetry On and Off the Page: Essays for Emergent Occasions*. Northwestern University Press, 1998; *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture*, with a New Preface. University of Chicago Press, 2003; *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy.* University of Alabama Press, 2004; *The Vienna Paradox: A Memoir.* New Directions Books, 2004; *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*. University of Chicago Press, 2010; *Poetics in a New Key: Interviews and Essays.* University of Chicago Press, 2014; *Edge of Irony: Modernism in the Shadow of the Habsburg Empire*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2016; *Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics* (2021).

In fact, Perloff traces her poetics of "unoriginal genius" from a Benjamian Arcades Project, made up of creative citations, discussing the processes of choice, framing, and reconfiguration as in the work of Brazilian Concretism and Oulipo, of such hybrid citational texts as Charles Bernstein's opera libretto *Shadowtime* and Susan Howe's documentary lyric sequence *The Midnight*. Perloff also finds that the new syncretism extends to language: for example, to the French-Norwegian Caroline Bergvall writing in English and the Japanese Yoko Tawada, in German. *Unoriginal Genius* concludes with a discussion of Kenneth Goldsmith's conceptualist book *Traffic*—a seemingly "pure'" radio transcript of one holiday weekend's worth of traffic reports. In these instances and many others, Perloff shows us "poetry by other means" of great creative complexity.

Marjorie Perloff as the critic par excellence has been dedicating to explore the intriguing development in contemporary poetry, creatively embracing the "unoriginal" writing of uncreative poets.

Conclusion in Memoriam

It is interesting to notice that Marjorie began her career with Yeats Dissertation at the Catholic University of America. In an interview with Charles Bernstein, "Futurism and Schism: Close Listening with Marjorie Perloff," Marjorie talked about William Butler Yeats:

> I still think he is a great poet, but I was certainly influenced by the culture of my university years. In the 60s, Yeats was a hot dissertation topic. Gayatri Spivak, for example, wrote her dissertation on Yeats. All kinds of people who you wouldn't expect worked on Yeats because there was so much to do. On Blake as well. You could explicate Blake's late prophetic books like Jerusalem. The same thing was true of Yeats, and it just seemed very exciting. But don't forget that I wrote my dissertation on rhyme: it was the formal aspect of Yeats's poetry that interested me, and with respect to sound. I still think Yeats, is an absolutely extraordinary poet, however different he may be from, say, Gertrude Stein. Yeats's work is so rich and complex.[1]

In fact, her dissertation was published as *Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats* (as a book in 1970).

Confucius considered life as a process of transformation that moves through different developmental stages, with each stage having its own task and process. Confucius reviewed his own life journey and suggested the following stages of life (*Confucian Analects*, Confucius 1971 [500 B.C.E.]; Cheng, Y. 1988).

In *The Analects*, Confucius provides us with maps of human development. The Master said, at 15, I set my heart upon learning; At 30, I had planted my feet firm upon the ground; At 40, I no longer suffered from perplexities; At 50, I knew what were the biddings of heaven; At 60, I heard them with docile ears; At 70, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right.

1. 志學 : 15; 2. 弱冠 : 20; 3. 而立 : 30; 4. 不惑 : 40; 5. 知天命 :50; 6. 耳順 :

1 See https://https://press.uchicago.edu/books/excerpt/2015/Perloff_Poetics_New_Key.html. Accessed 15 May 2024.

60; 7. 古稀 : 70 從心 ; 8. 傘壽 : 80; 9. 卒壽 : 90; 10. 上壽 : 100

At the age of 93 now, she is in heaven. Farewell, Marjorie, till we meet again.

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From Paradigm Shift to Scientific Construction: The Interdisciplinarity of Marjorie Perloff's Poetic Theory

Yang Gexin

Abstract: Marjorie Perloff is a towering figure in contemporary literary criticism, known for her incisive analyses and groundbreaking theories on modern and contemporary poetry. Her work traverses the rich terrains of modernism, postmodernism, and media ecology, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of poetic expression in the 20th and 21st centuries. This essay, in memory of Marjorie Perloff, examines her significant literary contributions, and the critical reception of her poetic theories, underlining the interdisciplinary nature of her work.

Keywords: Marjorie Perloff; indeterminacy; radical artifice; unoriginal genius; infrathin

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Marjorie Perloff was born in Vienna, Austria, on September 28, 1931. The rise of Nazism forced her family to flee to the United States in 1938, where they settled in Riverdale, New York. This profound experience of displacement and resettlement during her early years may have influenced her subsequent interest in themes of fragmentation and alienation in literature. Marjorie pursued her undergraduate education at Oberlin College, receiving her Bachelor's degree in 1953. She then

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earned her Ph.D. from the Catholic University of America in 1965, completing a dissertation on W.B. Yeats and his relationship with the visual arts. Her academic career flourished at several institutions, most prominently at Stanford University, where she served as the Sadie Dernham Patek Professor of Humanities. Even after her retirement, she remains an active scholar-in-residence at the University of Southern California. Her prolific career has been adorned with numerous accolades, including fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Marjorie Perloff's oeuvre is marked by a series of influential works that have reshaped the landscape of literary criticism. Among her most notable texts are "Frank O'Hara: Poet Among Painters" (1977), "The Poetics of Indeterminacy" (1981), "The Dance of the Intellect" (1985), "Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media" (1991), and "Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century" (2010), "Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics" (2021).

She gained prominence in the 1970s through the publication of influential works such as "Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats" (1970), "The Poetic Art of Robert Lowell" (1973), and "The Poet Among Painters: Frank O'Hara: Poet Among Painters" (1977). Her writings demonstrate a primary focus on individual poets, adherence to academic tradition, emphasis on meticulous analysis of literary works within diverse cultural contexts, and a critical stance towards the prevalent deconstruction movement in the United States at that time.

As one of her seminal works, "The Poetics of Indeterminacy," examines the transition in 20th-century poetry from the clarity and precision of modernism to a more open-ended, indeterminate form of poetic expression. She delves into the works of avant-garde poets, emphasizing how these poets challenge conventional forms and meanings. By doing so, Marjorie highlights the ways in which modern poetry resists fixed interpretations, inviting readers to engage with texts more interactively and fluidly. In this book, Marjorie explores the works of poets such as John Ashbery and Samuel Beckett, among others. She argues that these poets embrace ambiguity and multiplicity, rejecting the notion that poetry should offer clear, unambiguous messages. Instead, they create texts that demand active engagement from readers, who must navigate the layers of meaning and interpretative possibilities.

In "The Dance of the Intellect," Marjorie investigates how modernist poets grappled with the fragmentation of language and meaning. She focuses on how poets like William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot used innovative techniques to reinvigorate poetic expression. By examining their use of collage,

juxtaposition, and other experimental forms, Marjorie reveals the intellectual rigor and creativity that define modernist poetry. This work underscores Marjorie's belief that modernist poets were not simply breaking away from tradition for the sake of novelty but were deeply engaged in a critical rethinking of language and its capabilities. Their experiments with form and structure were efforts to capture the complexities and uncertainties of the modern world.

"Radical Artifice" represents a significant development in Marjorie's critical thought. In this book, she explores how contemporary poetry has been influenced by media technologies and cultural shifts. Marjorie argues that poets have increasingly incorporated elements of media and popular culture into their work, leading to new forms of poetic expression. Focusing on poets like John Cage and Susan Howe, Marjorie examines how media and technological advancements have transformed the landscape of poetry. She argues that these poets use techniques of appropriation, collage, and sampling—methods more commonly associated with visual and digital art—to create innovative poetic works. By doing so, they challenge traditional notions of authorship and originality, reflecting the media-saturated world in which we live.

In "Unoriginal Genius," Marjorie continues to explore how contemporary poets use techniques closely associated with visual and digital art to create new poetic forms. This book represents a culmination of her interest in the intersections between literature and other art forms, as well as her engagement with postmodern theories of authorship and originality. Marjorie examines the works of poets like Kenneth Goldsmith and Caroline Bergvall, who challenge the notion of the poet as an original creator. Instead, they view poetry as a collaborative, intertextual practice that draws on existing texts and cultural materials. By doing so, they reflect the complexities and pluralities of the contemporary world.

Marjorie Perloff's "Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics" is an insightful exploration into the subtle nuances and minute distinctions that often escape traditional literary analysis. The book delves into the concept of the "infrathin," a term originally coined by the artist Marcel Duchamp to describe the barely perceptible, infinitesimal differences between similar phenomena. Marjorie adapts this term to examine its relevance and application in contemporary poetry, aiming to highlight and celebrate the delicate intricacies that define the micropoetics of modern literary works. Marjorie advocates for a refined, meticulous reading strategy that appreciates small-scale poetic elements. This approach enriches the reader's engagement with the text, unveiling layers of meaning that might otherwise remain obscured. By highlighting the potential of infrathin elements, Marjorie inspires

contemporary poets to experiment with new forms and techniques. Her insights promote a deeper exploration of the subtle aspects that can profoundly shape poetic expression.

Marjorie Perloff is an esteemed scholar renowned for her profound wisdom. She has consistently demonstrated a tireless commitment to pushing the boundaries of knowledge and challenging established epistemic frameworks. Her exceptional accomplishments and significant influence, cultivated through her unwavering pursuit of poetic theory and critical paradigm, are widely revered by the academic community.

One of the most influential paradigms in Marjorie's poetic criticism is the concept of indeterminacy. This idea suggests that modern and contemporary poetry often resists fixed or singular interpretations, encouraging multiple readings and interpretative possibilities. In her book, "The Poetics of Indeterminacy," Marjorie argues that contemporary and avant-garde poetry often creates "open texts" that do not have one fixed meaning. Instead, they invite readers to engage with them in unique and personal ways. The texts that Marjorie champions often embrace fragmentation, discontinuity, and ambiguity. This can be seen in the use of techniques such as juxtaposition, which brings disparate elements together without necessarily reconciling them into a coherent whole. For example, in Ashbery's poetry, collage and pastiche techniques create a landscape where meaning is continually deferred. According to Marjorie, this approach reflects the complexities and uncertainties of the modern world, challenging readers to navigate layers of meaning actively.

In her book "Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media," Marjorie introduces another significant paradigm that reshapes our understanding of contemporary poetry. This paradigm centers on the impact of media technologies and popular culture on poetic forms and practices. Marjorie argues that the saturation of media in contemporary culture has fundamentally altered how poets create and readers perceive poetry. Techniques such as appropriation, collage, and sampling are seen as responses to living in a media-saturated environment. Marjorie uses the term "artifice" to highlight how contemporary poets self-consciously engage with the constructed nature of their work. This acknowledgment of artifice distinguishes their work from earlier, more naturalistic approaches to poetry. The engagement with radical artifice is not limited to the written word but extends to digital and multimedia expressions. Marjorie's criticism frequently addresses how contemporary poets incorporate elements such as text formatting, visual design, and other media into their work, creating a multisensory experience that reflects the

complexity of modern life.

Marjorie's work is notable for its interdisciplinary approach, which is evident in several of her critical studies, including "Frank O'Hara: Poet Among Painters," "Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century," and "Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics," etc. Marjorie frequently examines the interactions between poetry and other art forms, particularly visual art and music. By analyzing poets in the context of their relationships with painters, musicians, and other artists, she reveals how these interdisciplinary connections influence and enrich poetic practices. Beyond specific art forms, Marjorie's interdisciplinary paradigm includes a willingness to cross traditional boundaries between genres and media. For example, her discourse on infrathin and micropoetics resonates across disciplines, fostering a dialogue between literary studies, visual arts, and auditory analysis. This interdisciplinary approach enhances our understanding of how minute elements function in various artistic contexts. This allows her to provide a more holistic understanding of poetic works, considering their diverse influences and the various contexts in which they operate.

The interdisciplinary approach in Marjorie's criticism also encompasses the broader cultural and technological contexts in which poetry is produced and consumed. This includes examining how technological advancements from the printing press to the digital age have impacted poetic form and the nature of literary dissemination. According to her, technological advancements not only expand the toolkit available to poets but also reshape audience expectations and modes of engagement. Marjorie particularly highlights the emergence of conceptual writing, where the idea or concept behind the work takes precedence over traditional concerns with expressive content. This shift is best exemplified in the works of poets like Kenneth Goldsmith, whose practice of "uncreative writing" involves presenting found texts as poetry. Conceptual writing dissolves the boundaries between creation and appropriation, challenging our understanding of what constitutes poetic art.

Marjorie Perloff is an equally significant humanistic scientist in the field of poetry studies. She has systematically observed, comprehended, and elucidated poetry and poetic theories from a scientific perspective. Her remarkable foresight and profound insights into the evolution of American poetry are evident in her scientific construction of poetic theory. As early as 1992, in "Radical Artifice," Marjorie astutely examined the challenges faced by poetry in the digital age, shedding light on how the convergence of art and science has revolutionized our conventional understanding of poetic expression. This paradigm shift, exemplified by renowned language poets like Susan Howe and Charles Bernstein, has expanded

the boundaries of poetic forms and modes of creation. In today's era, we not only consume words on printed pages but also delve into vast electronic repositories containing gigabytes of literary content.

Obviously, Marjorie is the first to discover this key issue that has been a concern of American avant-garde poetry since the 1980s: that is, the connection between poetic creation and the media in an age featured by unprecedented development in science and technology. This idea has posed a huge challenge to traditional literary criticism and has significantly enlightened the development of literary concepts since the 1990s. Through her analysis and dissections of American poetry, especially those of language poetry, Marjorie has shown that we must define the relationship between poetry and the media in this very different new era, because, whether we like it or not, the media has been integrated itself with not only the ways poets write poems but also the ways we read, appreciate and criticize them.

Marjorie also reinterpreted visual poetics. Almost thirty years ago, she made attempts to answer such difficult questions as "Will electronic technology change literature fundamentally, namely, will it change the very conception of literature? Are the existing literary theories effective to be applied to interpret contemporary and past literary works?" Her anatomy of avant-garde poetry provided a forward-looking vision of the influence of science on literature, and showed a keen insight into the development of literature; she also discovered the new character of literature in the age of information. Though it hardly needs to be stated, it is worth repeating that that she has always been at the forefront of literary studies, leading the world of literary criticism.

"Paging the Screen: Digital Poetics and the Differential Text" is an article included in the book, *New Media Poetics: Contexts, Technotexts, and Theories* co-edited by Adelaide Morris and Thomas Swiss in 2006. In this article, Marjorie explores the definition and characteristics of digital poetry, emphasizing that it transcends being a mere electronic rendition of traditional poetry but rather represents a novel poetic form reliant on digital technology and multimedia environments. Digital poetry amalgamates diverse elements such as text, imagery, sound, and animation to create an immersive multi-sensory experience often characterized by its multimodal nature. According to Marjorie, technologies like hyperlinks, interactive interfaces, and multimedia integration unlock new possibilities for the creation of poetry. The textual composition of digital poetry is not fixed but dynamically evolves through reader interaction, algorithmic changes, and other factors resulting in various versions, consequently transforming readers from passive recipients into active

participants.

Marjorie particularly emphasizes the impact of technology on poetry's form, asserting that digital technology has not only provided novel creative tools and platforms but also revolutionized the modes of communication and reception in poetry. She introduces the concept of "differential text" to elucidate the dynamic and interactive nature of digital poetry, effectively merging literature, art, and digital technology to forge a new realm for poetics research. Marjorie discoveres the revolutionary impact of media on poetry and reinterpreted visual poetics from the perspective of modern science. In the era of scientific advancements, computers intervene in the lives of poets and readers, not only transforming the form of poetic texts but also prompting poets to create poems and engaging readers in interactive textual experiences.

We are now in the AI era, artificial intelligence not only revolutionizes poetry creation but also transforms our approach to reading poetry, consequently influencing theories and criticisms. Will it reshape our perception of literature? Can our existing literary theories effectively elucidate present as well as past literature? These are among the most challenging questions that Marjorie addressed two decades ago. Her remarkable foresight regarding the influence of science on literature, her subtle understanding of literary development trends, and her discovery of new characteristics inherent in literature of information age are all substantiated by contemporary literary practices. Marjorie Perloff, an ever-youthful scholar, esteemed professor, and discerning poetry critic, exhibited an unwavering ardor for the art form that not only withstood the test of time but flourished. Even in her nineties, she relentlessly pursues poetic research and annually unveils groundbreaking discoveries. Such unwavering determination is not only admirable but also serves as an everlasting source of inspiration for future generations of scholars.

I first got to know the name "Marjorie Perloff" in 2008 when she was elected as the president of the Chinese/American Association for Poetry and Poetics. It wasn't until 2011, during the first Convention of Chinese/American Association for Poetry and Poetics at Central China Normal University in Wuhan, that I had the opportunity to meet Marjorie and her husband Joe. Prior to the convention, I was invited to meet them in Guangzhou where Marjorie delivered a speech at Sun Yatsen University. During our city tour, I was impressed by Marjorie and Joe's humor and kindness, which complemented her eloquence and academic wit displayed during her speech.

After leaving Guangzhou, we traveled to Xiangyang where Joe delivered a

speech for Cardiothoracic surgeons from all the hospitals in the city. Following this, Marjorie, her granddaughter Lexie, and I embarked on a climb up Wudang Mountain, one of the Sacred Sites of Taoism in China. During this ascent, I was deeply impressed by Marjorie's resilience and optimism. It is no small feat for anyone, let alone a lady in her 80s, to scale a mountain over 1500 meters high. After a brief stay in Xiangyang city, Marjorie, Joe and I departed for Wuhan to attend the first convention of the Chinese/American Association for Poetry and Poetics. While in Wuhan, we celebrated Marjorie's 80th birthday.

Since then, I have maintained regular communication with Marjorie and her family, drawing inspiration from her academic accomplishments. Regrettably, I missed the opportunity to visit her in Los Angeles during my 2014 visit to America as a visiting scholar due to unforeseen circumstances. As Marjorie predicted, technological advancements continue to reshape our daily lives. The rapid progress of technology has bridged geographical gaps through convenient online interactions. Despite living on opposite sides of the globe, we frequently connect virtually and even gathered for a Zoom Meeting to celebrate Marjorie's 90th birthday during the Covid pandemic. Time flies by quickly, yet those cherished moments remain vivid in my memory. However, our esteemed poetry critic and theorist has departed for the world where she rightfully belongs.

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Marjorie Perloff's "Third Path" of Poetry Criticism and Its Reception in China

Luo Lianggong

Abstract: As a world-renown American critic and theorist in poetry, Marjorie Perloff (1931-2024), with her in-depth exploration into western avant-garde poetry and poetics and her theoretical and methodological reconstruction by means of dialog with the 20th-century American critical theories, made great and unique achievements, which can be labelled as "the third path" in poetry criticism in terms of its transcending New Criticism and Cultural Criticism in the 20th and early 21st centuries. Since her first visit to China in 2007 and her co-founding of the Chinese/American Association for Poetry and Poetics in 2008, Perloff's critical theories and ideas have been translated or introduced into China. This paper presents an examination of Perloff's "third path" of poetry criticism, and its introduction to and influence upon China's poetry creation and criticism.

Keywords: Marjorie Perloff; the third path of poetry criticism; Chinese scholarship

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Marjorie Perloff (1931-2024) is one of the foremost critics of contemporary, modern, and avant-garde poetry and poetics now writing in English. Educated at Oberlin College, Barnard College, and the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C., she became a distinguished scholar and professor at various universities, including Sadie D. Patek Professor of Humanities at Stanford University, Florence Scott Professor Emerita of English at the University of Southern California, and the Weidenfeld Professor of European Literature at Oxford University. Her teaching and research cover a vast range from the 20th- and 21st-century poetry and poetics, both Anglo-American and from a comparativist perspective, to intermedia and the visual arts. As a poetry critic and theorist of world fame, Perloff is the winner of many honors and awards, include fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Huntington Foundation. She was elected as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and served as President

of the Modern Language Association and the American Philosophical Society. Perloff is also a great influence upon China's scholarship in poetry criticism, especially her original and unique theory and methodology in poetry criticism, which can be labelled as the "third path" of poetry criticism for its transcending New Criticism in the mid-20th century and Cultural Criticism in the late 20th century.

I. "The Third Path": Marjorie's Poetry Criticism and Poetics

As an influential American poetry critic and theorist, Marjorie Perloff has published numerous books, articles, and essays, discussing issues ranging from *digital poetics* to *philosophy*. Her early books dealt with individual poets such as W. B. Yeats in *Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats* (1970), Robert Lowell in *The Poetic Art of Robert Lowell* (1973), and Frank O'Hara in *Poet Among Painters* (1977). With the publication of *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (1981), she turned to an extensive exploration of avant-garde art movements. Over 10 books by her such as *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant-Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (1986), and *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (2011) examine the politics and aesthetics of the avant-garde as it has gone through modernist and postmodernist variations. In *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media* (1992), she dealt with digital poetics, and in *21st-Century Modernism* (2002) is a manifesto of modernist survival, which is quite rebellious against the mainstream idea that modernism was gone with the rise of postmodernism in the second half of the 20th century. She is also the author of *Poetics in a New Key* (2014), a collection of her major interviews, and *Wittgenstein's Ladder* (1996), a cultural memoir.

Perloff stands out in the international academic arena through his profound exploration of European and American avant-garde poetics and her revolutionary reconstruction of the theory and methodology of poetry criticism from a distinct and far-sighted perspective. She initiated a series of constructive theories on fundamental poetic issues such as aesthetics and its practice, media and form, function and value of poetry, the relationship between traditional poetics and the culture of modern science and technology, and the identity and role of a poet.

Based on this, she developed and practiced a revolutionary methodology of poetry criticism, characteristic of "differential reading," as she put it in her *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy* (2004). By "differential," Perloff presented her micropoetics about reading the minute difference in similarity or the almost-same. Just as Peter Nicholls comments, "*Differentials* offers readings with a difference, discovering textual difficulty as a source of pleasure and restoring to literary analysis

an excitement we had almost forgotten it might have" (Perloff, *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy,* Backcover). This theory is further explored in her other books and essays. In *Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics* (2021), she claims, poetry might be defined as the art of the infrathin, "the art in which difference is more important than similarity," and the practice of micropoetics involves a "super-close reading — a reading for the visual and sonic as well as the verbal elements in a text, for the individual phoneme, or letter as well as the larger semantic import"— and in which the context (history, geography, culture) of a poem's conception and reception plays a crucial role (1-28). Just as Tal Goldfajn said, "Perloff is interested precisely in these smallest of differences […]. Perloff's book is an exercise in attention to such difference, to the smallest, subliminal variations that give a particular poetic passage its texture" (web).

In this and other books, Perloff defends her belief in the power of close reading, a strategy often maligned as reactionary to the late-20th-century prevailing critical atmosphere as represented by cultural criticism. Perloff's theory opens up new readings of particular modernist works by exploring the unexpected verbal, visual, and sonic relationships that create new constructs and new contexts, ranging from T. S. Eliot to Ezra Pound, and to the contemporary avant-garde poets, including those who are usually categorized as LANGUAGE poets like Susan Howe, Charles Bernstein, Rae Armantrout, Ron Silliman, and Kenneth Goldsmith. But Professor Perloff's critical theory and practice is not confined just to the text itself, but go beyond the text and presents a social and cultural perspective. According to Perloff, the contexts such as history, geography and culture of a poem's conception and reception are also crucial to poetry reading.

In general, Perloff's critical theory depends upon the integration of textual analysis and cultural examination, the combination of aesthetic and social attributes of poetry, the linking of tradition with the future, and the fusion of humanities and technology. To a great extent, her critical theory embraces both the aesthetically-oriented nature of new criticism and the culturally-oriented nature of cultural criticism, and can be regarded as the third path of American poetry criticism since the 20th century.

II. The Dissemination of Perloff's Critical Theory in China

It seems to be destined for Marjorie Perloff's critical theory to be introduced to and received by Chinese academia. Before her works and ideas were introduced to China, she had made acquainted with many Chinese and Chinese American scholars and guided and supported young Chinese scholars with great care. She had many

long-known friends and scholarly comrades like Zhaoming Qian, Yunte Huang, Timothy Yu, and Er Zhang. She had a special love for China and Chinese culture, probably because of her husband Joseph Perloff, who helped China as a doctor in Shanghai and Chongqing in the years of China's anti-Japanese War. She generous held a family dinner party to welcome about 20 Chinese scholars, including Nie Zhenzhao and Luo Lianggong, during the 5th International Convention of Chinese/American Association for Poetry and Poetics in Los Angeles, November 2016. Her friendship with Chinese and Chinese American scholars contributes to the dissemination of her ideas and works in China.

Perloff's enthusiasm in communicating with Chinese scholars prompted her cooperation with Nie Zhenzhao and Luo Lianggong, Chinese professors in the field of American poetry criticism, in initiating the founding of the Chinese/American Association for Poetry and Poetics (CAAP) in 2008, the following year of her first visit to China. In June-July 2007, Perloff, together with her husband, visited Beijing, Xi'an, Chongqing, Yichang, Wuhan, Hangzhou and Shanghai. During this visit, she took part in the International Conference on the 20th Century American Poetry at Central China Normal University. Her speech and talk about the poetry "on- and off-page" so strikingly impressed Chinese scholars as to cast new light upon Chinese scholarship on poetry and poetics. After the establishment of CAAP, she visited China for 4 more times, respectively in September 2011, May 2014, November 2017, and November 2019, and took part in all CAAP conventions, virtually and physically, and the online International Poetics Symposium in Celebration of Marjorie Perloff's 90th Birthday organized by Chinese scholars in September 2021. During her each visit, Perloff would deliver one or more speeches or lectures, allowing Chinese scholars to know her scholarship in a lively way, and keeping the Chinese audience in pace with the outcome of her new publications.

The first academic introduction to Perloff's critical theory appeared just before her first visit in 2007. Luo Lianggong published his interview with Perloff in *Foreign Literature Studies* 3 (2007). This interview provides a brief introduction to Marjorie Perloff and her academic achievements. In this interview, Perloff gave a summary of her poetics and its evolution, claiming herself as a formalist, a literary historian and an evaluative comparatist critic, expressed her ideas about modern and contemporary American poetry, including LANGUAGE poetry and other avant-garde poetry and ethnic American poetry (1-8). In the same journal, He Huibin published an article reviewing Perloff's *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy.* In this article, He claims that differential reading Perloff advocated transcends the limitations of close reading and is more suitable for the analysis of contemporary

poetry, by combining textual reading with cultural context. He Huibin believes that differential reading is quite different from previous close reading that was often divorced from culture, politics, history, etc., which later led to the opposite, resulting in the popularity of cultural studies that attach importance to context, and the close reading gave way to "far-reading," which made the focus of previous studies—literariness—disappear into the discussion of history. In this article, He Huibin claimed Perloff's differential reading as a third way of literary reading which takes advantage of while going beyond both New Criticism and cultural criticism (171-173).

This is the very beginning of a wave of dissemination of Perloff's academic theory and critical practices. Afterward, Perloff visited China 5 times and each time gave speeches and lectures, attracting much attention from Chinese scholars. When the CAAP was established in 2008, it became a very important channel of, among many missions and tasks, disseminating Perloff's theories and of Perloff's communication directly with Chinese scholars.

In 2012, the Chinese translation, by Nie Zhenzhao and others, of Marjorie Perloff's *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media* was published by Shanghai Foreign Education Press, as part of the 9-volume American Academy of Arts and Sciences fellows' books on literary criticism. Nie expressed his reason for choosing this book for translation as below—

> She stands at the forefront of contemporary American poetry, scrutinizing poetry creation in the media age with the sharpest eyes, holding the torch of wisdom to lead us into a new academic realm. She guides the development of contemporary poetry academic research with her profound knowledge and critical studies, and critics call her an author who reads with precision and refuses to hand over the authority of art criticism to teachers or theorists. (Nie 4)

This is Perloff's first book translated into Chinese. And after this, a book of *A Study of Marjorie Perloff's Poetic Criticism* by Zhang Xin, et al, was published in 2015. It presents a theoretical summary and review of Perloff's major works ever published, which provides Chinese scholars with a chance of systematically understanding Perloff. Afterward, scholars such as Luo Lianggong, Shang Biwu, Wang Songlin, and Wang Zhuo published a series of articles on Perloff's newly released collection of interviews and conversations—*Poetics in a New Key* (2014), which provides a variety of perspectives into Perloff's critical theories and practices. Ever since there have been more articles and papers addressing Perloff's theories and ideas in China.

III. The Reception of Perloff's Critical Theory in China

The wider and lasting dissemination of Perloff's critical theory and practice has received echoes from Chinese scholars. Perloff was quoted in an increasing number of academic papers and books by scholars such as Luo Lianggong, Ou Rong, Li Zhimin and Jiang Yan, especially in the works on American avant-garde poetry.

A tendency that deserves attention is that Chinese scholars such as Luo Lianggong, Zhang Xin, and Li Zhimin began to integrate Perloff's theory and concepts into their own theoretical discourse or theoretical construction. After He Huibin who translated and introduced Perloff's differential reading as a unique critical pattern, Luo Lianggong views Perloff's differential reading as a third of poetry criticism and attempts to integrate Perloff's theory of differentials and infrathin into his construction of "multi-dimensional text-based poetry criticism theory." According to the multidimensional text-based poetry critical theory, the poetic text is indeed constructed with language, and the grammatical structure, semantic structure and rhetorical devices of poetic language are all meaningful. The tone, attitude, theme and image emphasized by New Criticism are all based on language, and the text constructed by language has been the object of criticism and interpretation for a long time by New Criticism and the poetry criticism circle. However, this kind of poetry study often regards language as a set of symbols, and seldom pays attention to poets' exploitation of language material resources. The emphasis on symbolic characters in literary criticism not only oversets or overshadows the materiality of written language—including its visual and sound properties—and their special meaning generation mechanism, but also suppresses the participation of visual and auditory senses. This theory is deeply rooted in Perloff's theory of differential reading and infrathin.

In some sense, Luo Lianggong and other scholars in China are making efforts to absorb Perloff's unique critical theory, by means of reinterpreting and localizing, to construct a Chinese-style poetry critical theory. This also reflects Chinese scholar's endeavor to construct independent and China-suiting theory based on mutual respect and dialogue with the world, which is reflected in Luo Lianggong's series of essays on "multi-dimensional text-based poetry critical theory" published since 2016, such as "The Poetics of Sound in African American Poetry," "Is Poetry an Art of Language?—An Tentative Exploration to the Text of English Poetry," and "Poetics of the Visual in Contemporary American Poetry."

In the past decade since 2010, with the wider translation and dissemination of

Perloff's academic theories and ideas and her influence in China, more Chinese scholars are following Perloff's pattern in criticism and perspective to poetry, demonstrating a transcendence over the legacy of New Criticism and Cultural Criticism and a contribution to China's own theoretical construction. It is convinced that Perloff poetic criticism theory and its academic thought will receive a more extensive and profound response from the future Chinese academia. In some sense, it is secure to say that Marjorie Perloff is the mentor of many scholars from China and the world. She has built a bridge and paved a ladder for the academic exchanges and poets' visits between China and the United States, and has made great contributions to the cultural exchanges between the East and the West with her academic wisdom, personality charm, spiritual horizon, and brilliant leadership as well.

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Doing Philosophy as Poetry: Reading Perloff Reading Wittgenstein

Yunte Huang

Abstract: This article is both a reading of Ludwig Wittgenstein and a tribute to the monumental work of the late Marjorie Perloff, a towering figure in contemporary poetry criticism, who has arguably been the most ardent and eloquent explicator of what she calls the "Wittgensteinian poetics." Tapping into the wellspring of Perloff's critical oeuvre, this article reassesses Wittgenstein as a conceptual poet by interpreting some of the most salient features of his philosophical poetics.

Keywords: Ludwig Wittgenstein; Marjorie Perloff; philosophy and poetry; Wittgensteinian poetics

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> But our lives are not whole, and we have, so to say, philosophical and poetic responsibilities; one will not necessarily acquit the other.
> —Charles Bernstein, *Content's Dream* (167)

While poetry has always enjoyed its prestige on a par with philosophy in the Chinese tradition—thanks in part to the deep roots of Confucianism, which defines poetry as an expression of one's thoughts (诗言志 , "Poetry says the mind"), in the West the battle between poetry and philosophy has been raging on for centuries. Ever since Plato's infamous attack on poetry, the subgenre of *Apologia* has boasted many sequels, with each epoch feeling the need to defend poetry by restaging the Greek drama, rehearsing all the hue and cry, ending invariably, often unconvincingly, with a Pyrrhic victory for poetry. Like an instance of domestic disturbance, whenever the authority is called and arrives on the scene, it is often the victim, the weaker, that would feel apologetic, if not right away, then later. From Aristotle to Longinus, from Philip Sidney to Percy

Bysshe Shelley, every apologist has tried to elevate poetry to the height of philosophy rather than the other way around—with Sidney, for instance, pushing the "sublime" like elixir pills, or Shelley extolling poets as the "unacknowledged legislators of the world." Few, if any, have thought about calling philosophy back to the jungle, the forms and textures of life, which is the domain of poetry. Among contemporary philosophers, Martin Heidegger probably stands out as a theorist who ardently tries to bridge the ancient gap between poetry and philosophy, and he does so by welding together epistemology and ontology, conceptualizing language as the "house of Being." But the person who really flips the script, so to speak, of and on the Greek drama is none other than Ludwig Wittgenstein, the eccentric Cambridge-trained, Austro-Jewish thinker, who declares, somewhat enigmatically, that "philosophy ought really to be written only as a poetic composition."

In fact, as a philosopher addressing primarily the analytic philosophical community and as someone who expressed little interest in contemporary literature, art, or music, Wittgenstein might seem like an unlikely candidate for being an advocate for poetry. Not only did he not self-consciously write in the genre of poetry as conventionally conceived, but he also repeatedly admitted that he did not understand or appreciate the work of the poets of his own time, such as Rainer Maria Rilke or Georg Trakl. In other words, he never saw himself as a practitioner in the art of writing, whether poetry or prose. In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein acknowledged with much candor that "Just as I cannot write verse, so too my ability to write prose extends only *so far*, and no farther. There is a quite definite limit to the prose I can write and I can no more overstep *that* than I can write a poem. *This* is the nature of my equipment; and it is the only equipment I have. It is as though someone were to say: In this game I can only attain *such and such* a degree of perfection, I can't go *beyond* it" (59). In a slightly earlier entry in the same volume, Wittgenstein went even so far as to say that "If I were to write a good sentence which by accident turned out to consist of two rhyming lines, that would be a blunder" (58).

All these facts and disclaimers notwithstanding, Wittgenstein has become sort of a patron saint for contemporary poets and artists, especially those with an avant-garde bent. While Stanley Cavell, arguably the heir apparent of Wittgensteinian philosophy in the United States, has rearticulated, in *The Claim of Reason* (1979) and other works, the significance of Wittgenstein's conception of the affinity between philosopher and poetry, it is Marjorie Perloff, a towering figure in contemporary poetry and criticism, who has remained the most ardent and eloquent explicator of Wittgenstein's paradoxical dictum of "doing philosophy as poetry."

Beginning with *Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary* (1996), followed by numerous books and essays as well as her own translational work, culminating in *Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics* (2021), Perloff has presented a full picture and delineated a vibrant genealogy of what she calls a "distinctively Wittgensteinian poetics" (*Wittgenstein's Ladder* xiv). In this essay, by tapping into the deep wellspring of Perloff's scholarship, I will discuss some of the most salient features of Wittgensteinian poetics, as understood by her and others, and reassess the ways in which we may conceive the exiled Austrian philosopher as a conceptual poet. Or, as David Antin puts it, "If Socrates was a poet, Wittgenstein is a poet" (161).

I. Tractatus

The first and only book published in the author's lifetime, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* has drawn an inordinate amount of attention from scholars interested in mining the poetic potentials of Wittgenstein's writing. Originally intended as the thesis for the fulfillment of his degree at Cambridge University, the *Tractatus* is, in the words of Antin, "a queer work all the way through" (151). It consists of a curiously numbered set of paragraphs exploring the nature and limitations of logic and language. For Antin, the numeric eccentricity, which gives the *Tractatus* the appearance of a philosophical treatise, is a telltale sign that there is more than meets the eye. Formatted like a logician's metaphysical litany, it is structurally akin to Bertrand Russell's mathematical philosophy—the kind of work that had brought Wittgenstein to Cambridge in the first place:

> 1. The world is everything there is.
> 1.1 The world is the sum total of all facts, not all things.
> 1.11 The world is defined by these facts, and by their being *all* the facts.
> 1.12 For all these facts determine both everything there is and everything there isn't.[1]

As Wittgenstein explains in a footnote, the decimal-numbering system appears to "show with the utmost clarity the relations among the paragraphs": "The numbering

1 Rather than the standard edition of Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus translated by C. K. Ogden, which has been long in use and which also provided the basis for David Antin's article under discussion, I am quoting from the new translation by Damion Searls, an edition championed by Marjorie Perloff, who wrote the Foreword to the book. Also, quotes from the main texts of Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and Philosophical Investigations are usually identified by passage numbers rather than page numbers, a practice I will follow in this article.

of each proposition on the following pages indicates the logical weight of that proposition, or in other words, the emphasis I place upon it in my presentation. Propositions n.1, n.2, n.3, etc. are remarks on proposition number n; propositions n.m.1, n.m.2, n.m.3, etc. are remarks on proposition number n.m.; and so on" (7). But as Antin points out in his review essay "Wittgenstein Among the Poets," the numerical system does not really proceed in any logical way upon close reading. The *Tractatus*, Antin observes, "circles and repeats itself over and over, correcting itself and elaborating on its original pronouncements and sometimes apparently cancelling them out." More a method of meditation than a mathematical or logical system, the decimal system is, in fact, "a pathway leading into Alice's looking glass." The numbers are merely markers along a spiral staircase—Wittgenstein's ladder—that does not lead to a logical conclusion, but a "luminous void," which may be comprehended in wordless silence, via repeated meditation (152).

Antin's insight into the meditative nature of the *Tractatus* is, in fact, indebted to Perloff—he was, after all, reviewing Perloff's foundational work when he made the remarks quoted above. As he readily acknowledged, "It is one of the great virtues of *Wittgenstein's Ladder* that it makes clear how much of a meditation the *Tractatus* is" (153). Indeed, among all the critics trying to mine the poetic potentials of Wittgenstein's writings, Perloff is unique in her ability to call attention to the striking discontinuities that mark the transitions from a technical discourse to a humanist discourse. Perloff takes us back to the watershed moment in philosopher-poet's life, when he turned his attention to a close reading of the Gospels, which would have a profound impact on his worldview and work. As we know, Wittgenstein had begun his work on the *Tractatus* when the Great War broke out. Judging by the extant earlier version of the manuscript—the so-called "Proto Tractatus"—Wittgenstein had originally conceived it as "a treatise on the nature of logic written under the sign of Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell" (*Edge* 155). After he joined the war by volunteering as a common soldier and was engaged in active combat on the Russian Front in 1916, close brushes with death on a daily basis and his absorption in Leo Tolstoy's *Gospel in Brief*, a book he had found by chance, pushed his work in the direction of a quasi-mystical meditation on the meaning of life. A week after he had won his first decoration for bravery in the war, Wittgenstein wrote in his diary entries that would be rephrased in or directly added to the *Tractatus*:

> What do I know about God and the purpose of life?
> I know that this world exists.

That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field.
That something about it is problematic, which we call its meaning.
That this meaning does not lie in it but outside it.
That my life is the world […]
To pray is to think about the meaning of life.
I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will:
I am completely powerless. (*Notebooks* 72-74)

This last sentence, as Perloff reminds us, was rephrased in a proposition included in the *Tractatus*: "The world is independent of my will" (#6.373). Or, the entries about meaning not lying in the world but outside it were to be repeated almost verbatim in the *Tractatus*, followed by the sentences "In the world, everything is how it is and happens how it happens—there is no value *in* it, and if there were, that value would have no value" (#6.41). In Perloff's reading, it is in the transition from the technical and logical to the humanist and ethical, or rather, the fracture between these two discourses, that we find, as far as the *Tractatus* is concerned, Wittgenstein's poetry. When the *Tractatus* reaches its end after a spiraling set of meditative passages about death, God, mysticism, and so on, the striking last entry "About things we cannot speak of we must keep silent" (#7) is, to quote Antin again, "a conclusion somewhat likelier for a poet than a logician" (152). For Perloff, such a gesture toward reticence or silence is not only a philosophical acknowledgement of the limit of language, but it also brings Wittgenstein closer to what John Keats has termed "Negative Capability," "of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason"—a mental state closely allied to the moment of poetry (26). The seeming failure of the *Tractatus* to articulate the inner connection of the propositions is, then, paradoxically "the source of its strength, its poetic power" (*Wittgenstein's Ladder* 47).

Biographical facts would also bear out Perloff's critical acumen. Having made the crucial transition, or what we may call a poetic breakthrough, in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein, upon release from the Italian POW jail after the war, tried to publish the work in a literary journal *Der Brenner*. In a letter to the editor Ludwig von Ficker, Wittgenstein wrote, "The work is strictly philosophical and at the same time literary" (Monk 177). Later in *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein would also speak of the "poetic mode" he constantly experienced in his supposedly philosophical work: "In a letter (to Goethe I think) Schiller writes of a 'poetic mood.' I think I know what he meant. I believe I am familiar with it myself. It is a mood of receptivity to nature in which one's thoughts seem as vivid as nature itself" (65-66). Such a poetic

mode would, as we will see, have other manifestations in the philosopher's work.

II. Philosophical Investigations

In the preface to *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein explains his initial idea for the book: "I have written down all these thoughts as *remarks*, short paragraphs, of which there is sometimes a fairly long chain about the same subject, while I sometimes make a sudden change, jumping from one topic to another.—It was my intention at first to bring all this together in a book whose form I pictured differently at different times. But the essential thing was that the thoughts should proceed from one subject to another in a natural order and without breaks" (ix). In other words, he had conceived the book in the same way a philosophical work is done conventionally, following a linear argument by relying on logic and rationality, not so different from the way he had originally conceived the *Tractatus* by imposing a numeric system for the sake of structural coherence. But just as the decimal system actually defies the very logic it claims to put forward in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein encounters a similar compositional dilemma in *Philosophical Investigations*. He further explains, "After several unsuccessful attempts to weld my results together into such a whole, I realized that I should never succeed. The best that I could write would never be more than philosophical remarks; my thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination." As a result, the book became a compendium of remarks that crisscross in multiple directions. Wittgenstein himself saw the book as "an album," with each item maintaining a paratactic relationship with each other (ix).

Such a paratactic structure provides the basis for Perloff to examine the poetics of *Philosophical Investigations*. In the second chapter of *Wittgenstein's Ladder*, aptly entitled "The 'Synopsis of Trivialities': The Art of the *Philosophical Investigations*," she zeroes in on Wittgenstein's seeming mundane obsessions with ordinary language and teases out the fundamental significance of grammar for both philosophy and poetry. For Wittgenstein, philosophers misuse language to pursue truth or essence, mistaking one language game for the other. Like flies in a fly-bottle, they are trapped by the grammar of their language. In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein writes:

> People say again and again that philosophy doesn't really progress, that we are still occupied with the same philosophical problems as were the Greeks. But people who say this don't understand why it has to be so. It is because our language has remained the same and keeps seducing us into asking the same

> questions. As long as there continues to be a verb 'to be' that looks as if it functions in the same way as 'to eat' and 'to think,' as long as we still have the adjectives 'identical,' 'true,' 'false,' 'possible,' as long as we continue to talk of a river of time, of an expanse of space, etc. etc., people will keep stumbling over the same puzzling difficulties and find themselves staring at something which no explanation seems capable of clearing up. (15)

His aim as a philosopher, Wittgenstein quips, is to "show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle" (*PI* #309).

Following Wittgenstein, Perloff argues that the same goes for poets seeking truth or essence by prioritizing a particular use of language. She explains that while the distinction between the practical language of the everyday and the autonomous language of poetry has been the article of faith for most poets, Wittgenstein has showed us that language has no essence; instead, "it is a complex cultural construction, whose variables are articulated according to one's particular intersection with it" (*Wittgenstein's Ladder* 71). These variables are what Wittgenstein calls language games, which bear a family resemblance with each other rather than cohere into an organic whole. Homeric epics, Shakespearean sonnets, Li Po's *jueju*, and Japanese haiku are all language games. Trying to claim some universal essence in all of these would be futile or misleading, because, as Wittgenstein once said, "In order to get clear about aesthetic words you have to describe ways of living" (*Lectures* 11). The form of life is the living grammar that defines the meanings or aesthetics of these poetic works.

Consequently, as Perloff argues elsewhere, for both philosophy and poetry, "invention is the key word" (*Differentials* 70). Philosophy to Wittgenstein is a form of continual reinvention of ways of seeing the world. Rather than uncover some hidden or metaphysical truths, he sees his own work as that of a poet. "What I invent are new similes," he writes in *Culture and Value* (19). Or, in *Philosophical Investigations*, "The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose" (#127). These new similes or newly assembled reminders are perspectives or framing devices that initiate us into a new view of things. "Make it new," Ezra Pound said. Or, "to begin again and again," as Gertrude Stein insisted. Identifying the affinity between the philosopher and the modernist poets, however, Perloff is also quick to draw a distinction in case each member of the family should lose their own individuality: "Wittgenstein's paratactic structures are not metonymically organized, as are, say, Ezra Pound's lyric sequences in the *Cantos*." In *Philosophical Investigations*, Perloff argues, quoting Herman Rapaport,

parataxis is a matter of negative serialization: "Two and two is four" is a simple sentence, as is "The rose is red," but there is nothing in the first sentence to make the second follow. "In each sentence," as Rapaport puts it, "there is compulsory connectivity. But in thinking of the sentences serially, the question of reciprocity becomes vexed. In short, despite appearances, they are Other to one another" (*Wittgenstein's Ladder* 67). In this space of negative seriality, of vexed reciprocity, Perloff finds the quintessential poetics of *Philosophical Investigations*, what she calls the "inherent provisionality of the text." For what is poetic for the philosopher is "not a question of heightening, of removing language from its everyday use by means of appropriate troping or rhetorical device. Rather, what makes philosophy poetic is its potential for invention, its status as what we now call conceptual art" (*Differentials* 70). Once we understand that, the significance of the unique compositional method of *Philosophical Investigations* becomes clear, as Perloff states: "It becomes incumbent on the philosopher-poet to produce not a coherent treatise but, as Wittgenstein puts it in the preface to *Philosophical Investigations*, a series of remarks, 'short paragraphs […] sometimes jumping, in quick change, from one area to another'" (*Edge* 168).

III. Aphorism

As a genre of philosophical discourse, aphorism, like the bevy of its cousins—proverb, maxim, adage, epigram, axiom, dictum, eclogue—is meant to achieve the greatest meaning with the fewest words. Civilizations were founded on the cornerstones laid by great thinkers whose doctrines have been distilled into a body of memorable sayings. Whether it is Heraclitus's "You cannot step twice into the same river" or Confucius's "Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous" (学而不思则罔，思而不学则殆), aphorism supposedly serves to crystalize the tenet of a philosophical system. Francis Bacon, for instance, writes specifically of aphoristic virtue:

> The writing in aphorisms hath many excellent virtues, whereto the writing in Method doth not approach. For first, it trieth the writer, whether he be superficial or solid: for aphorisms, except they should be ridiculous, cannot be made but of the pith and heart of sciences; for discourse of illustration is cut off; recitals of examples are cut off; discourse of connection and order is cut off; descriptions of practice are cut off. So there remaineth nothing to fill the aphorisms but some good quantity of observation: and therefore no man can suffice, nor in reason will attempt to write aphorisms but he that is sound and

grounded. (142)

Bacon's notion exemplifies the traditional belief that behind the seeming fragmentation of aphorisms lies a larger truth. And such a mother ship of truth guarantees the integrity of these adorable, spattering babies of wisdom.

Known for his penchant for aphorisms, Wittgenstein, however, epitomizes a different kind of aphoristic practice. Notably, his works are full of terse and often gnomic utterances, such as "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world," "Death is not part of life," "The face is the soul of the body," and so on. But Wittgenstein appeared to have turned to aphoristic writing for a purpose quite different from those articulated by Bacon and others.

Indeed, Wittgenstein was fully aware of his own predilection for aphorisms, seemingly modeled after those of Heraclitus and Schopenhauer. In *Culture and Value*, he used a simile to think through the tricky relation between aphorisms and the larger conceptual projects he was working on: "Raisins may be the best part of a cake; but a bag of raisins is not better than a cake; and someone who is in a position to give us a bag full of raisins still can't bake a cake with them, let alone doing something better. I am thinking of Kraus and his aphorisms, but of myself too and my philosophical remarks. A cake—that isn't as it were: thinned-out raisins" (66). If a large project like the *Tractatus* or *Philosophical Investigations* is like a cake, the best part of it is the raisins baked into the cake, but they are not the cake itself. Or, as Perloff suggests, "Aphorisms, so central to the *Tractatus* and earlier work, cannot in themselves make a poetic-philosophical discourse. If they remain discrete, like so many separate raisins in a bag, they fail to cohere into a fully formed 'cake'" ("Writing Philosophy" 726) In his book-length study of the genre, Andrew Hui astutely points out that aphorism is "at times an ancestor, at times an ally, and at times an antagonist to systematic philosophy […] As such, it oscillates between the fragment and the system" (7). It is especially so in the writings of Wittgenstein, who has resorted to aphorisms because of his suspicion of philosophy as dogmas or of science as systematic truths. In other words, unlike other philosophers such as Heraclitus and Schopenhauer or even essayists like Montaigne, who employ aphorisms to illustrate a larger point, Wittgenstein, in Perloff's words, embedded his into "a network of 'dry' logical and mathematical propositions of the sort 'If p follows q, the sense of 'p' is contained in that of 'q.'" The question for us, Perloff suggests, is "How to reconcile these two seemingly unlike modes of discourse?" ("Writing Philosophy" 716).

As a matter of fact, Wittgenstein has answered that question himself: the

two cannot and do not go together. In the preface to *Philosophical Investigations*, we already encounter his candid acknowledgement of the difficulties in welding together his various remarks into an organic whole. In another telling entry in *Culture and Value*, he reconfirms such a fact: "The relations between these concepts form a landscape which language presents us with in countless fragments; piecing them together is too hard for me. I can make only a very imperfect job of it" (78). By virtue of what they regard as a structural deficiency in Wittgenstein's work, some professional philosophers, such as Alain Badiou, have dismissed him for having reduced philosophy to "a series of esoteric aphorisms and meaningless propositions." But as Perloff has cogently argued, "What Badiou called his 'esoteric aphorisms' and 'meaningless propositions' can be seen from another angle as precisely the stuff that the poetic, as we have come to understand it in our own time, is made of" (*Edge* 167). The greatest virtue of aphorisms, as Wittgenstein employed them, is their refusal to be corralled into the systematic enclosure. Therefore, an aphorism, to quote Hui again, is "a mark of our finitude, ever approaching the receding horizon, always visible yet never tangible" (16). Wittgenstein's thinking is predicated on the notion that the language we use sets the trap but also the limit for our knowing. By resorting to the aphoristic, Wittgenstein in some sense draws the very boundary of thinking itself.

Indeed, as Perloff shows, one needs to take Wittgenstein for his word when he says "Philosophy ought really to be written only as a poetic composition." What makes Wittgenstein's writing poetic, she argues, is partly "his use of homilies and proverbs animated by metaphors of charming and almost childlike simplicity" (*Differentials* 69). For example, "Why can't a dog simulate pain? Is he too honest?" (*PI* #250), "If someone is merely ahead of his time, it will catch him up one day" (*CV* 8), or "A new word is like a fresh seed sewn on the ground of the discussion" (*CV* 2). In almost all of his writings, Wittgenstein avoided "all conventional argument or plotting—beginning, middle, and end—and rely on aphorisms, anecdote, conceit, collage, and fragment," stylistic choices that are in Perloff's reading reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp, the French avant-garde artist known for his conceptual work as well as aphoristic, enigmatic statements ("Introduction" 4). Indeed, "Unlike traditional aphorisms," Perloff writes, "Wittgenstein's short propositions don't really 'say' anything. Or, to put it another way, what they 'say' is enigmatic […] Wittgenstein's sentences are thus characterized, not by their metaphorical force or their use of the rhetorical figures like antithesis and parallelism, but by what would be called their *opaque literalism*. The sentences say just what they say—no difficult words to look up!—but they remain mysterious, endlessly puzzling, enigmatic."

In fact, she compares Wittgenstein's opaque literalism to the kind of Objective poetics embodied, say, by William Carlos Williams's famous poem "The Red Wheelbarrow": "So much depends/upon/a red wheel/barrow/glazed with rain/water/beside the white/chickens" ("Writing Philosophy" 719).

In addition to opaque literalism, Perloff sees another way Wittgenstein's aphoristic writing is akin to modernist poetics—in this case, Ezra Pound's notion of poetry as condensation. The key in Wittgenstein's statement "Philosophy ought really to be written only as a poetic composition" is the German word for poetry, *dichten*. Etymologically, Perloff points out, the verb *dichten* comes from the adjective *dicht* (thick, dense, packed): "*Dichten* originally meant 'to make airtight, watertight; to seal the cracks (in a window, roof, etc.)'—in other words, something like the Zen phrase 'to thicken the plot'" ("Writing Philosophy" 725). In *ABC of Reading*, Ezra Pound equates the German word *dichten* with the Italian word *condensare*, followed by a footnote that reads, "A Japanese student in America, on being asked the difference between prose and poetry, said: Poetry consists of gists and piths" (92). Elsewhere, Pound also said, very famously, "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree" (*Literary Essays* 23). One of the ways for Wittgenstein to do philosophy poetically, then, is to resort to the verbal density and resonance of aphorisms, those terse, gnomic utterances that give his text its poetic edge. In her foreword to the new translation of the *Tractatus* published by Liveright in 2024, Perloff insists that we recognize Wittgenstein's aphorisms not only as elements of philosophical analysis, but also as poetic koans (xix), echoing her earlier proposition to treat the numeric anomaly of the *Tractatus* "as a kind of clinamen, a bend or swerve where logic gives way to mystery" (*Wittgenstein's Ladder* 42).

IV. Infrathin

In another Zen koan-like quip, Wittgenstein writes in *Philosophical Investigations*, "But isn't at least *the same* the same?" (#215). In a conversation with his students, Wittgenstein also said, "Hegel seems to me to be always wanting to say that things which look different are really the same. Whereas my interest is in showing that things which look the same are really different" (Drury 171). He was critical of philosophy's search for identity, essence, or the absolute by collapsing differences or, in his term, mistaking one language game for another. As he observes, "A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words" (*PI* #122). In this regard, philosophy certainly shares with poetry a fundamental concern with the use of language. Unwittingly echoing Wittgenstein,

Ezra Pound once said, "The function of poetry is to debunk by lucidity" (*Sayings* 16).

Earlier in *Wittgenstein's Ladder*, Perloff has employed Wittgenstein's philosophical insights to read Gertrude Stein, demonstrating that these two Jewish exiles—one American-born living in France and the other Austrian-born living in England—caught between languages as forms of life, hypersensitive to linguistic minutiae, were actively exploring the frontiers of meaning. Wittgenstein repeatedly ponders, for instance, how the "have" in "I have a pain" differs from the "have" in "I have a book"; or, why one's right hand cannot "give" one's left hand money. Grammar, he observes, "only describes and in no way explains the use of signs" (*PI* #496). Likewise, for Stein, poetry is not a naming game, contrary to Emerson's belief that poets are namers looking for the universal that underlies everything. Instead, she explores what Perloff calls "grammar in use," fluid meanings that elude the confinement of labels or fixed names (*Wittgenstein's Ladder* 90).

In *Infrathin*, her last scholarly monograph, Perloff tackles again the kinship between Wittgenstein and Stein, this time adding to the duet Marcel Duchamp, the French avant-garde artist from whom she has taken the title word for her book. Infrathin (*inframince* in French) was used by Duchamp to playfully describe the most minute shade of difference between things that seem to be the same or identical. In fact, he declared that one cannot define the infrathin but can only give examples, such as the tobacco smoke smells also of the mouth which exhales it, the separation between the detonation noise of a gun and the apparition of the bullet hole in the target, or the same object after a one-second interval (*Infrathin* 2-3). These examples, Perloff suggests, recall Gertrude Stein's sentence in *Tender Buttons*: "The difference is spreading," or her even more famous line "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose." As Stein shows us in her endlessly complex iterative prose, Perloff states, "the slightest repetition or shift in context changes the valence and meaning of any word or word group. A rose is a rose is a rose. And by the third enunciation, it is already something else" (3).

In the same vein, Duchamp's infrathin is also reminiscent of Wittgenstein's question, "But isn't at least *the same* the same?" Both Duchamp and Wittgenstein, Perloff assures us, would have answered no to the question, as would Stein, known for her poetry of repetition with a difference. "'A thing is identical with itself.'—There is no finer example of a useless proposition, which yet is connected with a certain play of the imagination," Wittgenstein mused. "It is as if in imagination we put a thing into its own shape and saw that it fitted" (*PI* #216). To paraphrase Charles Bernstein in his reading of Stanley Cavell's reading of Wittgenstein, to seek

identity this way is "to construct a grammatical fiction" (172).

Rather than identity, the infrathin defines the poetic, the language of repetition, to "make it new" (Pound), or to "begin again and again" (Stein). Wittgenstein would have fully understood such a poetics of the infrathin. In *Culture and Value,* he admits, "Each of the sentences I write is trying to say the whole thing, i.e., the same thing over and over again; it is as though they were all simply views of one object from different angles" (7). This is called conceptualism or Cubism in poetry and art, looking at the same object from different angles—or, in that case, is it still the same object? Somewhere Wittgenstein said, "The only way to do philosophy is to do everything twice" (qtd. in Perloff, "Introduction" 7). Twice does not just mean two times, but more than once, the necessity of doing over, repeatedly, slowly. "In philosophy," Wittgenstein also said, "the winner of the race is the one who can run most slowly. Or: the one who gets there last" (*CV* 34). He sometimes regarded his own writing as "nothing but 'stuttering'" (*CV* 18), and he insisted that "My sentences are all supposed to be read slowly" (*CV* 57), in part because they are in some sense repetitions of each other with a crucial, infrathin difference. He told us that he often used copious punctuation marks in his writing to slow down the tempo of reading, because he believed "I should like to be read slowly" (*CV* 68). In other words, he wanted his texts to be read in the way we appreciate a poem, in which case, as Perloff reminds us, "The attention to difference, to the infrathin, is especially important […] Every letter stroke, every space, matters" (*Infrathin* 26).

Here in his insistence on repetition and slowness, his attention to tempo and punctuation, the philosopher finally meets the poet. Thanks to Perloff and others, we have come to understand how Wittgenstein's two signature statements on doing philosophy converge: "Philosophy ought really to be written only as a poetic composition" and "The only way to do philosophy is to do everything twice." This is not, to quote Bernstein again, "to make philosophy literature but to call philosophy back to its sources of judgment" (168). Directly or indirectly refuting Plato's age-old jeremiad, Wittgenstein became what Antin succinctly calls "a poet of nearly pure cognition," that is, he is not a poet of any particular language, German or English, but "a poet of thinking through language" (163).

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Redefining Subjectivity and Ethics: Maugham and Zhuangzi

Zheng Jie

Abstract: W. Somerset Maugham, an English author active from the late 19th to the mid-20th century, has long been the subject of comparative and cross-cultural literary studies, especially in relation to his literary connections with the East. Moving beyond Edward Said's "Orientalist" model, this paper adopts J. J. Clarke's concept of "strategy of self-questioning" to explore Maugham's "creative" engagement with Zhuangzi's philosophies. Through analyzing *The Painted Veil* and *The Narrow Corner*, the paper argues that Maugham employs Zhuangzi's concept of *Yi Dao Guan Wu* as a lens to redefine the concepts of subjectivity and ethics within the context of cross-cultural dialogue.

Keywords: subjectivity; the strategy of self-questioning; *Yi Dao Guan Wu*; thing; ethics

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标题：重构主体性和伦理：毛姆和庄子

内容摘要：作为活跃于19世纪末和20世纪中叶的英国作家，毛姆和东方的文学关系一直以来都是比较文学和跨文化研究的热点。本文试图超越赛义德"东方主义"理论分析框架的常规路径，采用克拉克提出的东方主义中另一种传统，即"自我质疑策略"的概念，探讨毛姆对东方思想产生兴趣的复杂动机。通过聚焦分析毛姆的《面纱》和《狭角》，本文认为毛姆创造性地"整合使用"庄子的思想，由此重新定义主体性的概念并在跨文化交流的语境下反思和想象主体性和伦理的关系。

关键词：主体性；"自我质疑策略"；以道观物；物；伦理

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The scholarly discourse surrounding W. Somerset Maugham's mid- and late-period works, particularly those written since the 1910s, has often focused on his redefinition and construction of man as a subject amid the convergence of cross-cultural contexts and discourse systems, fully represented in various conflicts between the human subject and the "other." These criticisms may be complemented by the theories of Feminism, Orientalism, Post-colonialism and queer studies. Christine Doran, for example, argues that Maugham's works related to Asia are seen as abound with "literary devices, images, stereotypes, and clichés" (8) deeply entwined with the discourse of Western imperialism. Gayatri Thau Pillai & Chitra Sankaran, in contrast, examine how Southeast Asian women in Maugham's novels strive to counteract their objectification within the subject-object paradigm of Orientalism. They explore the influence of indigenous women and nature in deconstructing the rational and self-regarding imperialist male subject, casting these elements as agents that realign their designated positions within the oppressive system of domination. These two contrastive yet representative readings, however, do point to Maugham's ambiguous attitudes towards the East.

This paper is ignited with the concern of understanding Maugham's connection with Zhuangzi in his configuration of subjectivity and ethics, a topic traditionally contextualized within the Western intellectual thoughts of Spinoza, Sartre, Freud and Lacan—among which Spinoza's *Ethics* is more frequently discussed. Don Adams posits that Maugham's "ethically earnest fiction," to a certain extent, is informed by Spinoza's model, which distinguishes between "a naturalistic individualist ethics" and "collective social morality." "Combining a metaphysical determinism with a socio-political progressivism," his work offers a nuanced reconciliation between the subject and the "other" (45-46). This perspective finds resonance in Robert Calder's interpretation of *Of Human Bondage* (1915), who reads the end of this novel as embodying the perfect Spinozan Situation. The influence of Spinoza was readily acknowledged in Maugham's 1938 autobiography *The Summing up*: "I look upon my first reading of Spinoza as one of the signal experiences of my life. It filled me with just the feeling of majesty and exulting power that one has at the sight of a great mountain range" (240). Scholars generally concur that Maugham's understandings of human subjectivity, whether exploring the dynamic relation between love and desire, immanence and otherness, free choice and responsibility, or physical and spiritual liberty, is deeply entwined with Spinoza's philosophy.[1] According to Spinoza, the ultimate goal of man as a subject is the rational virtue,

1 See Amin Ettehadi and Roohollah Reesi Sistani, "Psychoanalytic Reading of Love and Desire in Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*," S*tudies in English Language Teaching* 1 (2017): 58-66.

defined as "the desire to do good generated in us by our living according to the guidance of reason" (37).

Such a view, though unintentionally, is questioned poignantly in Maugham's *The Summing Up*: "But goodness is shown in right action, and who can tell in this meaningless world what right action is?" (255) Maugham's question form a dynamic collision with Spinoza's account that ethical progress towards the Supreme Good depends essentially on the mind's innate knowledge. With an attempt to explain the inconsistent understanding of the human subject and ethics as it can be found in Maugham's work, from his early work to the works published after *Of Human Bondage*, I suggest that his later works demonstrates a reconfiguration of subjectivity goodness informed by Zhuangzi's philosophy. I shall use *The Painted Veil* (1925) and *The Narrow Corner* (1932) as examples to investigate how Zhuangzi's thought of *Yi Dao Guan Wu* (以道观物 *Dao*) offers Maugham a means to challenge the dualisms that define Western notions of subjectivity (self/other, subject/object, good/bad). Furthermore, we will analyze in what ways Maugham's man, following the principle of *Dao*, is capable of negotiating between the relationship of man and things, achieving the nature of "Dao as One," the liberty in imaginary space.

From Spinoza to Zhuangzi

In Maugham's narrative, the concept of goodness assumes a rebellious stance against rule-based ethics. This unreserved goodness, rooted in one's own temperament, is viewed by Maugham as a defiance of determinism. An exemplary representation of this ethos is found in *Of Human Bondage*, particularly in the character of Athelny. Athelny's acts of kindness towards Phillip emanate effortlessly, reflecting a life lived modestly without a pursuit of worldly success, even as he shoulders the responsibility of supporting eight children on a meager income. Athelny's ideal existence mirrors Spinoza's philosophy, asserting that human happiness lies in recognizing and accepting one's own nature. This, according to Spinoza, involves operating free will within the constraints of one's existence, exerting control over external circumstances, and realizing one's inherent nature.

Surprisingly, only four years later, Maugham challenges the notion of such ideal goodness in *The Moon and Sixpence*. He bestows upon Dirk Stroeve, an individual described as an "honest, sentimental, exuberant soul" (*The Moon and Sixpense* 129), the attributes of being ridiculed and misunderstood. Similar to Athelny, Stroeve leads a modest life, demonstrating selfless and effortless goodness towards Strickland purely out of his innate love for art, despite being inherently

labeled as a "buffoon" by nature. After enduring abandonment by his beloved wife, Stroeve expresses a philosophy of humility and inconspicuous living in the face of life's harshness: "The world is hard and cruel. We are here none knows why, and we go none knows whither. [...] And let us seek the love of simple, ignorant people. Their ignorance is better than all our knowledge. Let us be silent, content in our little corner, meek and gentle like them. That is the wisdom of life" (*The Moon and Sixpence* 192). Here the meaning of goodness is subjected to ridicule. The narrator, representing one of Maugham's personas, "rebelled against his renunciation" (*The Moon and Sixpence* 192), signifying Maugham's disagreement with Stroeve's passive acceptance of life. This sentiment aligns with Robert's criticism that when faced with a choice between the happiness of a good, ordinary couple and the creation of a masterpiece at their expense, Maugham appears to favor the painting.[1] For Maugham, the virtue of goodness does not always lead to a harmonious balance between the individual and the external world.

Returning to Spinozan ethics, Spinoza posits the existence of a singular substance in the universe. This substance possesses two fundamental attributes: thought and extension, and the various states of these attributes constitute the essence of all natural things. According to Spinoza, humans gain knowledge of this substance through concrete entities or rational understanding, with the highest form of the latter manifesting as supreme goodness in an ethical context, signifying true freedom. Spinoza defines freedom as the knowledge of necessity, not external necessity, but the intrinsic necessity of one's own nature. In essence, true freedom arises from a clear understanding of one's desires and emotions, allowing the ethical subject to reconcile the inherent contradiction between the self and the object. This leads to the formulation of a model for the relationship between the self and the other, progressing from sensibility to reason to divinity.[2]

The self as the subject, however, as Maugham later realized, cannot consistently act in alignment with self-consciousness to achieve a harmonious balance with the other. Following Maugham's encounter with Zhuangzi, his thoughts of goodness undergo an evolution, evident in the portrayal of Waddington in *The Painted Veil*. It should be noted that critics have long been preoccupied with the novel's feminist undertones and "Orientalist construction" of China, disregarding the links between Waddington and Zhuangzi. In comparison with his earlier works such as *Of Human Bondage*, this novel marks a philosophical departure in the definition of goodness,

1 See W. Somerset Maugham, *The Moon and Sixpence*, New York: Modern Library, 1919, 222.

2 See Chantal Jaquet and Lena Taub Robles, "From the Self to Oneself: Subject and Interiority in Spinoza," *The New Centennial Review* 2 (2017): 63-76, 66-67.

particularly in the context of grappling with the meaning of life and death, as well as the intricate relationship between "things" and humans, a philosophical turn closely intertwined with the thoughts of Zhuangzi.

For Maugham, China held a profound allure, being a land that, in his words, "gives you everything" (Hastings 242). Nevertheless, scholarly attention has predominantly fixated on "the veil" through which Maugham perceives China, emphasizing the passive representation of the country in his works. Moving beyond such an orientalist reading of Maugham's China, Issac Yue, among others, have examined Maugham's travel narratives and landscape depictions of China, contending that "his interests in the East, after all, lie in its traditions and heritages (both manmade), and it is through such a style of landscape description that he is able to express his negative sentiments concerning colonialism and imperialism" (80). Luo Moubei, in a similar vein, asserts that Maugham centers on Chinese rural areas to define the authenticity of China, thereby highlighting the sense of dislocation and fragmentation he experiences in the context of wars and bourgeois society.[1]

Considering Maugham's ambiguous intentions and reluctance to clarify his admiration for China, this question of how to assess his connection with China, however, remains unsolved. This paper shall take this critical challenge by focusing on Maugham's engagement with Zhuangzi as a process of *dialogue* between the Western and Chinese traditions in context of the twentieth-century literary scene. Other than align with Edward Said's summary of the relationship between East and West as "a relationship of power, domination, of varying degrees of complex hegemony" (5), this paper follows instead J. J. Clarke's path in emphasizing that "the religious and philosophical ideas of India, China, and Japan have provided an instrument of serious self-questioning and self-renewal, […] an external reference point from which to direct the light of critical inquiry into Western traditions and belief systems, and with which to inspire new possibilities" (6). Literature is a form of ethical expression in a specific historical situation.[2] Given Maugham's potential attempt at cross-cultural dialogue during the imperialist era, it becomes crucial to move beyond the traditional Orientalist model and redefine his critique of Western thoughts and values in intercultural dialogues.

1 See Luo Moubei, "Geopolitical Changes and Modernist Transitions in Travel Narratives," *Tianfu New Idea* 3 (2020): 70-77.

2 See Nie zhenzhao, "Ethical Literary Criticism: A Basic Theory," *Forum for World Literature Studies* 2 (2021): 189-207; Nie Zhenzhao, "Ethical Literary Criticism: Sphinx Factor and Ethical Selection," *Forum for World Literature Studies* 3 (2021): 383-398.

Orientalism as "a Self-questioning Strategy"

Maugham's experiences of World War I, however, marked a significant shift in his literary focus, shifting from a satirical commentary on Christian ethics and rigid Victorian values to the disillusionment with the materialistic values, and more importantly, Western culture in general evident in *Of Human Bondage* and *The Moon and Sixpence*. Such a spiritual crisis, however, was widespread in the Western world during the postwar period, marked by the disillusionment with the rationalist ideals of the Enlightenment and the progressive beliefs of the Victorian era. Notable philosophical movements, such as Schopenhauer's "philosophical pessimism," Nietzsche's proclamation of "the death of God," and Freud's psychoanalytic doctrine, contributed to the development of irrationalism from the late 19th to the 20th century. As Clarke notes, these factors collectively fostered "a mood of discontent with the comforts and promises of Western civilization, and to encourage a search for more satisfying and meaningful alternatives" (95). It is against this backdrop of European reflections on modernity since the late 19th century that Maugham's fascination with the East, particularly China, needs to be understood. Maugham's journey to China was not merely a geographical exploration but a response to the changing intellectual currents of the time, where the West sought alternative perspectives to address the profound shifts in societal values and spiritual foundations.

We should be reminded that Maugham has been actively seeking theories from diverse sources that not only satisfied his intellectual curiosity but also contributed to the creation of a system that resonated with him. Underlying his diverse narratives there runs a consistent theme of individuals' pursuit of freedom together with the construction of subjectivity. In his youth, German philosophy, particularly the ideas of Spinoza and Schopenhauer, shaped Maugham in his ethical perceptions and values. However, Maugham gradually found himself disenchanted with the prevailing values of Western culture. During the First World War, Maugham embarked on a journey to the South Seas to gather material for *The Moon and Sixpence*. He expressed that the people on these islands were nearer to the elementals of human nature. This phase of Maugham's life can be seen as a progression of interest, from his early fascination with the bohemian lifestyle to his longing for marriage, his interest in exotic culture and lifestyles, and to his subsequent disappointment with Western traditions of ethics and values.

Maugham's reflection on subjectivity and ethics is manifested in various forms—from the exploration of conflicts to dialogues, reconciliations, or

entanglements between the self as a subject and the "other," both within the realm of human internal attributes and in interaction with the external circumstances. The concept of the subject was historically rooted in the idea of the "I" who experiences and interacts with the world. In the pre-modern era, the human subject was often perceived as a product of external forces, such as God, or as being subject to fate or providence. However, Descartes introduced a revolutionary perspective, positioning human experience at the center of existence with his famous assertion in Meditations: "I think, therefore I am." Nevertheless, 20th-century approaches to subjectivity have often grappled with the anxiety of not replicating Descartes,[1] and many critics have focused on how the subject is constructed by cultural conditions or the human psyche. The prevailing assumption is that the modern subject is less stable, dominated by the unconscious, desire, and the influence of the "other." Maugham's works, including *Of Human Bondage*, *The Narrow Corner*, and *The Painted Veil,* reflect this modern mental situation, where protagonists navigate the complexities of society and the degradation of human nature. Calder aptly notes that Maugham is representative of the 20th century "in his examination of the manifestations of freedom and bondage" (390).

This partly explains Maugham turning to Asia, particularly China. In *The Summing Up*, he explains his post-war journey to China, driven by a traveler's interest in art, curiosity about the manners of a people with ancient civilization, and a desire to encounter individuals who could enrich his experience. It was both a quest for spiritual freedom and an opportunity to interact with diverse individuals who could serve his purposes.[2] During his travels in China, Maugham visited Koo Hongming, journeyed along the Yangtze River to Chengdu, and immersed himself in the rural and natural beauty of the countryside. On the other hand, his interest in Zhuangzi, as evident in works like "Rain" and "A Student of The Drama" in *On the Chinese Screen* (1922), surpasses his fascination with Confucianism. Maugham, relying on Giles's translation, considers Zhuangzi to be a mystic, emphasizing a connection with Eastern philosophy that goes beyond the surface of cultural observations.

Giles, in his 1889 translation of Zhuangzi, notes in the preface that Zhuangzi has long been considered "a heterodox writer," representing a "reaction against the materialism of Confucian teachings" (14). Upon Giles' request, Aubrey Moore, who lacked knowledge of Chinese, provided an introduction to Zhuangzi

1 See Jonathan Rée, "Subjectivity in the Twentieth Century," *New Literary History* 1 (1995): 205-217, 206.

2 See W. Somerset Maugham. *The Summing Up*. New York: Arno Press, 1977, 202.

based solely on Giles' translation. Moore's interpretation, focusing on quietism, mysticism, and relativism, has influenced how later Western translators and scholars perceive Zhuangzi's philosophy.[1] It is interesting to note that, Maugham, in *The Summing Up*, reveals that by the age of twenty-four, he had constructed a complete philosophical system based on two principles: "The Relativity of Things and The Circumferentiality of Man" (251).

The kindred spirit between Maugham's philosophy and Zhuangzi's is noticeable—though implicit—in *The Painted Veil*. Waddington's discussions on concepts such as "things," death, and goodness in the novel are intricately linked to Zhuangzi. Similarly, in *The Narrow Corner,* Dr. Saunders rethinks the relationship between the self as subject and the phenomenal world, linking himself with Zhuangzi's thoughts. While there are inherent differences between Eastern and Western philosophies, Maugham appears to belong to the category of those who find value in drawing from ancient Eastern traditions to supplement perceived lacks in the West.[2] In the following analysis, we shall examines how Maugham creatively "adapted" Zhuangzi's thought in his configuration of human subjectivity, through the representations of Waddington in *The Painted Veil* and Dr. Saunders in *The Narrow Corner.*

Redefining Self and Other

Maugham's journey through China is rich with encounters with idyllic scenes—"the hills and the valleys, the trees, water and the water" and fields with peasants working (*On a Chinese Screen* 71)—that consistently provide him with aesthetic enjoyment and psychological comfort.[3] Additionally, Zhuangzi, for Maugham, offers "very good reading" that allows him to easily wander without immediate application (*On a Chinese Screen* 105). The natural beauty of the Chinese countryside and the narratives of "other things" in Zhuangzi's world seem intertwined in Maugham's search for spiritual freedom.

Waddington, in *The Painted Veil*, becomes the embodiment of this fusion, moving beyond limited, anthropocentric perspectives and offering a mitigating force against the horror of the plague and the pain of moral betrayal. When Kitty asks Waddington about the meaning of *Dao*, he provides a very Daoist explanation:

1 See Herbert A. Giles, *Chuang Tzŭ: Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer*. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1889.

2 See John James Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought*, London: Routledge, 1997, 97.

3 See Luo Moubei, "Geopolitical Changes and Modernist Transitions in Travel Narratives," *Tianfu New Idea* 3 (2020): 70-77.

> It is everything and nothing. From it all things spring, all things conform to it, and to it at last all things return. It is a squire without angels, a sound which ears cannot hear, and an image without form. It is a vast net and though its meshes are as wide as the sea it lets nothing through. It is the sanctuary where all things find refuge. It is nowhere, but without looking out of the window you may see it. Desire not to desire, and leave all things to take their course. (234)

In the context of Zhuangzi's philosophy, "things" (物 *wu*) encompass all entities, including human beings. Zhuangzi, in *The Identities of Contraries* （齐物论 *Qi Wu Lun*) posits that all things originate from *Dao* and are finite beings. When "things" as subjects observe "other things," the perspective profoundly influences the results. This is the meaning of one of the foundational concepts in Daoist philosophy, *Yi Dao Guan Wu*, which can be translated as "viewing things through the *Dao*" or "observing things from the perspective of the *Dao*." This concept is essential for understanding Zhuangzi's approach to life, nature and the cosmos. Zhuangzi suggests that humans, driven by spirit and wisdom, often engage in arguments about right and wrong, limited by various constraints when perceiving the self and other things. According to Zhuangzi, if individuals can set aside prejudice and adopt a perspective that transcends the notions of "self" and "other," all things can attain an ideal state of equality and unity.

Departing from the use of things as cultural and social symbols—such as the Persian carpet as a metaphor for the meaning of life in *Of Human Bondage* and the pagoda and Buddhist temple representing chastity and Kitty's spiritual transformation in *The Painted Veil*, Maugham's focus in *The Painted Veil* is not on specific objects but on various things correlated with human life revealing themselves to Waddington's eyes and mind. For instance, when Kitty questions the meaning of death in the novel, Waddington refrains from answering. Instead, he lets his eyes interact with the wild scene. In contrast to a dead man stagnating like a machine, nature, and the wild are animated with pleasure:

> He did not answer, but his eyes travelled over the landscape at their feet. The wide expanse on that gay and sunny morning filled the heart with exultation. The trim little rice-fields stretched as far as the eye could see and in many of them the blue-clad peasants with their buffaloes were working industriously. It was a peaceful and a happy scene. Kitty broke the silence. (232)

In Waddington's perception, the rice fields and natural landscape are dynamic, mirroring each other without being disturbed by human thoughts or states, including plagues and disasters. They exist and grow on their own, forming a unity with humans that encompasses life and death—reflecting the Daoist notion that "in TAO life and death are ONE" (Giles 96). People do not exist independently but as integral parts of this unified cycle. From this perspective, viewing things through the lens of *Dao* rejects the objectification or instrumentalization of people and things, emphasizing respect for all entities—a spirit rooted in freedom. This holistic approach, where things are tightly intertwined with human life, allows for the emergence of "thing power" when people enjoy them without instrumental motives. Waddington's attitude toward things reflects this perspective, as the wild and the fields inspire a sense of vulnerability in the face of plague and death, fostering reflection on and appreciation of beauty. When Kitty asks about the meaning of the nuns' good deeds, Waddington claims that the nuns' lives are beautiful in themselves, expressed through the pictures they paint, the music they compose, the books they write, and the lives they lead. Among these, the most beautiful is the beautiful life, equated with the perfect work of art.[1]

Waddington's equating of a "beautiful life" with a "perfect work of art" marks the presence of humans as a footnote, emphasizing the desire for the presence of things, or the other. In Calder's interpretation, Maugham's expectation of human relations is sensible detachment outwardly but a thirst for intimacy inwardly. Here, things are not mere possessions of the author; they actively participate in the human construction of meaning, playing a significant role in "stabilizing human identity" (Brown 162). The interaction between humans and things reveals Maugham's expectation for human interrelationships, requiring the subject to break away from traditional dualistic modes and approach relationships without preconceptions or utilitarian attitudes—a redefinition of goodness. Just as Zhuangzi suggests, it is important to leave behind preconceptions and focus on the true nature. Waddington continues his interpretation:

> Each member of the orchestra plays his own little instrument, and what do you think he knows of the complicated harmonies which unroll themselves on the indifferent air? He is concerned only with his own small share. But he knows that the symphony is lovely, and though there's none to hear it, it is lovely still, and he is content to play his part. (233)

1 See W. Somerset Maugham, *The Painted Veil*, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1963, 233

Here Waddington further examines the goodness of the nuns by placing individuals and their deeds within a system, likening it to an orchestra where each person has a specific role. This differs from the Catholic notion of goodness, which advocates love for God, as well as Spinoza's progressive ethics exemplified by such characters as Athelny and Dirk. In fact, both Spinoza and Zhuangzi adhere to monism, with the distinction that Spinoza defines goodness based on people's knowledge of intrinsic necessity, elevating the rationality of humans to the highest level. Although Maugham's works are marked by conflicts between reason and desire, it turns out his later novels do not perfectly align with the Spinozan situation presented at the end of *Of Human Bondage*. One very possible explanation is that Maugham diverges from Spinoza on the latter's emphasis on rationality as the solution to the cultural and spiritual crisis in the 20th-century Western world. Maugham rejects both the idea that man, as a subject, is at the mercy of religion and social morality, and the paradigm that the subject is trapped in a prison of internal desires or external subject-object relationships. Waddington, as the mouthpiece of Maugham, provides a redefinition of goodness and human subjectivity from an egalitarian, flexible and spontaneous perspective within a holistic system of relations. This approach aligns himself more closely with Zhuangzi, suggesting looking beyond the superficial appearances and perceiving the deeper, intrinsic nature of things as part of the interconnected and ever-changing fabric of the universe.

Reimagining Subjectivity

In contrast to the extensive critical discussions on *The Painted Veil*, *The Narrow Corner* has received relatively little attention since its publication in 1932. The narrative unfolds through the perspective of Dr. Saunders, a cunning yet principled captain, a melancholic young man entangled in a murder case, a half-breed girl and her fiancé on a remote Pacific Island, and an idealistic young man—all caught up in a web of love, intrigue, and death. Dr. Saunders, as a detached observer, witnesses the diverse personalities of these individuals ensnared by their desires, each navigating a distinct path to their diversifying destinies. In many aspects, "the doctor's point of view encapsulates the author's life philosophy meticulously developed over fifty years" (Calder 353). In contrast to his empathy with all creatures, Dr. Saunders, as an outsider, maintains a worldly and indifferent stance toward human destiny. Additionally, he passionately reflects on the intricate relationship between body and soul. Some critics (Calder, for example) perceive the

novel as an exploration of Hindu philosophy.[1] The fact is that Dr. Saunders, akin to Waddington, engages in philosophical contemplation not through the "rationality" of traditional Western philosophy or the yoga of Indian philosophy/Buddhism (emphasized in *The Razor's Edge*), but through the lens of the thing of opium. This substance becomes a pivotal element in shaping human subjectivity within the narrative.

In *The Painted Veil*, when Kitty queries Waddington about the role of *Dao* in his life, he responds that after having half a dozen whiskies and gazing at the stars, it works and signifies everything. Similarly, Dr. Saunders opts to transcend his body and soul through opium-induced contemplation: "They smoked alternately. Gradually, peace descended upon the doctor's soul [...] his spirit soared in regions far above the storm. He walked in the infinite" (*The Narrow Corner* 89).

It is worthy of note that both alcohol and tobacco objectively induce a sense of relaxation, often leading individuals into a state of mental paralysis. Alternatively, opium sheds its artificially assigned status as a psychotropic drug, reverting to its original role as a pain-relieving medication. This signifies the dissolution of its instrumental properties and the alleviation of the "oppression" it may exert on humans. Much like opium, the island where the protagonist ascends is portrayed in its natural beauty, unspoiled and pristine: "You had a sensation of primeval freshness, and all the complications of the generations disappeared. A stark simplicity, as bare and severe as a straight line, filled the soul with rapture" (*The Narrow Corner* 92). Here, the elements do not assume the identity of the Other, avoiding objectification as desire or an unknown antagonist. Instead, the "primeval freshness" of these elements allows the protagonist to "float on the spiritual altitudes," providing a contrast to the complexity and finitude of human behavior. Similar to opium, this experience aids in healing the confusion and loss experienced by the characters, prompting a return to questioning the nature of the soul. As John Frow describes, "the true role of Things, of underlying thingness, is to be the mirror of our souls, the object that makes us a subject, that makes us real" (273).

On the flip side, Maugham portrays Waddington behaving decently while under the influence of alcohol, and Dr. Saunders smokes opium without succumbing to addiction. Both seek to enter the realm of imagination with rationality. In a similar vein, Zhuangzi advocates for the abandonment of distinctions and oppositions between the self and the universe through a "Pure State of Mind" (心斋 Xin Zhai), ultimately attaining a state of being "Carefree" (逍遥 Xiao Yao). This involves "the

1 See Robert Calder, W. *Somerset Maugham and the Quest for Freedom*, New York: Doubleday, 1973, 353.

desire to break through the phenomenal thing to its essential by means of imagination" (Tang 120). In traditional Western discourse of thoughts, characterized by dualistic thinking regarding self and other, reason and sensibility, Zhuangzi's world may seem mystic and haphazard. Alcohol and opium thus could act as neutral mediators, facilitating the potential for a cross-cultural philosophical dialogue in Maugham's texts. The narratives of them as things offer a perspective into the Western thinking of culture and values from an Eastern philosophy standpoint, prompting "a challenging and uncomfortable" dialogue with Western "culture of individualism, of power, of dualistic thinking, and of materialism" (Clarke 99).

In summary, the existential meaning of opium implies a state unrestricted by human will and an interaction with humans without oppression. It engages with humans on an equal footing, providing temporary anesthesia of the spirit. This brings human thought and spirit into a dialogue with the physical body in an imaginary space, establishing a unifying relationship between the two. Such a relationship transcends all finitude, reaching a state unburdened by the external world and prompting contemplation of the essential meaning of human existence. While it may appear that the thing becomes the object of human gaze, involving acts of possession or projection, it is, in fact, a subject participating in defining the meaning of human existence in the real world.

As Maugham writes in *The Summing Up*, "In civilized communities, men's idiosyncrasies are mitigated by the necessity of conforming to certain rules of behavior. Culture is a mask that hides their faces. Here, people showed themselves bare" (198). This statement highlights the allure of the East for Maugham. Opium, in turn, acts on the human spirit, crafting imaginary worlds that liberate individuals from the complexities of desire and social relations, ultimately returning them to the essential state of the soul and affirming the meaning of existence:

> In this condition of freedom, his soul could look down upon his flesh with the affectionate tolerance with which you might regard a friend who bored you but whose love was grateful to you. His mind was extraordinarily alert, but in its activity, there was no restlessness and no anxiety; [...] He was lord of space and time [...] (*The Narrow Corner* 36)

Through a Daoist interpretation of the relationship between things and humans, one rediscovers the self through the power of imagination. The thing of Opium facilitates the creation of an imaginary world that prompts individuals to reconsider their subjectivity. Simultaneously, it helps to overcome the feelings of fragmentation

and nothingness prevalent in the modern experience, enabling one to reach the realm of "Dao as One," though *simulacra*, in the tangible world and attain spiritual freedom that transcends the limitations of time and space. This philosophical paradigm effectively dissolves the Western debate on the contradiction between body and spirit. In this way, Dr. Saunders accesses the imaginary world of "Dao as One" through his interaction with things. In this moment, the practical significance of the human spirit and existence becomes evident.

Despite experiencing this spiritual oneness, Dr. Saunders, however, maintains a belief in the inherent meaninglessness of the real world. He asserts that the world comprises only himself, his thoughts, and feelings, dismissing everything else as mere fantasy, a perspective deriving from Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy*. This amalgamation of Western and Eastern philosophical thoughts shapes his rules for navigating life in reality:

> "I have acquired resignation by the help of an unfailing sense of the ridiculous."
> "Laugh, then. Laugh your head off."
> "So long as I can," returned the doctor, looking at him with his tolerant humour, "the gods may destroy me, but I remain unvanquished." (*The Narrow Corner* 233)

It seems that the concept of "resignation" suggests the interplay between freedom and necessity as carefully discussed in Spinoza's *Ethics*. We should be reminded that the central thesis of *Ethics*, however, is *conatus* (endeavor), underscoring the affirmation and lucidity of desire as a form of rational freedom. As such, it is not surprising to find that Dr. Saunders' articulation of spiritual freedom drastically divergence from Spinoza's thoughts: "It had liberated him from the bonds of unprofitable habits, and, more relaxed than ever from all earthly ties, he rejoiced in a heavenly sense of spiritual independence" (*The Narrow Corner* 244).

Indeed, the descriptions align more closely with Zhuangzi's pursuit of the Dao—the "Carefree" state characterized by no yearning, no tiredness, and no suffering. This ideal spiritual freedom transcends opposition or contradiction between subject and object, representing a state of mind where all sensory existence is elevated into the rational concept of "Oneness," unburdened by the complexities of life. However, this ideal freedom remains confined to the realm of ideas, expressed through imagination; it is a sensual and imaginative "freedom" that cannot manifest in the tangible world. Dr. Sanders, therefore, employs mediators to

surpass the limitations of the body, initiating a dialogue with the soul and ultimately entering the realm of what could be termed as the Buddha.

There seems to be a convergence between Hindu philosophy and Maugham's philosophical thoughts. Here we shall take a diversion to explain further on the distinction of the two thoughts. From the standpoint of Hindu philosophy, it is human ignorance, attachment to the earthly world, and the entanglements of *karma* that make it challenging to distinguish *Brahman* (the nature of reality) and *Atman* (the self). The determined practitioner, by renouncing social life, suppressing passions, and undergoing various stages of spiritual training, can intuit the wise nature of *Atman* and witness the unity of *Brahman* and *Atman*, achieving liberation. This perspective aligns more with Larry in *The Razor's Edge*, as opposed to Dr. Saunders, who leans towards merging physical pleasure with spiritual enjoyment.

Moreover, Saunders's assessment of Frith's commitment to Hindu philosophy echoes his evaluation of mysticism in *The Summing Up*—flawless but incredulous: "That is an explanation of things that does not entirely displease me," Dr. Saunders believes, adding, "There is a futility about it that gratifies the sense of irony" (140). Indeed, Dr. Saunders's reception of Hindu philosophy, as depicted in *The Narrow Corner*, appears more ambiguous than Larry's in *The Razor's Edge*. Calder further contends that Maugham, despite his deep interest in Hindu philosophy, had not "got religion" (351). As such, it would be safe to conclude that the Maugham's involvement with Zhuangzi and Hindu philosophy suggests his interest in the concept of "Oneness" formed by the subject and the phenomenal world. This underscores an attempt to dismantle the dichotomous subject-object model prevalent in the tradition of Western philosophy.

Amid the spiritual turmoil characterizing the Western world in the 20th century, Maugham finds himself confronted with a pressing dilemma: How is it possible to lead a meaning and goof life when Spinoza's envisioned intellectual freedom appears to falter at its foundational premise? In light of the perceived inadequacies within Western philosophical discourse, Maugham seeks renewal in Eastern thought, viewing it as a viable antidote to the pervasive sense of void and disorientation in Western society. Within this framework, Maugham deliberately "adapt" Zhuangzi's philosophical concept of *Yi Dao Guan Wu* alongside Spinoza's and later Hindu philosophy in his redefinition of subjectivity. This exploration manifests through two primary relational dynamics: the interplay between self and others within human constructs, and the interaction between humans and things. .

In *The Painted Veil*, Maugham's narrative, when viewed through Zhuangzi's

principle of observing things through the *Dao,* reveals a nuanced discussion on life, death and the essence of goodness. This perspective posits that the character's reconstitution of existence and moral values is catalyzed by their engagement with "things." "Things" or "good deeds" humans forge are, in themselves, life's inherent value. This standpoints diverges from the dualistic subject-object framework, embracing instead a monistic view where self and other coexist equitably within the "Dao as One"—a harmonious totality. *The Narrow Corner* further explores Maugham's meditation on redefining human subjectivity and freedom within this holistic "Dao as One." Characters like Waddington and Dr. Saunders leverage "things" to foster a self-awareness captured within an imaginative realm. Here traditional dichotomies—self versus other, humans versus objects, body versus soul—dissolved into a unified state of being. This envisioned ideal of "carefreeness," free from hierarchical and evaluative judgments, is achievable only within an imaginary domain, facilitated by a state of mental disengagement or paralysis.

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《哈迪与伯德：最后的时光》中的“底层历史”叙事及其伦理意义

The Narrative of “History from Below” and Its Ethical Significance in *Hardie and Baird: The Last Days*

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内容摘要：作为历史上首位二度获得布克奖的苏格兰作家，詹姆斯·凯尔曼以其独特的语言风格和对苏格兰底层人民的关注而著称。在《哈迪与伯德：最后的时光》中，凯尔曼以1820年的邦尼穆尔之战为背景，通过明暗线交织的叙事结构呈现了苏格兰普通工人的困境和挣扎。本文通过分析作品中邦尼穆尔之战的叙事再现，对处于底层社会环境中哈迪的伦理身份和伦理选择进行解剖，尤其分析其伦理选择的过程及动机，从而解读以哈迪为代表的苏格兰人身份认同危机。本文认为，凯尔曼的“底层历史”叙事不仅赋予作品以苏格兰民族特色，确立了其艺术创作的个性，同时也在历史书写中注入深刻的伦理寓意，展现了凯尔曼超越地域性的伦理思考。

关键词:《哈迪与伯德: 最后的时光》；文学伦理学批评；底层历史；伦理身份；伦理选择

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Title: The Narrative of “History from Below” and Its Ethical Significance in *Hardie and Baird: The Last Days*

Abstract: James Kelman, the first Scottish author in history to win this award twice, is renowned for his distinct language style and his focus on Scotland’s underclass. In *Hardie and Baird: The Last Days*, Kelman skillfully intertwines narratives to illuminate the challenges faced by ordinary Scottish workers amidst the backdrop of the Battle of Bonnymuir in 1820. This paper aims to analyze Kelman’s portrayal of the Battle of Bonnymuir and to explore the ethical identity and choices

of Hardy, a character navigating a socially disadvantaged milieu. Additionally, it delves into the motivations behind Hardy's ethical decisions, aiming to unravel the identity crisis experienced by the Scottish people. It argues that Kelman's approach of narrating "history from below" not only infuses his work with a distinct Scottish national character but also establishes the unique essence of his artistic expression. Furthermore, it embeds meaningful ethical reflections into the historical narrative, showcasing Kelman's ethical contemplations that transcend local confines.

Keywords: *Hardie and Baird: The Last Days*; ethical literary criticism, history from below; ethical identity; ethical choice

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2011 年，詹姆斯·凯尔曼（James Kelman）再度摘得布克国际奖（Man Booker International Prize）桂冠，成为历史上首位二度获此殊荣的苏格兰作家，被誉为"新苏格兰文艺复兴奠基人"（Hames 2）[1]。凯尔曼的写作风格独树一帜。他擅长将英语与格拉斯哥工人阶层方言、俚语等混杂使用，因此其作品常被贴上"单调粗俗"、"无可读性"和"混乱"等标签（Pitchford 701）。然而，语言混杂性和不可读性恰恰显示了凯尔曼捍卫苏格兰文化的决心："我希望我的作品能够归属于某种文学传统。它力证两件事：地方文化的合法性和捍卫该文化的权利"（Hames 53）。彼得·博克索尔（Peter Boxall）认为，凯尔曼的作品持续关注"处于主流话语之外的'被边缘化'的无助人群"（Boxall 123）；大卫·阿奇博尔德（David Archibald）也敏锐地察觉到"底层历史"（history from below）观可构成凯尔曼的主要创作意图之一[2]。上述学者的观察可谓切中肯綮。纵观凯尔曼的创作生涯，他对"苏格兰底层历史"始终保持高度关切，以独特的笔触和深刻的社会洞察力，赋予苏格兰社会中被忽视和边缘化的人群以语言和存在的力量。

尽管评论者们已经洞察到了凯尔曼书写"苏格兰底层历史"的创作旨趣，但他们并未深入探讨"如何书写苏格兰底层历史"以及"底层历史叙事背后蕴含的伦理意义"这两个关键问题。作为苏格兰作家、文化和政治活动

1 本文外文引文均出自笔者译。

2 参见 David Archibald, "Kelman's Drama," *The Edinburgh Companion to James Kelman*, edited by Scott Hames, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010, 66.

家，凯尔曼不仅通过语言等媒介巧妙地将苏格兰民族意识融入各种文本之中，而且以普世的伦理视角反观苏格兰底层历史，赋予作品超越文本本身的社会、文化以及伦理价值。鉴于此，本文将以文学伦理学批评为阐释框架，探究凯尔曼戏剧《哈迪与伯德：最后的时光》（*Hardie and Baird: The Last Days*, 1990）中的苏格兰底层历史叙事策略及其伦理意蕴。在这部作品中，凯尔曼以 19 世纪初的苏格兰为历史背景，通过展呈哈迪与伯德在底层历史境遇所面临的伦理身份困境表现人性的深层状态。本文通过分析邦尼穆尔之战的叙事再现，对处于动荡底层社会环境中哈迪的伦理身份和伦理选择进行解剖，分析其伦理选择的过程及动机，从而解读以哈迪为代表的苏格兰人身份认同危机，为读者从伦理视角思考苏格兰历史提供启示。

一、邦尼穆尔之战的叙事再现

文学伦理学批评强调文学作品应被置于其产生和存在的历史环境中审视。[1] 伦理环境的概念为《哈迪与伯德》中的“底层历史”叙事提供了不可或缺的解读框架。《哈迪与伯德》的序言部分介绍了作品的背景：“1820 年，安德鲁·哈迪与约翰·伯德领导下的激进派团体与政府军发生了冲突，这便是历史上著名的邦尼穆尔之战”（109）[2]。深植于 19 世纪初苏格兰特定的历史土壤，作品中的苏格兰社会底层群体，如工人、农民等，组成的激进派对当时被地主阶级操控的政府表示强烈不满，他们要求政治改革，渴望恢复议会。例如，当被斯莫尔长官问及恢复议会的原因时，伯德强调 “议会的取消是导致苏格兰处于水深火热的真正原因”（159）。哈迪也提出“当他们问我想要什么权利的时候，我回答道：‘恢复议会’和投票选举。因为我认为苏格兰政府应该满足这些要求”（151）。哈迪和伯德坚信，被地主控制的苏格兰政府已长期漠视底层民众利益。二人希望通过抗争来恢复议会制度，实现社会的公正。尽管哈迪与伯德未能取得最终的胜利，但他们的抗争精神和意识在苏格兰民族运动中留下了深刻的烙印。在此背景下，这场战役不仅是当时苏格兰社会政治动荡的缩影，更是工人阶级与地主阶级伦理观念对立与碰撞的生动写照。这种充满矛盾和冲突的战争伦理环境也在凯尔曼精湛的叙事技巧中得以呈现。

在《哈迪与伯德》中，凯尔曼构建了以哈迪与伯德对话为明线、以叙述者对战争的回忆为暗线的双重叙事结构，通过自由间接引语融合回忆者哈迪与叙述者视角。邦尼穆尔之战虽未以真实的战争场面呈现，但凯尔曼通过穿插叙述的手法，将战争所引发的混乱与恐慌的社会氛围巧妙地融入作品的叙

1　参见 Nie Zhenzhao, “Ethical Literary Criticism: A Basic Theory,” *Forum for World Literature Studies* 2 (2021): 192; Nie Zhenzhao, “Ethical Literary Criticism: Sphinx Factor and Ethical Selection,” *Forum for World Literature Studies* 3 (2021): 383-398.

2　本文有关《哈迪与伯德：最后的时光》的引文均来自 James Kelman, *Hardie and Baird: The Last Days* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1990)。以下引文仅标注页码，不再一一说明。

事结构。在对话的主线中，凯尔曼运用格拉斯哥工人阶层独具特色的语言，通过哈迪、伯德等人物所使用的断裂、破碎化的语言表达方式，展现底层人物内心抗拒与屈从之间错综复杂的张力。他们的对话不仅揭示了其对政治改革的强烈渴望，更表达了他们对社会不公的愤怒和反抗。这种直接而生动的对话交流，使读者能够深入了解到底层人物在动荡时期所承受的压力和挑战，同时也更加深入地理解故事的背景和情境。另一方面，叙述者的回忆则为故事增添了历史的厚重感。透过叙述者的回忆，读者可以窥见战争场景和人物内心世界的交织。这种叙述方式不仅丰富了故事的层次感，也为故事提供了一种自反性的视角，让读者更加全面地理解底层群体的处境和危机。《哈迪与伯德》中的双重叙事结构由此展现了 19 世纪 20 年代苏格兰社会中工人与政府之间错综复杂的争议与对立。在这部作品中，邦尼穆尔之战不仅是一场硝烟弥漫的军事冲突，更是多重伦理观念、不同阶级利益和社会深层矛盾的集中体现。战争背后隐藏着苏格兰人民在历史转折点上所面临的生存困境与道德选择。当时，经济衰退和严苛的《谷物法》（*Corn Laws*）[1] 让民众生活举步维艰，而邦尼穆尔之战的失利又进一步加剧了社会的不稳定和民众的焦虑。正是在这样充满挑战的伦理环境中，哈迪、伯德等人展现出了底层群体复杂的伦理身份。

二、"底层身份"的书信写作建构

"在文学文本中，所有的伦理问题产生都同伦理身份相关"，伦理身份"是一个人在社会中存在的标识，人需要承担身份所赋予的责任与义务"（聂珍钊，《文学伦理学批评导论》 263）。哈迪的伦理身份并非单一，而是由多重角色构成，蕴含着内在的张力和矛盾。出身于格拉斯哥南部，哈迪原本对政治活动并无多少兴趣。然而，1820 年的邦尼穆尔之战成为他生命中的转折点。这场战役不仅加深了他与老兵伯德的深厚友情，更在团队协作中展现了他不凡的领导才能。然而，哈迪对于突然赋予的领导者身份却显得有些无所适从甚至畏惧。即便在格拉斯哥民众的请愿队伍中，他也更倾向于视自己为一名普通的劳动者，认为："我们每个人都是朴实善良的劳动者，心中都怀揣着回到昔日耕作快乐时光的梦想"（136）。尽管哈迪认为自己是一位普通的劳动者，也是代表着广大劳动者利益的反抗者，努力为底层群体争取应有的权益；但同时他还被迫拥有领导者的身份。这一身份隐含着与广大群众产生隔阂的风险，也置哈迪于身份困境之中。作为反抗者，他需要为劳动者发声，争取

1　1815 年 5 月，曼切斯特政府为保护部分地主利益不受侵犯开始禁止殖民地以外的外国谷物（小麦、大麦）进口，这便是历史上著名的《谷物法》。该法律一经发布，导致苏格兰出现资源垄断、粮价上涨等现象。许多苏格兰工人因无法接受高昂的价格被迫面临饥饿。哈迪、伯德二人呼吁政府废除《谷物法》。参见 Harley Knick, "Trade: Discovery, Merchantilism and Technology," The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, edited by Roderick Floud et al., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 175-203.

权益；但作为领导者，他可能因地位的提升而与普通劳动者产生距离，甚至需要在某些情况下牺牲劳动者的利益。这两种身份之间的矛盾，使得哈迪面临着艰难的伦理选择：他应该如何建构和维护自己的“底层身份”？对于哈迪而言，他若想成为一名合格的劳动者代表，就必须警惕领导者身份与“底层身份”的背离，并始终贯彻反抗者的精神。这不仅意味着他需要在行动上保持与劳动者的紧密联系，更需要通过文学书写等方式，持续地传达和捍卫劳动者的声音与利益。因此，哈迪的伦理身份并非简单的劳动者，而是反抗者与领导者的复合体。他需要在这两种身份中寻找平衡，努力做出最符合劳动者利益的伦理选择。

“文学批评要回归历史的伦理现场，采用历史的相对主义的视角来审视不同时代伦理环境下人物做出的伦理选择”（聂珍钊 王松林 9）。作为劳动者，哈迪的伦理身份为他的叙述赋予了强烈的现场感和真实性。在历史的大潮中，哈迪不仅是见证者，更是一名积极的行动者。“1820 年，近 6 万名工人发出行动的呼声，其中一些人甚至企图夺取苏格兰当地政府的武器，但均未成功。安德鲁·哈迪在这场运动中崭露头角，成为这群人的领袖，与曼彻斯特政府的骑兵形成了紧张的僵持局面。不同政治阵营之间的斗争日益白热化”（Devine and Wormald 439）。19 世纪 20 年代的苏格兰是政治思潮的交汇点，身处这一时代的哈迪深刻感受到了社会的动荡与不安。在这样的历史背景下，他果断地选择通过文学来记录自己的伦理选择，并对这个纷扰与变迁的时代进行深入反思。哈迪通过文字揭露社会的不公，为民众发声。他尝试通过书信的形式来记录 19 世纪初苏格兰工人所面临的集体困境。在剧中第一幕第一场景中，“哈迪坐在茶柜前，专心致志地写信”（110）。他朗读道：“我有充足的时间通过写信来反省我过去的行为，希望我过去的行为会因我们神圣的救世主的功绩而得到宽恕”（111）。在哈迪的视野中，文学书写不仅是一种表达观点的方式，更是一种完成伦理选择、实现自我反思的手段。这种对过往行为的持续审视，为其人性因子的增长奠定了基础。书信写作也由此建构了他的“底层身份”。除此之外，哈迪对自己的信件寄予深厚期望。他希望通过书写邦尼穆尔桥上的事件来实现他为民发声的夙愿。在第一幕第十三场景中，他写道：“下面是邦尼穆尔之战的全部过程，希望读者能够忽略其中夹杂的私人情感，也不要考虑这封信的写作方式和风格”（148）。随后，哈迪撰写了自己与政府军相遇的具体细节：

> 伯德原本以为会有两百名全副武装的老兵赶来支援，但结果却只有五六个人。不过，如果我们从格拉斯哥来的人更多一些，情况或许就会有所不同。我们接到的命令是穿越邦尼布里奇，迎接从斯特拉文、卢瑟格伦等地赶来的援军。我们经过一座沟渠桥，踏足于沼地上约一英里远的地方，随后登上山顶，休整了大约一个小时。就在这时，骑兵出现了

并要求我们放下手中的长矛，但双方没有达成一致。于是他们发动了一场猛烈的进攻。然后，我们被带到了斯特林城堡被关押。（149）

哈迪在历史的长河中赋予了邦尼布里奇、斯特拉文、卢瑟格伦等苏格兰地理坐标深远的意义，以此铭记这段"几乎被世人遗忘"的历史"（110）。他不仅以书信的形式详细记录了19世纪初苏格兰工农阶级的斗争史诗，更是通过文字传达出他对社会公正与道德责任的深沉执着。在戏剧的第二幕第五场中，哈迪曾满怀深情地对妻子玛格内特说："在这封信抵达你手中之前，我的精神将永远陪伴着你"（173）。在幻想中与玛格内特对话的同时，哈迪将自己的书信视为一种艺术表达。尽管他的朋友伯德提醒他："你不必给每个人都写信"（175），但哈迪坚定地回应："我必须继续写这些信，这是我义不容辞的责任"（175）。哈迪之所以如此坚持，源于他强烈的伦理意识和道德责任感。他坚信苏格兰民众的利益至关重要，"人民反抗压迫的权利神圣不可侵犯"（165）。因此，他选择通过文学书写来传递自己的伦理观念。在整个戏剧中，哈迪奋笔疾书的形象让人印象深刻，直到故事结尾："哈迪停下了笔，凝视着天花板，缓缓地闭上了眼睛"（180）。通过文学书写，哈迪不仅对自己进行了道德剖析与自省，更引领读者一同感受他对战争的困惑，以及对劳动者的深切同情。哈迪的文学书写不仅记录历史事件，更成为了为底层劳动者树立自我认同的象征。他通过挖掘并呈现底层劳动者的生活和挣扎，巩固了他们的社会身份。通过叙述邦尼穆尔之战和劳动者运动，哈迪为底层劳动者的历史和价值观注入了新的生命力。他的文字为他们赋予了声音和存在感，使得他们不再是被忽视的群体，而是社会中不可或缺的一部分。因此，哈迪的文字书写不仅是一种伦理选择，更是一种对底层劳动者身份的坚定建构和巩固。

三、"底层历史"书写背后的身份认同危机

哈迪复杂的"底层身份"书写映照了他从身份困惑走向自我救赎的曲折过程。这也反映了19世纪初苏格兰政治混乱的社会景象：在战争冲击下，原有的伦理秩序与价值取向受到严重影响，人们普遍陷入了身份认同的迷失和伦理困境中。苏格兰文学界对这一问题的关注在戏剧作品中尤为明显。马克•布朗（Mark Brown）在《1969年以来的现代主义与苏格兰戏剧：舞台革命》（*Modernism and Scottish Theatre Since 1969: A Revolution on Stage*, 2019）中指出，"自16世纪加尔文教限制苏格兰剧场上映一切有关历史的戏剧开始，戏剧事业长期处于停滞状态。然而，近五个世纪后革命历史剧的涌现，解决了困扰苏格兰人几个世纪的'我是谁'的问题"（Mark Brown 31-32）。苏格兰剧作家主席伊恩•布朗（Ian Brown）也强调："二战后，革命历史剧能够迅速成为苏格兰现代戏剧的主流，这与人民日益增长的寻求身份认同的需求密

切相关”（Ian Brown 79）。两位学者都关注到了苏格兰人长期以来对于“我是谁”的身份困惑，以及戏剧在探寻和表达这种身份认同中的重要作用。在此背景下，凯尔曼接受了伊恩·布朗的邀请，对《哈迪与伯德》进行了再度改编[1]，使得“苏格兰人身份认同”成为作品深入探讨的伦理问题之一。这也彰显了戏剧在反映和探讨社会伦理问题方面的独特价值和影响力。

“伦理身份有多种分类，如以血亲为基础的身份，以伦理关系为基础的身份、以道德规范为基础的身份、以集体和社会关系为基础的身份、以从事的职业为基础的身份”（Nie, “Ethical Literary Criticism: A Basic Theory” 191）。苏格兰人的身份认同困境不仅反映在个体层面，也体现在民族集体层面。1820年邦尼穆尔之战的根源就在于苏格兰人对自身身份的认同出现了裂痕。戏剧开篇引用诗人丹尼尔·泰勒（Daniel Taylor）的《伯德与哈迪之颂》（*The Dirge to Baird and Hardie*, 1889）解释道：“有关哈迪和伯德二人的过去，就像众多其他有关苏格兰起义的历史，几乎完全被人们所遗忘了”（109）。这里的“几乎完全被遗忘”揭示了伯德与哈迪的个人历史与苏格兰历史之间的裂痕，反映了苏格兰底层人民遭遇身份丧失、不被认同的困境。19世纪20年代的苏格兰更是历经了诉求被排斥甚至被打压的命运。自19世纪以来，苏格兰接连爆发的独立运动常被英国官方描绘成联邦中的激进形象，这反映了苏格兰人在身份认同问题上的屡遭挫折。在这种环境下，苏格兰作家们对邦尼穆尔之战进行了不同程度的解读和再现[2]，以不同方式凸显了苏格兰人在身份认同上所遭遇的困境。

文学伦理学批评从起源上把文学看成道德的产物，认为文学是特定历史阶段人类社会的伦理表达方式。[3] 作为一名具有强烈民族意识的创作者，凯尔曼努力将苏格兰社会边缘人物纳入创作，以此揭示这些人由于身份认同错位所造成的困境。他打破了传统文学中苏格兰工人的“进步者”形象，即“经

1　自 20 世纪 90 年代开始，苏格兰文学界逐渐聚焦于历史事件的伦理内涵，并由此兴起了一种反抗权威的“进步主义”思想潮流。在这一时代背景下，格拉斯哥学派，以凯尔曼、汤姆·雷昂纳德（Tom Leonard）和尼尔·华莱士（Neil Wallace）为代表，坚信只有深入剖析过去，我们才能更好地掌控未来。秉持这样的历史观念，凯尔曼创作了《哈迪与伯德：最后的时光》，这部作品的核心目的正是深入探索历史事件的伦理价值。参见 Simon Kovesi, *James Kelman*, London: Manchester University Press, 122.

2　有关 1820 年苏格兰邦尼穆尔之战题材的文学作品并非凯尔曼首次创作，历史上先后进行了三次改编。首次为安德鲁·哈迪的后代科尔·哈迪（Keir Hardie）以笔名威廉·斯图尔特（William Stewart）于 1908 年创作的《苏格兰自由斗士》（*Fighters for Freedom in Scotland*），其次为 1920 年苏格兰民族党议员弗兰克·雪莱（Frank Shelley）选择以《苏格兰自由斗士》为蓝本，改编创作了《1820 年之崛起》（*The Rising of 1820*），第三次则为 1990 年凯尔曼在面临格拉斯哥市“欧洲文化之都”更名事件进行了再次创作。参见 Simon Kovesi, *James Kelman*, London: Manchester University Press, 127-128.

3　参见 Nie Zhenzhao, “Ethical Literary Criticism: A Basic Theory,” *Forum for World Literature Studies* 2 (2021): 190.

个人努力摆脱生存困境"（Craig 105）的固有模式，突出描述了作为失败者的苏格兰工人形象。在《哈迪与伯德》中，主人公们为帮助格拉斯哥市民摆脱贫穷和饥饿的命运，勇敢地放弃了原有的身份，但却陷入了无法改变周围环境的困境。这种失败不仅是个人的挫折，更是对苏格兰人集体面临的伦理、身份和归属问题的深刻反映。通过对哈迪、伯德等主人公失败故事的书写，凯尔曼引导读者思考个体在复杂多变的社会环境中如何定义自己，如何面对身份认同的挑战。这种书写方式不仅展示了苏格兰工农阶级的悲剧故事，更引发了关于如何重建伦理环境、做出伦理选择以实现身份认同的深入讨论。鉴于此，《哈迪与伯德》的底层历史书写探讨了苏格兰人集体面临的伦理、身份和归属问题，成功地引发了读者对身份认同问题的深入思考，从而实现了其文学和伦理价值的双重提升。

在《哈迪与伯德》中，凯尔曼不拘于现实主义和后现代主义的表现模式，以明暗交织的叙事穿梭于分裂战乱的城市及矛盾不安的内心之间，深刻揭示了苏格兰底层工人在战场等"极端"环境中所经历的身份认同和伦理选择的挑战。凯尔曼通过深入挖掘战争中的人性挣扎，展现了对伦理问题的深刻洞察。他聚焦于人物内心的世界，而非过多陷入历史的细节之中，让读者直接感受到战争带来的苦难和困境。这种叙事方式不仅赋予了作品独特的"凯尔曼式"苏格兰民族特色，确立了其艺术创作的个性，同时也在历史书写中注入了深刻的伦理寓意，展现了凯尔曼超越地域性的道德思考。即使两个世纪过去了，这部作品依然传递着深刻的警示，发人深省。以《哈迪与伯德》为代表的苏格兰本土作品在后现代思潮中大胆探索，突破了传统束缚，展现了独特的"苏格兰性"。更为重要的是，这些作品通过对普世人类道德问题的深入探讨，拓展了苏格兰文学对现实的深度书写。

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