

Chinese Literature as World Literature: Revisiting Wang Ning's Literary Vision and Revisualizing Chinese Literature in the Age of Globalisation

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Abstract: Professor Wang Ning is a visionary Chinese literary theorist and comparatist who has played a prominent role in both Chinese and international academic debates about the construction of world literature and global humanities. This article revisits his evolving theories on world literature, discusses his emphasis on the necessity of a tripartite translation strategy in the formation of a more democratic world literary system from a Chinese perspective, scrutinises his historical approach to understanding Chinese literature in relation to the Nobel Prize in Literature, and the importance of literary film adaptation after the world's turn to the visual. As a world-class literary theorist, Prof. Wang Ning has had a profound influence on Chinese humanities scholars who write in both Chinese and English, compelling us to ponder over how to practice his cosmopolitan spirit and join him in advancing China's scholarship in the age of globalisation.

Keywords: Chinese literature; world literature; cultural translation; visual turn; literary film adaptation

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标题: 作为世界文学的中国文学：重温王宁教授的文学构想以及重新想象全球化时代的中国文学

内容摘要: 王宁教授是一位具有远见卓识的中国文学理论家和比较文学学者，他在中国和国际学术界关于构建世界文学和全球人文的论争中发挥了重要作用。这篇文章重新回顾了他有关世界文学的丰富的理论，探讨了他从中国文学的角度强调构建更民主的世界文学体系必须注重的三种翻译策略，细读了他从历史的角度理解中国文学与诺贝尔文学奖的复杂关系以及在全球视觉转向后中国文学电影改编的重要性。作为世界级文学理论家，王宁教授对于中国所有从

事双语写作的人文学者产生了深远的影响，促使我们思考如何赓续他的世界主义精神，如何在全球化时代加入他的行列共同促进中国学术的发展。

关键词：中国文学；世界文学；文化翻译；视觉转向；文学电影改编

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David Damrosch has called for collaborative work to mitigate “both the global generalist’s besetting hubris and the national specialist’s deeply ingrained caution” (286). Franco Moretti has expressed a similar view, albeit in a more explicit manner (54-68). Like Damrosch and Moretti, Professor Wang Ning is the embodiment of the ideal scholar, a master of both national and general literature. His unflinching effort to build cultural and academic bridges between China and the world, and his indisputable theoretical contributions to Chinese and global humanities over the span of four decades entitle him to be recognised as a master of both Chinese and western learning whose forward thinking has shaped and will continue to shape the literary world in China and beyond into a more democratic, inclusive, and diversified community. This article revisits his evolving theories on literature, discusses his emphasis on the necessity of a tripartite translation approach in the formation of a more just world literature from a Chinese perspective, and scrutinises his historical approach to understanding Chinese literature in relation to the Nobel Prize in Literature. Inspired by his great theoretical contributions to both Chinese and world academia, and in light of the global turn to the visual, the author proposes that, on the one hand, we should continue the tripartite translation strategy, with an emphasis now on creating an active translation mindset, and on the other hand, we should embrace a visual translation, namely, adapting Chinese literature to film, to bring visibility to Chinese literature at home and abroad so as to visually promote Chinese literature as world literature.

1. Chinese Literature as World Literature and Its Contemporary Challenges

As early as 1991, Professor Wang Ning was already a firm believer in and a strong advocate of Chinese literature. Interviewed by Ravni Rai Thakur, then a student of Chinese literature at Leiden University, he defined the relationship between Chinese literature and world literature thus: “Chinese literature is no longer a small tributary of the mainstream of world literature, but has found its own place within it, and

has already reached the point where it can carry on a real dialogue with its Western partner” (68). His academic career of over four decades has been a fruitful journey in promoting Chinese literature among world literature and engaging his western counterparts in dialogues and debates that have helped shape today’s more plural, decentered, and progressive literary world.

One of Professor Wang’s biggest contributions is his relativist definition of world literature which simultaneously captures its complexity and simplicity. Based on Goethe’s universalist concept of *Weltliteratur*, inspired by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels’s cosmopolitan elaborations on world literature as global intellectual production, and after many constructive dialogues with Douwe Fokkema, Franco Moretti, and David Damrosch on their contemporary theorization of world literature, Wang put forward his relativist definition in an effort to push back the universalist presupposition and the homogenization accusations often associated with both world literature and globalization:

To avoid this problem, I adopted a relativist attitude toward cultures and literatures of all countries, since by its nature world literature must be represented in different languages. It is appropriate, then, that such a literature should sometimes be mentioned in the plural. That is, we should have both world literature in general and world literatures in particular, the former referring to a universal criterion by which to evaluate literature of the greatest world significance, the latter to the different representations, including translations, of literatures from all countries. (“World Literature and the Dynamic Function of Translation” 4)

In the above-quoted definition, his relativist approach to world literature implies his practical embrace and creative fusion of both literary elitism and pluralism, to the actual effect of pluralizing the elitist world literature and making the plural world literatures elite—the former, through dewesternising the canon of world literature, and the latter, through elevating marginalised national literatures, including Chinese literature, to the status of world literature.

With that being said, the central competing arena remains firmly within the singular form of world literature. Anthologies of world literature, through their evaluating practices of inclusion and exclusion, have largely shaped people’s knowledge and imagination of what world literature is. In *The Longman Anthology of World Literature*, General Editors David Damrosch and David L. Pike note that “world literature” used to be narrowly understood as “masterworks by European

writers from Homer onward, together with a few favored North American writers, heirs to the Europeans” in North America, but North Americans today have generally recognised “that Europe is only part of the story of the world’s literatures, and only part of the story of North America’s cultural heritage”(xxvii). What is implied is Damrosch and Pike’s double vision that, in addition to its inclusive strategy serving as an index of how far world literature has been breaking away from its Eurocentric prejudices, which has largely freed American literature from its subordination to European canons as well, *The Longman Anthology*’s inclusion of Chinese literature and other non-European masterpieces is an appropriate response to America’s claim of ownership of the literary or cultural legacies of its vast immigrant population. The editors of *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature*, including Paul Davis, also claim to have offered “an entire world of literature” “in the best available editions and translations” (V). Anthologising world literature in English is to reshape and re-form the literary canon per se.

Although some great Chinese traditional masterpieces of various genres and times have been included in the aforementioned world literature anthologies, modern Chinese writers do not fare well. *Longman* and *Bedford* both recognise one modern Chinese writer, Lu Xun. The second edition of *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, released in 2012, includes two modern writers, Lu Xun and Zhang Ailing. Apart from advocating for the inclusion of traditional Chinese masterpieces, Professor Wang Ning is also concerned with when contemporary Chinese writers from the second half of the 20th century onward will enter anthologies of great books and be recognised as masters alongside the greatest writers of all time.

To remove Chinese literature from the periphery and reposition it in the polycentric world literary system, Professor Wang has strongly advocated the translation of Chinese literature and emphatically stated that “in the era of globalization, enthusiastically promoting Chinese must be done with the intermediary of English” (“Cosmopolitanism and the Internationalization of Chinese Literature” 175). However, as a keen advocate of Chinese literature and a true comparatist, he does not hesitate to point out that contemporary Chinese writers have to learn to become masters of the language, because regardless of whether they are ready or not, or wish to or not, in the age of rapid global translation flow, they will be read alongside the greatest writers in human history.

In responding to German sinologist Wolfgang Kubin, contemporary Chinese literature’s loudest critic who takes issue with Chinese writers’ (lack of) foreign language reading ability and their (lack of) Chinese language writing ability, Professor Wang Ning largely shares Kubin’s concerns but offers his solutions in

a more constructive, encouraging manner. In his reasoning, if Chinese writers learn to read directly in today's world lingua franca, they will be able to access more literary works of global significance for creative development and aesthetic inspiration. Moreover, he presses Chinese writers further by asking them whether they want to write merely for their fellow native readers or for all the readers of the world. To answer his own question, he writes, "If a writer writes not only for his own contemporary readers, but rather for all the readers of the world, he will at least think over whether the subject matter he deals with is his own initiative, and whether it is of certain universal significance. If not, it will not be thought of as original, even though he might not deliberately repeat or even plagiarize others" (Wang, "Chinese Literature as World Literature" 390). Given time, future Chinese writers will be well-read bilinguals or polyglots, but Wang's provoking question about whether they are writing for the entire world, and by extension, how their works will be viewed within the framework of world literature will always be relevant and alarming, and so is his suggested answer.

Matter-of-factly, Kubin's open criticism of contemporary Chinese novelists can be ascribed to his cosmopolitan view of literature. As a sinologist who simultaneously does creative writing and translation, he mainly expresses his concerns about contemporary Chinese novelists while thinking highly of contemporary Chinese poets (Gu Bin and Hu Sang 85-92; Zhu Anbo 118-124). His critical views can be summarised in the following aspects: First, psychologically speaking, Chinese contemporary novelists, due to their superficial understanding of people and places, are unable to recreate an authentic person or city. Second, intellectually speaking, Chinese novelists do not think deeply or creatively, and therefore their works cannot nourish German intellectuals and writers. Third, from a translator's perspective, Chinese novelists tend to overwrite for the sake of monetary reward, and therefore, their works are not refined language-wise. Fourth, from the gender equality perspective, the narrators of many Chinese writers' works are overly misogynistic, taking pleasure in oversexualizing women characters. Fifth, in terms of the quality of translation, young Chinese translators are inexperienced and non-writers, which is a big disadvantage compared to senior German translators who are experienced and often do research and creative writing as well.

To understand Kubin's criticism, one has to, first of all, acknowledge Kubin as a typical German writer-scholar who is simultaneously a translator, and who lives up to the work ethic that requires one to be polyglot and multitasked. His well-intended remarks, unpleasant and to some extent unfair, highlight the challenges contemporary Chinese novelists have to learn to overcome as their works are

increasingly likely to be evaluated by literary scholars in favor of a cosmopolitan concept of world literature and by more sophisticated, progressive, and gender-conscious readers, both at home and abroad.

2. Toward an Active Translation

As a comparatist, Professor Wang Ning is keenly aware of the fact that the works of many authors such as Goethe and Shakespeare travel far and wide because of translation, and that many others are in oblivion because of the lack of translation. It is his historical consciousness of the role of translation in shaping world canons that makes him tireless in advocating the translation of Chinese literature into the global lingua franca. In his understanding, it is “through translation” that Chinese literature has reasserted itself in the mainstream of world literature (“Translating Modernity and Reconstructing World Literature” 111).

To that end, Professor Wang Ning has proposed a tripartite translation solution to promote Chinese literature in the world (“Translating Modernity and Reconstructing World Literature” 111). Firstly, he recommends that Chinese literature be jointly translated into the target language by Chinese literary scholars and western sinologists. Wang’s purpose is to use sinologists’ help to meet the specific demand of a western market, whatever that may be. Wang differs from Kubin in that he believes that Chinese translators will be, if not yet, capable of elegantly and idiomatically translating Chinese literature into a foreign language, while the latter believes that Chinese literary works should be translated only by the native target language users for the sake of retaining any poetical flavor (Zhu 122). In my opinion, both Wang’s and Kubin’s approaches can be utilised and encouraged to maximise the spread of Chinese literature and offer diversified literary translation products to readers with different aesthetic needs.

Secondly, Wang encourages Chinese scholars to directly publish their studies in English in high-impact international academic journals to engage leading western scholars in conversations and debates. In light of his suggestion, a great way to respond to Kubin’s accusation of the misogynist undercurrent in Chinese writers’ works is to create and nurture critical spaces for more women scholars at home and abroad to voice their opinions on Chinese writers, male and female alike, to help raise their gender consciousness, and ready them for a sophisticated and progressive global readership.

Thirdly, Wang highlights the importance of anthologising both Chinese literature – especially modern Chinese literature – and world literature in the world lingua franca by Chinese scholars. In his vision, Chinese scholars will not only

make translated Chinese literature available to the global reading public, but also become an important force in formulating a new world literary canon that will give full credit to the long-marginalised Chinese literature. Given that American universities are using their English anthologies of world literature – for instance, *The Bedford Anthology* used at the University of New Mexico—Chinese universities certainly need a handy Chinese version of a world literature anthology in English. As a result of this growing anthologizing effort, more national versions of world literature anthologies written in English will be available in the marketplace to end the monopoly of certain anthologies.

Inspired by Professor Wang’s vision for Chinese literary and cultural translation in the ongoing process of global literary production, distribution, and consumption, I propose to adopt an active translation strategy. In Ali Darwish’s critique of the translator’s interference with the original text, he categorises interference into two kinds—the active interference, and the passive interference—describing the former as intentional, the latter as inadvertent. According to Darwish, active translation can occur on both personal and general levels. When it occurs on a personal level, it means the translator is imposing “a certain attitude or personal view or a set of beliefs that dictate a certain way of thinking or writing” (Darwish 117). When it occurs on a general level, it often implies that “a certain translation approach is adopted by authorities, organizations, governments and other official apparatuses as a form of censorship” (Darwish 111). In Barbara Pauk’s study of Helen Maria Williams’s well-known English translation of *Paul et Virginie* by Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, a student and disciple of Rousseau, she suggests that Williams has actively transformed the philosophical and naturalist original in order to make it conform to her personal belief of feminism by giving a female protagonist a voice while significantly reducing that of the male narrator (106). Although Darwish and Pauk have conflicting views on interference in translation, their studies both show that an active interference can be disturbingly productive and productively disturbing.

In addition to Professor Wang Ning’s three solutions analysed above, my proposed version of an active translation includes the following three solutions: First, an active translation has to be gender-conscious and incorporate a gendered approach. It means that the genders of all persons involved, fictional or not, have to be factored into creating a progressive space. Second, an active translation means to translate not only what the world requests or craves to know about China, but also what China wishes to show the world. Rather than passively meeting the demand of the world, this active translation mentality allows China to proactively assume

the responsibility to share its rich traditions and cultures to help envision a global community of shared destiny where cultural diversity and pluralism is respected and appreciated. Third, an active translation is inclusive, embracing various forms of translation in its broadest sense, which means visual translation and rewriting should be considered an integral part of translating Chinese. The following section will discuss in greater detail why adapting Chinese literature into film is critical in establishing and imagining Chinese literature as world literature in the increasingly visualised world community.

3. The Nobel Prize in Literature and Literary Film Adaptation

In his monograph *A Comparative Study of Twentieth-Century Western Literature*, Prof. Wang Ning acknowledges the utmost prestige of the Nobel Prize in Literature compared to other important literary awards such as the Dante Prize, the Miguel de Cervantes Prize, and the Goncourt Prize, and considers the Nobel Prize in Literature, albeit imperfect in its selection criteria, reflective of the changing literary trends and schools in the 20th century (237). He also poses challenging questions: “Since the Nobel Committee for Literature at the Swedish Academy considers a fair distribution of the prizes across nations and regions important, why over eighty years has it never awarded a writer from China whose population accounts for one-fifth of the world population? Doesn’t China have one single writer who deserves the Nobel Prize in Literature?” (Wang, *A Comparative Study of Twentieth-Century Western Literature* 256). In addressing these questions, he examines China’s great literary history and legacies, identifies the missed Noble Prize in Literature opportunities due to the negligence of the authorities of the first half of 20th-Century China, and optimistically promotes the emerging middle-aged and young writers, including Mo Yan and Ma Yuan, whose works, in his view, are almost as good as some world literary classics (Wang, *A Comparative Study of Twentieth-Century Western Literature* 257-258).

Professor Wang Ning further acknowledges the prestige of the Nobel Prize in Literature and remarks, “The institutional authority capable of manipulating the fame of authors and their works most powerfully has been, since the early 20th century, the Swedish Academy” (“World Literature and the Dynamic Function of Translation” 8). In his interview with Kjell Espmark, the then Chair of the Nobel Committee for Literature and professor of the history of literature at Stockholm University, he pressed the latter to reveal who among Chinese writers was favored to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (*A Comparative Study of Twentieth-Century Western Literature* 401). Espmark told him that the Committee was aware of China’s

literary progress through reading translated Chinese literature, watching films and their contact with late sinologist Goran Malmqvist, and that winning the Nobel Prize in Literature was merely a matter of time for Chinese writers (Wang, *A Comparative Study of Twentieth-Century Western Literature* 401). It is unclear what films the committee watched and how exactly the aforementioned films helped update the committee members on Chinese writers, but Espmark did acknowledge the role of film in informing the Committee of or familiarizing it with Chinese literature. Those who adore literature cannot agree more with Espmark that literature will never die out, that people cannot fully appreciate literary works through watching films and TV, and that they can only enjoy the pleasure of literature by reading it (Wang, *A Comparative Study of Twentieth-Century Western Literature* 402). With that being said, film, mentioned in passing in Espmark's exchange with Wang, is too important to be ignored in an increasingly visualised world. Films on China in general, and film adaptations of Chinese literature in particular, can facilitate the dissemination of Chinese literature and should be taken full advantage of.

With regard to the ongoing visualization of the world, Professor Wang has long pointed out that “upon entering the age of globalization, there has also appeared a shift in current literature and culture: from traditional verbal writing to the newly emergent picture or image writing” (“An ‘Iconological Turn’ in Literary and Cultural Studies and the Reconstruction of Visual Culture” 29-30). Referencing André Lefevere's concept of translation as rewriting, Wang argues that translation studies “should more or less shift its focus to that of pictorial criticism, or iconological criticism” (“An ‘Iconological Turn’ in Literary and Cultural Studies and the Reconstruction of Visual Culture” 30). He further identifies the deconstructive force of iconographical writing and its criticism “lies in its forceful deconstruction of the verbal-centric mode of thinking and writing, and emancipating the creative and critical imagination of artists and art critics” (Wang, “An ‘Iconological Turn’ in Literary and Cultural Studies and the Reconstruction of Visual Culture” 39). Although he doesn't discuss films specifically in this emerging visual culture, he emphasises the necessary turn to the visual in literary and cultural studies, which includes films.

George Bluestone, in his 1957 classic monograph *Novels into Film: The Metamorphosis of Fiction into Cinema*, uses both great Hollywood director D. W. Griffith and great Polish-British writer Joseph Conrad's shared goal “to make you see” to advance his theory of the two ways of seeing: “Novelist and director meet here in a common intention. One may, on the one hand, see visually through the eye or imaginatively through the mind. And between the percept of the visual

image and the concept of the mental image lies the root difference between the two media” (1). According to Bluestone, a literary film adaptation and its source differ in the medium used but essentially, they are simply two ways of seeing – one, through the visual image and the other, the mental image. Although Bluestone considers the mental image superior to the visual image, his theory of the two ways of seeing suggests that literary film adaptation produces one more or an alternative way to make one see visually the image the literary source intends to make one see mentally.

Unlike Bluestone who insists on the superiority of classical novels to their film adaptations, Charles Eidsvik believes that literary film adaptations “frequently provide major advances in the art of film” (255). His four reasons for why adaptations are good for literature still hold true today and are worth recapping here. The first reason is that movies work as introductions to books like ninety-minute free “ads” because they aid the imagination to help sell books. The second reason is that movies help bring literature beyond college classrooms, and therefore help literature to regain its significance. The third reason is that the melodramatic style of storytelling in movies connects the viewers with the popular Victorian literary tradition, and therefore helps link today’s hard-to-read Joycean-Faulknerian literature with its past. The last reason is most relevant to the issue of Chinese writers and worth quoting here word by word:

Four. Movies help make writers self-conscious, nervous, and aggressively experimental. Movies are, after all, a co-opting medium, a great middle-class sponge of ideas, plots, and characters. Writers hate being co-opted; they hate the fact that movies can reach audiences better than books; they hate taking money to see their creative offspring gang-raped in a screenwriter’s conference room; they hate the formulaic-cliché side of Hollywood. I tend to think that hate helps reinforce the paranoiac love of romantic individuality necessary to literary genius.[...] Dislike of the movies has been useful to the advance of literature. The whole Lawrence-Joycean-Millerian thrust of modern literature has been to explore the dangerous, to keep from being co-opted by the Kitsch trade, to stay authentic. I believe film has kept modern literature pure by producing adaptations which serve as cautionary tales about what will happen to your work if you sell out, if you popularize. [...] movies, by carrying on literature’s popular traditions, free serious writers from having to carry on those traditions themselves. (Eidsvik 259)

In the above quote, Eidsvik argues that film adaptations, with their popular cultural tendency, have the actual effect of freeing writers from restraining themselves to popular traditions, pushing writers to stay authentic and experimental, making writers more self-conscious and appreciative of romantic individuality. He proposes a “politique des adaptations”, namely, a policy to highlight the importance of analyzing literary film adaptations (Eidsvik 262). His theory of literary film adaptations can greatly inspire Chinese literary scholars and writers searching for ways to grow Chinese literature in order to transform literary challenges into opportunities in the globalised literary world.

Moreover, a film adaptation can also serve as a cultural criticism of its literary source. Marilyn Hoder-Salmon uses screenwriting in her criticism of Hollywood’s sexist practices in adapting women’s novels. According to Thomas M. Leitch: “This approach does not neglect the traditional activity of interpretation; it simply changes the medium through which the novel must be interpreted from the critical essay into the screenplay, which selects what the screenwriter takes to be most important about the novel and rewrites it” (19). In Hoder-Salmon’s model, screenwriting—a kind of rewriting—is used as a form of criticism, and by extension, the film adaptation itself—another form of rewriting but twice removed from the original source—can also be used as a form of criticism. In this sense, a film adaptation is a criticism of its literary source from the popular cultural perspective, while the literary original is already a criticism of its filmic offspring(s) from the literary perspective. The filmic differences from the literary text are not an index of the film being faithful or not to the original, but a criticism of it per se. Hoder-Salmon thus establishes a critical relationship between literature and literary film adaptations. Her critical method can be used in teaching and advancing both genres under discussion.

There has always existed a deep affinity between Chinese literature and Chinese cinema. The first Chinese film *Dingjun Shan* (*Mountain Ding Jun*) (dir. Ren Qingtai, 1905), a recording of a famous Chinese traditional opera of the same name, was adapted from *Sanguo Yanyi* (*Romance of Three Kingdoms*), a great classical Chinese novel written by Luo Guanzhong in the 14th century. This affinity, established since the birth of Chinese cinema, has successfully weathered great social and cultural changes over a century. Many contemporary writers such as Mo Yan, Yu Hua, Su Tong, Liu Heng, Liu Zhenyun, Lilian Lee, and Chi Li have works adapted to the big screen. Needless to say, the international success of Chinese fifth-generation directors is aided, if not made possible, by the best contemporary writers and their works. The literary film adaptations have helped diffuse those works in return. When Espmark mentioned films among the several means that helped update

the Nobel Committee for Literature on Chinese writers, he likely referred to literary film adaptations of those contemporary writers. In the case of Mo Yan, of his four literature-to-film adaptations, *Red Sorghum* was adapted from the namesake novella and directed by Zhang Yimou in 1987, *Happy Times* was adapted from his novella *Shifu Yuelaiyue Youmo* (*Master Shifu Is Becoming Increasingly Humorous*) and directed by Zhang Yimou in 2000, *Bai Mianhua* (*Cotton Fleece*) was adapted from his namesake novel and directed by Li Youqiao in 2000, and *Nuan* was adapted from *Baigou Qiuqianjia* (*White Dog and the Swing*) and directed by Huo Jianqi in 2003. Those films have certainly helped bring visibility to Mo Yan, and advertised him as one of the best writers in contemporary China.

Literary film adaptations will help advance and advertise Chinese literature in the world which is increasingly experienced and understood visually. Film adaptations will play an irreplaceable role in asserting Chinese literature as world literature, introducing emerging writers—especially serious writers—to the world, and helping proactively create Chinese culture as global cultural literacy. Needless to say, the call for more literary film adaptations is not to negate the significance of the written word or the experience of reading a book. Far from that, the call is based on the belief in the written word and the visual as an organic whole, complementing and advancing each other, rather than subverting and substituting each other, as some may worry.

4. Conclusion

This article starts by celebrating Professor Wang Ning's assertion of Chinese literature as world literature, not only because China has become culturally confident to feel comfortable and proud to regard its great literary tradition as part of the world literary tradition, but also because of the visible literary progress collectively achieved in the past few decades by a global community of Chinese writers, translators, scholars, and sinologists. Wang's dispassionate evaluation of Kubin's sharp criticism of contemporary Chinese novelists compels Chinese literary scholars as well as writers to reorient themselves with a cosmopolitan mentality so as to adopt a writing style embracing not only Chinese literary tradition, but also the world literary legacy. Wang's emphasis on the significance of translation comes from his profound historical understanding of the formation of national and world literary canons, for any writer not translated into the then world lingua franca means zero possibility of enjoying an afterlife beyond their national boundary. Based on his tripartite translation strategy to aid the internationalization of Chinese literature, I propose to adopt an active translation mindset to expand his strategy, and to bring

other factors such as gender and visual translation into play, with an aim to offer more diversified approaches to growing Chinese literature and its visibility in the increasingly gender-conscious, visualised world.

No matter how a film adaptation is defined in relation to its literary text, a film has many undeniable benefits for the diffusion of the latter in the image-saturated world where serious literature is increasingly confined to few college classrooms. In the foreseeable future, visualising literature will become not a choice but a necessity, not a threat to literature but its best companion. In his 1991 interview, Professor Wang Ning concludes by this remark: “We need to have a national literature with its own characteristics, within the broader context of world literature. I am not a prophet, but I think the future of Chinese literature is bright” (Thakur 68-69). With the collaboration of translators, filmmakers, national specialists and global generalists, the internationalisation of Chinese literature, along with other minor literatures, will contribute to the demise of what Moretti calls ‘the one-and-unequal world literature’ and to the birth of a one-and-equal *Weltliteratur*.

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