

# The Conception of World Poetics and the Forming of a Global Academic Community

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**Abstract:** The fast development of globalization and the increasing frequency of cultural exchanges among people around the world have contributed to the resurgence of world literatures and the preliminary formation of a “World Poetics”—a globally felt discursive effort in literary theories. In this paper, the author first sorts out Wang Ning’s impressive achievements in the fields of comparative and world literatures, and in the promotion of Chinese scholarship in the world during the past forty years. Then taking Wang’s conception of World Poetics as an example, the author argues that in an increasingly globalized world, Chinese scholars are making great efforts to break the Western-centric mindset, to make their voices heard in the international academic community, and to construct a Chinese literary theory discourse. The author concludes that, in this information era, the communication and cultural exchanges among different nations are going deeper and globally there seems more and more resonance among scholars from different parts of the world. A loosely-structured, preliminary global academic community is beginning to take shape, which is also a prerequisite for the conception of World Poetics. With China’s continued economic prosperity and its comprehensive national power, China’s humanities academia will certainly be able to make an increasingly strong voice in the international literary arena.

**Keywords:** World Poetics; comparative literature; globalization; Global Academic Communities; Wang Ning

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**标题:** 世界诗学的构想和全球学术共同体的初步形成

**内容摘要:** 当今世界全球化程度的日益加深和世界各国人民文化交流的日益频繁促进了世界文学现象的再度繁荣，也有助于一种全球性的文学艺术理论话语——世界诗学——的诞生。本文通过对王宁先生四十年来致力于比较文

学与世界文学研究及其对中国学术国际化所取得的突出成就的梳理，旨在以王宁先生多年来对世界诗学的构建为例，探索中国学者为打破国际学术界积弊已久的西方中心主义思维定式、在国际学术圈发出中国学者自己的声音、建构中国的文学理论话语而付出的巨大努力以及所取得的成效。本文作者认为，在一个越来越全球化、各国人民交往和文化交流日益频繁而且逐步走向深层对话的信息化时代，不同国家学者之间的学术交流日益密切且走向深层对话，一个结构松散的全局性学术共同体正在逐步形成，这也是世界诗学有望形成的先决条件；而随着中国经济的持续繁荣和综合国力的不断提升，中国的人文学术界一定能在国际文坛上发出越来越强劲的声音。

**关键词：**世界诗学；比较文学；全球化；全球学术共同体；王宁

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### Introduction

Since the 1970s, there has been a lot of doomsaying of the humanities, literary studies in particular, in the Western academy, which could be justified somehow by the sharp fund-cutting in the universities, the shrinking of enrollment in literature and literary theory, the gloomy prospect for the graduates, and the cry of crisis every now and then in the humanities. Things are a little bit different in China though. Although the humanities have been in a disadvantageous position compared with the science and engineering, they have still achieved considerably and developed fast during the past forty years. Different from the situation in many Western countries, China has been stressing the international cultural exchanges, in recent years in particular, and actively promoting the mutual appreciation between different nations and cultural tolerance. Globally speaking, the process of globalization has been frustrated in various ways especially by the Covid-19 pandemic beginning from the end of 2019 and the international trade sanctions by some Western countries. But the trend of globalization is unstoppable. In general, the pandemic situation in China is well-controlled, people's life has been safeguarded, and the national economy has been steady and growing. Looked at from China's domestic policies, the government has begun to adopt the monumental plan for international cooperation "The Belt and Road," which includes the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Maritime

Silk Road, aiming to develop economic cooperation with countries along the lines, promote cultural tolerance, and construct communities of mutual interests, reliance, and responsibilities. In addition, since 2000 Chinese government has adopted the strategy of promoting Chinese culture to the world and stressed cultural exchanges in both governmental and non-governmental levels. It's against these international and national backgrounds that the Chinese humanities have gained the momentum to push forward and made great achievements. A group of Chinese scholars who are familiar with both Chinese and Western literatures have been trying to break the barricade between the East and the West, and bridge different cultures for the purpose of mutual appreciation. They not only try to introduce the latest literary trends and philosophic thoughts from the West to China, but also devote themselves to bringing the best academic achievements in China to the outside world. During this process they have been trying to construct a Chinese academic discourse of their own on the basis of amalgamating the East and the West, the ancient and the modern, thus contributing to the progress of a global academic community. And Wang Ning is an excellent example of these scholars.

### **A General View of Wang Ning's Academic Achievements**

Starting his career from teaching English in Nanjing Normal University since 1978, Wang has never left his pursuit of teaching and researching in the field of foreign literature studies. He has taught in such distinguished universities in China as Peking University, Beijing Language and Culture University, Tsinghua University, and now Shanghai Jiaotong University. Familiar with both Chinese and English literatures and skilled in writing in both languages, Wang has been taking the lead in introducing Western literary theories into China. He is also enthusiastic about practicing those theories in his criticism while at the same time introducing Chinese literature to the outside world. Wang's achievements are mainly in the fields of psychoanalysis, modernism, postmodernism, globalization, cultural studies, translatology and world literature.<sup>1</sup> He has by far published three monographs in English, more than twenty books in Chinese, and near 600 papers, including over 130 in English. More than 100 of his papers have been indexed by A&HCI and SSCI database and many of his works have been translated into over a dozen of other languages, including Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Germany, Russian, and French, exerting profound influence on the international humanities. Due to

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<sup>1</sup> In addition, Wang has also written a lot of influential articles about post-colonialism, diasporic literature, ecocriticism, Marxism, digital humanism, posthumanism, and studies on Northrop Fry and Henry Ibsen during the past 30 years.

his outstanding achievement and esteem, Wang was selected as member of the Academy of Latinity in 2010, Changjiang Distinguished Professor by the Ministry of Education of China in 2012, and foreign member of *Academia Europaea* in 2013. Wang has led the trend of comparative literature and become an unprecedented academic landscape in the humanities in China. The following is a brief review of his major academic achievements in the past forty years.

As early as the late 1980s, Wang began to study Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis and published translations and monographs such as *Deep Psychology and Literary Criticism* (1992) and *Literature and Psychoanalysis* (2002), becoming the main promoter of the second wave of psychoanalytic theory in Chinese literary criticism. Wang not only introduced psychoanalytic theory to China, but more importantly, he excelled in applying this theory to the analysis of Chinese texts. His analyses of modern Chinese writers include Cao Yu, Liu Naoou, Zhang Xianliang, Mo Yan, Wang Anyi, and Xu Xiaobin (Wang, "The Influence and Flux of Freudianism in Modern Chinese Literature" 10-19). Wang does not merely use "advanced" foreign theories to interpret those texts, or treat them as local resources to prove Western theories. Rather, he uses the perspective of Chinese scholars to test and even question foreign theories on the basis of specific textual analysis, thus forming an equal dialogue between China and foreign countries.

In terms of modernity theory and postmodernism, Wang is the "trendsetter" of our time. He was the first to convene the "International Symposium on Postmodern Culture and Contemporary Chinese Literature" (1993) and to publish a number of important papers. He has also published books such as *After Postmodernism* (1998) and *Beyond Postmodernism* (2002). Based on a detailed analysis of more than thirty contemporary writers in China and abroad, Wang points out that although culturally Chinese society is not a typical postmodernist society, due to the deepening of cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries and the uneven development of China's economy and urban culture, contemporary Chinese literature clearly carries postmodern factors, which can provide us with an opportunity to engage in an equal dialogue with Western scholars (Wang, "The Mapping of Chinese Postmodernity" 40; "Rethinking Modern Chinese Literature in a Global Context" 1-11).

In the area of comparative literature and cultural studies, Wang has taken an extremely open view of the impact of cultural studies on literary studies. He has not only published a large number of papers, but also published several books include: *Comparative Literature and Contemporary Chinese Literature* (1992), *Comparative Literature and Chinese Hermeneutics* (1996), and *Comparative*

*Literature: Theoretical Reflections and Literary Interpretation* (2011), and has organized several international symposia. In Wang's view, the original comparative literature is clearly Western-centric and we can take advantage of this opportunity to establish a new school of comparative literature—an "Oriental School" with China, India and Japan as its mainstays, which "is characterized by parallel comparative studies and poetic dialogue across Eastern and Western cultural traditions" (Wang, *Comparative Literature and Contemporary Cultural Criticism* 38, 51). We can see here not only Wang's efforts to advocate equal dialogues, but also his ambition to construct a "World Poetics" that transcends Western centrism. It is no wonder that some Chinese scholars have called him "a pioneer in the internationalization of Chinese comparative literature" (Li Lin 151), and even the late J. Hillis Miller once applauded Wang "for contributing so much, in their essays in this issue and in their other work, to the broadening of once-Eurocentric comparative literature to include literature from all over the world" ("Reading [about] Modern Chinese Literature in a Time of Globalization" 190). As one of the pioneers of cultural studies in Chinese academia, Wang has consistently taken the position of eliminating the dichotomy between literary studies and cultural studies, pointing out that the two can fully complement each other and produce constructive exchanges between them (Wang, *Comparative Literature and Contemporary Cultural Criticism* 81-83).

In the field of translation studies, as early as 1987, Wang published almost simultaneously his works on translation such as *History of Western Art* and *Freudianism and the Literary Mind*. After that, combining translation studies with the study of world literature, he conducted continuous in-depth research on the function of translation and strongly supported the construction of translation studies as an independent discipline—"translatology." He has organized at least four international symposiums on translation, published *Globalization and Cultural Translation* (2004), *The Cultural Turn in Translation Studies* (2009), and *Comparative Literature, World Literature and Translation Studies* (2014) in either Chinese or English. In Wang's view, both translation and translation studies are extremely important and play an irreplaceable role in the current revival of world literature studies; translation needs to go beyond the primary stage of literal translation, and should pay more attention to the cultural perspectives. The cultural turn of translation has become a trend (Wang, *Cultural Translation and Classical Interpretation* 3-17).

In the field of globalization studies, Wang's main influence is in the cultural side and his rare global horizon and vision make him even more remarkable in foreign literature studies. Since 1980s, Wang has realized that globalization

is an irreversible trend and we can become the trendsetters if we can seize the opportunity. Since 1998, Wang has organized at least four major international symposia on the development of humanities in the era of globalization, published a large number of papers and books include *Globalization and Postcolonial Criticism* (1998), *Globalization and Culture: The West and China* (2002), and *Translated Modernities: Literary and Cultural Perspectives on Globalization and China* (2010). In Wang's view, the rapid development of globalization since the second half of the twentieth century is one of the results of technological progress, especially the information technology revolution, and for China as a whole, we have become the biggest beneficiary of the globalization process due to our accession to the WTO. To promote the modern transformation of traditional Chinese culture and the strategy of going international of Chinese culture (literature) (Wang, *Globalization: Cultural Studies and Literary Studies* 41-60; *Globalization and Cultural Studies* 193-293; *Globalization and Cultural Translation* 1-15).

In addition to his remarkable achievements in the above-mentioned fields, Wang has also accomplished prominently in the fields of world literature, the post-theoretical issue, cosmopolitanism and World Poetics in the past ten years. In addition to organizing several international conferences on related topics, Wang has published dozens of papers in well-known journals at home and abroad and several important books such as *Comparative Literature, World Literature and Translation Studies* (2014), *Literary and Cultural Studies in the Post-Theoretical Era* (2009), and *World Literature and Modern Chinese Literature* (2021). In Wang's view, the revival of world literature at the end of the twentieth century is closely related to the process of globalization and cosmopolitanism; after the twentieth century, we are now in a "post-theoretical era" in which Western theories tend to weaken and ours is an age of carnivalistic "heterglossia." But this is also a good opportunity for Chinese scholars to discover the spiritual core of Chinese culture and to present our excellent cultural traditions to the world (*Studies in Comparative Literature, World Literature and Translation* 201-290). It is in this context of cultural globalization that Wang puts forward his own concept of "World Poetics."

### **World Literature, Cosmopolitanism and the Conception of World Poetics**

Wang's conception of World Poetics has a profound international and domestic background. Internationally, due to the rapid advancement of science and technology, human society entered an information age at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and globalization was no longer limited to the initial financial and economic fields, but soon extended to global governance, politics, and culture.

The humanities academics worldwide are also thinking about the crisis and the way out and the reorientation of theory. At home, the Chinese initiative of “Belt and Road” and the policy of Chinese culture going international have encouraged Chinese scholars’ cultural self-confidence and courage to go global, while the shame suffered by Chinese since the nineteenth century have stimulated scholars to discover the spiritual core of our cultural tradition.

It is in this international and domestic context that we have conceived a variety of theoretical achievements in the last three decades that have impressed the international academia. In the field of literary and cultural studies in recent years, I can cite a variety of theoretical innovations proposed by Chinese scholars, including: Fu Xiuyan’s Chinese Narratology, Nie Zhenzhao’s Ethical Literary Criticism, Zeng Fanre’s Aesthetics of Eternal Engendering, Cao Shunqing’s Variation Theory of CL, Zhang Jiang’s Chinese Hermeneutics, and Wang Ning’s World Poetics. Among these theories pioneered by Chinese scholars, the most influential ones include Ethical Literary Criticism, Chinese Hermeneutics, Variation Theory, and World Poetics. This wave of theoretical innovation is not only influenced by the aforementioned foreign and domestic environments, but also related to the consciousness of Chinese scholars towards academic innovation, their increased awareness of innovation and cultural self-confidence, and China’s increasing cultural soft power.

According to my observation, Wang explicitly proposed the construction of a “World Poetics” in two papers published in 2014. However, this theory is closely related to his research on world literature and cosmopolitanism in the past twenty years. The concept of world literature was first proposed by German scholar August L. Schlözer, Christoph M. Wieland the poet, and the literary giant Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in the early nineteenth century (Fang Weigui 9), but it was not until the end of the twentieth century that this concept was rethought and discussed by scholars, as globalization deepened and cultural exchanges between countries became increasingly close. Representative researchers of world literature include David Damrosch, Martin Puchner, Theo D’haen, Pascale Casanova, Thomas Beebe, Franco Moretti, and Chinese scholars such as Wang Ning, Liu Hongtao, Fang Weigui, and Cao Shunqing.

Influenced by the discussions of Western scholars, Wang has been concerned with the elaboration of the concept of world literature since the beginning of this century, trying to clarify the relationship between comparative literature and world literature, and advocating the strategy of “glocalization” to actively participate in the debates in the international academic community (Wang, “The ‘Death’ and ‘Regeneration’ of the Comparative Literature Discipline” 113-115; “The

‘Glocalization’ of the Chinese Comparative Literature Discipline and Its Direction” 93-100). After several years of exploration, Wang concludes that when people use the term “world literature” now, they have actually endowed it with three meanings: 1) a classic summary of the best literature in the world; 2) a global and cross-cultural perspective and comparative vision on which our literary research, evaluation and criticism are based; 3) a literary historical evolution through the production, circulation, translation and critical selection of literature in different languages. And the criteria by which we judge world literature should include: 1) whether it captures the spirit of a particular era; 2) whether its influence transcends the boundaries of its own nation/language; 3) whether it is included in anthologies of literary classics; 4) whether it can enter university classrooms; and 5) whether it is critically discussed in another cultural/linguistic context (Wang, “‘World Literature’: From Utopian Imagination to Aesthetic Reality” 5). Inspired by the translation ideas of Walter Benjamin, Wang also places special emphasis on the role of translation in world literature, arguing that it is the translation that gives the original work an “afterlife.” (Wang, “‘World Literature’ and Translation” 23).

Wang’s conception of World Poetics is also related to his understanding of cosmopolitanism. Two years before he proposed “World Poetics,” Wang began to pay attention to the revival of cosmopolitanism in recent years. He examines cosmopolitanism in detail, mainly as a cultural phenomenon, and sorts through the works of the ancient Greek Cynics through Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, to Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Martha Nussbaum, Kwame Appiah, Ulrich Beck, Craig Calhoun, Pheng Cheah, and Bruce Robbins. He elucidates its development and contemporary connotations and the reasons for its revival in the late twentieth century. He argues that, today, with China’s growing integration into the world, this concept is becoming increasingly relevant and constructing a “new cosmopolitanism” will help us go international in an era of globalization (“Cosmopolitanism and Its Significance for Contemporary China” 49-55). Then, Wang made a concise exposition of today’s cosmopolitanism from the dimension of literature and culture: 1) as a form of transcending nationalism; 2) as a pursuit of moral justice; 3) as a universal humanistic concern; 4) as a way to feel at home in the world; 5) as a way to dissolve central consciousness and advocate multicultural identity; 6) as a way to pursue the happiness of all human beings; 7) as a political or religious belief; 8) as a way to achieve global governance; 9) as an artistic and aesthetic pursuit; 10) as a critical perspective from which literary and cultural products can be evaluated (“Cosmopolitanism and World Literature” 12; “The Significance of Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary Times” 116). Wang

also points out that the ancient Chinese Confucianism also nurtures the idea of cosmopolitanism, the idea of Great Unity of the world (shijie datong), parallel to the Western tradition, which provides a good platform for Chinese and Western scholars to start a dialogue. This is certainly a prospective and insightful view.

After several years of contemplation and brewing, Wang formally proposed the idea of “World Poetics” in 2014 on the basis of a reevaluation of Earl Miner’s “comparative poetics.” He points out that although Miner’s comparative poetics research has been proud of his peers and previous scholars, he has failed to make further theoretical constructions of a World Poetics (Wang, “Earl Miner: Comparative Poetics and the Construction of World Poetics” 415). Wang’s World Poetics is not a replacement of Western literary theory with Eastern literary theory, nor is it a simple addition of Eastern and Western literary theory, nor is it a traditionally Western-centric literary theory, but “a new literary and interpretive theory, to be constructed on the basis of substantial studies of excellent world literatures and theories.” The purpose of this new theory is to construct a universal literary theory that shares common aesthetic principles and universal standards (Wang, “Earl Miner: Comparative Poetics and the Construction of World Poetics” 421). The World Poetics, “a theoretical summary and sublimation of world literary creation and experience..., will help to further refine the theoretical concept of world literature and to change and revise the existing map of world literature and literary theory”; “it becomes very important and very useful for rewriting the history of world literature and thus expanding the position of Chinese literature and theory on the map of world literature and literary theory” (Wang, “The Conception of World Poetics” 176).

So what are the main features of Wang’s conception of World Poetics? First, Wang points out that World Poetics can be divided into an overall “world literary theory,” i.e., a poetic system as a whole, and specific theories of world literary interpretation, the former referring to the sublimation and crystallization of the world’s excellent literary theories, while the latter takes into account the specific literary theories from different national literatures. Secondly, World Poetics must be characterized by the crossing of linguistic/cultural boundaries, and the history of World Poetics should include non-Western but important literary works such as *Wen Xin Diao Long* (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons) by Liu Xie (465-520). Third, World Poetics must be applicable to explaining all literary phenomena in the world. Fourth, in constructing a World Poetics we must pay attention to the combination of universality and relativity. Fifth, World Poetics should be open and actively engage in dialogues with other disciplines in the

field of humanities and social sciences. Sixth, World Poetics must be mediated by translation so that it can circulate and be available to various cultures (Wang, “Earl Miner, Comparative Poetics, and the Construction of World Poetics” 34-35). Soon afterwards, as Wang’s thinking deepened, he made it clear that World Poetics must break through the limitations of Western centrism and embrace all the literary theories that emerge from the world’s cultures; that World Poetics can never be used to “compulsively interpret” literature; that the vitality of World Poetics is reflected in its unfinished state of being constantly used for interpretation; and that World Poetics can be constructed, and that literary theorists of each era can interpret it in their own critical practice (Wang, “The Conception of World Poetics” 173-174). In the conception of a World Poetics, on the one hand we can see Wang’s attempt to portray an overarching literary theoretical paradigm in a comprehensive manner; on the other hand, we can also see that Wang sometimes tends to go to extremes, as in his description of the third characteristic of the World Poetics.

In my opinion, Wang’s vision of World Poetics has the following characteristics.

1. It emphasizes the subjectivity of Chinese scholars and Chinese theory, with a strong sense of rights. This is because Chinese discourse has long been suppressed and marginalized.
2. The concept of World Poetics has a strong sense of the times. On the one hand, the true advent of globalization has made people around the world live in a “global village.” On the other hand, the rapid development of information technology and Internet has made it possible for scholars to propose global theories that cross ethnic, linguistic, and national boundaries.
3. The concept of World Poetics is highly inclusive and has both synchronic and diachronic dimensions. It attaches importance not only to literary works from ancient times to the present, but more importantly, it pays particular attention to absorbing achievements of small cultural groups outside the mainstream Euro-American theoretical circles.
4. World Poetics is constantly developing, generative and reconstructive, and there is no fixed theoretical systems or theoretical texts of World Poetics.
5. World Poetics is global, which is reflected in the fact that the theorists or participants are from all over the world, and on the other hand, its objects of interpretation also cover the literature of different countries all over the world.
6. World Poetics is interdisciplinary, and after the post-structuralist wave of the second half of the twentieth century, the theoretical approach to literary research and literary criticism can no longer be “pure” literary.
7. World Poetics is dialogical. There is no single authority in the world of poetics and there will no longer be a monopoly like Euro-American centrism. World Poetics is not only formed in multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic dialogues, but dialogue is its main form of existence.

In Wang's view, "World Poetics is a theoretical sublimation of the research results of world literature and comparative poetics; it is not a whimsy of theorists hiding in ivory towers, but is proposed according to the practical needs of literary creation and theoretical criticism" (Wang, "The Conception of World Poetics" 174). Overall, Wang's conception of World Poetics is not only extremely forward-looking, it is also sufficient to influence and even guide the development of world literary studies and literary theory studies in the future. It is important to emphasize that Wang's vision of World Poetics is not intended to "seize power," but to truly envision a universal literary theoretical discourse that transcends linguistic, national and cultural boundaries. What Wang wants to emphasize is that we, as a vulnerable group and a disadvantaged culture, should be aware of and fully use our rights, so that we can make our voices heard in the international academic community and form a truly equal and effective dialogue. Moreover, we should not regard World Poetics as a panacea for literary criticism, because literature is alive, literary genres are constantly emerging, and new literary works are coming out all the time, so World Poetics as a theory of interpretation must also be constantly developing, changing and evolving.

### **The Emergence of a Global Academic Community**

From a global perspective, the development of theoretical ideas such as World Poetics, Ethical Literary Criticism and Variation Theory is not merely the individual achievement or credit of a certain scholar, but is closely related to the gradual formation of a global academic community in our time. The concept of "community" has been discussed by many scholars both at home and abroad. For example, in the view of Ferdinand Tönnies, community is a social organism formed on the basis of natural will, such as emotions and habits, as well as on the basis of blood and geographical ties.<sup>1</sup> The English word "community" means society, community, social group, etc. Community also has the abstract meaning of common and shared responsibility. In the modern sense, community refers to a social unit that often shares social norms, religion, values, or identity. While community was often associated with geography and ethnicity in the past, it can now also include virtual communities created through online platforms, or refer to a community of values rather than a physical community based on geography or race, etc. (Wang, "On the Cosmopolitan Vision in American Indian Literature" 126-127). My main

<sup>1</sup> For an in-depth discussion of community, see Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society*, trans. Lin Rongyuan, Beijing: Commercial Press, 1999; Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, trans. Guo Guoliang and Xu Jianhua, Beijing: Commercial Press, 2001; Zhongjian Mou, *Community: The Chinese Experience of Human Destiny*, Jinan: Jinan Press, 2020, etc.

consideration here is the possibility of a global academic community in the field of humanities in the age of globalization and its potential role in the construction of literary theories.

In the past forty years, Wang has not only been a dedicated scholar, but has also moved around the world in humanities circles and stayed close to world class literary figures such as J. Hillis Miller, Douwe Fokkema, Ralph Cohen, Fredric Jameson, Jonathan Culler, Terry Eagleton, Martin Puchner, Gayatri C. Spivak, Theo D’Haen, Homi Bhabha, Marshall Brown, Roland Robertson, Lawrence Venuti, Howard Goldblatt, and many others, all of whom were his good friends. He not only pays attention to uniting Chinese scholars and collaborate frequently with them, but also places great emphasis on exchanges and collaborations with international colleagues. In addition to serving as visiting professor at nearly 30 institutions in China, he has also served as visiting professor/researcher at many prestigious institutions abroad, such as Harvard University, Yale University, Columbia University, Sorbonne University, Cambridge University, and Göttingen University. He has served as President of the China Comparative Literature Association and for many years as Secretary General of the International Society for Literary Theory. Because of his distinguished scholarship and prestige, he has also served as editor-in-chief, advisor, or member of editorial board of nearly a dozen prestigious journals in China and abroad, including *Perspective: Studies in Translation*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, *Arcadia*, *Philosophy and Literature*, *Neohelicon*, and *Comparative Literature and Culture*, among others. Since 1993, he has organized more than thirty international symposia on cutting-edge topics, which have greatly contributed to strengthening academic exchanges at home and abroad and promoting Chinese humanities scholarship. In addition, with his academic reputation and connections, Wang has guest-edited nearly thirty issues of various internationally renowned journals and published papers of dozens of Chinese scholars. It is precisely this global vision and frequent international peer interaction that gave birth to Wang’s vision of a World Poetics.

Over the past century or so, with economic and financial globalization has come the steady development of cultural globalization. This is the cultural foundation and international cultural context for the construction of World Poetics. In terms of technology, the rapid development of transportation technology from the twentieth century onward has enabled people to fly from one side of the globe to the other in a single day. We are now accustomed to taking classes online, listening to “cloud” lectures, and attending conferences online, not to mention quickly learning about the latest academic and theoretical developments at home and abroad,

purchasing books online and downloading electronic resources, and searching for materials. It is no exaggeration to say that the rapid advancement of information technology has had a revolutionary impact on the field of literary studies, driving innovation and development in almost all fields of research, including the humanities.

I would also like to emphasize that the conception of a World Poetics benefits from the scholarly resonance among scholars who have an international perspective, a rich theoretical reserve, and a great deal of academic sensitivity. Let us call it “academic resonance.” It is precisely because of this kind of spiritual echo among scholars, this kind of sympathy for each other based on their passion for academics, this kind of mutual attraction and mutual support due to their interest in academics, that scholars from different cultures can collide with each other to strike sparks of ideas, stimulate theoretical inspiration, and generate new theoretical ideas, thus forming a worldwide academic community. If we say that the development of the globalization has given people a real sense of global village and thus liberated the originally closed minds, and the development of information technology and the Internet has provided us with the technical conditions, then the ambition of scholars from all over the world to study world literatures, appreciate world cultures, and promote cultural exchanges and mutual appreciation of civilizations, is the human factor for the gradual formation of a global academic community. As the first two decades of the twenty-first century have passed, we are pleased and grateful to see that an academic community composed of scholars from different countries, different backgrounds, and different cultures is taking shape, and has produced a considerable number of remarkable theoretical achievements through academic exchanges and spiritual stirrings, such as Wang Ning’s conception of “World Poetics.”

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