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Dossier

South-south comparison – comparing the "rest" beyond the West

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ABSTRACT:

It is a commonplace to accuse comparative literature of Eurocentrism, and the accusation is undoubtedly justified for most of the history of the discipline. Although since the turn of the twenty-first century the discipline, both in its traditional European and North American strongholds and in other regions, has widened its scope to take in many (if still not all) literatures previously neglected or marginalized, the primary term in most comparisons involving non-Western or with a more recent term Global South literatures still remains Western literature. Only very recently has there emerged a form of comparison directly engaging several Global South literatures and cutting out any Western reference literature. Such South-South comparison can take various forms, several of which are discussed in my article. I also argue that the principle of such comparisons can likewise be extended to comparisons between so-called minor or smaller literatures, even if originating in the Global North or the West, that hitherto have suffered a comparable neglect in relation to a very few European-language literatures that traditionally have been at the center of the discipline of comparative literature.

Keywords: *comparative literature, minor or smaller literatures, south-south comparison*

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The Eurocentrism of comparative literature during most of the discipline's history has repeatedly been criticized. Such criticism first emerged in the discussion about world literature as part of, or a sub-discipline of, comparative literature. Albert Guérard (1940, p. 34), in *An Introduction to World Literature*, already in 1940 noted that "the East is woefully under-represented", that "the term World Literature is an obvious exaggeration", and that it would be more accurate to call it "Western World Literature: a literature for Westerners, wherever they may be, and for Westernized Orientals". Werner Friederich (1960) observed that world literature as taught in American universities covered only a quarter of the (then) NATO languages—practically speaking, English, French, German, and Italian, presumably along with Spanish, which was not a member of NATO at the time. René Étiemble (1975) in "Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*" in the mid-1960s incisively dissected the tendency, in first instance in French Comparative Literature and criticism, but beyond this in what we could call mainstream Western Comparative Literature, to limit discussions of world literature to works from, primarily, Europe and by extension North America. Instead, he argued, attention should be paid to Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and other non-Western literatures originating from cultures that are in many instances older than their European counterparts, and that can claim equal importance from a world literary perspective. Some twenty years later, Étiemble (1987, p. 9) in an article on the re-emergence of comparative literature in China asked whether "on a le droit de se prévaloir du titre de comparatiste quand on ignore tout de la littérature arabe, tout de la littérature indonésienne, tout de la littérature chinoise, tout de la littérature japonaise, tout des littératures de l'Inde, tout des littératures orales de l'Afrique noire, etc". Since the days of Étiemble, world literature anthologies such as the Norton, edited, since the mid-1990s by, successively, Sarah Lawall *et al.* and Martin Puchner *et al*., and rival anthologies such as that published by Longman under the editorship of David Damrosch *et al*., have increasingly come to include the literatures of the non-Western world. Something similar has happened with literary historiography. Whereas earlier histories of world literature concentrated almost exclusively on European literatures, the recent multi-volume *Literature: A World History* (Damrosch; Lindberg-Wada, 2022), treats the world's literatures more equitably, dividing the world into six so-called macro regions (East Asia, Central and Western Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Americas, Europe) and assigning an equal number of pages to each.

A similar broadening of horizons has happened with respect to the practice of comparative literature in its more general dispensation. Alfred Owen Aldridge (1986) drew attention to comparative literature in Asia in *The Reemergence of World Literature: A Study of Asia and the Wes*t. Pioneering in a more directly hands-on respect was Earl Miner's *Comparative Poetics: An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature* (1990). Close upon Miner's heels followed Zhang Longxi, with *The Tao and the*

Logos: Literary Hermeneutics, East and West (1992), and, somewhat later, *Mighty Opposites: From Dichotomies to Differences in the Comparative Study of China* (1999), and *Allegoresis: Reading Canonical Literature East and West* (2005). More recent examples are Alexander Beecroft's *Authorship and Cultural Identity in Early Greece and China: Patterns of Literary Circulation* (2010) and Wiebke Denecke's *Classical World Literatures: Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman Comparisons* (2014). In all these instances non-Western literatures are paired with their Western counterparts. For Shu-mei Shih (2004) and Rey Chow (2004) this again raises the spectre of Eurocentrism. Shih (2004) argues that Western comparatists, critics, literary historians, and anthologists, when addressing non-Western literature(s), are steered by what she calls "omnipotent definitions," invariably based on Western norms, such as "the systematic," "the time lag of allegory," "global multiculturalism," "the exceptional particular," and "post-difference ethics" in their choice of periods, genres, works, and authors to discuss, and how to discuss them. Chow (2004) calls for a "new" form of East/West comparison, in which Asian literatures would be freed from what she calls the "post-European and ..." complex in which the implicit awareness of "the European" (and by extension the American or more generally Western) as the original term of comparison always haunts the term after the "and". This new form of comparison should make room for "other possibilities of supplementarity, other semiotic conjunctions mediated by different temporal dynamics, ... as yet unrealized comparative perspectives, the potential range and contents of which we have only just begun to imagine" (p. 307).

The logical realization of what Chow called for would be a form of comparison by-passing Western literature; in other words, South-South or Global-South comparison. One way – perhaps the most obvious one – is the intra-regional approach. This involves comparison between several literatures participating in a distinctive literary-cultural system spanning a smaller or larger geographical region. Beecroft (2008; 2015) in this respect speaks of a cosmopolitan system. He borrows the term from the Indologist Sheldon Pollock (1996) who speaks of a Sanskrit cosmopolis covering a cultural-literary region comprising (much of) South and Sout East Asia. At variance with what Beecroft (2008, p. 95) calls a panchoric system, in which "a literary language allows literature to circulate among a set of political entities sharing a native language (but likely not a political regime)", "a cosmopolitan literary language creates a cross-cultural system, in which speakers of many languages share a common literary idiom … this language may be the cultural expression of a world-empire, or a nostalgic reminiscence of a former empire, or it may constitute a cultural world-empire without political ramifications".

Of course, also within the European context such systems are present; suffice it to think of those rooted in Greek and/or Latin for much of antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modernity or French from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. In

European antiquity, Greek and Latin defined a Mediterranean cosmos, to use Pollock's and Beecroft's term, before there was any specific definition of Europe as we now tend to think of it. All these cultural-literary regions can also be discussed in terms of the interliterary processes as defined by Dionýsz Ďurišin (1992). In Durišin's concept of zonality, works circulate within specific geographical and cultural contexts in different periods, and not necessarily using the same language. Ďurišin applied his ideas to the Mediterranean as an inter-literary network in a book he co-edited with Armando Gnisci (2000).

David Damrosch extends the idea of a "cosmos" created by a particular language when he talks of cuneiform as a "cosmopolitan script," and hence as the binding element in what he calls a "scriptworld". As Damrosch (2007; p. 206) puts it: "the leading edge of a global language is its globalizing script, which can far outrun the spread of the language itself". As example he cites China, which "over many centuries … has had a national script rather than a national language" (2007, p. 206). But the Chinese script, or writing systems based on or inspired by it, also defines an East Asian cultural region calling for inter-regional comparison. The region or regions defined by an Arabic/Persian literary culture constitute another such scriptworld.

For Zhang Longxi, Damrosch's Chinese scriptworld is more or less equivalent with what he himself, using a term that has been gaining currency since the turn of the twenty-first century, calls the Sinosphere. He sees the latter as "a temporally and spatially evolving concept in history" (Zhang, 2021, p. 283) that was "connected through ideas and a written language" (p. 284). A crucial role was played by literature, with important texts by Chinese authors circulating throughout East Asia in the original, making the Sinosphere "a shared literary space beyond borders of the different countries and their linguistic and cultural differences" (p. 285). The original Sinosphere and its scriptworld came to an end around the turn of the twentieth century because of Western colonial powers taking advantage of a weakened Qing Empire, the rise of Japan after the Meiji Restoration, and the rise of nationalisms in East Asian and South-East Asian countries. Consequently, proposals for East Asian inter-regional comparisons of a later date take a different tack.

Taking her cue from Mary Louise Pratt's (1991) "contact zones", Karen Thornber discerns what she calls a "literary contact nebula" comprising China, Japan, and Korea, especially as of the late 19th century. As she puts it, "some of the most sustained and vibrant twentieth- and early twenty-first century East Asian artistic relationships developed not within individual East Asian societies or between East Asian and Western literatures, but among the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean literary worlds" (Thornber, 2014, p. 462). She had earlier (Thornber, 2009) extensively addressed the same topic. From a different perspective, Sowon Park (2013, p. 1) argues that "while there has been an increasing preoccupation with literary networks beyond the Western canon since the middle of

the last century, the investigations have been restricted to the colonial world and the postcolonial states of the Western powers". At the same time, she notes, "the non-Western colonial field of the Pan-Asian Empire (1894-1945) —Imperial Japan, colonial Korea, semi-colonial China, and Taiwan—has been not so much relegated to the margins as just passed over". Park's aim, then, is to "recalibrate the dynamics of 'the West and the rest' and 'center/periphery' models of world literature by bringing an East Asian perspective to the discussion" (Park, 2013, p. 1).

South-South comparison beyond the intra-regional dimension and extending into the inter-regional one we find with Auritro Majumder (2021, p. 9) who "connects India to 1920s and 1930s Mexico and the Soviet Union; 1960s and 1970s Vietnam, Cuba, and the Congo; and present-day China and the United States," discussing "how literary texts came to highlight marginalized groups across national boundaries, provincialize dominant histories, and articulate the distinctive yet interconnected problematic of peripheral literature". "What is significant here," he emphasizes, "is that an understudied constellation of writers outside the 'West' was drawing more on one another than on the imperial center when it came to their aesthetic sensibilities" (2021, p. 9). His discussion of the shared sensibilities underlying both Rabindranath Tagore's 1907 speech on world literature and Mao's Yenan talks on art is an example of South-South comparison in the context of what he calls "peripheral internationalism". Other instances of inter-regional, and indeed inter-continental South-South comparison involve Latin America and the Arab world, an area in which Waïl Hassan (2014, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021) has been particularly active, and Latin America and Africa, with notable contributions by Stefan Helgesson (2018a, 2018b, 2022). Andrea Bachner (2021) focuses on comparison between Latin America and China. A volume edited by Ottmar Ette and Friedericke Pannewick (2006) addresses literary relations between the Arab world and hemispheric America. For Russell West-Pavlov (2018, front matter), "'The Global South' has largely supplanted 'the Third World' in discussions of development studies, postcolonial studies, world literature, and comparative literature" and "The concept registers a new set of relationships between nations of the once-colonized world as their connections to nations of the North diminish in significance". The contributions to his edited volume, then, explore "the historical, cultural, and literary applications of the term for twenty-first-century flows of transnational cultural influence, tracing their manifestations across the Global Southern traditions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America".

The continents West-Pavlov references as constituting his Global South squarely fit a South-South comparative approach. Most scholars on the Global South would probably subscribe to his definition of the term when it comes to political and economic matters. However, when it comes to cultural matters, and specifically to literature, I think Global South and South-South do not seamlessly overlap. Zhang Longxi (2012a)

terms literary cultures that "provide other cultures with points of cultural and scriptural references", "reference cultures." His examples are the Chinese and ancient Greek cultures serving as such to what Damrosch calls the Chinese scriptworld and Zhang himself the Sinosphere, and to the world of the Romans and beyond to Western culture. The same thing would hold for Pollock's Sanskrit cosmopolis and for the Arabic/Persian cosmopolitan system in Beecroft's terminology. Jumping to more recent times, we could posit that European literature, at least in the eyes of Western Comparative Literature scholars, but implicitly also for non-Western scholars subscribing to the Western paradigm, as was largely the case until the turn of the twenty-first century, has played that role for the world at large. What is often overlooked, at least by those criticizing Eurocentric comparative literature/world literature studies, is that within the European, or more generally the Western context, a handful of so-called major or larger literatures have played and continue to play the role of reference literatures: ancient Greek and Latin literature, followed, in chronological order, by Italian, Spanish, French, English, and German literature, with Russian and Scandinavian literature likewise influential at certain moments. For the most recent period, English-language literature, *i.e.* mainly anglophone literature of the United States in tandem with literature from the British Isles, although there is also significant input by writers from the former British colonies, functions as reference literature. Although terminologically perhaps a little awkward, it might make sense to speak, mutatis mutandis, of an intra-European South-South relationship if one directly compares works from two or more European so-called minor or smaller literatures, by-passing any such intra-European reference literature. One again here thinks of Durišin's zonality, for instance an inter-literary zone of what once, and increasingly again, is referred to as Central, or Central and East Europe, with literatures "in the zone" sharing common traits, exchanging forms, motifs, stylistic features, tropes, etc. Several scholars working on these literatures recently met in Budapest to discuss the possibility of precisely such an inter-literary project. But one can also think again of the European South, as peripheral to the continent's North or to what is usually thought of as Western Europe, as argued by Roberto Dainotto (2007). Dainotto traces how the turn toward the North Atlantic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and to a capitalist-bourgeois economic system, allowed several north-western European states to economically draw ahead of the rest of Europe, including those states along Europe's southern rim, such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal, that until then had been flourishing. The economic, military, and political downgrading of these nations also happened in literary historiography. Although the European nations, then, whose literatures do not belong to what I earlier called Europe's reference literatures, do not fall within the geographical Global South, I would argue that they still qualify for something similar to a South-South comparison approach. In any case,

China, which likes to affirm itself as the leader of the Global South, does not belong to any geographical South either. In other words, the definition of any "Global South" is based more on a sense of exclusion from what is perceived as a hegemonic system skewed toward the interests of the West than on any real geographical given. Said exclusion, at least historically, pertains to the realms of the economic and the political, but I see no reason why it should not also be extended to the cultural realm, and from this perspective there is a lot to be said for considering all non-reference literatures, including those from Europe, as qualifying for South-South comparisons.

Another way to think of something that could be called South-South comparison is to consider comparisons between works, or entire literatures, in a European language but originating from several former colonies sharing this language, and without using the European so-called mother literature as *tertium comparationis*. Examples that come to mind are Hispanophone literatures from the Americas, Lusophone literatures from the Americas, Sub-Saharan Africa, Macau and Goa, or Francophone literatures from the Caribbean and Africa. Literature from Spain, Portugal, or France would be left out of the comparison, as would be other European or Western reference literatures. This would be one way of implementing Lucia Boldrini's (forthcoming) concept of "embracing ignorance." She uses this expression to refer to the fact that in the UK, where she teaches, more and more students of literature are ignorant of languages other than English, which would seem to preclude doing comparative literature in the orthodox sense of the discipline's definition. Boldrini primarily has in mind comparisons between works from the UK and its former colonies, where, she argues, "comparative literature can aid us even with monolingual students and readers, to engender greater awareness of differences and diversity, and to lead to a decolonial perspective that helps prise open hegemonic languages and the cultural and aesthetic assumptions that texts written in those languages generate." I would argue that the same effect can be achieved *a fortiori* by directly comparing works from former colonies, thus effectively engaging in South-South comparison. Some of this work is already being done, but it usually shelters under different disciplinary umbrellas than that of comparative literature: *francophonie*, Lusophone, or Hispanic Studies (although in the latter cases the so-called mother-literature is usually included), or, in the English-language context, postcolonialism.

Zonal studies comparing several geographically non-European literatures in originally colonial or imperial European languages also offer interesting possibilities. Again, some of this work has already been or is still being done, although again it may go under different names, such as for instance hemispheric studies in the case of the Americas. Or it may be captured under other geographical denominations, such as Caribbean studies. Examples that come to mind, somewhat at random, are the essays in the volume edited by Gustavo Pérez Firmat (1990) under

the title *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature*, James Nolan's (1994) *Poet*-Chief*: The Native American Poetics of Walt Whitman and Pablo Neruda*, and Antonio Benítez-Rojo's (1992) *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. In fact, the Caribbean presents a rich field for multilingual inter-regional comparison. Suffice it to think in this respect of the pioneering work of Édouard Glissant with his *Discours antillais* (1981). In *Poétique de la relation* (1990) Glissant enlarged his approach to the Global South.

If there seems already quite a bit of work going on in South-South comparison, then, particularly in the context of the Global South, when it comes to actual works of literature, this is hardly the case when it comes to theory. Revathi Krishnaswamy denounced "a widespread assumption that theory is the product of a uniquely Western philosophical tradition" and that, while "the non-West may be a source of exotic cultural production" it "cannot be a site of theory" (2010, p. 400). And "although scholars in comparative poetics and East-West studies have tried to challenge this assumption by drawing attention to pre-colonial textual traditions (Chinese, Japanese, Sanskrit, and Arabic), their work has had little impact on the practice of comparative literature or literary theory" (2010, p. 400). In fact, until very recently even scholars from non-Western countries almost invariably relied on Western theory to discuss their own literatures in a comparative approach. In China, for instance, when comparative literature as a discipline revived in the 1980s after having lain dormant since WW II, Chinese comparatists focused on American developments in literary theory, mostly New Criticism as filtered through Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature* (1948), or in comparative literature via the writings of H. H. Remak. Later especially the work of Fredric Jameson became important. Wang Ning in a *New Literary History* article emphasized how Chinese critical discourse in 2005 remained largely tributary to Western and particularly American influences. From then on, though, Wang adopts a more assertive tone when it comes to native Chinese forms of theory, and he does so in a Global South context. He calls upon "the previously marginalized theoretical discourses to come to the forefront in a break from a unified West-centric orthodoxy" and "scholars from small ethnic communities or non-Western groups to engage in dialogues with their Western and international counterparts on a level playing field" (Wang, 2015, p. 187). He finds that the time has come to develop a Chinese theoretical discourse grounded in native Chinese theory. In this he echoes his colleague Shunqing Cao who in his *The Variation Theory of Comparative Literature* (2013) advances the claim to a distinctive Chinese School of Comparative Literature. In a review article of Cao's book, Wang (2013, p. 3) emphasizes how Cao at the beginning of his career as a comparatist was influenced by the works of James Liu and Earl Miner, but that he later aimed "to develop a home-grown Chinese comparative literature". Cao's *History of Chinese-Foreign Literary Theory: A Comparative Study* (1988), Wang (2013, p. 3) argues, "for the first

time put Chinese literary theory in a broad context of world literary theory highlighting its different characteristics and unique position" and "demonstrates that to write a comprehensive history of world literary theory should not overlook the literary theory and criticism in those non-Western countries , especially China, where there is its own autonomous body of literary theory with *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (by Xie Liu) as its landmark". In fact, as the denomination "comparative literature", as Cabo Aseguinolaza (2006) remarks, historically implies the normative superiority of Western theory, Zhou and Tong (2009) propose to replace it with the term "cross-cultural studies", implying equality between all cultures concerned. Anders Pettersson (2008) has advanced the use of "transcultural literary history" for the same reasons. Ette (2016a, 2016b) has suggested the term "transarea studies".

The stance adopted by Wang and Cao toward Chinese theory in relation to Western hitherto normative theories chimes with the decoloniality approach advanced, particularly with respect to Latin American literature, but more generally applicable to all Global South literature, by Walter Mignolo (2021, but many earlier pertinent publications) and Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2011), themselves building primarily on Anibal Quijano (1999). Decolonialists aim to "delink" from Western knowledge by appealing to the lived experience of ordinary people, mostly indigenous, outside of Europe, and their cosmovision. Helgesson (2022) focuses on how decoloniality operates in African and Brazilian critical practice. A specific instance of delinking from Western practice can be found in magical realism Latin American style that since its inception in the mid-twentieth century has become normative for the literatures of the Global South (there is also an earlier, European magic realism, see D'haen, 2020). Mariano Siskind (2012) argues that Latin American magical realism, as foundationally defined by Alejo Carpentier (1967) under the term "lo real maravilloso," or the marvellously real, but commonly known as magical realism, is "a cultural condition, and not an aesthetic perception of reality universally available; it is the defining particular trait of Latin American reality". As such, it serves by extension to theorize a Global South dissociation from Western rational and causal thinking, especially as embodied in the European-inherited novelistic forms dominant in Latin America at the time of Carpentier's seminal essay "De lo real maravilloso americano," first published as an article in the Caracas newspaper *El Nacional* on 8 July 1948, then reworked as preface to his novel *El reino de este mundo* in 1949, and still later reworked again in the collection of essays *Tientos y diferencias* of 1967. Uslar Pietri, himself one of the earliest practitioners of, and commentators on, Latin American magical realism, in a brisk survey of Latin American literature he published in 1986, said that magical realism was "una reacción, reacción contra la literatura descriptiva e imitativa que se hacia en la América hispana, y también reacción contra la sumisión tradicional a

modas y escuelas europeas" (Uslar Pietri, 1986, p. 136; quoted in Siskind 2012, p. 31).

In the meantime, scholars have also drawn attention to earlier instances of South-South comparison happening in the Global South itself. Hala Halim (2012, p. 563) posits that "No longer is the task merely to render the purview of comparison more capacious and wide-ranging; rather, it is to seek out non- Eurocentric modes and models of comparatism". Invoking Haus Saussy's (2006, p. 10) remark in the ACLA State of the Discipline Report he edited that "there is room for a comparative study of comparative literature traditions" as well as Gayatri Spivak's (2003, p. 11) call to recognize the non-Westerner not only as an object of study but also as "a producer of knowledge," Halim turns to a study of *Lotus: Afro-Asian Writings*, a journal published for the Afro-Asian Writers' Association from 1968 to the early 1990s in, successively, Cairo, Beirut, and Tunis. Halim (2012, p. 565) argues that *Lotus* "represents a decidedly anti-Eurocentric project of comparatism that also compels attention by virtue of being a supranational/internationalist one, in contradistinction to the nation- based Western traditions of comparative literature". Using Arabic, French, and English as its working languages, the journal published, reviewed, and discussed literature from Africa and Asia, often in a comparative approach. "That the journal was also issued in Arabic, a Third World language," Halim (2012, p. 572) contends, "in and of itself contests the hegemony of imperialism's linguistic legacy". *Lotus*'s choice of working languages and its content for Halim (2012, p. 571) "instantiate the impetus to reorient intercultural dialogue, as no longer primarily between metropole and colony but between former colonies". As such, it fulfils a role similar to what I also argued a literary form or genre such as magical realism plays.

Halim (2012, p. 575) singles out a little-known essay, published posthumously, by the renowned Egyptian author, critic, and educator Tahar Hussein (1975b) as "a particularly significant case in point of the sea change from a Eurocentric comparatism to a South- South one". The essay in question, "Egypt and Cultural Exchange," marks Hussein's turning away from "the teleological, Eurocentric narrative" (Halim, 2012) he advocated for Egyptian literature in his 1938 book *Mustaqbal al- Thaqafa fi Misr* (The Future of Culture in Egypt, 1975a). In an English-language article he published in *Books Abroad* (1955) he defended a similar position with respect to the position Arabic literature occupies in (then) contemporary world literature (Hawas, 2019). In his 1975b essay he situates Egyptian literature both historically and in the present in an Afro-Asian context, invoking its roots in medieval Arabic literature, influences from Persia, China, and India, and links to African sub-Saharan literatures. "In contrast to Hussein's 1938 book," Halim (2012, p. 577), concludes, "the telos here, as outlined in the [essay's] concluding

paragraphs, is 'cooperation among the peoples of Asia and Africa" and the desire that 'this solidarity . . . be a concrete reality'".

As the foregoing paragraphs have shown, there is not only plenty of work on intra- and interregional, or intra- and inter-zonal, comparison already going on, there are also many possibilities for extending this work to hitherto little- or less-studied literatures and their relations, similarities, or dissimilarities, without including any of the major Western reference literatures, or Western literature in general, into the equation. What I think is most urgently called for now, or in near-future developments, is to study not just single works, or even complexes of works, in whatever constellation, from a South-South comparative perspective, but the underlying theories and poetics. I am thinking here, for instance, of how Saussy (2019) has remarked that for Western poetics, building on Aristotle's *Poetics*, mimesis is the determining yardstick. As Saussy points out, Aristotle elaborated his theory with the theatre in mind, the main Greek genre at the time. Most non-Western societies and cultures base their poetics on the lyric, and on how a poem expresses the poet's emotions. Zhang (2012b) notes that even in Western poetics Aristotelian mimesis only became dominant after the Renaissance. Earlier, a Platonic theory of poetry as divine inspiration was common. Such a theory is much closer to theories of the origins of poetry, or of literature in general, in other cultures than that of Europe or the West. Zhang also points out that in the Arabic translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, or at least in the interpretation put upon it in Arabic culture through Ibn Rushd (Averroes), literature in general, including drama—and following the principles applied to what in Arab culture was the highest genre, that is to say poetry—is evaluated or interpreted according to whether it "praises" or "blames" someone/thing—not whether it is tragedy or comedy, as in the Western tradition. The same thing applies to ancient Chinese poetics. To each poem in the *Book of Poetry*, Zhang notes (2012b, p. 357), "The commentator would attach a 'preface' to specify whether that poem is meant to 'praise' the moral influence of an ancient sage king or to 'blame' the decadence of a morally fallen state under a wicked ruler". The inevitable conclusion, according to Zhang (2012, p. 356), is that "today, when we discuss poetics in relation to a truly global concept of world literature . . . we need to go beyond the Greek and the Aristotelian tradition, even as we fully acknowledge Aristotle's *Poetics* as a classic example of the kind of work we need to do". In fact, we need to study and compare, zonally, intra- and inter-zonally, regionally, intra- and inter-regionally, the various poetics current in literatures beyond those of the West.

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Comparatismo sul-sul – comparando "o resto" além do Ocidente

RESUMO:

É um lugar comum julgar a literatura comparada como eurocentrista, e a acusação é, sem dúvida, justificada durante a maior parte da história da disciplina. Embora desde a virada do século XXI a disciplina, tanto em seus tradicionais redutos europeus e norte-americanos quanto em outras regiões, tenha ampliado seu escopo para incluir muitas (se ainda não todas) literaturas anteriormente negligenciadas ou marginalizadas, o termo principal na maioria das comparações envolvendo literaturas não ocidentais ou, com um termo mais recente, do Sul Global, ainda continua sendo literatura ocidental. Apenas muito recentemente surgiu uma forma de comparação que envolve diretamente várias literaturas do Sul Global e elimina qualquer literatura de referência ocidental. Essa comparação Sul-Sul pode assumir várias formas, várias das quais são discutidas em meu artigo. Argumento também que o princípio de tais comparações pode ser estendido igualmente a comparações entre as chamadas literaturas menores, mesmo que originárias do Norte Global ou do Ocidente, que até agora sofreram uma negligência comparável em relação a pouquíssimas literaturas de língua europeia que tradicionalmente têm estado no centro da disciplina Literatura Comparada.

Palavras-chave: *Literatura Comparada, literaturas menores, comparação Sul-Sul*