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## Mo Yan in Context

Duran, Angelica, Huang, Yuhan

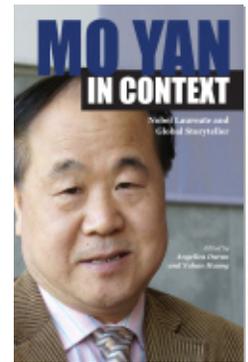
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# **Part Three**

## **Roots**



# Cosmopolitanism and the Internationalization of Chinese Literature

*Ning Wang*

## Abstract

In "Cosmopolitanism and the Internationalization of Chinese Literature" Ning Wang traces the origin of the practice of cosmopolitanism in China and elsewhere and offers a new construction of this controversial concept from a literary and cultural perspective. Wang argues that in China's recent past to talk about cosmopolitanism from a literary point of view was mostly to identify Chinese literature with Western literature. Wang posits that with the advent of globalization, the rapid development of Chinese economy, and Mo Yan's 2012 Nobel Prize in Literature, the dynamic is becoming mutual and that the success of Mo Yan's work lies mostly in his narration of the fundamental problems Chinese people are confronted with in a broad cosmopolitan context with regard to human concerns at large.

The construction of a theoretical discourse of globalization by Western scholars has accelerated in recent years. As a corollary, cosmopolitanism has once again become a significant theoretic topic: it appears in the works of philosophers and sociologists, and more frequently, it is quoted and discussed by literary and cultural studies scholars. These studies interpret and deal with cosmopolitanism from the perspectives of political philosophy and culture but touch upon literature and culture to varying degrees and for different ends. Starting in the mid-1990s, we find, for example, Martha Nussbaum and Joshua Cohen dealing with the relations between patriotism and cosmopolitanism in general or Tim Brennan dealing with this topic from a perspective of literary and cultural studies. Pheng Cheah's and Bruce Robbins's *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* touches upon the topic by incorporating all three. The recent interest in world literature is naturally associated with the rise of cosmopolitanism in the contemporary era. Since I am a scholar of literature, what I am most interested in is how different literary works represent cosmopolitan ideas in contrast to nationalism. In speaking of world literature, I have previously pointed out

that world literature can be defined in different ways, as 1) a canonical body of excellent literature of all countries, regardless of region, 2) a global and cross-cultural perspective and a comparative horizon in the study, evaluation, and criticism of literature in general, and 3) a literary evolution through production, circulation, translation, and critical selection in different languages (see Wang, "World Literature" 5). My discussion of cosmopolitanism is based on this definition of world literature.

## Cosmopolitanism revisited

As an interdisciplinary theoretic concept and critical discourse, the roots of cosmopolitanism date back to ancient Greek philosophical thought. The word-roots of cosmopolitanism also come from the Greek: *cosmos* from κόσμος, meaning the universe, and *polis* from πόλις, meaning city. Hence the term means "world city" or "world state." Cosmopolitanism is first of all a political philosophical concept whose ethical color is strong. That is why it is closely related to literature and culture in the current global era. As we know, in the beginning of the twentieth century and especially after World War II, many former colonial countries became independent. Thus nationalism permeated all literary works produced at the time. But now, along with the process of globalization, cultural exchanges have become frequent, and this cannot but influence literary creation. The fundamental meaning of cosmopolitanism is that all human beings, regardless of their ethnic or other affiliations, belong to a big single social community. Cosmopolitanism, therefore, approximates the current construction of the discourse of globalization according to which people all share a fundamental ethic and right transcending individual nations or countries. All theoretical terms, including cosmopolitanism and globalization, are laden with positive and negative associations. All their important dimensions cannot be covered within a limited space, but a few deserve critical attention. According to Craig Calhoun, cosmopolitanism means something different on different occasions: it refers to the world as a totality rather than individual places or communities, and it indicates that those holding this belief feel at home in a diversified community (428). In short, it mainly refers to inclination and endurance in this sense. Additionally, this sort of cosmopolitanism breaks through the boundary of the nation-state stands in opposition to patriotism to some degree and nationalism entirely.

Cosmopolitanism is usually discussed on the philosophical, political, and sociological levels as well as on the cultural and literary levels. The philosophical dimension of cosmopolitanism dates back to the works of Plato and Aristotle, who opposed cosmopolitanism on the basis of the fact that people usually lived in their own city or state and stuck to particular political doctrines. Therefore, they tended to identify with it. When enemies invaded their state, citizens would rise up to defend their homeland. For the ancient Greeks, good citizens should not share too strong an affiliation with those outside of the state. However, we cannot conclude that all ancient philosophers

were against cosmopolitanism. Other intellectuals who traveled to other countries possessed and articulated a more universal ethics. The first Western philosopher who did not confine himself to a particular state was Diogenes, whose idea of the "citizen of the world" has remained a principal notion of cosmopolitanism. What many contemporary thinkers pursue is not the interest of a particular nation-state but the universal value and interest of humankind in its entirety including ethics, and thus they are not limited philosophically or, by extension, politically and socially (see, e.g., Appiah). Although modern scholars seldom quote these ancient ideas in their discussion of cosmopolitanism, they echo and develop their ideas. This is particularly the case with Enlightenment philosophers, who fixated on cosmopolitanism. In 1795 Immanuel Kant put forward a sort of cosmopolitan law or right in his article "*Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf*" ("Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch"). Although Kant's ideas are still influential in current discussions on cosmopolitanism, some critics find his ideas inconsistent. This complaint is partly owing to the tension of the concept of cosmopolitanism itself. Kant also introduced a "cosmopolitan law," which refers to the domain of a third kind of law—public law—apart from constitutional and international law. In cosmopolitan law, individuals have all rights as citizens of the earth rather than those of a particular country. Kant's "citizen of the earth" here comes from the "citizen of the world" but is more expansive (see Wood 59-76).

While Christopher Columbus's discovery of the Americas in 1492 enabled him to become one of the earliest cosmopolitanists in action, Kant's pioneering ideas of cosmopolitan thought laid a foundation for many of the claims by cosmopolitanists since the nineteenth century. With Columbus's discovery, capitalist expansion, the absorption of weak countries' national industries, and the formation of a new division of international labor laid the groundwork for the actualized process of globalization. I do not mean that the imposition of a specific value system by Columbus and his attendant cultural and state apparatus onto weak countries' national industries legitimates global capitalist expansion: I simply lay out the process. Between the Age of Discovery and the Age of Globalization, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels described the market capitalist practice of breaking the boundaries of the nation-state and expanding their own forces in their *Communist Manifesto*. In dealing with the consequence of such capital expansion, Marx and Engels look to its parallel intellectual expansion: "And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature" (69). As a result, production and consumption are not limited to their own countries but extend into distant countries and even continents. Equally important as an ideological reflection of capitalism, cosmopolitanism covers everything from industrial production to literary and cultural production. From today's point of view, we may

well come to the conclusion that the contributions made by Marx and Engels lie in their discovery both of surplus value under the capitalist system and the regulation of globalization in economy and culture. Their descriptions and discussions have become important theoretic resources of twentieth-century political philosophers and literary and cultural scholars in their discussion of the issues of modernity and literary and cultural globalization. A revolutionary aspect of their broad cosmopolitan vision is their inclusion of the proletarians of various countries and their argument that all individuals share fundamental characteristics and common interests. This is a key matter when we turn to Mo Yan, who so closely associates himself as a rural citizen as much as a global citizen. As with the influence of Aristotle's and Plato's cultural context on their cultural theories, so with Marx's and Engels's. Marx himself was a cosmopolite and his Jewish ancestry and later communist belief contributed to his choice to travel and settle everywhere as a citizen of the world conflating diaspora with homeland and work in the interests of humankind. The First International (1864–76) and Second International (1889–1916) Labor Parties founded under the influence of Marxian thought were characterized by his cosmopolitan tendency and political and organizational practice. The Third International, or Comintern (1919–43), established by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, was dissolved largely because of the rise of nationalism and the independence of different national communist parties.

Upon entering the second half of the twentieth century, the process of economic globalization has also speeded political and cultural globalization. According to Jan Aart Scholte, since the 1960s the use of the term “globalization” has spread throughout languages, professional environments, and academic disciplines. However, globalization as it is understood in recent times is a relatively new term that implies a sort of development, process, tendency, and change. It covers all aspects of economy, politics, and culture. Hence, globalization has contributed to a renewed interest in contemporary academia toward cosmopolitanism. The phenomenon of globalization can be categorized into four aspects: internationalization, liberalization, universalization, and planetarization. The four aspects overlap substantially since they all refer to the increase of the social relations crossing the boundaries of nation-states at large. Thus many people emphasize several implications of these four notions, although these aspects emphasize matters differently (see Scholte 526–32; see also Bartoloni <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2340>>). While the advent of globalization has thus provided cosmopolitanism with notions for its rise, cosmopolitanism has in turn provided globalization with a sort of theoretic discourse. Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande remind us that we should take into account a process connecting the two: global connections are a sort of “cosmopolitanization,” and cosmopolitanism is nothing but a feeling and attitude coming from ethic responsibility (5-6). The founding of transnational organizations represents the institutionalization of such a practice. For example, the League of Nations and the United Nations are such international organizations of global governance. Obviously, these internation-

al organizations cannot replace the function of the state, let alone the so-called world government. Rather, they function as a sort of utopian governing organization. And this is why critics often attack cosmopolitanism's philosophical and political levels.

We can thus see that cosmopolitanism is not always consistent. Different descriptions of it sometimes cause confusion if different people try to understand it from different angles. Calhoun addresses the multidimensional orientations and contradictions of cosmopolitanism and pertinently points out that in using the concept cosmopolitanism, scholars are often confused and therefore appear inconsistent:

"Cosmopolitan" is claimed sometimes for a political project: building participatory institutions adequate to contemporary global integration, especially outside the nation-state framework. It is claimed sometimes for an ethical orientation of individuals: the suggestion that each should think and act with strong concern for all humanity. It is claimed sometimes for a stylistic capacity to incorporate diverse influences and sometimes for a psychological capacity to feel at ease amid difference and appreciate diversity. It is used sometimes for all projects that reach beyond the local ... It is used at other times for strongly holistic visions of global totality, like the notion of a community of risk imposed by potential for nuclear or environmental disaster. It is used at still other times to describe not individuals but cities, as for example New York or London, contemporary Delhi or historical Alexandria gain their vitality and character not from the similarities of their residents but from the concrete ways in which they have learned to interact across lines of ethnic, religious, national, linguistic and other identities. (431)

From a political perspective, those against cosmopolitanism hold that, as far as the nation-state is concerned and on which nationalism and patriotism are based, cosmopolitanism does not have such a "world nation" or "world government" above a particular nation and its agency, and that therefore the claim for cosmopolitanism is meaningless. At best, today's new cosmopolitanism transcends the old cosmopolitanism on the ethical level and the limits of Kant's legal cosmopolitanism and becomes a sort of cultural cosmopolitanism.

### From cosmopolitanism to world literature(s)

Literary and cultural studies scholars have long been interested in cosmopolitanism given its significant traces in literary works. For example, Douwe Fokkema was a vanguard in applying this topic to world literature. With a perspective drawn from globalization, he transcended the old-fashioned Eurocentric or West-centric versions of cosmopolitanism trying to find a sort of alternative cosmopolitanism in non-Western contexts. His concern in globalization is cultural plurality and diversity. Trained in Sinological and comparative literary study, Fokkema did not absorb the limits of Eurocentrism and West-centrism. Rather, he was able to integrate some of the traditional ideas from Chinese culture related to cosmopolitanism. For instance, the Confucian concept of "brotherhood all over the world" (四海

之内皆兄弟) is an analogue to the pursuit of a human unity as advocated also by cosmopolitanism (Fokkema 1-17). To this Confucian doctrine, Chinese people should view all those coming from afar as friends. His findings are echoed in Sino-logical globalization circles. Wei-ming Tu and Chung-ying Cheng have enthusiastically promoted the universality of Confucianism in the West (see Cheng; see also Mitchell and Duran for the inherently dynamic nature of religions and religious philosophy). Tu tries to realize equal dialogue between contemporary Neo-Confucianism and Western modernity by reviving a sort of Neo-Confucianism (see Tu), and Cheng puts forward a sort of "world philosophy" parallel with world literature (see also Wang, "Reconstructing").

From my perspective as a Chinese scholar of comparative literature and world literatures who has practiced cosmopolitanism through global scholarly interchange since the 1980s, I would like to offer my own theoretical construction of cosmopolitanism. I have drawn the following ten forms I find to be enabling resources for approaching world literatures, whether foreign or from one's native time and place. That is, cosmopolitanism could be described as 1) something transcending the nationalist form, 2) a pursuit of moral justice, 3) a universal human concern, 4) a cosmopolitan and even diasporic state, 5) something decentralizing and pursuing a pluralistic cultural identity, 6) a pursuit of human happiness and cosmopolitan unity, 7) a political and religious belief, 8) a realization of global governance, 9) an artistic and aesthetic pursuit, and 10) a critical perspective from which to evaluate literary and cultural products. Of course, there could be more constructions of cosmopolitanism from other perspectives: perhaps political scientists or sociologists would put more emphasis on the nation-state. However, my definitions do not contradict the importance of the nation-state but subsume that element to the literary expressions which emerge from the nation-state. Elaborating on some aspects in literary cosmopolitanism with regard to literary creation and criticism should clarify this point.

A number of the aforementioned forms respond to some persistent literary themes of universal significance—such as love, death, and jealousy—themes which scholarly and general readers have for centuries regularly recognized (for how these themes relate to basic plots, see Christopher Booker). These themes find particular embodiment in the works by great writers who represent these themes most vividly and profoundly. For example, in Western literature Shakespeare, Goethe, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Kafka, and other writers whose works have been included in major world literature anthologies have all represented these persistent themes in their works in ways which provoke enduring interest. So their works have become world literature by fulfilling and transcending the limits of national literatures defined both geographically and in terms of era. Considering my ten forms in terms of world literatures may help us advance our understanding of aesthetics, to develop more fully, for example, the work of Roman Ingarden on the societal aspects of aesthetics. Literary criticism must continue to address striking national characteristics: ac-

tively, as Shunqing Cao and Miaomiao Wang demonstrate in this volume, as well as inertly in response to reader reception, which of course is dependent on translations into languages available to different sets of readers. Equal attention must continue to be given to more universal characteristics and to the pursuit of a sort of common aesthetics. Fiction, poetry, and drama are genres of all national literatures, although they appear differently in different national literatures—other genres do not. To take Chinese literature as a case in point, 辞 (*ci*), a lyric based on rhythmic and tonal pattern, is unavailable in other languages as is 赋 (*fu*), an intricate literary form combining elements of poetry and prose popular from Han times to the Six Dynasties in China. There is also 骚 (*sao*), as used in a long poem by Qu Yuan, which is characterized by the use of six-syllable couplets with the two lines of each couplet being connected by a meaningless syllable 兮 (*xi*). On the other hand, traditional Chinese literature does not possess the epic, formally described, although the form is the highest achievement in ancient Greek literature. From their Western rather than global perspective, Marx and Engels consider Homeric epics as the greatest works in the history of world literature.

As far as literary criticism is concerned, when we say why a work is of great originality and to what extent one work plagiarizes a preceding work or repeats it, we make such judgments from an international and cosmopolitan perspective according to some universally recognized criteria (see Wang, "Weltliteratur"). Thus literary cosmopolitanism has endowed us with a broad vision whether we recognize it or not. It enables us not to confine ourselves to a particular national cultural and literary tradition but to engage with excellent works in world literature. In this sense, any great literary work of originality should be absolutely original rather than restricted to a certain space and time. Mo Yan's works certainly belong to such literary works. On what scholarly basis can we make this statement? We cannot avoid evaluating individual works when doing literary studies, which will certainly refer to the relativity and universality of our evaluation. Starting from a national perspective, we often emphasize works' relative significance and their value within a given national cultural environment. Conversely, if we start from a cosmopolitan perspective, we will seek and therefore likely find their universal significance and value within a broad context of the literatures of the world and, to a certain extent, to redefine world literature.

## World literatures and Chinese literature

While the ten forms I propose apply to world literature as a whole, I shift, nevertheless, to address them specifically in terms of the relationship between Chinese literature and world literatures. As is well known, China developed quickly in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) into one of the most powerful and prosperous countries in the world, both politically and economically as well as culturally and literarily. Chinese people at the time viewed their country as the 中央帝国 (Middle

Kingdom), while people of other countries, whether Eastern or Western, were viewed as 蛮夷 (barbarians), reminiscent of but developed independent of Aristotle's and Plato's thought. From a literary point of view, China was also regarded as a 诗王国 (Kingdom of Poetry) with Tang poetry flourishing at a time when Europe was still in what has been called the Dark or Middle Ages. Such eminent Chinese poets of different dynasties as Qu Yuan (屈原) (340-278 BCE), Tao Yuanming (陶渊明) (365-427), Li Bai (李白) (701-762), Du Fu (杜甫) (712-770), Li Shangyin (李商隐) (812-858), Bai Juyi (白居易) (772-846), and Su Shi (苏轼) (1037-1101) (see Owen) all appeared much earlier than Dante, Shakespeare, or Goethe.

Unfortunately, because of later Chinese rulers' corruption and inability to govern the country well, it was not long before China became a second-class feudal and totalitarian country. Although for a long period of time, especially in the years before the Qing Dynasty (1616-1912) when China was isolated culturally from the outside world, it maintained close relations with the world in other arenas such as economics and Chinese literature still inspired Goethe. Indeed, this great European writer and thinker developed the concept of *Weltliteratur* with the help of his reading and dynamic understanding of Chinese literature in translation. After reading some Chinese literary works of minor importance through translation, Goethe put forward his utopian conjecture of *Weltliteratur*: "I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men ... I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach" (Goethe qtd. in Damrosch 1; see also Habjan <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2346>>). Unlike most European writers at the time, Goethe had a broad cosmopolitan vision of the literatures of all countries, owing in large part to his vast reading of non-European literary works in translation. In turn, Goethe himself benefited greatly from translation: it enlarged his reputation, moving from Germany to all of Europe and then to the whole world. When he was advanced in age, he was almost marginalized in German critical circles, considered by young avant-garde critics as conservative and old fashioned. Translations of his works, however, ensured his literary renown. And in the age of Eurocentric dominance, to be a famous European writer means to be a world-renowned writer. Moreover, his interest in Oriental literature, as well as the translation and reception of his works in Oriental countries, including China, solidified his fame in the East (see, e.g., Beecroft <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2334>>).

Despite its relevance to the development of the field of world literatures (for a summary, see Tötösy de Zepetnek and Vasvári), Chinese literature has largely been marginalized on the map of world literatures and in comparative literature. In order to resume its literary and cultural traditions, in the twentieth century China launched a large-scale translation of Western cultural and literary works into Chinese, view-

ing it as the only way of unifying China with the world (see Wang, "On World Literatures" <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2336>>). This process of Westernization through literary translation in China maintains today: numerous Western literary works are available in Chinese, while few excellent Chinese works are translated into other languages. There are chiefly three reasons for this: first, the absence and inability of excellent translation; second, the bias of Orientalism prevailing in Western literary scholarship, as well as mass media; and third, the shrinking of the literary market on a global scale. In its homogenizing of national cultures, globalization offers China an opportunity to bring its culture and literature to the world. Some Chinese scholars and translators, including myself, once thought that integrating Chinese literature into world literature in the shortest possible time was merely a matter of translating Western literature to Chinese. We seldom translated our own Chinese literature to major world languages, especially English, thus accounting in part for the current marginal position of Chinese literature in the world. Now, some contemporary Chinese intellectuals, including myself, are once again interested in cosmopolitanism and world literatures in this age of globalization, thinking it one of the most effective ways to promote Chinese literature and culture in the world.

Although cosmopolitanism has not yet attracted large critical and scholarly attention in Chinese academia, it is not unfamiliar to Chinese scholars. In the 1920s and 1930s, it came into China in the form of anarchism, attracting the attention of some young intellectuals. In literary circles, Ba Jin (巴金) and Junjian Ye (叶君健) were two eminent examples (see Wang, "World Literature"). Both learned Esperanto and expressed interest in it as they thought it might be a good way to integrate with the world. Ye even wrote his works in the artificial language and attracted attention from international Esperanto circles. Ye attained a much higher level of proficiency than Ba Jin, who quickly stepped out of the anarchist circles and engaged himself in the mainstream of modern Chinese literature. Ironically enough, Esperanto never gained as much popularity as English or any other major world language. Ba Jin then became a world-famous writer largely owing to translations of his works into other modern languages done by Sinologists and foreign translators. On the other hand, Ye failed to become as well known as Ba Jin and is known today in China primarily as one of the translators of Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tales and internationally for his novel *The Mountain Village* (1947), written in English. Their cases indicate clearly that any artificial world language cannot survive in face of the hegemonic languages such as English in the twenty-first century. Additionally, it is becoming clear that in the era of globalization, enthusiastically promoting Chinese must be done with the intermediary of English. It is with the recognition of the hegemonic power of English that we need to discuss the issue of cosmopolitanism again in the Chinese context with regard to world literature.

The current state of the book market is far from satisfactory in terms of the circulation of literary and academic works. Few British or U.S. bookstores carry books

written by Chinese writers or scholars even in English translation, let alone in the original Chinese. In sharp contrast, nearly all bookstores in China carry as many foreign literary works as possible translated into Chinese. There are a number of publishing houses, such as Shanghai Translation Press (上海译文出版社), Yilin Press (译林出版社), and Foreign Literature Press (外国文学出版社), devoted almost entirely to the publication of translated foreign literary works, with Western literary works occupying the largest part of their titles. Such leading publishers in Beijing as the Commercial Press (商务印书馆) and the Sanlian Press (三联书店) make the most of their profits by publishing translations of contemporary Western literary works and those of humanities selling well. In contrast, books of the similar titles authored by Chinese humanities scholars hardly circulate even moderately. Today's young Chinese readers admire Western thinkers and writers much more than their Chinese counterparts. Why does this phenomenon occur in today's China and around the world? Does China lack excellent literary works or its own literary masters? The answer for anyone with some knowledge of contemporary Chinese literature and culture is obviously "no." I now offer the following three reasons in brief before extrapolating on them.

First is the prevalence and influence of the ideological bias of Orientalism among Western audiences. A long-lasting bias against the Orient and Oriental people, including China and Chinese people, persists. From my own observations, it is clear that those who have never been to China often view the country as, at best, exotic and, at worst, backward even now, and Chinese people as uncivilized in comparison with elegant Westerners. Thus excellent Chinese literary works are hardly expected. Xingjian Gao and Mo Yan are the rare exceptions. They are truly fortunate to have excellent English translators to promote their works in the world market. The effect of access to works is clear. It is an undeniable shame for a Chinese high school student to be unaware of such Western intellectual giants as Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Goethe, Twain, Joyce, Eliot, Faulkner, or Hemingway. Their books sell well in China and are regularly anthologized in Chinese world literature anthologies. In contrast, it is quite natural for even Western literary scholars, let alone students and general readers, to be unaware of any or all of classical or contemporary Chinese authors. Second, largely because of the imbalance and even absence of excellent translations of Chinese literature, Chinese literature has failed to enter the world market. As we know, foreign language teaching in China has been a large educational enterprise with quite a few educational and commercial institutions reaping great profits. In recent years, along with the boom of Chinese language training worldwide, this enterprise has gradually been on the decline. Even so, English language training has been of great importance to China's high schools and universities: it is all but compulsory for the majority of university students in China. If they do not know English, they can hardly communicate with people of other countries, given that English has become a lingua franca in the age of globalization. And if university faculty members do not understand English, promotion is difficult.

Yet, the sad fact remains that most Chinese college students and teachers, including specialists in English, possess only enough reading proficiency to read English books and newspapers and only enough speaking proficiency to conduct simple communication with English speakers. Although many Chinese scholars have the ability to translate literary or theoretic works from foreign languages into Chinese, few could translate Chinese books into excellent and publishable foreign languages. Sometimes, their translations of great Chinese literary works into English or other major foreign languages either go unappreciated by native speakers owing to foreignizing elements or simply do not circulate in the target book markets. Many of the translated Chinese literary works published by China's Foreign Languages Press, for example, are chiefly circulated domestically rather than internationally. This finds particular embodiment in the sharp contrast of the circulation in the English-speaking world of the two major versions of the Chinese novel *The Story of the Stone* (红楼梦). Owing to the excellent English translation by David Hawkes, *The Story of the Stone* has been relatively popular in English-speaking countries. The other version, translated as *A Dream of Red Mansions* by Xianyi Yang and Gladys Yang, is mostly consulted by specialists of Chinese literature and translation studies but has not made a large impact in the book market in English-speaking countries. Third, owing to the market problem confronting all literary and scholarly production, it is difficult for Chinese literature to reach a world audience effectively, and this phenomenon is a paradox. We live in a postmodern consumer society today in which high-brow literature and cultural products are challenged by the rise of popular and consumer cultures. Since classical Chinese literary works of high aesthetic quality are far from such cultures, contemporary readers may find them unattractive even if English translations were available. If faithfully translated into English or other major foreign languages, they can hardly be appreciated by the international reading public, let alone be commercially successful like many Western literary or theoretical works in China. Contemporary Chinese literature may suffer from a related matter. Since classical Chinese literature developed largely in the absence of Western influence, contemporary Western readers may find it unpalatable and too distinct from the contemporary Western literature they are used to.

Chinese literary critics and scholars only contribute to this state of affairs. They often complain that China does not possess its own modern and contemporary literary masters like Proust, Eliot, Joyce, Grass, Faulkner, Hemingway, Kundera, García Márquez, or Naipaul. They aver that ours is an age of lacking literary and theoretic masters. Indeed, while Binzhong Zhu took the step of publishing a book-length analysis of Faulkner and Mo Yan, he commented on Mo Yan's works as inferior to Faulkner's based on the standards of the Western novel. We can conjecture from this that Mo Yan would fare better in scholarly analyses within the context of the Chinese novel. Thus many think that the Chinese should continue only translating literary masterpieces from Western languages to Chinese: to my mind, this would be tragic for Chinese writers and literary scholars.

There is hope, however, and the present volume *Mo Yan in Context: Nobel Laureate and Global Storyteller* (Duran and Huang) is a good example. The volume includes articles by scholars of comparative literature, sociology, philosophy, etc., who engage with Mo Yan's works in a constructive and global manner. Also, in the past decade both a Chinese-born Chinese national (Mo Yan) and a Chinese-born French writer (Gao) have been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. Thus we can point to the importance and success of translation and of Howard Goldblatt, who translated Mo Yan's works, and Mabel Lee, who translated Gao's works. Without superb English translations, in particular Mo Yan would most probably have missed the honor of the Nobel Prize. In this sense, we should say that his prize winning is a success of collaboration with the author as the nodal point amid a necessary global network of cosmopolitanites, including translators, publishers, nominators, readers, the media, etc. Mo Yan's winning of the Nobel Prize in Literature has been hailed enthusiastically by the majority of Chinese writers and ordinary readers as a good beginning for contemporary Chinese literature to be recognized by authoritative international institutions. It has also, in just this brief period, stimulated more people of the younger generation to be engaged in literary creation and studies. The popular and critical recognition of Mo Yan is founded on decades of practical, linguistic, and critical work. Howard Goldblatt was a trailblazer in starting to translate Mo Yan's works into English in the 1990s when Mo Yan was just beginning to be known domestically, far behind many of his contemporary fellow Chinese writers, such as Meng Wang (王蒙), Xianlang Zhang (张贤亮), or Anyi Wang (王安忆). Coincidentally, some cosmopolitan Western literary critics and scholars took notice of his potential creativity as a promising writer. For example, Fokkema reread avant-garde literary texts from a Western and comparative perspective and in 2008 described "Chinese Postmodernist Fiction" in terms of three of its representatives, among whom Mo Yan comes first (151). Finally, the inclusion of Mo Yan's short story "Old Gun" in *The Norton Anthology of World Literature* for the first time in 2012 is a testament to its having started to establish its canonicity.

Some might say that Mo Yan is a typical Chinese writer: monolingual, so therefore nationalist. Such an assessment would derive from more of a comparative literature model than a world literature one, and it does not coincide with the core of cosmopolitanism, which does not require multilingualism. In a work whose title indicates his humility about his limited reception, 锁孔里的房间—影响我的10部短篇小说 (*A Room Seen through the Keyhole: Ten Short Stories Which Have Influenced Me*), albeit larger than that of the typical reader, Mo Yan pays tribute to the works of such Western and Latin American writers as Faulkner and García Márquez, writers who share his concern with cosmopolitan phenomena. Although Mo Yan sticks to his native county Gaomi in China's Shandong Province, as his literary model and fellow Nobel Prize in Literature awardee Faulkner does his fictionalized Yoknapatawpha County in the U.S. South, he deals with some of the fundamental

issues and experiences shared by all human beings in the world. That is, from the very beginning, Mo Yan wrote both for Chinese readers and for all readers and lovers of literature throughout the world. In this sense, it seems that the more local a writer is, the more likely it is that his/her works may become more cosmopolitan with the help of translation. Thus we can see that cosmopolitanism and world literature do not contradict local, regional, or nationalist sentiment, except in its narrowest and most exclusive varieties.

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