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Chinese-Western Comparative Literature: Theory and Strategy. Edited by JOHN J. DEENEY. Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1980. xx, 201 pp. N.p.

This volume contains seven papers from the Conference on East-West Comparative Literature that was held in Hong Kong in 1979. In the first article, "East-West Comparative Literature: An Inquiry into Possibilities," Heh-hsiang Yuan discusses different approaches to comparative literature: influence or affinity studies, synchronic or diachronic analyses of comparative stylistics, and so forth. He advocates a study of literary parallels, focusing not only on superficial resemblances but also on philosophical, political, or cultural contiguity.

Han-liang Chang's "Towards a Structural Generic Theory of T'ang *Ch'uan-chi*" is a disjointed piece. He argues the obvious inadequacy of *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* story categories for analytical purposes, and presents a tortured summary of structuralist theories of genre; one Chinese *ch'uan-ch'i* is then analyzed with reference to the earlier outlined theory. It is hard to imagine what reader the writer had in mind, for although the analysis of the story is interesting, the discussion of theory is not comprehensible to the non-adept; and to those familiar with the writers cited (especially with Todorov and Propp) the truncated summaries of their work offer little, while precious few Chinese examples are cited.

"The Linguistic and Mythical Structure of *Hsing* as a Combinational Model," by Ying-hsiung Chou, is a suggestive piece. This is true in spite of the turgid summary of *hsing*, the inadequate discussion of the musical origins of the term, and the author's lumping together of *hsing* examples with no regard to difference in periods. The combinational model of Roman Jakobson is used to some advantage.

Donald Wesling's contribution, "Methodological Implications of the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida for Comparative Literature: The Opposition East-West and Several Other Observations," is in large measure an outline of deconstructive criticism, about which the author has grave reservations. (A more sympathetic treatment can be found in the recent book by Vincent B. Leitch.) The reader may anticipate illustration of how the deconstructive approach could be used to illuminate Chinese literature, but

Wesling works in the opposite direction: he uses examples from Chinese literary scholarship as ammunition for his attack on deconstructive criticism.

Douwe Fokkema has written the only concise, clear article in the volume, "Strength and Weakness of the Marxist Theory of Literature with Reference to Marxist Criticism in the People's Republic of China." He outlines eight basic tenets in the body of Marxist criticism read in China. Although the argument is weakened by his own adoption of the concept of a "scientific" study of literature, Fokkema illustrates how inconsistencies among the eight tenets are reconciled, arguing that Marxism offers holistic solutions derived from a set of beliefs contingently interpreted rather than from testable data.

The title of William Tay's article, "Fragmentary Negation: A Reappraisal of Ezra Pound's Ideogrammic Method," is misleading. "Fragmentary negation" is neither discussed nor suggested, and the study is a reappraisal only in the sense that it rehashes familiar material, more succinctly stated in published work by Hugh Kenner and Achilles Fang. It is essentially a workmanlike summary of Ezra Pound's imagist program.

Wai-lim Yip's contribution, unenlighteningly entitled "*Andersstreben*: Conception of Media and Intermedia," explores "the esthetics of one art passing into the condition of another." The author jumps from quotation to quotation (citing Lessing, Hsi K'ang, and Charles Olson, to name a few), with more than one abrupt transition and with little clear development of the argument.

In his foreword to the volume, A. Owen Aldridge expends much space elaborating on points he agrees with or would modify in Heh-hsiang Yuan's article. In the second half of his contribution, he critiques the remaining articles in politely formulated but often quite telling remarks. Essentially the comments of a discussant, this section would have been more appropriately placed at the end of the volume.

The afterword by John J. Deeney, "A Prospectus for Chinese Literature from Comparative Perspectives," is the sort of informal state-of-the-art talk appropriate as an after-dinner presentation, but better left unpublished. It shines, however, compared with the three speeches—including that of the vice-chancellor of the host university—welcoming and sending off the conference participants, all of which are reproduced here.

Many of the authors have the annoying habit of indiscriminately drawing a dichotomy between "East and West," when by the former they mean either "China" or "Asia" or the "non-Western world." Also, more than one paper reflects the stance of an academic more intent on appearing au courant with Western critical developments than on trying to throw light on the subject at hand. Furthermore, references to Chinese literary theory reveal a lack of historical understanding on the part of most authors.

Even though the result is less than this reviewer would wish, the impulse behind the conference and the volume is laudable.

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