



# The Discourse of Chinese Literary Theory

## and the Dialogue between Western Literary Theory and Chinese Literary

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**Abstract:** Some people believe that the Discourse of Chinese literary theory merely covers the categories such as *qi*(Airs), *feng-gu*(Wind and Bone), *shen-yun* (Spiritual Resonance), *bi and xing* (Analogy and Evocative Images), *miao-wu* (Marvelous Enlightenment) and *yi-jing* (Artistic Moods) etc. However, from a culture prospective we analyzed the traditional Chinese Literary theory and sort out that the Discourse of Chinese Literary theory is not the above-mentioned categories but its own way to express in literature, just as the ancient Chinese put it "What is written doesn't give the fullness of what is/was said; what is/was said does not give the fullness of the concepts in the mind". Therefore, the Chinese Scholars have strongly believed that the only way to convey meaning is to "establish the Images". It is this discourse that has been highlighted in the Chinese Literary theory. On the basis of the former research the present paper aims at furthering the study of dialogue between Western Literary theory and Chinese Literary Theory by making it more specific and systematic. And four basic principles and five methods of starting dialogue between the two are put forward as the result.

*Key words: Discourse of Chinese Literary Theory, Dialogue, Principles, methods*

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When mentioning the discourse of traditional Chinese literature, some will take it for granted that there is nothing but these categories as *qi*(Airs), *feng-gu*(Wind and Bone), *shen-yun* (Spiritual Resonance), *bi and xing* (Analogy and Evocative Images), *miao-wu* (Marvelous Enlightenment) and *yi-jing* (Artistic Moods). However, it is a misunderstanding of what we are talking about. Actually, those categories of traditional Chinese literature are not what I call “discourse”, or in other word “the academic regulation”. The categories are only something that lies on the surface while the academic regulation dominates in the deep. Moreover, the categories have their own time spans while the academic regulation may deeply root in both the long history and the splendid culture. Therefore, I often say, “categories is dead, and the regulations living”, it means that the specific categories may die out but the general regulation will survive. For instance, neither did a category like *Feng-gu* exist before the Qin dynasty, nor did *miao-wu* appear until the Jin dynasty, and the category *yi-jing* first emerged in the Ming dynasty.

But what is the regulation? Lao Tzu, one of the ancient Chinese Sages, once said, “The way that can be followed, is not the eternal way. The name that can be named is not the eternal name.” that is to say, what is expressed by the means of the word is posited as a variable object which varies from person to person, from time to time. And right there the ancient Chinese Sage established the embryo of Chinese literature regulation. In *Appended Words of Commentaries on the Book of Changes* we find a good way to convey the meaning of words, “establishing the Images to give the fullness of the concepts in their minds”. Later, Chuang Tzu, the best successor of Lao Tzu, put it much clearer, “one who has caught the fish can forget the trammel, one who has caught the hare can forget the traps, one who has caught the meaning can forget the words”. These Sages’ shared efforts and ideas helped with the establishment of the Chinese academic regulation, the mode of discourse generation and discourse expression. Since it is believed that the fullness of the concepts in one’s mind is not easy to convey and in order to effectively convey it the Chinese have to “establish the Images”, an academic tradition that specially emphasizes on “meaning beyond words”, “schematization beyond images” and “intention beyond tones” gradually formed in Chinese literature community. We may find this similar kind of discourse mode everywhere in Chinese culture, for instance, the school of Buddhism expressed it as “Do not establish any words, but use mind to convey the fullness of one’s mind”, and in Chinese literature, which emphasizes the expression of “not inherent in any single word yet the utmost flair is attained”, the regulation is indicated in categories like *miao-wu*, *xing-qu* (stirring and excitement) , *bi and xing*, *Shen-yun*, *ying-jing* and so on. On the other hand the Confucius School chose another way to talk about the inexpressible “Tao”, which is “referring to Confucius Books”. It is believed that by interpreting the Confucius classics people can approach the “Tao” directly and generate new significance as well.

To sum up, it has long been a latent and deep academic regulation rooted in the Chinese culture that stresses on that the fullness of meaning/concept cannot be conveyed easily. Therefore, in Yan Yu’s *Cang lang Shi-hua*, he highlighted it as “The miraculousness of their poetry lies in its transparent luminosity, which cannot be pieced together; it is like sound in the air, color in appearance, the moon in the water, or an image in the mirror; it has limited words and unlimited meaning”, and Si Kongtu in his famous *Er-Shi-si-Shi-Ping* confessed that “the pure flavor lies beyond saltiness and sourness”. In a word, all the categories that

we mentioned above are binding and bound to the academic regulation and it becomes the unique character of Chinese discourse of literary theory.

The academic regulation still remains in such topics as we talk about “emptiness and fullness” (Xu Shi Xiang Sheng), “Oneness and numerousness”(Yi Shao Zong Duo) and “language and concept” (Yan Yi Zhi Bian). And it will not die away with the categories. The dialectical relationship between “emptiness and fullness” (Xu Shi Xiang Sheng) is now used to guide painting, camera advertisement design and even literary writing. Whereas poem-writing and environment design often resort to *yi-jing* (the artistic moods).

Either the Chinese literary theory or the Western literary theory is only part of the world Literature and without any of them the world literature will be incomplete. However, the Chinese literary theory and the Western literary theory are of different origin and different civilization which makes it difficult to achieve the dialogue between the two. Fortunately, more and more scholars, both from western countries and China, realize the significance of the dialogue between the two kinds of literature theories. In addition, some scholars have put effort at searching for the basic methods of making dialogue. Cao Shunqing(1995) mentioned some basis methods in dialogue between the Western Literary theory and the Chinese Literary theory. Further research in that field has continued in the past decade. Cao and Zhi (2003) put forward two principles and four methods used to guide and conduct the research in this field. Another research interest (Gu 2002) has centered on the basic fusion patterns between the two different literature theories. On the basis of the former research the present paper aims at furthering the study by making it more specific and systematic.

## 2 Basic principles for the dialogue between heterogeneous literature theories

The communication between Chinese literary theory and western literary theory can be classified as macroscopic one and microcosmic one. Macroscopically, it involves the basic principles of the communication between heterogeneous literature theories, including discourse theory, discourse system, discourse sense, cultural thought way, discourse rules etc. In detail, they are discourse independence principle, discourse equality principle, two-way elucidation principle and the principle of seeking common points while reserving difference. Microcosmically, it refers to the primary approaches and methods of the communication between heterogeneous literature theories, which will be discussed later.

### 2.1 Discourse Independence Principle

It is Professor Cao Shunqing (2003) who for the first time put forward the discourse independence principle definitely in his thesis *Constructing the Chinese Discourse of Literary theory in Dialogue: its Basic Principles and Methods*. He pointed out that the communication between heterogeneous literature theories or heterogeneous poetics is not a problem of language but a problem of ‘discourse’. The ‘discourse’ does not refer to language or speech in common sense but the principles of cultural meaning construction by employing the discourse analysis theory. “These principles are those of thought, expression, communication and unscrambling based on certain cultural tradition, social history and cultural background. They are the approaches to determine how meaning is constructed and the way we both communicate with each other and create knowledge.” In brief, ‘discourse’ can be defined as the basic categories and principles of thoughts and expressions in a culture. Discourse, as the basic

principles followed by all expressions, is the core of a culture and is critical to the cultural concepts of a culture system.

Therefore, the principal work for the communication between heterogeneous literary theories is to realize the mutual communication between discourses. "In the communication between heterogeneous literary theories, any ignorance of discourse or ignorance of the essential approach to cultural meaning construction and expression principles undoubtedly will result in the comparison of superficial cultural phenomena or the monolog of the superior literary theory." Said Professor Cao. For the communication between heterogeneous literature theories, to nail down the discourse of each side is of the first importance. After that we may seek the basic principles shared by both sides. To construct such mutual-understood discourse, of course, is a very complicated process which includes the clean-up of a self cultural system, the translation and introduction of terms, the discussion of different cultural and social background, etc. However, whether to establish self discourse system or to create the common discourse for both sides, "discourse independence" is the first principle which the communication theory should abide by. That means a self discourse system should be established before the communication begins, and a standpoint in the discourse should be always kept during the communication. Only in this way can the communication between heterogeneous literature theories progress effectively.

## 2.2 Discourse Equality Principle

Professor Cao Shunqing has put forward discourse equality principles as well as discourse independence principles. He believed that although it is very hard to achieve the real equality in the communication between the heterogeneous literary theories, the abandonment or ignorance of this principle is doomed to result in the hegemony of a superior culture. In the communication between Chinese culture and western culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is the ignorance of equality principle that has brought Chinese culture or literary theory into a state of so called 'aphasia'. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese people has begun to "seek fresh theory from the foreign countries" after painful self-reflection. Confronted with dramatic cultural clash, China has introduced miscellaneous ideologies from the occident. This all-round input ranges from philosophy, politics, economics, history, culture to life style. As to literary theories, almost all the western systems established on thousands years' struggle, have been introduced into our nation, from Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greek to the modernism and post-modernism nowadays. However, in such introduction and communication between Chinese and western culture, we have neglected dialogue, especially the discourse equality principle in dialogue. As a result, we learn the exotic theoretical discourse at a cost of losing our own. Instead of enriching our literary theory with the employment of the exotics, we transplant the exotic theory into ours and replace ours completely in terms of cultural discourse. This is so called 'aphasia' of Chinese culture and literary theory. It "does not mean we Chinese scholars are unable to speak Chinese, but means that we lost our own way to think and express, and that we lost our own theoretical categories and basic way approaches. Consequently, it is hard for us to fulfill the cultural responsibility for the affirmation of our nation's existence meaning." Based on the analysis above, the pathogenesis for 'aphasia' is the loss of our indigenous discourse in the Sino-western communication. From the perspective of knowledge sociology, 'aphasia' which stands for the loss of discourse represents "holistic switch of Chinese and western knowledge genealogy". So the advocate of the equality in the dialogue between Chinese and western literary theory does not mean some "post-colonial" argument

influenced by personal feeling or emotion, but equal interlocution between Chinese literary theory and western literary theory based on the acknowledgement of the 'heterogeneity' of Chinese traditional literary theory. 'Aphasia', whether refers to the loss of a nation's indigenous discourse or represents holistic switch of knowledge genealogy, results from the indifference or loss of the equality sense in the cultural collision and interlocution. Our history experience shows that the precondition for the effective dialogue between heterogeneous literary theories is to adhere to the discourse equality principle. Otherwise 'Dialogue' can turn back to 'monologue' again.

### 2.3 Two-way Elucidation Principle

Besides discourse independence principle and discourse equality principle, the author believes, 'two-way elucidation principle' is another significant principle in discourse interlocution as well. Although 'elucidation study' was first put forward formally by Taiwan scholars Gu Tianhong and Chen Huihua (Chen Pengxiang) in 1976, it had been applied earlier by Chinese scholars such as Wang Guowei, Wu Mi and Zhu Guangqian as an approach or a method in their practices. Professor Cao Shunqing, in his thesis *A study on the basic theory characteristics and methodology system of Chinese School in Comparative literature* published in 1995, for the first time took 'elucidation study' as one of the five major methodologies of Chinese school. Although there is 'no comparison' or no direct comparison in 'elucidation study', it achieves the same 'effect' (Yang Zhouhan, 2003) as comparative literature research does for its cross-cultural feature (cross-Chinese-and-western-heterogeneous-cultural feature). Compared with the view of 'one-way elucidation' held by Taiwan scholar, Chen Dun and Liu Xiangyu (1988) for the first time advanced 'two-way elucidation' in their book *Conspectus of Comparative Literature*. They pointed out "Elucidation is by no means a one-way study but a two-way one or a mutual one. To believe that only certain nation's literary theory can elucidate the other's is as extreme as to believe that certain nation's literature has influence on the others' while it has never been influenced by any other nation's literature in Influence Study. Apparently it is untenable theoretically." Du Wei (1992) also argued that "The core of elucidation study is cross-cultural literary understanding". The "two-way elucidation" principle in the heterogeneous discourse interlocution, we believe, emphasizes that in the process of constructing a new literary discourse we should not only be good at absorbing the foreign literary theory (particularly from the occident) for our benefits but also interpreting other nations' literature or theory with ours. We should 'export' our theory as well as 'import' others'. At least we should have the sense of 'export'. That is to say, in the dialogue we should be aware of the importance of discourse application and discourse export. If the discourse equality principle and the discourse independence principle are established to defend our position, the two-way elucidation principle is the clarion of offense. Recently some scholars have pointed out in their thesis "When a nation is powerful in its economy and politics, generally its culture is a superior one which is characterized with export while the inferior cultures have to accept the superior and even become assimilated." And then they concluded "it is impossible, at present even in the near future, for Chinese literary theory and western literary theory to have an equal interlocution position." We believe that actually the current interlocution between Chinese literary theory and western literary theory is unequal but the cause for it does not completely lie in the powerful political and economic position of the western countries. Can we say the leading position of the United States in literary theory in the 20<sup>th</sup> century depends on its arms just because it is

a superpower? Also powerful, why haven't Britain and Japan got the same achievements as America did? It cannot be denied that there is a close connection between political-economic strength and cultural development. But the foremost reason for the predominant contribution made by the American literary theorists, we believe, is that they are good at inheriting the western literary theory's tradition and innovating. Therefore, although the politics and economy of China are still in development, it cannot stop us to have the sense of discourse equality and discourse export in the interlocution. The key point of two-way elucidation is that we should not only be good at inspiring Chinese literary discourse with the employment of the occident's but also have the courage to illustrate the western theory with ours. Only in this way can we Chinese scholars express our own ideas and only in this way can our newly-established literary theory discourse have the feature of nationality and globalization. Undoubtedly, there is a long way to go. As long as every scholar possesses such a sense, Chinese literary theory will be accepted by the world. Mr. Wang Guowei has set a very good example for us. Moreover, some contemporary Chinese scholars (Li Siqu) made use of the theory 'Emptiness and Fullness' (Xu Shi Xiang Sheng) to explain Milan Kundera's work and have made great achievement.

## 2.4 The principle of 'seeking common points while reserving difference' and 'mutual complementarities of heterogeneity'

Another important principle in the interlocution among heterogeneous literary theories is the principle of 'seeking common points while reserving difference' and 'mutual complementarities of heterogeneity'. Liu Jieming (1993) pointed out that "the start of Chinese and western comparative literature is to seek their intercommunity, but the real purpose of it is to discover the value of their difference." The heterogeneous literary theory interlocution begins with seeking the intercommunity and then goes further to distinguish the difference. As one of the most important methods of Chinese School, the method of "comparing intercommunity and difference" has attracted many scholars' attention earlier. Mr. Yuan Hexiang said: "Literature, whether Chinese literature or western literature, has something in common. Such intercommunity is the start of the research of Chinese-western comparative literature. But this start is not absolute one but a beginning which leads us into a wider research field—distinguishing difference. So we should study the different literary expressions based on such factors as environment, times, customs and culture as well as study the 'intercommunity'. The emphasis put on 'intercommunity' also means the focus on the nationality of both Chinese and western literature, and the exploration of their particular value. It will result in not only communication and blending but mutual complementarities (learning from others' strong points to offset one's weakness). Professor Cao Shunqing also pointed out "Fundamentally, comparative literature has two functions: one is communication – to seek the intercommunity of the literatures between nations, of the disciplines and of the civilizations for the purpose of blending together. The other is complementarities – to distinguish the difference for the purpose of highlighting each literature's nationality, individuality and particular value, and achieving the result of mutual complementarities and reflection." In his work *Comparison between Chinese and Western Poetics* he concluded: "Based on the comparison above, we can get an indication that in spite of the great difference in nationality between Chinese literary theory and the western's, and in some concepts they are even contrary, they have a lot of common ground. It is this fact that makes the communication between Chinese literary theory and western's possible and shows their respective



value. The more common ground they have, the stronger their affinity is; the more distinct their differences are, the more valuable their mutual complementarities are. What Chinese ancient literary theory contributes lies in not only the fact that it has put forward some theories similar to the western theory, but also the fact that it has advanced something that can not be found in the western theory. It is these 'new' things that supply a gap for the world literary theory".

It is the commonness and individuality of Chinese literary theory and western literary theory that determine our only choice in communication -- the principle of 'seeking common points while reserving difference' and 'mutual complementarities of heterogeneity'. For example, there are some respective features as well as much commonness between Chinese literary theory of "Poetry has no assured explanation" and "Hermeneutics" from the west, between "defamiliarization" and *qi-zheng* (Oddness/Commonness), *tongbian* (Continuity and Change) theory, and between 'Language (Yan), Images (Xiang), Meaning (Yi)' theory in China and the Theory of Textual Level in the West. Mr. Gu Zuzhao once explained the difference and complementarities between Chinese literary theory and the western's by the example of the ideal aesthetic models in different culture . After the comparison of the western Prototype Theory and Chinese *yi-jing* or *yi-xiang* (Image theory), he concluded that through the comparison, we found that the western scholars' research on the 'prototype theory' is fine enough to remedy the roughness of Chinese *yi-xiang* while the maturity of *yi-jing* also fills the gap in the western modern literary theory.

The flourish of the western modernism reflects the modern significance contained in Chinese ancient theory of *yi-xiang*. As to *yi-jing* theory, it is considered as the most national, mature and perfect theory in China literature as well as the worldwide theory. After the birth of imagism in the west, poets has dissatisfied with straightness and superficialness in lyrics and the Impressionists has changed their taste from authenticity and factuality into the aesthetic pursuit of implicit artistic moods. The western modern scholars have realized that the artistic objects include not only the actual life but also the indiscernible image. Although such understanding is still far from Chinese artistic pursuit of 'schematization beyond images', the hint is clear that *yi-jing could be accepted* by the West in the future." Insisting on the principle of 'seeking common points while reserving difference' and 'mutual complementarities of heterogeneity', we can survey the world culture with a pluralistic and open view, and construct a more open, reasonable and humane literary theory exceeding the current model.

### 3 Methods for dialogue between heterogeneous literary theories

After suggesting some principles of dialogue between heterogeneous literary theories on the macro level, we would like to make a further discussion on the forms and methods for dialogue between heterogeneous literary theories on the micro level. In our opinion, there mainly exist the following forms and methods for dialogue, that is, "different discourse and common topic", "different approaches and common trends", "different discourses with common context", "dialogue in discourse interpretation", "different methods and common conclusion", as well as "different regulations and common law". After adopting these dialogic methods, we may reach the state of "coexistence of various categories and discourses".

### 3.1 Different discourses and Common Topic

When we have a dialogue we should firstly confirm the topic, which is the basis of dialogue. Since 1988, I have been exploring the possibility of two-way dialogue between the Chinese literary theory and the western poetics. In *Comparative Poetics of China and the Occident*, I provide such a strategy as five topics in the literary theory studies have been taken as the unit of dialogue, on which we make the discussion in Chinese and the western literary theory. Till now, this strategy is still able to be adopted notwithstanding its shortcoming that it is a dualistic dialogue; nevertheless, the dialogue should be multi-polar in the multicultural context. In other words, other literary theories beyond the western poetics and Chinese literary theory should also be covered in the dialogue. For example, we take 'literature and life' as the topic of the dialogue. We may find that it is not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the western philosophy and literary theory began to emphasize the ontological property of literature. Dilthey suggested 'life experience' while French philosophers Henri Bergson defined literature as the duration of life and the vital intuition. Susanne K.Langer defined literature as forms of life. While in Chinese classical literary theory, the discussion on the forms of life was brought out from the following three categories: *qi* (Airs), *shen* spirit *yün* (tone). For example, in Chuang-tsu's philosophy, *qi* is a basic form of life. Chuang-tsu suggests that life depends on the gathering of air, while death is dispersal of air. In Cao Pi's opinion (Cao Pi is one of the famous literary theorists in ancient China), 'In literature, *qi* is the dominant factor. *Qi* has its normative forms—clear and murky. It is not brought by force.' Cao Pi emphasizes that literature is a form of life, which focuses on *qi*. Through foregoing contrast, we may conclude that discussion on literature and life in Chinese classical literary theory is far richer and profounder than that in the western poetics. However, the point of view on forms of life in the western poetics may promote our perception of literary essence in Chinese classical literary theory.

In this way, the heterogeneous discourses may transcend the original state of literary theory and the new theory will be developed. The following is another example, emotional property, the demonstration of literariness, emphasizes to explore the literary essence from the aspect of subjective perception, in particular the subjective emotion. Regarding this topic, there exist different opinions in China and in the West; however, we may also take it as the common topic for our dialogue between heterogeneous discourses. Property of expression has been emphasized in Chinese classical literary theory. In early Qin Dynasty, the viewpoint of 'poetry expressing one's ambition' is very prevalent, which has great influence on the development of literary theory in China. Later, another viewpoint of "poetry expressing one's emotion" emerges. In Chinese classical literary theory, there is a brilliant expression of the viewpoint about 'poetry expressing one's emotion':

The poem is that to which what is intently on the mind goes. In the mind, it is being intent; coming out in language, it is a poem. The affections are stirred within and take on form in words. If words alone are inadequate, we speak them out in signs. If signing is inadequate, we sing them. If singing them is inadequate, unconsciously our hands dance them and our feet tap them. (translation by Stephen Owen)

Since then, emotion has been regarded as the poetic essence in Chinese classical literary theory. In addition, ancient Chinese literary theorist Lu Ji suggests: 'The poem follows from the affections and is seriously intricate'. Liu Xie advocates: 'the affections are the warp of pattern, and diction is principle's woof. The woof can be formed only after the warp is straight; diction can expand itself only after



principle is set.' In the western poetics, viewpoint of 'poetry expressing one's emotion' is also prevalent. In Greek poetics, doctrines of 'imitation' and 'representation' are emphasized. For William Wordsworth, poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility. Henri Bergson sees art as expression of life and suggests poem is expression of the state of mind. Under the influence of the literary theories, Italian aesthetician Benedetto Croce regards intuition as expression of lyricism. From these discussions, we find that there exit principle and connotation of discourse of its own in every literary theory system. In dialogue, each discourse is a subject, which breaks the monologue of western discourse.

### 3.2 Different Approaches and Common Trends

What is literature? Or what is the essence of literature? That is a principal question in literary studies. Literary theorists all over the world provide various answers to this question. In the West, there are different answers to this question in different stages of development of literary theory. Generally, Aristotle's doctrine of 'art is the imitation of elegant nature' is regarded as the authoritative statement of artistic essence, the position of which is outstanding in the western poetics. Later, from Horace, Leonardo da vinci, Philip Sidney to Nicolas Boileau Despreaux, they all follow that orientation. Up to Romantic period, the focus of western literary theory shifts from imitation to subjective expression. Theorists at that time suggest that art is creation but not passive imitation and poetic essence is 'a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. These theories all indicate a certain feature of literary essence notwithstanding their differences, that is, emotional property of literature. Belinsky suggests that literary essence is to reflect social reality with image; M. H. Abrams adopts 'the lamp' and 'the mirror' to represent their tendency of the two literary theories. While in Chinese classical literary theory, the artistic essence could be found out in the integration of mind and matters. It advocates the beauty of artistic conception should be brought out from the integration of mind and matters, as well as the integration of perception and scene.

In Indian literary theory, some categories such as rasa or sentiment, dhvani or suggestion, riti or style, vakrokti or indirect speech, etc. are included in the discussion of the literary and artistic essence. Among them, the theory of sentiment and the theory of suggestion are specially emphasized. The category of sentiment in Indian literary theory arises earlier than the notion of imitation in the western poetics. Various sentiments are recorded in Indian classical works such as *Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda*. As a category of literary theory, rasa or sentiment means the sentiment of beauty presented in literary works. Bharatamuni suggests in *Natyasastra* that rasa or sentiment is the artistic life and the essence of beauty. In his opinion, meaning can not exist without combination with sentiment. For Rabindranath Tagore, literary creation is the creation of sentiment, and sentiment is the soul of art. Throughout the history of Indian literary criticism, the theory of sentiment is in an authoritative position. The sentiment refers to the emotion in creation, performance and appreciation, but not a copy of objective world. The sentiment, as the artistic essence, is a preference to subjective aesthetical appreciation and experience.

Besides, Japanese literary theory has its own viewpoints on the issue of the literary essence, although it has been greatly influenced by Chinese classical literary theory.

From the discussion above, we find that literary theorists all over the world have the same orientation in the study of the literary and artistic essence notwithstanding their different approaches, different principles and connotations of discourses. In the dialogue, different voices as subjects replace the monologue of the western literary theory. Only in this way can we discuss profoundly and completely the matter of literary and artistic essence.

### 3.3 Different Discourses with Common Context

The third method to start the dialogue between the two is called “different discourses with common context”. The common context means the heterogeneous discourses will meet the same or similar social context in the totally different historical conditions. Meanwhile, the heterogeneous discourse may react differently under that same or similar social context, then result in the entire different solutions, and at last form their different modes of discourse expression and modes of constructing meaning. Although they still have different contents, functions or even the topics, they are caused by the same or similar context. Based on this common context, we can push them to the area of dialogue and let them start the dialogue.

In any historic periods when heterogeneous multi-cultures conflict with each other any discourses they would meet the same social context in which people would choose whether to restore to their ancients or to create new ways. This kind of phenomenon usually occurs during the turning periods when the old culture cannot be up to the date. At that moment, different culture will choose differently whether to reject the old tradition, old culture and old discourse in order to reconstruct a new culture and a new discourse, or to develop and transform a renewed one based on the former traditional discourse.

When meeting this social context, the Chinese chose to transform the old one to the renewed one based on its own tradition discourse. One of the discourse modes was literally “the old state with the new policy” which was originally from one of the poems in *Book of Songs*. This kind of discourse mode is somewhat like “the old bottle with the new wine”. Still, Confucius set up a trend that respected and admired their ancient classic highly. himself had spent all his life in interpreting the ancient classics while not creating something new. This kind of archaism discourse mode has influence Chinese culture for quite a long time. Most of the ancient Chinese intellectuals resorted to this kind of approach, in other words, whenever reading, writing, interpreting, criticizing, arguing they went through the ancient *Confucius Books* to find the way, the reference, and even the supporting ideas. As a result, the terms they commonly used to refer to this kind of discourse mode were borrowed from the ancient classics too.

On the other hand, facing the same context the western academic discourse chose to take another way to reject the old one totally and invent a new one. The western academic discourse has always had the character of seeking for knowledge by taking the pure academic attitude. Just as Tang Yongtong has put it, “They have always tried to acquire knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and they have always tried to seek for the truth for the sake of truth”. Such spirit has played a decisive role in the Western Literary Theory. In the Western Literature there has always been a kind of scientific character of seeking for the utmost truth. For the pursuit of innovation, the scholars in the West have been carrying the academic discourse forward and sometimes even developed to the opposite direction. Compared with the Chinese Literary discourse, the Western Literary discourse has had a dynamic creative spirit from the ancient Greek Literary

Discourse to the Contemporary Literature Discourse. Conversely, the Chinese Literary Discourse has somewhat shown a preference to arguing in a circle.

### 3.4 Dialogue in Discourse Interpretation

Another literary theory dialogue between heterogeneous civilizations is the dialogue in the translation of discourse. The translation of literary theory of heterogeneous civilizations has to involve in at least two languages (the source language and the target language) and two texts (the source text and the target text). With development of philosophy and translation study under the prospective, the nature of translation itself is paid much more attention and the descriptive study of translation has revealed some phenomenon that have long been neglected in the field. Translation does not only relate to pure linguistic problems but also the two heterogeneous cultures lying behind the texts and languages. Each culture and the discourse of it have its own unique concept categories and its different ways of expression. Among heterogeneous cultures these categories and ways may overlap, intersect and correspond to some extent, but can never equate. Therefore, the transcoding of different languages has always shown the intension between the two cultures lying behind.

Above all, translation is a dialogic process. The phenomenon of “misreading” which are being discussed extensively is basically caused by the dialogue between two discourses of heterogeneous civilization. In other words, this kind of dialogue cannot avoid “misread”. For instance, “*feng-gu*”, literally “Wind and Bone”, is an important term in Liu Xie’s *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*. It is a key category in classic Chinese Literary theory. When he translated it in his English version of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, Vincent Yu-chung Shih put it literally as “the wind and the bone”. However, he still pointed out in the translator’s preface that this term should be understood as “organic unity” because Liu Xie used it as a compound word to indicate the organic unity of ideas and language. Besides, some scholars translated it as “Suasive force” and “bone structure”. The embarrassing translation of this term reflected both the extreme difference between the two languages and the heterogeneity between the two deep discourse systems. The key problem in this case is the dialogue, and the research interest of comparative literature has to focus on the dialogue in discourse translation.

### 3.5 Coexisted and crisscrossed categories and Discourses

As one of the important approaches to conduct dialogue between heterogeneous literary theories, “coexisted and crisscrossed categories” is an ideal state that we are always seeking for. If the possibility of constructing the world literary theory is not considered, this state will be an inevitable phase of interacting between the East and the West for quite a long time. The term which we use to describe the actual state of all east and west literary theory categories coexisting and crisscrossing in the field is what we actually advocate. At the very beginning of dialogue, we will be in a state of coexisted categories because we cannot and not necessarily replace the western discourse for the typical Chinese discourse immediately. For example, the categories such as *Xing* (the typical characters in the typical situation and appearance), *shen* (expression), *qing* (emotion), *li* (reason) will be used simultaneously. Still, we may find out many such examples. In that state all the categories will be used independently, whereas it is the unavoidable result that signifies the end of the monologue of the western literary theory.

Recently, Yu Hong (2000) holds that there is a phenomenon of “two-conceptual-meaning” in the modern Chinese context. By “two-conceptual-meaning”, he refers to such a phenomenon that the conceptual meanings of a part of Chinese words are entirely modernized, as a result, they only retain their external forms, the character, and the conceptual meaning were shifted such as “wen” in modern Chinese. On the other hand, there is another part of Chinese words maintaining their original conceptual meaning while not being modernized such as Literature (Wen), Poetry (Shi), Prose (Fu), Opera (Qu). We do not think it is a mere linguistic phenomenon, but a kind of potential discourse under the form of Chinese language. The reason for it is that the modern Chinese does not only retain the ancient Chinese discourse but adopts the western discourse. That exemplifies the state “the crisscrossed categories” vividly. One of Hu Jingzhi’s book (1989) entitled *Aesthetics in Literature* is just like that. The structure of that book was arranged systematically according to the typical western pattern, the Aristotle one. And the author proved his argument by logical analysis, too. Nevertheless, he applied a typical Chinese category, *yi-jing* (Artistic Moods), to the whole of Chapter 8, from the title to the content.

#### 4 Conclusion

Besides the approaches and methods mentioned above, there are other ways to promote the effective dialogue between heterogeneous literary theories, for instance, “different approaches and common conclusion”, “different regulation and common law”, “classification”, “cataloguing”, “quotation and”, “mixture”, which I will not give further discussion.

In conclusion, the 21<sup>st</sup> century will surely be a century when various cultures interact, dialogue and communicate with each other. With the development of the world culture we have to adjust our strategies of making dialogue. That is to say, we have to globalize our own literary discourse and indigenize the others. Only in this way can we cure our “aphasia” and reconstruct our own system of literary theory. Of the top importance in the process it is what we talked above, the basic principles and the specific methods.

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