
Centres on the Margin and the Doubly Marginalised

Introduction

Although literary works had been circulated in all kinds of forms, including original, translated, dictated, recreated, etc., beyond their places of origin throughout history, it was only in 1827 that the concept *Weltliteratur* was brought up by the German writer Goethe, who not only acknowledged the transnational circulation of literature, but also encouraged the acceleration of it:

National literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach. (2021, p. 23)

Goethe explained the reason to pursue *Weltliteratur* is that it is important to look beyond one's limitations determined by their cultural surroundings (ibid.). He, at the same time, suggested that one should not examine foreign literatures based on their domestic aesthetic traditions (ibid.). However, until 200 years later, in 2022, his suggestion still has not become a widely adopted practice, at least partially if not all, due to the existing inequality in *Weltliteratur*.

Damrosch claims that 'all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin' are world literature (2003, p. 4). In the international market, literatures are similar to other goods in circulation, in that there are stronger producers and weaker producers. Back in 1899, Brandes had noticed such inequalities in the market: '[a]longside the world-famous works, numberless others are preserved, loved and respected—and continuously read—in their countries of origin without being known abroad' (2021, pp. 62-63). Brandes (2021) attributed such inequalities to the position of the literature's language on the global stage. Moretti's world-system analysis further explains how certain languages and literatures become less influential than others. He believes that world literature is a 'profoundly unequal' literary system comparable to the international capitalist system (2000, p. 56), where 'the onset of capitalism brusquely reduces the many independent spaces needed for the origin of species (or of languages) to just three positions: core, periphery, semi- periphery' (2021, p. 401). Under such circumstances, even the study of world literature itself 'can become [...] ideologically complicit with the worst tendencies of global capitalism' where we see the core being occupied by French, German and English literatures and the study itself has long been Eurocentric (Damrosch, 2011, p. 456).

In the discussions related to world literature such as the ones above, the relations among different literatures are often examined from a global perspective, which implies a structure where European

literature is situated at the centre and other literatures are scattered on the margin. However, there are other ways to look at such relations. If we enlarge the picture of the margin, what we find may not be limited to single marginalised national literatures but also marginalised literary systems with its own cores and peripheries – a multiscale structure. Aiming to provide a new perspective of looking at world literature and contribute to the decentralisation of its study, this essay will deliberately bypass the major events happening at the current centre; instead, it will focus on the comparison between two regional literary systems on the margin of *Weltliteratur* with Portugal and China as their respective centres and explore the singularity of the literature of Macao as in how it has been *doubly marginalised* in the ‘contact zone’¹ of the Portuguese and Chinese (Pratt, 2008).

Centres on the Margin

As an academic of Chinese nationality with a research focus in Lusophone literature, I find that important figures in my culture and my field are often considered trivial in the world literary system. Looking at Chinese literature, in spite of Goethe’s appreciation for it and his opinion that Chinese novels are as rich as their German and French counterparts (Hutchinson, 2018, p. 58), the reality is that throughout the history of Nobel Literature Prize, there are merely one Chinese writer, Mo Yan and one French Chinese writer, Gao Xingjian who have won the prize; whereas the numbers of French, British and German winners are fifteen, eleven and nine respectively. To some scholars, the existence of such disparity would be perfectly reasonable. Moulton, for example, in his work *World literature and Its Place in General Culture* (1911), claimed that Chinese civilisation has made little contribution to world literature (D’haen, 2021, p. 153). Almost a century later, Casanova, although acknowledging the ‘great internal literary traditions’ in Chinese literature and how globally ‘little known’ it is in her influential work *The World Republic of Letters* (2004, pp. 256-257), she does not seem to encourage any more discussion or acceptance of Chinese literature in the international literary realm, as she herself merely allocates less than one full page in this 400-page book to discuss the matter (Rojas, 2018, pp. 43-44).

Looking at Portuguese literature, the situation is not any better. In terms of being recognised by international prize institutions, José Saramago was the only Portuguese writer who won a Nobel Prize; whereas in Portugal’s neighbouring country, Spain, the number of the same prize winners is six. Similar indifference towards Portuguese literature is shown in a number of western theoretical classics, despite the fact that ‘Portugal has particular literary, cultural, and historical ties with Europe’

¹ Pratt defines ‘contact zones’ as ‘social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – such as colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today’ (2008, p. 7).

(Buescu, 2021, p. 310). For example, Said's well-known work *Orientalism* (1978) barely touches on the 'tradição orientalista na literatura portuguesa'² (Brookshaw, 2000, p. 33), arguably because '[o] mesmo alheamento é extensivo a Portugal'³ (Laborinho, 2010, p. 11). Such 'alheamento'⁴ can be observed in Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* (1995) in which Shakespeare is placed at the centre of the western literary canon and considered absolutely universal; whilst Fernando Pessoa has to be introduced as the Portuguese Whitman 'as a foil' to the discussion of the Hispanic Whitmans Borges and Neruda (p. 451), and Camões, Eça de Queiroz and José Saramago are simply not mentioned.

Apart from being pushed to the margin of the Eurocentric world literary system, Chinese literature and Portuguese literature are also similar in the sense that they both were, if not still are, the centres of two literary systems: the Sinosphere one and the Lusophone one.

The Sinosphere literary system was originally composed by four East Asian countries, China, Japan, Korea and the Vietnam before French colonisation, with China as its cultural centre (Zhang, 2021, p. 282). Even-Zohar's observation quoted by Moretti (2000) while explaining the similarities between the world literary system and economic system that 'there is no symmetry in literary interference' seems applicable to this regional literary system. Just as Brazilian literature is indebted to foreign literatures (Schwarz, 1992, p. 50), Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese literatures were indebted to Chinese literature for a long time in history. They used to be 'interfered with by a source literature', in this case, Chinese literature, 'which completely ignores it' (Even-Zohar, 1990, p. 62). The most obvious example is that the universal written language was classic Chinese in this system until the 20th century (Lim, 2016, p. 246). In Japan, texts in Chinese were widely circulated for a long period (Zhang, 2021, p. 285), and numerous Japanese writers were influenced by Chinese classics. For example, in the first novel of the world, *Genji Monogatari* (1010) by Murasaki Shikibu, there are 102 references to 47 poets in 白氏文集⁵ (Yan, 2021, p. 97). Sei Shōnagon refers to Bai Juyi's works approximately 30 times in *Makura no Sōshi* in addition to her constant reference to other Chinese classics (ibid.). Matsuo Bashō also constantly quotes Li Bai, another famous poet of the Tang dynasty, in his posthumously published travel diary *Oku no Hosomichi* (1702). Similarly, Korean elites used to read classical Chinese literature (Zhang, 2021, p. 282) and write mostly in Chinese (Lee, 2003, p. 7). Those elites took the genres of Chinese poetry and prose as the canon in their own traditional literature (Lee, 2003, p. 7). In Goryeo, for example, local intellectuals adored Su Shi, a poet and

² Translation by me: orientalist tradition in Portuguese literature.

³ Translation by me: the same alienation is extended to Portugal.

⁴ Translation by me: alienation.

⁵ Translation by me: Bai's Collected Works. Bai refers to Bai Juyi, a poet of the Tang dynasty, in this case.

essayist of the Song dynasty, so much that many of them started to plagiarise his works (Liu, 2008, p. 72). In Vietnam, works by canonised Chinese writers, including Tao Qian, Li Bai and Du Fu etc., were also in circulation in their original versions. Vietnamese intellectuals wrote poems in Chinese as well, following the rhyming rules of Chinese poetry at the time (Tran, 2019). In contrast, Bai Juyi and Li Bai hardly, if not never, mentioned Japanese literature in their works; Su Shi was even against the intensification of the diplomatic relation between Song and Korean authorities, as he saw Koreans as barbarians (Liu, 2008, p. 71); and Vietnamese literature has never had a considerable readership in China even until today.

While the Sinosphere literary system is located in Asia, the Lusophone literary system consists of writings in Portuguese language all over the globe. It is commonly considered that there are three worlds in Lusophone literature: Portugal, Brazil, and Portuguese-speaking Africa. *World literature Today*, for example, named its first periodical of Volume 53 ‘The Three Worlds of Lusophone Literature’ (Ivask, 1979). The centre of the mentioned three worlds was, if not still is, Portuguese literature. While the interference of the core and its peripheries in the Sinosphere literary system was ‘unilateral’, conforming to the ‘Law of Interference’ concluded by Even-Zohar (1990, p. 62), Portuguese literature’s centrality in the Lusophone literary system had its two sides. First, Portuguese literature is central to its peripheries because the origins of Brazilian literature and Lusophone African literatures are often traced back to the texts written by Portuguese: Pêro Vaz de Caminha’s chronicles (Oliveira, 1946; Bosi, 1972, Sun, 1999) and José da Silva Maia Ferreira’s poems (Ervedosa, 1979), in particular, which follows the pattern that “the first texts produced in the colonies in the new language are frequently produced by ‘representatives’ of the imperial power” due to the inevitability of ‘writing in the language of the imperial centre’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002, pp. 4-5). Second, similar to other colonial empires, Portugal ‘create[d] in [its] imperial center of power an obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself’ (Pratt, 2008, p. 4), and the same chronicles depicting other lands’ exoticism were used to affirm Portugal’s centrality. That is to say, Portuguese literature not only dominated the literary realm of its colonies, it also needs the marginalisation of its colonies in order to feel central.

The centrality of Portuguese literature and culture in the Lusophone system can be observed in a number of examples. Before 19th century, most Brazilian elites had Portuguese origins and received higher education in Portugal (Sun, 1999, p. 19), thus texts produced by them often reflected Portuguese literary traditions and trends. For example, *Prosopopéia* (1601) by Bento Teixeira, a remarkable work of the Baroque period of Brazil, is an imitation of *Os Lusíadas* by Camões ‘desde a

estrutura até o uso dos chavões da mitologia e dos torneios sináticos⁶ (Bosi, 1972, p. 41). Cláudio Manuel da Costa (1729 - 1789), one of the most talented poets from Minas Gerais, was also heavily influenced by Camões (Sun, 1999, p. 8). In Africa, the situation was different. Even in the 1960s, the illiteracy rates in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde were as high as around 97%, 98%, 100% and 78.5% respectively (Laranjeira, 1995, p. 20). The readership of literature was thus limited to a small group of local people who were ‘assimilados⁷’ (ibid.). In this case, Portuguese literature was central in the sense that it was the Portuguese regime who controlled the local population’s access to literature by determining the level of education they could receive. In addition, those who were relatively well-educated went to Portugal to receive higher education. Agostinho Neto, the first president of Angola and a famous poet, is an example. Even though African elites like Neto strived to fight against the Portuguese empire in many aspects including challenging its literary traditions, the literature created by them was marginalised to somewhere near non-existence, for it could hardly be circulated among its own people.

Both the Sinosphere and Lusophone literary systems have experienced the degradation of their original centres, but to different degrees. As the Chinese empire of Qing’s economic and politic power was declining, Japan and Korea both began to largely use their own writing systems, yet they held different attitudes towards classic Chinese. Whilst the Japanese, who defeated Qing in wars, chose to preserve Chinese characters in *wakan konkōbun*⁸, Koreans opted to abandon Chinese script and to use *hangul*, an alphabet invented by King Sejong in the 15th century (Zhang, 2021). The deuniversalisation of Chinese language marked the fall of China from the position of the cultural centre of the Sinosphere world. Later, as a pioneer importer of western modernity in Asia, Japan became so culturally important in the region that even “the concept of ‘China’⁹ was appropriated to refer to [it]”, which can be observed in Yamaga Sokō’s argument that Japan had the legitimacy to be called the Central Kingdom in terms of its prosperity and stability compared to its neighbours (Huang, 2006, pp. 92-95). The most representative example of Japanese influence in the Sinosphere literary system during the modern period should be the fact that Lu Xun, arguably the greatest figure in Chinese modern literature, studied and lived in Japan for years. There he learned to look at his country and culture of origin from a critical perspective. Lu Xun’s memoir prose ‘藤野先生¹⁰’ dedicated for his Japanese teacher is even included in the standard Chinese textbook for eighth-grade students in

⁶ Translation by me: from the structure to the use of mythological ideas and synaptic styles.

⁷ Translation by me: assimilated.

⁸ 和漢混交文. It is a Japanese writing system which mixes Japanese and Chinese writing styles.

⁹ In Chinese: 中国. The literal meaning of the word is ‘central kingdom’.

¹⁰ Translation by me: Mr. Fujino.

China today¹¹. Nevertheless, Japan was no longer the cultural centre of East Asia since its invasion of Korea and China in the 20th century (Zhang, 2021, p. 285), for the wars generated in Korean and Chinese people's hearts so much hatred towards Japanese that it made them refuse to learn from Japan in almost any aspect. Now in the 21st century, it is hard to argue that any of the three countries is or will become the literary centre in this cultural space, because they each have established their new traditions and are using distinct languages.

In the Lusophone literary system, the margins have a long history of writing against the centre by trying to establish their own identity. In Brazil, Basílio da Gama's *O Vraguai* (1769), for example, challenged the rhyming style of the canonised *Os Lusíadas* adopted by many poets of his era, wrote about figures of indigenous mythologies instead of those of European mythologies, and even praised the heroism of the indigenous warriors fighting against the Portuguese army, although it was an epic devoted to Marquês de Pombal, a powerful Portuguese politician at the time (Sun, 1999, p. 13). After Brazil's independence in the 1820s, Gonçalves de Magalhães, an important figure in Brazilian romanticism, wrote the essay 'Sobre a Historia da Literatura do Brasil' (1836) to demonstrate how the development of Brazilian literature was repressed by the Portuguese regime and to encourage more patriotism in the literature of Brazil. Then, in the 1920s, inspired by European vanguards, the *Semana de Arte Moderna*¹² was held, marking the beginning of Brazilian modernism. The arguably most important idea in Brazilian modernism is *o canibalismo*¹³ brought up by Oswald de Andrade in 'Manifesto Antropófago' (1928), which conveys the ambition of absorbing all European cultures and incorporating them in Brazilian culture. As we mentioned earlier in the essay, Brazilian literature is indeed indebted to foreign literatures, but *o canibalismo* at least shows Brazilian literature's dissatisfaction with being on the periphery of Portuguese literature and its attempt to learn from the outside of the Lusophone literary system. Similarly, Luso-African elites were also inspired by ideas born in Europe. In the 1930s, Aimé Césaire used the word *Négritude* for the first time in his poem 'Cahier d'un detour au pays natal' published in Paris (Laranjeira, 1995, p. 28). *Négritude* soon became a popular concept among black intellectuals in Europe including those from Portuguese-speaking countries, as it advocated the rediscovery of African history and opposed the dominance of European cultures over African cultures (Laranjeira, 1995). To represent *Négritude* and challenge the 'padrão lusitano'¹⁴ (Chaves, 2005, p. 53), inserting kimbundu¹⁵ in literary works became a practice commonly adopted by Angolan writers, which can be observed, for example, in Agostinho Neto's *Sagrada*

¹¹ See 人教版《语文·八年级上册》.

¹² Modern Art Week.

¹³ Cannibalism.

¹⁴ Translation by me: Lusitanian standard.

¹⁵ One of the most commonly used languages in Angola.

Esperança (1976). In Moçambique, Mia Couto (1992; 2005), the winner of Camões Prize in 2003, besides inserting the local language into his writing in Portuguese, also creates new words that often make sense to Portuguese speakers but do not exist in Portuguese language. Such a practice also challenges the purity of European Portuguese.

Today, Portuguese literature still has a prominent position in the Portuguese-speaking world, as shown by the facts that the Portuguese language remains the official language in this cultural realm; *Prémio Camões* and *Prémio José Saramago* are arguably the most important prizes for Lusophone literature; and Portuguese scholars, critics and publishing houses still play a crucial role in the field. However, Portugal's centrality has been heavily challenged by Brazil. *O Acordo Ortográfico da Língua Portuguesa de 1990*¹⁶ is a good example. The agreement aimed to unify the official spelling rules in Portuguese-speaking countries, and as a result the Brazilian way of spelling has been adopted for many words. This indicates that Portugal has lost its absolute correctness and authority over its own language.

From the above analysis on the history of Lusophone literature, we can see that the attempts of abandoning the literary traditions of Portugal and of challenging the conventional use of Portuguese language were not caused by the decline of the political power of the Portuguese empire. Instead, it was because the margin was constantly fighting against the centre that the centre gradually lost its dominance in this case. This is interestingly different from the situation in the Sinosphere system as we previously analysed, where the degradation of China's political power occurred first, and the peripheries decided to abandon the centre and adopt modern western ideas accordingly. Another difference is that, in my opinion, Brazil has the potential to become the cultural centre of the Portuguese-speaking world because it has a large population, which implies a large readership and abundant labour in the creative industry, and its literature can be circulated smoothly in the Portuguese-speaking world without language barriers; whereas it is impossible for China to have a cultural influence as strong as a thousand years ago over its neighbours, although it has become a superpower again, for its censorship has been killing its own creativity in both literature and cinema, and the use of different languages has made it more difficult for Chinese literature to circulate among East Asia.

Bringing the Sinosphere case and the Lusophone case together, we can also find that the formation of a centre and its margin has to do with the existence of a significantly stronger national power, but

¹⁶ Translation by me: The Orthographic Agreement of the Portuguese Language of 1990.

it doesn't only happen through colonisation or other types of activities with military forces involved; and literary systems are dynamic in that the centre can shift or at least be threatened.

The Doubly Marginalised

The literature of Macao, written by the Chinese, Portuguese and Macanese¹⁷ in Chinese, Portuguese and Patuá lies on the border of the Sinosphere and Lusophone literary systems. It has been doubly marginalised by the respective two literary centres. For instance, in 中国现当代文学¹⁸ (Huang, 2010; Wang, 2015), writings of Macao are rarely mentioned. Similarly, among all the winners of *Prémio Camões* and *Prémio José Saramago*, not one is from Macao. The relevant committees do not contain members from Macao, either.

Macao is unique in comparison with Brazil and Portuguese-speaking African countries, for it has almost¹⁹ always been a marginal mini-space of a great power occupying an enormous territory: first, the Chinese empire; then, the Portuguese empire; finally, the People's Republic of China. History has made Macao a cultural space 'entre [os] dois pólos'²⁰ (Pires, 1988) of the Sinosphere and the Lusophone worlds. Probably because of its marginal geographical position and its cultural *betweenness*, the literature of Macao has been doubly marginalised in the Sinosphere and Lusophone literary systems.

According to Pratt, 'travel books written by Europeans about non-European parts of the world' helped form the otherness of the periphery in Europeans' mind and naturally made them feel at the centre of the world (2008, p. 3). Accordingly, 'a produção textual colonial [de Portugal] tratou Macau como um território conceitual pensado no espaço periférico de reprodução de uma consciência nacional'²¹ (Simas, p. 138), making it a cultural extension of Portugal echoing the greatness of the centre. It is not surprising that Macao used to be *the other* for the Portuguese empire; but one might not imagine it was also *the other* in the Chinese empire. According to Huang, "examining the remains of Chinese writings on Macao in the past four centuries based on the canon of Chinese poetry, most of those that can be considered 'literature' are works by tourists coming from the mainland [of China]" (1995, p. 87). To understand how marginal Macao used to be in the eyes of Chinese elites, we can have a look

¹⁷ It refers to Portuguese and Luso-Asians born in Macao, not people of Macao.

¹⁸ Translation by me: Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature.

¹⁹ 'Almost' because the three regimes all had its not-so-powerful periods.

²⁰ Translation by me: between two poles.

²¹ Translation by me: colonial textual production [of Portugal] treated Macau as a conceptual territory in the peripheral space of reproduction of a national consciousness.

at the poem ‘Sailing on Lonely Oceans’ by Wen Tianxiang²², a famous politician and poet of the Song dynasty:

Delving in the Book of Change, I rose through hardships
 great
 And desperately fought the foe for four long years.
 Like willow down the war-torn land looks desolate;
 I sink or swim as duckweed in the rain appears.
 For Perils on Perilous Beach I heaved sighs;
 On Lonely Ocean now I feel dreary and lonely.
 Since olden days there’s never been a man but dies,
 I’d leave a loyalist’s name in history only.
 (Xu, 1994, p. 161)

After being captured by his enemies, Wen wrote this poem to express his loyalty to Song while passing by Macao. The ‘Lonely Ocean’ is the name of the sea on the east coast of Macao. This name itself already indicates Macao’s remoteness in Chinese people’s perception. Moreover, the poet connects the geographical loneliness of the sea with his personal loneliness, which shows that, psychologically speaking, Macao is far away from where *the homeland* is, although it is on the homeland of the poet. In other tourists’ writings, Macao is often presented as a residence of Jiuyi²³ where the cultural landscape is different from the centre of the mainland and hence very exotic and novel (Li, 1988). When reading them, people living in central China would probably gain a sense of pride and a confirmation of their own centrality, too.

Macao’s cultural betweenness can be observed in representative Macanese literary works by writers like Deolinda da Conceição, Henrique de Senna Fernandes and Leonel Alves. Conceição writes about Macao in Portuguese but from a perspective of a person living the history of Macao instead of an outsider. In her short story collection *Cheong-Sam* (1956), she depicts the situation of Chinese females not only in relation to the presence of the Portuguese in Macao, but also in relation to the restrictions imposed by traditional Chinese values and the historical background of Sino-Japanese wars during the World War II. She presents ‘um retrato de um determinado Oriente’²⁴ to Portuguese-speaking readers (Infante, 2010, p. 40), interpreting cultural differences between the East and the

²² 文天祥《过零丁洋》，translated by Yuanchong Xu.

²³ Jiuyi is 九夷, referring to the minority tribes in the east. 夷 is considered barbarian opposite to 汉 (Han).

²⁴ Translation by me: a portrait of a certain Orient.

West, expressing her sympathy for Chinese women, as well as her understating of and respect to Chinese culture (Hu, 2021, p. 54). According to Simas, in an interview by *Journal do Brasil*, Fernandes said: ‘Escrevo sobre a nossa mentalidade, nossas tradições e costumes, que são diferentes daqueles dos portugueses europeus ou dos chineses com quem vivemos lado a lado’²⁵ (2004, p. 160). Here, Fernandes explicitly expressed that he wished to show the cultural betweenness of the Macanese in his works. Leonel Alves, in his poems, emphasises his Macanese identity, which is a combination of both Portuguese and Chinese identities (Zhang, 2012; Hu, 2021) but different from each of them. Although these writers are considered important in the literary history of Macao, they were never given any honorary titles or major literature prizes from either Portuguese institutions or Chinese institutions outside of Macao. Their works probably carry too much Chinese identity to be included in Portuguese literature; at the same time, since they are not even written in Chinese, they are rarely categorised as Chinese literature. Those works’ cultural uniqueness inspired by the cultural complexity of Macao differentiates them from both Portuguese literature and Chinese literature, and thus leads to their marginalisation and even exclusion from the Sinosphere and Lusophone literary systems.

The case of Macao demonstrates certain singularity that previous theories might not have taken into consideration. For example, Deleuze, Guattari and Brinkley (1983) argued that ‘[a] minor literature is not the literature of a minor language but the literature a minority makes in a major language’ (1983, p. 16). Considering how marginalised it is, the literature of Macao is undoubtedly a minor literature, but what is *the minor language*, *the minority*, and *the major language* in this case? Portuguese and Chinese, although being the official languages of Macao and hence the major languages there, have both been considered minor in the world literary system by many scholars, not to mention Patuá; the Chinese is the ethnic majority in Macao, but Chinese from Macao are a culturally-speaking minority group in China. Such cultural complexity in the writings of Macao indicates that the question of *the minor* and *the major* is related to the scale of the literary system: in which system is the concept of *the minor* and *the major* being discussed? As we now see, a problem of being Eurocentric in the study of world literature is that universal generalisations are given merely based on the facts within the literary systems dominated by English, French and German literatures. Such generalisations can turn out to be overly simplified if cases from other systems are brought into the discussion. Another example is the dichotomy between the invaders and the locals in Pratt’s contact zone (2008). She studies how the former saw the latter based on travel books by Europeans, and what the latter adopted from the former in their localised writings. The invader and the local are

²⁵ Translation by me: I write about our mentality, our traditions and customs, which are different from those of the European Portuguese or the Chinese with whom we live side by side.

clearly *the other* to each other from Pratt's perspective. However, for Macanese writers, the border between *the self* and *the other* is blurred, as their identity is often plural, and their political position is often between the invaders and the locals. This suggests that when investigating what happened in contact zones, a third perspective from the middle of the dichotomy should also be examined, because without it the conclusions could end up incomplete.

Final considerations

With this essay, I have proposed a new way of looking at the relations among literatures: the question regarding the centre and margin can be seen as a question of the scale of the literary system in analysis. There is not only one universal world literary system in world literature but multiple literary systems of different scales. On the periphery of world literature, minor literary systems have been interacting with one another, not only with the centre. As an example of this I have discussed the Sinosphere and Lusophone literary systems. The literature of Macao, as we analysed in the previous section, is a cultural hybrid born in such interactions.

Through analysing the Sinosphere literary system, the Lusophone literary system and the literature of Macao, we found that literary theories created merely based on academics' knowledge within major literatures can be incomplete or too vague, if we try to apply them to the realities of marginalised literary systems. Hayot once proposed "a way of thinking about modern literature that makes the study of the non-West (and a more generally comparative literature) necessary, not on the grounds that it is good for you (at the end of the day, no matter how generously articulated, a condescending argument), but on the grounds that not doing so produces bad theories of literature and bad literary history" (2012, p. 6). Inspired by such an idea, I appeal for more studies about marginalised literary systems and literatures, not because they also contain works with good quality, but because not taking them into consideration can result in provincial literary theories.

Bibliography

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. (2002) *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge.

Andrade, O. (1928) 'Manifesto Antropófago' in *Revista de Antropofagia*.

Bloom, H. (1995) *The Western canon: the books and school of the ages*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Bosi, A. (1972) *História concisa da literatura brasileira*. Sao Paulo: Editora Cultrix.

Brookshaw, D. (2020) 'Etre o real e o imaginário: o Oriente na narrativa colonial portuguesa', *Veredas. Revista da Associação Internacional de Lusitanistas*, 3(1), pp. 33-42.

Buescu, H. C. (2021) 'Comparative World literature and Worlds in Portuguese' in Ganguly, D. (ed.) *The Cambridge History of World literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 310-325.

Canito, B. J. (2004) 'Macau, história e cultura' in Monteleone, J. and Sereza, H. C. (eds.) *Oriente, Engenho e Arte: Imprensa e literatura de língua portuguesa em Goa, Macau, e Timor Leste*. Sao Paulo: alameda.

Casanova, P. (2004) *The World Republic of Letters*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chaves, R. (2005) *Angola e Moçambique: Experiência Colonial e Territórios Literários*. Sao Paulo: Ateliê Editorial.

Chen, T. and Zhang, C. 陈庭史, 张叉 (2019) '陶潜、李白、杜甫与越南文学——陈庭史教授访谈', *杜甫研究学刊*, 03, pp. 95-100.

Conceição, D. (1956) *Cheong-Sam - a Cabaia*. Lisbon: Livraria Francisco Franco.

Couto, M. (2005) *Pensatempos: textos de opinião*. Lisbon: Caminho.

Couto, M. (1992) *Terra sonâmbula*. Lisbon: Caminho.

Damrosch, D. (2003) 'Introduction: Goethe Coins a Phrase' in *What Is World Literature?* Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 1-36.

Damrosch, D. (2021) 'Introduction' in Damrosch, D., Melas, N. and Buthelezi, M. (eds.) *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. ix-xvi.

Damrosch, D. and Spivak, G. C. (2011) 'Comparative Literature/World literature: A Discussion with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and David Damrosch', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 48(4), pp. 455-85.

Deleuze, G., Guattari, F., and Brinkley, R. (1983) 'What Is a Minor Literature?', *Mississippi Review*, 11(3), pp. 13-33.

D'haen, T. (2021) 'Modern Chinese Literature and World literature from a European Perspective', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 44 (2), pp. 153-157.

Ervedosa, C. (1979) *Roteiro da Literatura Angolana*. Luanda: União dos Escritores Angolanos.

Even-Zohar, I. (1990) 'Laws of Literary Interference' in *Poetics Today*, pp. 54-62.

Goethe, J. and Eckermann, J. (2021) 'Conversations on World literature (1827)' in Damrosch, D., Melas, N. and Buthelezi, M. (eds.) *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 17-25.

Hayot, E. (2012) *On Literary Worlds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hu, J. 胡婧 (2021) '澳门土生文学中的文化身份认同和审美选择', *华文文学*, 159, pp. 50-55.

Huang, J. 黃俊傑 (2006) "論中國經典中'中國'概念的涵義及其在近世日本 與現代臺灣的轉化", *東亞文明研究學刊*, 3(2), pp. 91-100.

Huang, W. 黃万华 (2010) *中国现当代文学*. 北京: 高等教育出版社.

Huang, X. 黃曉峰 (1995) ‘澳門世紀末的文學幻想’, 文化雜誌, 23, pp. 87-98.

Hutchinson, B. (2018) *Comparative Literature: a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford university press.

Infante, G. (2010) ‘Os contos de Deolinda Conceição e Fernanda Dias: contributo para a imagética do feminino oriental em língua portuguesa’ in Laborinha, A. P. and Pinto, M. P. (eds.) *MACAU ESCRITA, ESCRITAS DE MACAU*. Braga: Edições Húmus, Lda., pp, 39-47.

Ivask, I. (ed.) (1979) *World literature Today*, 53(1).

Laborinho, A. P. (2010) ‘Introdução: Macau e a escrita. Termos de um problema’ in Laborinha, A. P. and Pinto, M. P. (eds.) *MACAU ESCRITA, ESCRITAS DE MACAU*. Braga: Edições Húmus, Lda., pp. 10-17.

Laranjeira, P. (1995) *Literaturas africanas de expressão portuguesa*. Lisbon: Universidade Aberta.

Lee, P. H. (ed) (2003) *A History of Korean Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Li, D. 李德超 (1988) ‘中國文學在澳門之發展概況’ in Li, P. 李鵬翥 (ed.) 澳門文學論集.

Lim, H. T. (2016) ‘From the Universal to the National: The Question of Language and Writing in Twentieth-Century Korea’, *Journal of World literature*, 1(2), pp. 245-258

Liu, Y. 刘艳萍 (2008) ‘韩国高丽文学对苏轼及其诗文的接受’, 延边大学学报, 4, pp. 70-74.

Magalhães, D. J. G. (2014) ‘Discurso sobre a história da literatura do Brasil’, *Translusofonias*, 1(2).

Matsuo, B (1702) *Oku no Hosomichi*.

Moretti, F. (2000) ‘Conjectures on World literature’, *New Left Review*, 1, Jan/Feb 2000, pp. 54-68.

Neto, A. (1976) *Sagrada esperança: poemas*. Lisbon: Livraria Sá da Costa Editora.

Oliveira, J. O. (1946) *História breve da literatura brasileira*. Sao Paulo: Martins.

- Pires, B. V. (1988) *Os extremos conciliam-se: Transculturação em Macau*. Macao: Instituto Cultural de Macau.
- Pratt, M. L. (2008) *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge.
- Rojas, C. (2018) ‘A World Republic of Southern [Sinophone] Letters.’, *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, 30(1), pp. 42–62.
- Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Schwarz, R. (1992) Gledson, J. (ed.) *Misplaced Ideas: essays on Brazilian Culture*, London: Verso.
- Simas, M. (2004) ‘Identidade e memória no espaço literário de língua portuguesa em Macau’ in Monteleone, J. and Sereza, H. C. (eds.) *Oriente, Engenho e Arte: Imprensa e literatura de língua portuguesa em Goa, Macau, e Timor Leste*. Sao Paulo: alameda.
- Sun, C. 孙成熬 (1999) 巴西文学. 北京: 外语教学与研究出版社.
- Teixeira, B. (1601) *Prosopopéia*. Rio de Janeiro: Anuario do brasil.
- Wang, X. 王小曼 (2015) 中国现当代文学. 北京: 北京大学出版社.
- Xu, Y. (1994) *Songs of the immortals: an anthology of classical Chinese poetry*. London: Penguin in association with New World.
- Yan, Y. 晏筠 (2021) ‘《源氏物语》和《枕草子》的白诗引用与美学表达探析——以对《白氏文集》的引用为例’, *文化创新比较研究*, 12, pp. 96-99.
- Zhang, L. (2021) ‘East Asia as Comparative Paradigm’ in Ganguly, D. (ed.) *The Cambridge History of World literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 281–294.
- Zhang, J. 张剑桦 (2012) ‘澳门土生葡人文学概论’, *广西师范大学学报: 哲学社会科学版*, 48(1), pp. 63-70.