

中国比较文学

COMPARATIVE
LITERATURE
IN CHINA

中国比较文学学会编
浙江文艺出版社

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第四期

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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN CHINA

Volume IV,

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Articles

- 1 An Attempt at Comparing Myths: Supernatural Hero and Water Demon Matching Magical Powers

Xiao Bing

In eastern and western mythology, the supernatural hero and the water demon often match magical powers, both going through continuous metamorphoses, until the evil-doer is finally subjugated. Except for slight differences, the patterns of these stories are alike: correspondence in their entirety, multiple parallelism, and conformity in details. Therefore, a comparison can be established between eastern and western myths.

To win the love of Goddess of River Luo, Hou

Yi, the hero who shot at the sun, wounded the river god who changed first into a dragon and then into a fish. This one-sided transformation in the Chinese mythology became a two-sided one in the ancient Korean myth in which Sun God Tian Wang Lang, who wanted to marry Liuhua, eldest daughter of the river god, changed into another form and matched magical powers with the river god. This typical two-sided transformation is quite similar to the ancient Greek myth in which Heracles, who wanted to marry Princess Deianira, fought with River God Achelous, who changed first into a snake and then into an ox. The fight between Li-Bing and the river god who changed into an ox was but a simplified pattern of this kind of stories. This pattern assumed its complete form when God Erlang in "Pilgrimage to the West" fought with "Water Demon" Monkey King and the supernatural hero Monkey King fought with "Water Demon" Buffalo, Prince of the Devils, each going through continuous metamorphoses in the struggle.

This pattern can be traced back to the Buddhist "Xian Yu Scripture", the Dunhuang variant "Vanquishing Demons and Monsters" which was a deduced version of "Xian Yu Scripture", and "One Thousand and One Nights", etc. The causality between these stories, their evolvment, the approximate time and course of dissemination, etc. all call for further study.

30 An Analysis of Eastern and Western Mythology

Chen Ting

(I)

Eastern and western myths have the same subject matter and similar content: the creation of the world, the origin of mankind, the interpretation of natural phenomena, the eulogy of heroes and craftsmen. The reason for this is to be found in (i) the low productivity of every nation in the primitive society, which accounted for their common aspirations and (ii) the close proximity of the peoples' levels of understanding and the extraordinary similarity between their psychological characteristics.

(I)

Between the eastern and western myths there exist a number of national differences. With regard to the portrayal of deities and heroes, Greek myths are characterized by deities and heroes of the same form and sex while eastern myths are chiefly characterized by half-man half-animal deities; Chinese myths give prominence to the wisdom and selflessness of goddesses while Greek myths eulogize gods; there exists a vast accumulation of Greek myths which are comparatively long and rich in content while Chinese myths are comparatively short and smaller in number. The reason for this is to be found in each nation's social and historical background.

(II)

Chinese myths met with adversities when Confu-

cianists in later generations began to interpret and revise them from their own historical and philosophical viewpoints. As a result, not a few simple, original and imaginative myths were transformed into "rational" historical stories. Greek myths, on the other hand, flourished because they were treated as literature and art and images of deities and heroes in these Greek myths were endowed with forceful personality.

(IV)

The author brings up a number of questions of regularity arising from the development of eastern and western mythology.

46 Indian "Nāga" and Chinese "Dragon"

Yan Yunxiang

Is "Dragon" the totem image created by the Chinese? Is it in any way connected with the Indian "Nāga"? The author approaches the subject of "dragon" from the angle of historical process of its formation as a concept in the mind of the Chinese people.

The concept of "dragon" in ancient China is different from that in present-day China. The Chinese "dragon" today has undergone changes in image, characteristics, social function, etc. since it came under the influence of the Indian "Nāga"; but at the same time, it has achieved a remarkable develop-

ment characterized by originality.

By making a comparative study of the characteristics of "Dragon" and "Naga", the author tries to direct the readers' attention to their similarity and difference as well as their influences.

59 Dragon and Zeus

Luo Guo'an

By comparing Chinese and Greek mythology relating to the origin of mankind, the author points out that myths in the primitive society epitomized the actual life of the people, their ideology, primitive religions, historical facts, literature and art, social customs, etc.

In both Chinese and Greek mythology, the origin of mankind passed through two stages with the same content and form. At the first stage, the god (god and goddess, or only the goddess) moulded human beings out of clay. This shows that clay with its plasticity was believed to be the source of life for all things on earth and that mankind in remote antiquity believed in, among other things, "monism", by which they tried to interpret the nature of the objective world. At the second stage, the survivors from the deluge recreated mankind. This stage is different from the first in four respects, (1) It was human beings and not god who created human beings; (2) It was a couple, a man and a woman, who

created human beings; (3) Distinction of sex was made; and (4) Human beings were created with a combination of matters. This shows that actual life and man's cognizance of nature enabled human beings to evolve from a lower stage to a higher stage. This cognizance found expression in mythology through imagination, either directly or indirectly, and enabled man to throw off the yoke of god, thus elevating man's status from subordination to self-creation. Yet, the creation of human beings was still impossible without the aid of god.

The author thinks that mythology, when dealing with the creation of mankind in remote antiquity, represented the summation of the influences of different branches of "social sciences" in those days.

70 Epics in China

Jia Zhi

China is a country of poems and songs. Nearly every nationality of this country has its own epic telling the story of its birth and growth. With the southern nationalities Genesis epics occupy a dominant position while the northern nationalities are noted for their epics eulogizing heroes.

Genesis epics spread far and wide among the 28 nationalities in the south and the 2 nationalities in the north. The author cites some of the epics with distinctive features, such as "Cha Mu" of Yi, "Song

of Pan Wang" of Yao, "Mu Pa Mi Pa" of Lahu, "The Creation of the World" of Bouyei and compares them with the theory of Pan Gu's body turning into things on earth as found in ancient books of the Han nationality and the legend of the ice giant Imir whose body changed into the world as found in the mythology of Northern Europe.

In many of the Genesis epics can be found stories about floods, which are ingeniously illustrated by the decorative patterns cut in relief on the bronze drums unearthed in South China. Stories about floods are also linked with the Calabash Civilization of our country. Calabash myths are circulated in 19 nationalities where natives still ritualize a primitive form of calabash worship.

The author also cites the Dai's "Ying Yi Created the Universe", the Miao's "The Ancient Song of the Miao Nationality", the Jing Po's "Mu Nao Zhai Wa", the Yi's "Le Wu Te Yi" and "Gha Mu", the Naxi's "Genesis" and compares them with the romantic description of the origin of universe and mankind in the first chapter of the Finnish epic "Kalevala". This comparison enables us to obtain glimpses into the simple mode of thinking of primitive mankind, their science in the embryonic stage, their strong imagination and their artistic portrayal of the objective world.

Epics eulogizing heroes are circulated mainly in the north but they are also popular among the

Dai, Yi, Naxi and other nationalities in the south. Famous hero epics include the Zang's "Biography of King Gesaer", the Kirgiz's "Manasi", the Monggol's "Jianggeer".

A comparison is then made between the hero epics of the Dai nationality and those of the nomadic Monggol nationality which have a widely different style.

The author concludes by pointing out that different national languages have accounted for differences in forms, rules of rhyming and rhetorical devices of these two kinds of epics.

85 Novelettes and Novels under the Influence of "Water Margin" During the Edo Period

Wang Xiaoping

Quoting examples from Tatebe Ayatashi's "Japanese Water Margin", Kyokutei Bakin's "Romance of the Crescent Moon" and "Romance of Nanso Satomi Hakken", the article discourses on the influence of the Chinese vernacular novel "Water Margin" and others on Japanese novelettes and novels during the Edo Period.

These Japanese novelettes and novels, employing the artistic techniques of historical romance and drawing on the experience of the Chinese novel "Water Margin" in organizing a voluminous work with intricate plots and in hyperbolic characterization,

realistically depicted various phases of social life. By breaking with the convention of plane and coordinate artistic treatment, they succeeded in strengthening the ties binding different parts of the stories, thus giving impetus to the development of the time-honoured Japanese classical novels. Due attention should be paid to these Japanese classics by the scholars of our country.

101 Two Refusals: Lizzie Refused a Marriage Offer
Faithful Refused to be a Concubine

—A Comparative Study of Two Episodes from
“Pride and Prejudice” and “The Story of the Stone”

Fang Ping

Lizzie, the heroine of “Pride and Prejudice”, refused a marriage offer from the ridiculously pompous clergyman Mr. Collins. Though Lizzie tried hard to conceal her feelings “which were divided between distress and diversion”, she nearly burst into laughter when the idiotically romantic fellow paid his addresses to her. In the English classical fiction, there are probably few heroines like Lizzie who were blessed with such a good sense of humour and would find the courtship a mere farce.

Faithful (Yuan Yang) was a chamber maid in “The Story of the Stone”. The Elder Master took a fancy to her and tried to force her into concubinage.

A slave girl without personal freedom, she found herself at the mercy of her master. But Faithful refused to resign herself to her lot. With tears streaming down her face, she knelt down at Granny Jia's (the Lady Dowager's) feet and vowed never to marry.

The two girls, Lizzie and Faithful, were in a way the forerunners of women's emancipation campaign. They, either with tears or with a smothered laugh, unequivocally stood up for their dignity, free will, ideals, and the right to seek happiness. These two episodes, different as they are, constitute two links in sequence in the whole course of women's emancipation movement. They show us how the oppressed and enslaved women fought their way step by step toward liberation.

115 Grand View Garden and Notre Dame de Paris
—On the Function of Architecture in Chinese
and Western Novels

Yu Hongsheng

Zhang Yunmei

It is rare in the history of both Chinese literature and world literature for architecture to appear from beginning to end of a story as an independent artistic image matching its unique brilliance with the characters in the story. However, this kind of phenomenon is not isolated. The Grand View Garden