

**Lingyan Ke**

*University of Western Ontario*

## **Two Poets, One Moon**

Abstract: Only a few decades ago, Western scholars of comparative literature tended to argue that any English – Chinese comparison was “futile or meaningless” (Yu, 162). As this discipline evolves, however, this previous notion is being replaced by the perspective that “a glimpse of the otherness of the other can produce new perspectives on our own faces in the great mirror of culture” (Hayot, 90). My thesis contributes to this stream of innovation by bringing into comparison the function of the moon in Su Shi’s “Water Melody” and in Samuel Coleridge’s “Dejection: An Ode”, finding that in both poems, the moon functions to foreground the poets’ psychological experiences and acts as an agent in the resolution of emotional conflict in the poems and lives of the poets. The purpose of this work is to broaden the field in which both English and Chinese poetry are understood to exist by examining each through the lens of the other. Both “Water Melody” and “Dejection” have been examined to the point of exhaustion in each of their relative traditions, but bringing them into new light may reveal previously unseen angles. For example, this research finds that Susan Stewart’s theory of eighteenth – century English nocturnes is highly compatible with twelfth – century Chinese nocturnes, and this foreign theory can breathe new life into an ossified conversation. In a dissonant example, the familiar Western associations of the moon as an evil omen, recalling vampires and werewolves, can feel bizarre when imagined from the perspective of Chinese associations of the moon with family reunion. This comparison, in addition to exploring these two poems and poets, ultimately creates a destabilizing effect by which a reader may be induced to move beyond the traditions, to a point where Weltliteratur is no longer the goal, as it was for Goethe, but instead a starting point.

### **Works Cited**

- Hayot, Eric. “Vanishing Horizons: Problems in the Comparison of China and the West.” *A Companion to Comparative Literature*, John Wiley & Sons, 2011.
- Stewart, Susan. “Out of the Darkness: Nocturnes.” *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*. University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Yu, Pauline. “Alienation Effects: Comparative Literature and the Chinese Tradition.” *The Comparative Perspective on Literature: Approaches to Theory and Practice*. Cornell University Press, 2019.

### **Kacey Evilsizor**

## **Rearranging Comparative Clusters: Chinese and Persian Literature During the Mongol Empire**

There has been very little scholarly work done to date to compare Chinese and Persian literary traditions. The reason for the lack of comparison between these fields seems to be that they exist in different fields and academic departments; for example, those who study Chinese literature tend to study Japanese and other East Asian work while those who study Persian are likely to compare it to Arabic and other Middle Eastern work. These “comparative clusters,” as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak refers to them, create strict linguistic or regional groups of comparison, rather than cultural or historical.

Spivak also wrote that comparative literature must broaden its horizons in order to stay relevant and reinvigorate itself as a discipline. Comparative literature is starting to break away from this Eurocentrism, yet the very idea