



# COMMENT ON “A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF THE NARRATIVE THOUGHTS IN CHINESE AND WESTERN CLASSICAL LITERATURE”

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**Commented article:** CHEN, M. A comparative evaluation of the narrative thoughts in Chinese and Western classical literature. **Trans/Form/Ação:** revista de filosofia da Unesp, v. 47, n. 5, “Eastern thought 2”, e02400135, 2024. Available at: <https://revistas.marilia.unesp.br/index.php/transformacao/article/view/15070>.

Received: 10/08/2024 | Approved: 15/08/2024 | Published: 30/09/2024

 <https://doi.org/10.1590/0101-3173.2024.v47.n5.e02400267>



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## COMMENT ON “A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF THE NARRATIVE THOUGHTS IN CHINESE AND WESTERN CLASSICAL LITERATURE”

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Based on the theory of narrative thought, Chen (2024) compares the different temporal and spatial characteristics of Chinese and Western literature, especially analyzing them from three aspects, namely, narrative art, narrative thought and interpersonal relationship. What’s more, the following points from the perspective of cultural geography theory can also helps.

Firstly, cultural geography (Crang, 1998) can be used as the theoretical basis to explore the influence of space and time on the text creation and dissemination, highlighting the regional characteristics and cultural inheritance of literary texts. It was introduced to China as an academic discipline in the early 20th century, replacing the environmental determinism that had previously dominated geography. The theory posits that the landscape should be studied as a unit, with the argument being that the natural landscape and the man-made landscape are complementary to each other. Therefore, when studying cultural society, especially literary works, it is necessary to place the study of textual narrative techniques in a specific geographical space.

The development of “new cultural geography” in the 1980s, such as the feminist theory and ecologism theory, can also provide more theoretical perspectives for the research. For example, when researching specific literary works, more female literary works or texts with ecological themes can be selected to explore the relationship and interaction between

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people, time-space and the environment (Zelinsky, 1973). According to this theory, the text can be divided into pre-text space and post-text space. The pre-text space refers to the local composition of the writer's aesthetic experience; and this space has two basic dimensions, one is the physical spatial presentation of the text, pointing to the direct visibility of the article. The other one is the internal space of the text system, such as the context of the event, the landscape environment of emotional support, and the psychological and emotional movement; The post-text space mainly refers to the space when the text is completed, such as the dissemination, reader acceptance, value and meaning of the text.

Besides, the macro-spatial dimension associated with regional culture in literary generation can also be studied. At the same time, the micro-spatial dimension in specific literary works can also be analyzed. For example, the "four-dimensional space-time research" method, proposed by Wu (2007) can be used to study this topic. This method includes the political, living and ideological environment, in which the writer lives should be investigated to provide an academic basis to study the reasons for the generation of his thoughts, feelings, writing motivations, and artistic accomplishments. Secondly, it can be combined with the constantly changing typical events experienced by the writer to form a "four-dimensional research". Readers will be better able to comprehend the writer's ideas, emotions, inspirations for writing, and creative abilities as a result.

When studying the concepts of time and space in Chinese classical literature, we can add humanistic factors to form a three-dimensional literary narrative criticism framework, including "astronomy-humanities-geography" three dimensions. We can connect the transfer and flow of regional culture and ethnic culture in different geographical spaces to form a research path that integrates the four dimensions of "region, culture, group, and movement". Second, when studying the concepts of time and space in Western classical literary works, we can refer to Edward W. Soja's (1987) spatial theory. He believes that "the existence of spatiality is a product of a transformation process from an ontological perspective" and "spatiality is never innate, nor does it remain unchanged forever." In addition, Castells (2012) linked them together and pointed out that "space and time are the fundamental material dimensions of human life". Based on this, he proposed the space of flows and the space of place. The two core concepts of geography are used to explain the stability and dynamism of space. As a result, we should consider the fluidity of time and highlight the dynamic changes of texts as time and place flow when examining the narrative approaches of Western classical literature.

Based on phenomenology, Heidegger (2011, p. 32) explored the concept of time from two dimensions: "being" and "existence". One is the being determined by daily discussions, and the other is to see the existence from the historicity of being. That is to say, we should not only examine the daily phenomena described in literary works to reflect the being but also emphasize the temporality of literary works, that is, the so-called historicity,

highlighting the connection between “mind” and “spirit” in literary works and the adaptation and evolution of texts in the development and changes of the times.

Finally, in the comparison of Chinese and Western classical literature, in addition to emphasizing the differences between the two sides, we should also understand their commonalities. We can refer to Bertrand Westphal (2007), who proposed the theory of geocriticism, which is based on three theoretical concepts: spatio-temporality, transgressivity, and referentiality. Time and space are combined in this new literary model, which also uncovers and restores the literary resources lost due to linear thinking. It also reexamines and explores the internal laws of the development of classical Chinese and Western literature from the viewpoint of energy and ecology, offering fresh perspectives and inspiration for the growth of both Chinese and Western literature.

In conclusion, through the discussion of the concept of time and space in Chinese and Western classical literary works, in addition to the origin, it can be concluded that the literary aesthetic experience mentioned in this article is essentially the subject-object generation of a series of literary activities carried out by humans in space, and is the interactive product of human-space. It can also be seen that the literary text is externalized into a specific spatial image, and the aesthetic space is constructed internally to carry the author and call the reader, further generate new aesthetic experiences, and form new literary texts.

Therefore, through the comparison of Eastern and Western literature, it is not only necessary to emphasize its differences but also to discover its commonality, that is, literature is an art about time and space. The creative qualities of flow and transformation – that is, the passing down and evolution of classical literature – may be seen even in disparate cultural contexts, and this is another area in which this essay can be further developed.

Future articles can conduct more in-depth discussions on aspects such as urban literary geography and the activity space of literary groups, and expand the research texts from classical novels to different literary genres such as prose, poetry, and drama. The research timeline can also be gradually expanded from classical literature to modern and contemporary literature.

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