


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

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

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A embarks on a comparative analysis of the narrative techniques and philosophies embedded within Chinese and Western classical literature. This current commentary can present an analysis of the paper, alongside a critical evaluation that draws comparisons with other academic references by giving a detailed and balanced critique, identifying both strengths and areas for improvement.

Narrative ideas encompass the cognitive process of engaging in thinking with the explicit goal of comprehending and conveying information. This process should include organizing thoughts, ideas, and experiences to make meaning out of people’s experiences and should help to create a sense of coherence, understanding and intelligibility. Chen (2024) uses Confucian educational thought as the basis of its discussion to differentiate the narrative via its Western similar theories.

Confucian educational thought places great emphasis on the cultivation of moral character, social harmony, and the pursuit of knowledge. There are several theoretical frameworks to dissect the narrative structures of Chinese and Western literature. Key among these frameworks is the concept of time and space because the skilful management of time and space allows people to construct engaging, coherent, and impactful narratives. These elements enhance the overall structure, growth, and meaning of the story, allowing the audience to emotionally, intellectually, and imaginatively engage with the narrative.

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Providing references to Chinese cosmology to illustrate the cyclic and harmonious nature of time in Chinese literature is a turning point in supporting the basic theory of the paper. This worldview can help the readers to understand the juxtaposition against the linear and causal narrative framework predominant in Western literature, rooted in Aristotelian traditions. Furthermore, given the Confucian and Daoist influences on Chinese narratives, the portrayal of characters and events that are being presented in literature is completely justifiable. Confucianism emphasizes social harmony and moral duty, which often results in narratives that focus on collective experiences and societal roles that could be either in literary works or social sources as well. Daoism, in contrast, advocates for a contemplative and nature-oriented perspective, constructing narratives that embrace spontaneity and the inherent harmony of the natural world.

Through using a post-structuralist approach to explore narrative differences, it can present the deep-seated cultural philosophies that underpin literary works and in this special case, geographic narratology is a suitable method to analyse how spatial representations in literature reflect broader cultural attitudes towards space and place.

The main concerns in the application of temporal and spatial characteristics in discovering the laws of narrative behaviour in different literature and deepening a general understanding of novels could be solved by highlighting the centrality of narrative construction. In Chinese literature, often the concept of time is depicted as cyclical, reflecting a broader cultural belief in the interconnectedness of events. Moreover, it has the potential to depict the recurring nature of existence as is evident in works like “*Dream of the Red Chamber*,” where the narrative loops back on itself. Thus, it could be concluded that it can create a sense of continuity and harmony. In Western literature, the concept of time is generally depicted as linear and progressive, with a focus on causality and individual agency, which is the opposite of this conception. Shakespeare’s play “*Hamlet*” is a notable illustration.

The character development in Western literature often revolves around individual growth and psychological complexity, influenced by humanist and existentialist philosophies while in Chinese literature we see instances of reflecting Confucian ideals of duty and harmony. This is evident in classic Chinese novels such as “*The Water Margin*,” in which characters’ actions are deeply intertwined with their social obligations.

To address the narrative thoughts, the use of thorough comparative analysis is needed because it highlights significant cultural differences in narrative techniques. It is being implemented through the use of diverse theoretical frameworks that provide a multi-faceted perspective on the subject matter. The detailed examination of specific literary works also serves to illustrate the theoretical points convincingly, grounding abstract concepts in concrete examples.

The impact of globalization and the adoption of Western concepts in Chinese literature needs a more detailed exploration of specific instances where these influences are evident. An in-depth examination could be enhanced by studying modern Chinese authors who integrate Western storytelling approaches.

Presenting a binary view of Chinese and Western narratives potentially overlooks the nuances and overlaps between the two traditions. While it should include a broader range of literary examples from both traditions.

To provide a well-rounded critique, the ideas by Monika Fludernik’s “Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology” offer insights into how natural cognitive frameworks influence narrative structures (Fludernik, 1996). Additionally, Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of “hybridity” from “The Location of Culture” could provide a nuanced understanding of how cultural narratives intersect and influence each other (Bhabha, 1996), addressing the paper’s occasional binary portrayal of Chinese and Western literature. By including other scholarly perspectives, the analysis can be enhanced, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate interaction between Chinese and Western narrative traditions.

Besides, Edward Said’s “Orientalism” provides a critical examination of the historical influence of Western literature to show the East, often to advance colonialist interests (Said, 1978). It is an invaluable instrument for the examination of the power dynamics and representations in Western classical literature and a critical perspective on the portrayal of Eastern cultures.

This comparison can go beyond a basic separation and instead illustrate a lively, interwoven structure of narrative ideas by including these academic frameworks. Having a general comprehension of the diverse and interconnected narrative traditions enriches the broader discourse on global literature. Additionally, an examination of the works of other academics, such as Gérard Genette’s “Narrative Discourse”, which introduces the concepts of narrative time and order, could offer a new perspective on the disparities in structure and temporality between Western and Chinese narratives.

Furthermore, by depicting works such as those espoused by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, it is possible to illuminate the voices that have been marginalized in Classical Western and Chinese literature. The inclusion of psychoanalytic theories, including those proposed by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung has the potential to provide valuable insights into the representations of fundamental human experiences and psychological mechanisms in numerous cultures, thereby improving our understanding of the universal components of literature.

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