

Comparative Literature, Tradition and Innovation: An Interview with Marshall Brown

Yang Gexin

Abstract: Marshall Brown is professor of comparative literature at University of Washington Seattle and editor since 1991 of *Modern Language Quarterly: A Journal of Literary History*. He is author of 5 books on European literature of the 18th and 19th centuries and has also edited the Romanticism volume of the *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* and the European Romanticism section of the *Longman Anthology of World Literature*. In November 2014, Professor Yang Gexin, a visiting scholar at University of Washington from Huazhong Agricultural University, China, entrusted by *Foreign Literature Studies*, interviewed Professor Brown via e-mail. In this interview, Brown shares his farsightedness on the history and future of comparative literature. Comparative literature, for Brown, is institutionally in some difficulty while intellectually dynamic. Brown takes an optimistic view of the future of comparative literature despite some theoretical challenges that have emerged in the past two decades. Yet, he also expresses his worries that comparative literature's expansion and openness to the future will be conjoined with the denial of the past literary tradition. As to the relationship between tradition and innovation, Brown points out that respect for tradition is not a plea for regression or even for preservation, but merely an acknowledgment of our limits, and that tradition vs. innovation is a false dichotomy while the more functional one is construction vs. demolition.

Key words: comparative literature; tradition; innovation; Marshall Brown

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标题: 比较文学、传统与创新: 马歇尔·布朗访谈录

内容摘要: 马歇尔·布朗是华盛顿大学比较文学系教授、《现代语言季刊》的主编。布朗出版了5部关于18、19世纪欧洲文学的专著,主编了《剑桥文学批评史》浪漫主义卷和《朗文世界文学文集》欧洲浪漫主义文学。2014年11月,本文作者受《外国文学研究》的委托,在华盛顿大学比较文学系访学期间以电子邮件的方式对布朗进行了采访。布朗教授首先就比较文学的历史与将来提出了自己的看法。他指出比较文学虽然在体制上陷入困境,但在学术上却充满活力。虽然比较文学面临着各种理论的冲击,但他担心的并不是比较文学的将来,而是比较文学与文学传统的割裂。关于如何处理传统和创新的关系,他指出:尊重传统并不是要回归传统或保留传统,而是要从中认识到我们的局限和不足;传统与创新并不是真正的二元对立,建构与拆除可能更能说明问题。

关键词：比较文学；传统；创新；马歇尔·布朗

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Yang: The term “comparative literature” has suffered from its self-definition and experienced its dilemmas, anxieties and crises in its zigzagging development since it first appeared more than one hundred years ago. China’s comparative literature in the past 30 years has witnessed similar crises of identity. As an expert in comparative literature, what is your insight into the definition of the term and its relationship with “world literature?”

Brown: Comparative Literature in the United States is institutionally in some difficulty while intellectually dynamic. These two facts are not unrelated. The institutional troubles are not limited to Comparative Literature, to be sure. Most humanities fields and many in the social sciences have suffered severe enrollment declines as students gravitate to computer science, biology, economics, and business. European foreign language departments other than Spanish feel particularly hard hit because of the decline in motivation for the hard work of language learning. Asian language programs are healthier, but the languages are far more difficult to master, so large enrollments in language courses don’t directly translate into more advanced students, although Chinese (and some other languages) benefit from international students and what we call heritage students, who know the languages to some degree from home. But heritage students often leave comparative literature out in the cold, or limit it to what they know from home. And national language departments often benefit from supportive heritage groups. At my university, for instance, the Scandinavian Studies department has very strong emotional and financial support from a large population descended from Scandinavian immigrants. Comparative Literature enjoys no such perquisites. It has no natural constituency. We aren’t rooted in places; we study regions, migrations, ultimately the world. No one has roots in Comparative Literature.

And that is, of course, our great strength as well. Comparative Literature originated as a discipline in France, where it was closely associated with the kind of French cultural hegemony that was studied by Pascale Casanova in *The World Republic of Letters*. But in other countries it has taken other guises. It was late coming to Germany. To be sure, there was a long tradition of (relatively) tolerant and open internationalism in German departments of Romance languages, from which the great postwar generation of Ernst Robert Curtius, Erich Auerbach, Leo Spitzer, Hugo Friedrich, and Harald Weinrich emerged. But their aim remained the consolidation of a European cultural sphere, hence a certain kind of self-enclosure that was only partially ruptured when the Jewish Auerbach and Spitzer were forced into exile, first in Turkey and then in the United States. When the Hungarian-born, Swiss-educated Jew Peter Szondi established the first department of Comparative Literature in Germany at the Free University of Berlin in 1965, with a strong impulse from the reestablished Frankfurt school of Adorno and Horkheimer and with a greatly increased focus on modern and contemporary writers such as the East German Bertolt

Brecht and the Romanian Paul Celan living in France, the currents of minor and disruptive literature stimulated a new atmosphere. I attended Szondi's first courses in Berlin (though my German wasn't really up to it at the time), and I remember him as a formidable taskmaster, given to berating students in front of their fellows for poor quality reports. But he was also a leading liberal figure, standing up to the eminent Goethe scholar Wilhelm Emrich (later revealed as an ex-Nazi) and among the most outspoken supporters of the student uprisings of 1968. (His politics were aired in a mostly forgotten posthumous polemical pamphlet entitled "Über eine 'Freie (d. h. freie) Universität'" (On a "Free [That Is, a Really Free]" University). While subsequent developments were not all linear, nor should they be, German *vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft* often remains a domain for open borders, exploration, and breaking of taboos and clichés.

In the United States, finally, Comparative Literature emerged gradually after World War II, and at many universities as the domain of refugees. (I say finally because I am limiting myself to countries that I know something about first-hand. Latin American now has a number of challenging and exciting comparatists, and I have seen how much energy there is in your country, China. But it's not for me to attempt to speak on behalf of these regions.) When I studied at Yale in the late 1960s, Comparative Literature was the place where different European national cultural and critical traditions could intersect. American New Criticism, French (and, at that time, also Italian) structuralism, German hermeneutics, and Russian formalism were then all virtually confined to their national bases, but all were represented in our courses, in our readings, and in the visitors who came from many countries. The traditional American expression for this is that Comparative Literature "mixed it up," though nowadays we might be more inclined to computer lingo and hence think of it as a mashup. Even the great patriarch René Wellek had the passion born of roots in a small country (Czechoslovakia, as it became in Wellek's teenage years, and also the native land of Peter Demetz). While he would not touch materials he could not read in the original, his mastery of so many major and minor European languages and his history of migration made him, by the standards of the time, a citizen of the world.

The current intellectual vitality of Comparative Literature in the United States is the heir of that tradition in a changed world. Many of us—myself certainly included—remain students of European literatures, but we too are nourished by the energies of a remarkable cohort of world literature scholars at Harvard, Penn State University, Columbia, New York University, Duke University, and across the country. I remember having dinner once in the 1970s with Donald Davie—then a professor of English at Stanford University, a great poet and a formidably original scholar of 18th-century poetry, Scott, Russian verse, and much else—who said, if memory does not deceive me, that the California boys and girls whom he taught could never have a native understanding of John Keats. A second-generation Los Angeleno myself, and a lover of Keats, I bristled inwardly. But then, my training asks, really, who could be a native reader of Keats, unless Keats himself? And even he only if he could penetrate his turbulent unconscious. Comparatists joy at being non-native readers, seeing from the outside (and often, in the wake of the Italian immigrant Franco Moretti, at a distance), and exploring differences. I have repeatedly made pleas for recognizing and accepting the differences close at hand, those "glocalisms" that beset

us whenever we walk out our front doors. The real visionaries, however, are those who have had a tremendous impact educationally and occasionally even socially with their calls to blend ever widening horizons with the close attention to language and expression without which true understanding blurs. But then, what does true understanding mean? The debates over distant reading and big data have challenged canonical complacencies, yet their effectiveness too depends on their attention being just as exacting and precise as the minutest of close readers, albeit with different kinds of information. Those who want to embrace a plurality of cultures, most influentially the great David Damrosch, have been confronted by others attuned to static and interferences, such as Mary Louise Pratt's now well established notion of contact zones. I write this under the impact of having just read a powerful book by Emily Apter of New York University entitled *Against World Literature*. Apter is formidably learned and scrupulously exacting in her research and in her penetration of each topic that she studies, yet the impact of her work lies in its inexhaustibleness. The strength of Comparative Literature, as she sees it, is that it can never get to the bottom of anything; her largest project in recent years has been the "translation" of a vast work entitled *Dictionary of Untranslatables*; an earlier book is called *Continental Drift*, and the essays in the new book often meander or, as she says at one point, "incrementally shift" as her restless imagination prowls around her topics.^① You often feel that way reading Gayatri Spivak, of course. You don't when reading Damrosch's beautifully wrought essays, yet if the excitement of Apter's work is that you don't quite know what's around the next corner that is not so far from the excitement of Damrosch's, where you never know what the next essay will bring.

Comparative Literature has no roots but a million branches. Its rootlessness is the source of its institutional perils but also of its energies. Apter's *Continental Drift* is haunted by the serpentine line linking beauty and evil, occidental whimsy and oriental seduction (at least in the orientalist "orient" that she studies there). In other scholars such as Margaret Cohen the wave has become oceanic; in the work of Barbara Fuchs, just to name one other increasingly influential scholar, it is the fusion and confusion of gender and racial identities that marks the true grandeur of the Spanish Golden Age. I don't have a full enough view really to compare the United States with other countries, but here, at least, Comparative Literature has been on the move toward greater depth, greater information, greater understanding, and greater self-examination. In its recognition of untranslatables, it has made itself incomparable.

Yang: As you mentioned above, Comparative Literature has no roots but a million branches, which becomes the source of its institutional perils but also of its energies. Can you clarify what the institutional perils are? The current studies show that Comparative Literature has exactly been on the move toward greater depth. Yet it has now almost become cultural studies, including media studies, cinema and visual studies, popular cultural studies, or studies on race, gender and ethnicity. And it even seems to be a branch of formalism, structuralism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, Western Marxism, post-colonialism, feminism, new historicism, even homosexuality and queer theory. As Haun Saussy has succinctly said, "Comparative Literature ... is not always the protagonist." Do you worry about the loss of Comparative Literature as a discipline when confronting the challenge of culture studies.

Brown: As I said, the humanities are suffering generally from a shift of student interests toward more instrumental fields with well-defined post-university career tracks. For whatever reasons, we have not been good at making the case for the skills of intercultural understanding and communication that our fields specialize in. In addition to heritage students and financial contributions from heritage communities and foreign governments—and the Chinese government has been generous in this regard—the foreign language departments have been sustained by student enrollments geared toward instrumental uses. “Business languages” are big business these days: business Spanish, business German, business Chinese and Japanese, and so forth. In American universities students typically combine a major field that comprises a third to a half of their study with a range of general education courses and, at many universities, defined minor fields as well. Many foreign language departments have propped up their enrollments with useful courses and minors in business applications. The problem is that these contribute little to sustaining more advanced study and may even drain resources away from it.

Naturally, enrollment patterns vary from one university to another and by departments and areas of interest within branches of the university. Earlier historical periods (and, lately, history departments) have suffered more on the whole than more contemporary areas, though Classics departments have often maintained strong enrollments in general education courses such as myth and the roots of English. At my university Scandinavian currently is running large enrollments in folklore, Andersen’s fairy tales, the Vikings, and especially “sexuality in Scandinavia.” More generally, enrollments are likely to remain strong (and hence support their departments) in cinema, creative writing, contemporary cultures, ethnic studies, and gender studies, though these latter two often incline toward social sciences or even natural sciences rather than humanities.

As Comparative Literature has no natural base of community support, maintaining a student base requires gifted lecturers developing courses that attract students and/or expansion into related fields. My department initiated a cinema studies program about ten years ago, we have a vibrant faculty, and they maintain both high scholarly accomplishment and outstanding teaching success. In previous decades, the department had nourished other programs that grew successful and developed independence, and that is a possible course for cinema studies as well. But comparative literature as such was at its height at my university in the later twentieth century; the traditional European core has declined and here world literature study remains sadly underdeveloped.

That pattern, while certainly not universal, is widespread. Some European language departments have been closed or else merged and downgraded. Maybe only because I know the field best, I have the impression that German study may have particularly suffered, to a large extent because the language used to be taught in many schools and now in almost none. But as a percentage of their total number, comparative literature departments and programs may have been the most seriously affected. A number of programs have been closed or seriously threatened. Some of these were unsuccessful to begin with, but others very successful indeed; in fact, even Northrop Frye’s old department at Canada’s leading university (the University of Toronto) was nearly closed a few years ago.

This is a long preamble toward responding to your question. The result of all the

developments is to fuel the natural impulse of Comparative Literature to spread itself more widely. All the fields that you mention have grown within Comparative Literature departments, around Comparative Literature departments, and in competition with them. And there are others. Many departments are turning to translation studies, both theoretical and practical. Digital humanities endeavors have commanded attention and attracted both internal and external funding. My department now houses a resilient and successful textual studies program that works closely with our Information School. (The Information School used to be an outstanding library school, but libraries and information resources have radically changed, and that program has accordingly changed both name and focus. We are not the only ones needing constant reinvention.)

Do I worry about these developments? The short answer is no. To be sure, the latest fashions often don't produce the most lasting products. But then outworn fashions get threadbare. We have a proverb: the best is the enemy of the good. Those who admire perfection and always stare at the stars risk falling on their face. New impulses are often initiated by brilliantly original minds but then followed by less impressive imitators. But that is always and ever the case. Another proverb: the tree that does not spread withers. (This isn't a proverb that "we have." Actually, I just made it up. But it applies.) The discipline must change to keep alive, and the fact that you can list so many directions that are (or once were) innovative is a good sign. My own scholarship remains solidly traditional, but even I have found it crucial for my intellectual health to explore new directions, such as the music and literature work that I more or less stumbled into, and to inform myself to some degree about the other areas that you mention. But my "traditional" work is actually quite different in kind from the traditions even of most of my teachers, and certainly of earlier generations. As we can't always be looking at the stars, so we can't always be looking over our shoulders, at what we have left behind. All of us begin as innovators (even if only in the sense of innovating our careers), and it's essential to welcome new directions of study and to do whatever any one of us can to help them become the best they are capable of. Naturally, we should love what we study and should hope to share that love with others. But that applies in all fields: the political scientist, the geologist, the logician, the dentist, or whatever. We can't demand that others love the same things, so long as they have their own passions and their own standards.

But that isn't to say that I have no worries. One worry I have is that the connections among departments that Comparative Literature has fostered may suffer if the departments do. Precisely because we have no home base, we exist by building bridges. Universities are constantly developing new interdisciplinary programs precisely with that intent, but they often become their own border fortresses. I worry about expansion turning into fragmentation or balkanization.

And I have a greater worry, which is that openness to the future is too readily conjoined with denial of the past. Many scholars in my generation turned against the achievements of our predecessors; indeed, only recently under the influence of data-driven study and digital editing has there been even a slight return of respect of the great positivists of the early twentieth century, whose massive learning in primary materials was relatively unhampered by the responsibility we now have to master large doses of scholarship and theory. Many of them also had a cosmopolitanism based on thorough knowledge of many (European) languages that, again, is only

now again being recognized by some scholars in the US and in Europe who have celebrated Erich Auerbach's return to philology. Things haven't come full circle and they shouldn't; they should spiral forward. But valuable skill sets and knowledge bases are too often ignored or scorned, and not enough people are eager enough to learn from the past and with the tools of the past. Among the latest fads are distant reading and surface reading. The latter is little more than a clever slogan coined by people who actually read deeply, the former was invented and is promoted most heavily by Franco Moretti, a scholar who is himself a brilliant close reader. He knows what his new methods can bring because he knows what the old methods can accomplish. Without that, there's a real risk of reinventing the wheel, and maybe even a more lopsided wheel than we used to have. International and interdisciplinary understanding are vital, but so is—in both directions—intergenerational understanding. And that is sometimes the hardest of all.

Yang: I can't agree with you more on the current situation of Comparative Literature. When tradition suffers a decline, new fashion then gets the impetus. It is a universally acknowledged truth that new fashion conflicts to some extent with, yet correlates to tradition. So how to deal with the relationship between keeping tradition and making innovation is a big question scholars have to solve. I know your major field is literature in the Romantic period, and you have also shed new light on the relationship between music and literature in recent years. Would you share with us your ideas on what innovation is and how to innovate in the studies of Comparative Literature, with your own experience of balancing your traditional research and your new direction with your new book *The Tooth that Nibbles at the Soul* as an example?

Brown: Let me expand on what I started to develop in response to your previous question. We are surrounded in the academy with developments that are not only innovative but pathbreaking, paradigm-shifting challenges to accepted knowledge. You just have to read the weekly Science section of the New York Times to be assaulted by revolutionary new discoveries. Most of them, of course, don't pan out, many are based on statistical inferences from small samples, some are little more than speculations. But it's not newsworthy if not dramatic, and if not newsworthy, then often not grant-worthy. I have helped evaluate applications for one grant-giving agency that sets "ground-breaking research" that "goes beyond the state of the art" as explicit selection criteria. Using existing tools imaginatively doesn't fill the bill; to get a grant you (supposedly) have to break them.

Such language is too well-worn for the values it espouses. It hasn't changed much in the half century since Thomas S. Kuhn published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. I don't know how many revolutions any of us could stand, how many might really benefit us. Revolutions are the province of geniuses. (Kuhn uses the word "genius" only on one page, in connection with Galileo; I take it that it was as self-evident to him as to me that he was writing about geniuses, and so didn't feel the need to say so repeatedly.^②) They happen at rare intervals where "breakdowns" (a common word in Kuhn's book) produce "breaks" (a rare word) and, it is implied (but never with this term), "breakthroughs." But ordinary mortals turn even radical breaks into normal practice: speaking of academic historians, including literary historians, Kuhn says, "Periodization in terms of revolutionary breaks in style, taste, and institutional structure has been among their standard

tools” (208, from the 1969 Postscript). A world littered with geniuses won’t happen, but even if it did, it might look a great deal like a standard-tool existence. Dramatic newsworthiness is a reportorial artifact. There are a lot more breakdowns than breaks, and precious few breakthroughs. The rest of us just chug along.

That is my context for responding to your question. Genius, breakthroughs, revolutions are historical, even world-historical, but they aren’t the stuff of daily life. What we call grade inflation, or what the linguist Leonard Bloomfield called semantic degeneration, applies here: “revolution” has become a degraded honorific that in practice means little more than evolution. If we can acknowledge that most of us are better at building up than at throwing over, then we will have a truer estimate of the normal progress of science. The conclusion to Thoreau’s *Walden* says it, characteristically, better than any later-comer might: “Some are dinning in our ears that we Americans, and moderns generally, are intellectual dwarfs compared with the ancients, or even the Elizabethan men. But what is that to the purpose? A living dog is better than a dead lion. Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies, and not be the biggest pygmy that he can? Let everyone mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made” (254).

As I write this, the latest Presidential Address of the American Comparative Literature Association has just been published, by Eric Hayot, not yet 45 years old, but already a leader in world literature studies, with particular expertise in China. It is an elegant plea for ordinary science. “Institutionalized innovation: it only feels like a contradiction if you have a bad theory of institutions — if you imagine, that is, the institutional as somehow hors-texte, as something that you have no duty toward because it is either (a) too big and too impossible to change or (b) too dirty or too stupid or too restrictive to be worth changing at all” (485).^④ Not everything is gigantic or petty. This is a mistake made by low-quality deconstruction: the argument that if meaning is uncertain or turbid, then there is no meaning at all, so that texts are (in the once common formula) allegories of their own unreadability. But we can read without absolute univocity, and, equally, we can grow without rejecting, change without destroying.

Respect for tradition is not a plea for regression or even for preservation. It’s merely an acknowledgment of our limits. Even Descartes’s method of systematic doubt couldn’t doubt everything; rather, he was searching for firm ground to stand on. Even revolutionaries have first principles: Sébastien Faure had to respect the alphabet in compiling his *Encyclopédie anarchiste*.^⑤ Consequently, it’s natural—indeed, for almost all of us, inevitable—to start with what we have and know. Magicians conjure up rainbow bridges, but freeways are designed by engineers. Tradition vs. innovation is a false dichotomy. The more functional one is construction vs. demolition. Though even that partition is subject to abrasion.

The converse error is to pretend we can keep doing the same old thing. Repeating is not growing. That applies equally to old-fashioned ways and to new fads. Nor should we let our investigations be determined by expectations dictated by others. Common rhetoric in the American academy is that a topic has been “understudied.” But we don’t really need more understudies. They generate projects that, I like to say, seek to fill a much-needed gap. Plugging holes is not tradition, merely routine. We need a certain degree of disorder in our lives. (I’m echoing Thoreau

again, am I? Is echoing a failure of nerve? Even if I did it unwittingly? Even if I tone down his “tonic of wildness” in the process? Maybe he got it right, and my version is too anodyne? Which kind of tonic is good for us, his medicinal one or my musical one? Maybe sometimes one and sometimes the other?) Perhaps we could even define innovation as disorder brought into focus. If we each, as scholars, extend in directions that are unfamiliar to us and try to bring them into our ken, we may of course often find ourselves rediscovering what others have already known. But we may also stumble onto new paths. At the least, we will express some of the energy that is the motor of innovation. We just shouldn’t—most of us shouldn’t, geniuses excepted—aspire to have our discoveries overthrow previous knowledge. Our destiny lies somewhere in the middle: more on the side of discovery for some, more on the side of development for others.

How does that play out with respect to my work on music? I fell into it pretty much by chance. I have been an avid chamber musician since childhood, and it occurred to me that a famous episode in a Mozart string quartet illustrated the thesis of an essay I was writing. I drafted a footnote, but I couldn’t fit what I wanted to say into so small a compass. It expanded into a small essay. But to get there, I had to explore my intuition about the music, expand my information, and reflect more fully on the original premises. Any extension of one’s territory has the potential to reflect back on the old, to discover new methods for what you used to study as well as to cast a freshly angled light on the new domain. In principle it’s no more than asking at each step of the road, how have I been changed by what I have now encountered? In the case of music in particular, for me, it has entailed a more systematic reflection on formalism and on how meanings might emerge in a non-semantic medium. Musicologists had by and large been averse to such questions, though they were increasingly asked by the so-called New Musicologists, many of them with interdisciplinary backgrounds. A literature scholar, of course, cannot ignore meanings; even the most flea-bitten formalist has at least to deny them. So I came to music with the predisposition that it must have meanings, and not just forms or (an equally traditional stance) just feelings. They provoked me to think more about how the overarching meanings that we often call ideologies are generated also in verbal art, not through but beyond the sense of the words, as aura rather than as statement. There was nothing radical or dramatic in that approach, but using music as a reference language might bring a different focus to some of the issues. The essays I have written about music have perhaps all begun with some such adventitious intuition about a moment or a work, and very often as the result of chancing to hear or play a piece. And, indeed, now that I think about it, perhaps always with an intuition of disorder: the apparent aimlessness of the Mozart quartet passage or the more energetic aimlessness of a Beethoven cello sonata, certain insistent repetitions in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, the chaos of dawn in Haydn’s *Creation*, rhythmic ripples in a song by Fauré. Nor has it always been musical disorder; my attention has also been caught by literary and philosophical eddies as well. As one of our insightful idioms has it, you need something that “stirs the pot.”

From the outside it looks as if a science is built from tradition plus innovation, and then on rare occasions revolutionized by genius-sparked paradigm changes. But that picture can grow too systematic and hence too polarized. Invention comes from the Latin verb meaning to find,

and etymologically it means simply to come upon something. Chance is essential to discovery. Think of the chain of circumstances through which you and I met and that led me to write these words. Exposing yourself to chance means getting out in front of what you know, finding the glimmer in the darkness or the needle in the haystack that can light and thread your way toward new discoveries. Then you have to pursue it steadfastly. It was through random browsing in Emily Dickinson's vast poetic corpus that I stumbled on the little-known, never-anthologized poem that gave me the wonderful title line for my collection of music essays: the tooth that nibbles at the soul. Earth-shaking discoveries are great when they happen, but soul-nibbles are our stock in trade. I suppose that's a Romantic notion, as when Wordsworth concludes his celebration of childhood play in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" with the lines, "To me the meanest flower that blows can give / Thoughts that do lie too deep for tears" (538). But the Romantics have no patent on accident, as the recent interest in Lucretius's swerve has reminded us—or, in decades past, Deleuze's diagonality and Serres's turbulent flows. Accidents discover your prey; experience and equipment then set you in pursuit.

Not tradition and innovation, but accident and passion. The name for that is love.

Notes

- ① See Emily S Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (New York : Verso, 2013) 315.
- ② Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, second edition, enlarged (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1970)119: "Galileo's individual genius," "genius," "the exploitation by genius of perceptual possibilities made possible by a medieval paradigm shift." Notice that in the last of this triple-play with the word, not even genius initiates a paradigm shift.
- ③ Maybe he didn't have to but merely chose the traditional arrangement. In another free-wheeling essay, Hayot quotes the following, from a new book by Paul Saint-Amour entitled *Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form*: "Even the alphabet as a solution to the problem of hierarchy is made implicitly arbitrary here. Taking d'Alembert's cue, you might well choose to abandon the twenty-six letters and parcel knowledge out, instead, into eighteen Homeric episodes, each with its own style, organ, color, and art"(Hayot, "Academic Writing" 71).

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