

# Discourse Innovation and Practical Exploration in Chinese African Literaturology: An Introduction

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**Abstract** This special issue introduces “Chinese African Literaturology: The New Quality Idea,” a pioneering theoretical framework developed by Professor Zhu Zhenwu that challenges Western epistemological hegemony in African literary studies. The introduction examines how this paradigm shift from Eurocentric perspectives toward multipolar knowledge production fundamentally remaps world literature. This intellectual project demonstrates how Chinese scholars can develop independent theoretical frameworks rooted in non-Western intellectual traditions while engaging African literature through sustained fieldwork, cultural contextualization, and collaborative practice. By foregrounding African agency and Chinese perspectives as co-equal partners in knowledge production, this framework contributes to genuinely pluralistic world literature studies that honor cultural specificity, foster civilizational dialogue, and challenge the center-periphery dynamics that have historically marginalized Global South literatures. The issue marks a significant moment in comparative literature's evolution toward epistemological decolonization and equitable intercultural exchange.

**Keywords** Chinese African Literaturology; Africanness; world literature; Zhu Zhenwu; Global South

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## Introduction

For far too long, African literature has occupied a marginalized position within the global literary landscape. Its profound historical and cultural heritage, distinctive

spiritual essence, and transformative aesthetic innovations have remained largely obscured beneath the shadows of Western epistemological hegemony. The narrative of African letters has been predominantly filtered through Eurocentric lenses—interpreted, canonized, and theorized according to frameworks developed in Cambridge, Oxford, Columbia, and the Sorbonne. This intellectual colonization has perpetuated a troubling paradox: while African literature speaks with urgent, authentic voices about colonialism, identity, diaspora, and cultural resilience, the scholarly apparatus examining these works has largely remained tethered to the very imperial paradigms these texts so powerfully resist.

Yet the tides are shifting. In recent years, African literature has begun to command broader recognition due to its decoloniality, diasporicity, and hybridity, demonstrating increasingly significant value in global civilizational dialogues. The collective emergence of the “Global South” as a significant geopolitical and cultural force signals profound transformations in the world literary field. As a key member of the Global South, China is playing a leading role in breaking the long-standing monopoly of Western discourse, constructing an autonomous perspective for African literary studies, and fundamentally remapping the landscape of world literature.

This special column assembles five groundbreaking articles that collectively explore the pioneering theoretical framework of “Chinese African Literatology: The New Quality Idea” (中国非洲文学学), developed by Professor Zhu Zhenwu (朱振武), lead expert of China’s first major national program on African literature, “History of African Literature Written in English.” These contributions represent more than incremental advances in a specialized field; they constitute a paradigm shift in how we conceptualize, study, and value literary production beyond the traditional centers of Euro-American cultural power.

The significance of this scholarly endeavor extends well beyond African literary studies itself. It addresses fundamental questions about knowledge production, cultural authority, and the politics of interpretation in an increasingly multipolar world. Can non-Western scholars develop theoretical frameworks that authentically engage with non-Western literatures without reflexively defaulting to Western critical vocabularies? Can we imagine a genuinely polycentric world literature that moves beyond tokenistic inclusion toward substantive epistemological transformation? How do we construct bridges for mutual learning among civilizations while respecting cultural specificity and avoiding homogenizing universalism? These are the urgent questions animating the intellectual project this column documents.

## **Breaking from Eurocentric Paradigms: The Foundations of Chinese African Literatuology**

Professor Zhu Zhenwu, a distinguished scholar in comparative literature and world literature studies at Shanghai Normal University, has consistently grounded his academic research in cultural confidence and theoretical self-awareness, rejecting the mechanical appropriation of Western theories. His work emerges from a deep awareness that scholarly discourses from the Anglo-American world cannot substitute for Chinese voices, and that academics must ground their research in native cultural soil while strengthening cultural autonomy and constructing independent theoretical frameworks.

The theoretical architecture of Chinese African Literatuology rests on four foundational pillars, each representing a significant conceptual innovation:

First, the concept of Africanness emphasizes African literature's role in reclaiming cultural sovereignty and resisting colonial narratives. As Zhu and Li define it in their landmark article "The Africanness of African Literatures and New Patterns in Human Civilization," Africanness refers to "the deep identification of African and Afro-descended people with the history and culture of the African continent and their deep attachment to their homeland" (Zhu and Li 114). This cultural quality encompasses a determination to uphold selfhood, bridge divides, remember history, yet perpetually look toward the future (Zhu and Li 114). Unlike Western postcolonial theory, which often positions African texts as objects requiring Western theoretical rescue, Zhu's conceptualization centers African agency in defining cultural identity. Africanness manifests through decoloniality, diasporicity, and hybridity—three interrelated dimensions that collectively challenge Western-centric master narratives and affirm African literature's capacity to participate effectively in world literary dialogue on its own terms (Zhu and Li 114-27).

Second, the theory of "Four Major Diasporas" expands conventional diaspora studies by addressing intra-continental hybridity and post-return alienation among African intellectuals. Zhu's framework identifies four distinct modes of diasporic experience: Foreign diaspora ( 异邦流散 ), referring to traditional patterns of outward migration to Europe and the Americas; Native diaspora ( 本土流散 ), a uniquely African phenomenon wherein indigenous populations experience cultural displacement without physical migration due to colonial policies, language imposition, and racial segregation within their own countries; Colonial diaspora ( 殖民流散 ), encompassing white settlers and their descendants who participated in imperial expansion yet developed complex attachments to African territories;

and Been-to diaspora or Foreign-native diaspora ( 宾土流散, 或异邦本土流散 ), describing intellectuals who return home after extended periods abroad only to find themselves culturally estranged from both their homeland and their former host countries (Zhu and Yuan 135-58).

This typology represents a significant theoretical advancement beyond Paul Gilroy's influential "Black Atlantic" model, which primarily examines transatlantic flows between Africa, the Americas, and Europe. Zhu's framework captures the multidimensional complexity of African diasporic experiences, including internal displacements rarely acknowledged in Western scholarship. By recognizing that diaspora encompasses cultural rupture rather than geographical migration alone, this theory provides analytical tools for understanding the psychological dimensions of colonial trauma, the negotiation of hybrid identities, and the generative potential of cross-cultural encounters.

Third, the principle of Balanced Absorption ( 均衡吸纳说 ) advocates for balanced engagement between global and local literary traditions, explicitly rejecting both uncritical Westernization and insular nationalism (Zhu and Jiang). This concept directly challenges the hierarchical binaries that have structured world literature discourse—center versus periphery, mainstream versus marginal, universal versus particular. Instead, Zhu proposes a dynamic equilibrium model wherein diverse literary traditions engage in mutual learning without subordinating local specificities to presumed universal standards. The theory calls for integrating global literary achievements while maintaining cultural distinctiveness, fostering what Zhu terms "horizontal comparativism" rather than vertical hierarchies of aesthetic value.

Fourth, the vision of Coexistence and Symbiosis of Cultures ( 文化共栖共生说 ), inspired by Marxist-humanist ideals, envisions literature as a catalyst for symbiotic civilizational exchange. This framework directly counters Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis by prioritizing intercultural harmony and shared ethical futures over competitive antagonism. Drawing from Confucian principles of "seeking harmony but not uniformity" and the ideal that "only when everyone's beauty is beauty and everyone appreciates other's beauty, can all beauties co-exist," Zhu articulates a vision of world literature as a networked ecosystem of pluralistic co-creation rather than a competitive arena for cultural supremacy (Yang 8).

Together, these four theoretical pillars form a cohesive analytical lens that decentralizes Eurocentric paradigms, foregrounds marginalized voices, and redefines global literary studies through principles of equity, hybridity, and mutual respect. They represent not merely an alternative perspective on African literature but a fundamental reconceptualization of how we might construct more equitable

frameworks for engaging with all literatures beyond traditional Western canons.

### **The Articles: A Multidimensional Exploration**

The five articles comprising this special column approach Chinese African Literatuology from complementary angles, collectively demonstrating both its theoretical sophistication and practical applicability.

Yang Zhongju's "Zhu Zhenwu and Chinese African Literatuology: The New Quality Idea" provides the theoretical foundation, elucidating the core tenets of this framework from its conceptual genesis, structural architecture, and intellectual genealogy. Yang emphasizes that Chinese African Literatuology represents not merely a regional supplement to existing world literary studies but rather a paradigm shift from "center-periphery" hierarchies toward multi-centered coexistence and equal dialogue among diverse civilizational traditions. The article traces how Zhu's decades-long engagement with "non-mainstream" literatures—encompassing Irish, Canadian, Australian, Caribbean, and African traditions—provided the empirical and conceptual groundwork for this theoretical intervention.

Zhang Xiuli's "Balancing the Mainstream and the 'Non-Mainstream': A Critical Examination of Zhu Zhenwu's Literary Research Philosophy" explores the methodological sophistication undergirding Zhu's work, particularly his commitment to principles of "balance" that critique Eurocentric binary thinking while avoiding simplistic reversals or oppositional logic. Zhang meticulously traces Zhu's academic trajectory, revealing how his philosophical approach constructs a pluralistic framework fostering dynamic equilibrium between mainstream and non-mainstream discourses. The concept of "balance" permeates every dimension of Zhu's scholarship—from his advocacy for balanced absorption of global literary traditions to his insistence on maintaining equilibrium between domestication and foreignization in translation practice.

Qian Pingyun's "From 'Seeking Aesthetic Similarity' to 'Striking a Balance Between Domestication and Foreignization': A Probe into Zhu Zhenwu's Translation Philosophy" examines how Zhu's theoretical commitments manifest in the concrete practice of literary translation. Translation, Qian argues, serves as a crucial testing ground for theories of cultural exchange, revealing in microcosm the power dynamics, aesthetic negotiations, and ethical choices inherent in all cross-cultural encounters. Zhu's evolution from early emphasis on "aesthetic similarity" to his mature theory of "Domestication-Foreignization Balance" ( 归异平衡 ) reflects deepening engagement with fundamental questions about cultural identity, difference, and mutual intelligibility. Qian demonstrates how Zhu's translation

philosophy breaks free from longstanding pitfalls of either condescending appropriation (“looking down upon” source cultures) or uncritical veneration (“looking up to” them), instead seeking optimal balance points that respect both source and target cultures. This approach resonates powerfully with his theory of Balanced Absorption, emphasizing that only through equitable engagement with diverse literary traditions can we overcome cognitive biases and enable Chinese scholars to contribute distinctive, valuable voices to cross-cultural dialogue.

Gao Jing’s “Doris Lessing as an African Diasporic Writer and the ‘Africanness’ in *The Grass Is Singing*: Based on Chinese African Literaturology” exemplifies how Chinese African Literaturology generates fresh interpretive insights through textual analysis. Employing Zhu’s theories of the Four Major Diasporas and Africanness as her methodology, Gao redefines the literary identity of Nobel laureate Doris Lessing, challenging the conventional categorization of Lessing as a “British writer.” Through close reading of *The Grass Is Singing* and other works, Gao demonstrates that Lessing’s characterization, narrative settings, and thematic preoccupations reflect profound Africanness and diasporic consciousness that are central to understanding her achievement as a world literary figure. Gao’s analysis reveals how Lessing’s dual identity as insider and outsider, her simultaneous belonging and non-belonging, enabled unique critical perspectives on colonialism’s psychic costs for colonizers as well as colonized. This study demonstrates the practical value of Chinese African Literaturology for generating novel interpretations that challenge established critical orthodoxies.

Quan Wei’s “Remapping the Landscape of World Literature: Discourse Innovation and Critical Practice of ‘Chinese African Literaturology: The New Quality Idea’—Focused on *African Literary Studies* (Ten-Volume Series)” examines the monumental scholarly achievement that embodies Chinese African Literaturology’s critical practice. Quan analyzes the series’ innovative structure—particularly its dual categorization of “Classic” and “Select” works—which simultaneously acknowledges texts already recognized by international literary establishments while amplifying marginalized voices and regional literatures that Western canons have overlooked. The series encompasses not only anglophone African literature but also significant works in French, Portuguese, Arabic, and other African languages, providing unprecedented comprehensive coverage. Quan argues that this achievement fills critical gaps in China’s African literary studies while offering new pathways for global scholarship, demonstrating how Chinese perspectives can enrich rather than merely replicate existing knowledge.

## **Theoretical Innovation and Methodological Rigor: Advancing Global Literary Studies**

The intellectual project documented in this special column transcends mere regional or national interest, addressing fundamental questions about the future of comparative literature and world literary studies in an era of profound geopolitical transformation. Several key innovations deserve particular emphasis.

### **Epistemological Decolonization**

Chinese African Literaturology represents a sustained effort to decolonize literary studies by challenging Western epistemological monopolies. As Zhu forcefully argues, “Our studies on African literature should not be mere replicas of Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard or Columbia studies, nor should it parrot colonial discourses, summarize existing Western achievements, or serve as annotations or commentaries on Western scholarship” (Zhu qtd. in Quan 10). This stance reflects acute awareness that intellectual decolonization requires more than additive inclusion—incorporating previously marginalized voices into existing frameworks—but rather fundamental restructuring of theoretical architectures themselves.

Western postcolonial theory, despite its progressive intentions and significant contributions, often reproduces problematic dynamics. Edward Said's Orientalism, Gayatri Spivak's interrogations of subaltern speech, and Homi Bhabha's theories of hybridity remain primarily concerned with critiquing Western power and representation. While valuable, this critical focus can inadvertently recenter Western agency even as it contests Western hegemony. African texts become significant primarily as sites for demonstrating Western theoretical propositions rather than sources of theoretical insight in their own right.

Chinese African Literaturology shifts the analytical ground by foregrounding African and Chinese perspectives as co-equal partners in knowledge production. This approach recognizes that meaningful decolonization requires developing alternative theoretical vocabularies rooted in non-Western intellectual traditions. Concepts like “cultural symbiosis,” “balanced absorption,” and the four-fold diaspora typology emerge from sustained engagement with Chinese philosophical traditions (Confucianism, Daoism, Marxism) and African cultural practices (orature, indigenous knowledge systems, pan-African thought) rather than derivative applications of Western frameworks.

### **Heterarchical Rather Than Hierarchical Models**

A crucial innovation involves replacing hierarchical with heterarchical

conceptualizations of world literature. Traditional models position European and North American literatures at the center of a world literary system, with other traditions arranged in concentric circles of decreasing importance and influence. This cartography reflects and reproduces colonial power relations, naturalizing Euro-American cultural dominance as aesthetic superiority.

Zhu proposes instead a tripartite schema distinguishing “First-World literature” (US and UK), “Second-World literature” (Japan, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain), and “Third-World literature” (China, Africa, Latin America), with the explicit recognition that this categorization should facilitate rather than impede movement toward genuine pluralism (Yang 11). The goal is not inverting existing hierarchies—replacing Euro-American centrality with Sino-African centrality—but rather establishing what Zhu terms “horizontal comparativism”: lateral exchanges among traditions understood as possessing intrinsic rather than derivative value.

This heterarchical vision challenges the ontological colonialism embedded in much world literature theory. Franco Moretti’s influential “distant reading” methodology, for instance, proposes studying world literature through patterns and systems rather than close engagement with individual texts. While offering valuable macro-level insights, this approach risks reproducing center-periphery dynamics by applying metropolitan analytical tools to peripheral materials. David Damrosch’s definition of world literature as “a mode of circulation and reading” (Damrosch 5) foregrounds transnational flows but can inadvertently privilege texts that circulate successfully in Western markets and academic institutions. Chinese African Literaturology insists instead that African literatures must be understood according to their own aesthetic principles, historical contexts, and cultural logics rather than their capacity to satisfy Western readerly expectations or conform to Western generic conventions.

### **Dialectical Integration of Theory and Practice**

A particularly compelling dimension of this scholarly project involves the dialectical relationship between theoretical innovation and concrete critical practice. Chinese African Literaturology did not emerge as abstract philosophical speculation subsequently applied to literary texts; rather, it developed through sustained immersive engagement with African literary production, cultural contexts, and scholarly communities. As Zhu and his team emphasize, their methodology involves “conducting field research, combing through first-hand material, making direct contact with Africa, its writers and personnel working in literary and cultural fields, integrating into the texture and interstices of African culture, and delving into African literary texts” (Qian and Zhu qtd. in Yang 6).

This methodological commitment to grounded scholarship distinguishes Chinese African Literaturology from much postcolonial theory, which often privileges theoretical sophistication over sustained engagement with specific literary traditions and cultural contexts. The Ten-Volume Series exemplifies how rigorous textual analysis, cultural contextualization, and theoretical reflection mutually inform and enrich each other. Each volume combines comprehensive literary historical surveys with close readings of individual works, attention to aesthetic innovation and thematic concerns, and analysis of how texts participate in broader cultural conversations about identity, history, and futurity.

Moreover, this approach recognizes translation as integral to cross-cultural literary understanding rather than peripheral or merely technical. Zhu's extensive work translating English literature into Chinese and examining how sinologists translate Chinese literature into English informs his understanding of the complex negotiations involved in all intercultural exchange. His concept of "Domestication-Foreignization Balance" emerges from wrestling with specific translational challenges rather than abstract theorization, demonstrating how practical problems can generate theoretical insights with broad applicability.

### **Toward a New World Literary Order: Implications and Future Directions**

The scholarly project documented in this special column carries implications extending well beyond African literary studies or even comparative literature more broadly. It participates in urgent contemporary debates about knowledge production, cultural authority, and the possibility of genuinely multipolar intellectual exchange in an era of profound geopolitical transformation.

#### **Civilizational Dialogue and Cultural Symbiosis**

Chinese African Literaturology embodies a vision of cultural symbiosis and civilizational mutual learning that offers alternatives to dominant paradigms of both civilizational clash (Huntington) and liberal cosmopolitanism (Appiah). Against Huntington's pessimistic forecast of inevitable conflict between civilizational blocs, Zhu proposes that literature can model collaborative coexistence by demonstrating how cultural difference enriches rather than threatens collective human flourishing. African literature's demonstrated capacity to synthesize indigenous traditions with European modernist aesthetics, oral storytelling with written fiction, local specificity with global consciousness exemplifies productive cultural hybridity.

Against liberal cosmopolitan visions that often tacitly privilege Western universalism, Chinese African Literaturology insists on substantive rather than merely rhetorical pluralism. Genuine mutual learning requires that all participants

recognize others as equals possessing valuable knowledge rather than positioning some as teachers and others as perpetual students. As Zhu emphasizes: “We must keep a foothold in Chinese culture while breaking Western discourse patterns, critical clichés, and cognitive liminality and constructing our own literary and cultural concepts” (Qian and Zhu qtd. in Yang 9). Chinese scholars engaging African literature should neither assume pedagogical authority nor adopt positions of deferential subordination, but rather approach African texts as sources of aesthetic pleasure, intellectual insight, and theoretical innovation in their own right.

This vision resonates with UNESCO’s goals of preserving intangible heritage and advancing global intellectual equity, as well as with Chinese foreign policy emphases on South-South cooperation and building communities of shared future. By facilitating direct Sino-African scholarly collaboration that bypasses Western epistemological gatekeeping, Chinese African Literaturology models alternative infrastructures for knowledge circulation. The 2024 partnership between Zhu’s research team and Kenya Literature Bureau to promote Sino-African literary exchanges, and the designation of 2026 as “the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges” at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, demonstrate how academic scholarship can inform and inspire broader cultural diplomacy.

### **Reconstructing World Literature Studies**

Chinese African Literaturology participates in broader efforts to reconstruct world literature as a genuinely global rather than thinly disguised Euro-American enterprise. As Theo D’haen observes, “The meteoric rise of China is bound to ‘re-orient’ the world, and hence also world maps, including the map of world literature, within the already foreseeable future” (D’haen qtd. in Quan 20). The question is whether this reorientation will generate genuinely new cartographies or merely redraw existing maps with different centers.

The risk of reproduction looms large. Simply replacing Western centrality with Chinese centrality—substituting Beijing for London or New York as the privileged site from which global literary value gets adjudicated—would replicate rather than resolve fundamental problems. Chinese African Literaturology’s commitment to horizontal comparativism and heterarchical models suggests awareness of this danger and determination to avoid it.

The emphasis on “balance”—between mainstream and non-mainstream, domestication and foreignization, local and global, tradition and innovation—reflects not methodological timidity but rather philosophical sophistication about the dialectical relationships required for sustainable intercultural exchange. Imbalance in any direction—toward uncritical globalization or defensive insularity,

wholesale adoption of foreign models or xenophobic rejection, privileging only elite experimental writing or only popular accessible fiction—produces distortions that impede understanding.

The practical challenge involves institutionalizing this vision beyond individual scholarly projects. Chinese African Literaturology has made remarkable strides through national research funding, academic publications, university curricula, international conferences, and translation initiatives. Sustaining and expanding this momentum requires training new generations of scholars, developing robust institutional infrastructures, and fostering ongoing collaboration with African and other global intellectual communities.

### **Challenges and Critical Responses**

Any scholarly intervention of this ambition inevitably faces challenges and invites critical scrutiny. Several potential concerns merit acknowledgment and response.

First, some might question whether “Chinese” African Literaturology risks reproducing problematic dynamics it critiques—replacing Western interpretive authority with Chinese authority over African cultural production. This concern has legitimacy and requires vigilant self-reflexivity. The project’s emphasis on collaboration with African scholars, direct engagement with African cultural contexts, and recognition that Chinese perspectives constitute one among many valid approaches helps mitigate this risk. The goal is not replacing Western monopoly with Chinese monopoly but rather contributing to genuine pluralism wherein multiple interpretive communities engage texts according to their distinct but equally legitimate frameworks.

Second, the language question deserves consideration. Most scholarship emerging from this project appears in Chinese, potentially limiting accessibility for non-Chinese-speaking audiences including most African scholars and readers. While some work receives English translation, systematic translation remains incomplete. This linguistic limitation ironically reproduces asymmetries the project critiques, wherein Western scholarship’s predominant use of English enables global circulation while work in other languages remains marginalized. Addressing this challenge requires expanded translation efforts in multiple directions—not only translating Chinese scholarship into English but also into African languages, and translating African literature directly into Chinese without English mediation.

Third, questions about periodization and canon formation persist. While the Ten-Volume Series’ dual structure of “Classic” and “Select” volumes innovatively acknowledges multiple evaluative frameworks, decisions about which works merit

inclusion in “Select” categories inevitably involve subjective judgment. What criteria determine selections? How do scholars avoid reproducing their own cultural biases and blind spots? The project’s methodological commitment to fieldwork, collaboration, and cultural contextualization provides partial answers, but ongoing critical reflection remains essential.

Fourth, the relationship between political and intellectual dimensions requires careful navigation. Chinese African Literaturology emerges within contexts of expanding Sino-African economic and diplomatic relationships, raising questions about how scholarly work relates to state interests. Maintaining intellectual autonomy and critical distance while acknowledging that scholarship never occurs in political vacuums requires vigilance and integrity. The project’s grounding in genuine scholarly values—rigorous textual analysis, theoretical sophistication, respect for cultural difference, commitment to knowledge rather than propaganda—provides reassurance, but ongoing attention to these dynamics remains necessary.

### **Conclusion**

This special issue documents a significant moment in the evolution of comparative literature and world literary studies—a moment when scholars from the Global South assert authority to theorize literary production on their own terms, to develop analytical frameworks emerging from their own intellectual traditions, and to participate as equal partners in global conversations about aesthetic value, cultural meaning, and human creativity.

Chinese African Literaturology represents more than a regional specialty or national variation within an otherwise unchanged disciplinary landscape. It embodies principles of cognitive justice: the recognition that all cultures and communities possess legitimate knowledge systems deserving respect, that intellectual authority should not remain permanently concentrated in former imperial metropolises, and that genuinely global scholarship requires infrastructure enabling circulation of ideas from multiple origins on equitable terms.

The five articles comprising this column—examining theoretical foundations, methodological sophistication, translational practice, textual interpretation, and monumental scholarly achievement—collectively demonstrate how these abstract principles manifest in concrete scholarly work. They show that epistemological decolonization requires patient, rigorous engagement rather than polemical declaration; that alternative frameworks must prove their analytical power through compelling interpretations rather than asserting moral superiority; and that sustainable change emerges through collaborative institution-building rather than

individual heroics.

The road ahead remains long and challenging. Existing power structures resist transformation; established habits of thought prove difficult to unlearn; practical obstacles of language, funding, and institutional inertia impede even well-intentioned efforts. Yet the work documented in this special column provides inspiration and guidance for continuing this essential journey toward more just, inclusive, and intellectually vibrant modes of engaging with the world's literary riches.

The discourse innovation and practical exploration documented here mark not an endpoint but a beginning—an invitation to reimagine possibilities, to challenge inherited assumptions, to build new infrastructures for intellectual exchange, and to participate in the ongoing project of making world literature truly worldly. May this special column inspire readers to take up this vital work with energy, integrity, and hope for what we might collectively achieve.

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