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## Contents

Editor's Note		i
<b>Special Issue</b>		
<b>After the World: New Possibilities for Comparative Literature</b>		
West of Eden: Carrying On	Samuel Weber	3
A Comparative Frame of Mind	Ali Behdad	23
The World According to Nishida Kitaro: A New Proposal	Hitoshi Oshima	45
An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization: A Forum	Guy Beauregard, Duncan McColl Chesney, Chi-she Li, and David M. Stewart	55
Problematics of Translation in Ha Jin's Poetry: Poet, Critic, Translator	Joan Chiung-huei Chang	81
Translation and World Literature in Goethe's <i>West-East Divan</i>	Shih-Yen Huang	105
<b>Literary/Cultural Studies</b>		
Navigating Between Shakespeare and <i>Jingju</i> : Wu Hsing-Kuo's <i>Li Er Zaici</i>	Lia Wen-ching Liang	131
Reception of Du Fu in the Anglophone World and the Issue of Poetic Transparency	Ji Hao	151

## Editor's Note

On December 13-14, 2013, the Tamkang University English Department was honored to host *The Eleventh Quadrennial International Conference on Comparative Literature* organized by the Comparative Literature Association of the Republic of China. The general theme of the conference was "After the World: New Possibilities for Comparative Literature," and now, we are pleased to announce the publication of this special issue on the conference theme.

The conference was greatly successful. Besides numerous accomplished presentations, the keynote speaker, Professor Samuel Weber (Northwestern), and three plenary speakers, Professor Ali Behdad (UCLA), Martin Puckner (Harvard), and Hitoshi Oshima (Fukuoka), made the conference an exceptional experience for all participants. The three lectures given in the conference have been expanded and revised by their authors, and in this special issue, readers can now get a clear picture of the ideas that these speakers shared. Moreover, one forum titled "An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization," organized by Guy Beauregard (NTU) and composed of three other members, including Duncan McColl Chesney (NTU), Chi-she Li (NTU), and David Stewart (NCU), discussed critical issues involved with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*. The issues tackled within the forum appropriately correspond to the conference theme, and hence we believe that this forum discussion enriches our special issue.

The theme, "After the World: New Possibilities for Comparative Literature," calls for urgent and critical reflection upon the changing position of the discipline in relation to what used to be called "the world." This urgency is caused by the rise of globalization and the fact that the (old) world has dissipated. The idea "after the world" refers to both the temporal and spatial dimensions. In the very beginning, Weber in his paper "West of Eden: Carrying On" pays attention to the enticing and frightening traits of the term "after the world," since it is moot whether "there would still be time and space for new possibilities for comparative literature to emerge" after the world. As the term "after" itself bears a relative conception, using it implies the conception of "be-

With similar concerns, Ali Behdad and Hitoshi Oshima both propose a kind of reading that is in its nature reflective, critical, and, most important of all, border-crossing. Behdad suggests reconsidering the very idea of "comparison," which has long been concerned with similarity or difference between objects. "A Comparative Frame of Mind," the notion Behdad proposes, "looks for meaningful patterns" and indicates the fact that "any work is inherently comparative." In his paper, Oshima proposes a new way to understanding "the world" in light of Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitaro. This new proposal is not necessarily presented as an Oriental way because it is offered by an Oriental philosopher. Instead, it is an attempt to reflect on the age-old notion of dialectics and seeks a new path to confront our contemporary world.

Two presentations are selected and included in this special issue; both concern the issue of translation. It is perhaps fair to say that "translation" remains one of the most enticing and yet thorny concepts in the era of globalization. Joan Chiung-huei Chang in her article "Problematics of Translation in Ha Jin's Poetry: Poet, Critic, Translator" does not judge Ha Jin's translation poems in terms of fidelity, appropriation, or legitimacy. Chang argues that readers could read Ha Jin's translation poems as significant reflections of the writer's immigrant experiences in America. Shih-Yen Huang's paper, "Translation and World Literature in Goethe's *West-East Divan*," explores the idea of "world literature" in Goethe's works with special emphasis on the literary-aesthetic dimension. Huang argues that Walter Benjamin's translation essay can shed new light on our understanding of Goethe's world literature, as literature is "essentially relational and transnational."

Two keywords conclude our concern in this special issue—globalization and translation. If it appears urgent to reconsider the discipline of "comparative literature" or the notion of "comparison" in an age of globalization, it is because the world is set in motion and therefore becoming. We thank our contributors in this issue to bring us a new picture of this constant "(re)worlding."