

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

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Relevance of the topic

Comparative literature, as an academic discipline, emerged in the nineteenth century in Europe, focusing on the study of literary works beyond national and linguistic borders. Translation studies, on the other hand, developed as an independent field in the second half of the twentieth century, analyzing the process, theory, and practice of translation. Despite their different origins, both disciplines share a common goal: to understand how literature travels, transforms, and acquires new meanings across cultures.

The intersection of comparative literature and translation studies has become increasingly relevant in the era of globalization, where cultural boundaries are more permeable than ever. Through translation, comparative literature expands its scope to include works from diverse languages and traditions, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of world literature.

Theoretical Foundations

Comparative literature traditionally involves studying similarities and differences between two or more literary works, genres, or traditions. It often employs interdisciplinary approaches that connect literature with philosophy, history, linguistics, and cultural studies. Translation studies, in contrast, focus on the strategies, ethics, and effects of rendering a text from one language into another.

Modern theorists view translation as a *creative act* rather than a mechanical process. According to Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, translated literature can influence the target culture by introducing new styles and ideas. This approach aligns closely with comparative literature, which also examines how literary systems interact and evolve.

Translation as a Tool in Comparative Literature

Translation enables comparative literature to access foreign texts, making it possible to analyze them alongside native works. Through translation, scholars can compare motifs, symbols, narrative techniques, and ideological perspectives across different cultures.

For example, the comparison of Shakespeare's plays with their translations into French or Russian not only reveals linguistic differences but also cultural reinterpretations. Each translation becomes a reinterpretation that reflects the translator's worldview and the target audience's expectations.

Interdisciplinary Interaction

The dialogue between comparative literature and translation studies fosters interdisciplinary collaboration. Both fields benefit from insights in semiotics, postcolonial theory, and gender studies. Postcolonial scholars, for instance, have shown how translation can serve as a tool of cultural domination or resistance, while comparative literature helps contextualize these dynamics within global literary history.

Moreover, digital technology and globalization have expanded the scope of both fields. Machine translation, online literary archives, and multilingual publications enable new forms of comparative and translational research.

Conclusion

Comparative literature and translation studies are interdependent disciplines that together contribute to our understanding of literature as a universal human expression. Translation not only facilitates the comparative study of texts but also redefines cultural identity and intercultural dialogue. In a globalized world, the integration of both fields is essential for fostering empathy, cultural literacy, and intellectual exchange among nations.

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