Rebuilding a Profession: A Bibliometric Analysis of the Linguistic Culture of Comparative Literature in the US and Spain

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To Darío Villanueva, editor (2011–19) of *1616: Anuario de Literatura Comparada*

Abstract This article discusses why it is necessary to rebuild comparative literature in terms of a geopolitics of comparison. "Geopolitics" is understood here, following Gearóid Ó Tuathail, to mean a distinctive genre of geo-power which brought about the systemic closure of the surface of the globe. Comparative literature has been part and parcel of this process by extending a Eurocentric concept of "(national) literature" worldwide. A rebuilt comparative literature has, on the one hand, to bring to light significant evidence of the discipline's history within the historical and geographical context of power relations and, on the other hand, confront the coloniality of knowledge on three levels—locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. Here only the locutionary level is addressed by examining two journals—*Comparative Literature* and *1616: Anuario de la Sociedad Española de Literatura General y Comparada/Anuario de Literatura Comparada*—from a bibliometric-analysis perspective.

Keywords bibliometrics · comparative literature · geopolitics · linguistic culture · reflexive investigation

In Lionel Gossman and Mihai I. Spariosu's 1994 book *Building a Profession*, which puts together testimonies from notable comparatists of René Wellek's generation and of the generation he and others like him trained, the term "geopolitics" is not mentioned a single time. In contradistinction, the term is extensively used in the two American Comparative Literature Association (henceforth ACLA) decennial reports of the twenty-first century. Haun

Saussy's 2006 report even includes an essay by Katie Trumpener which aims to convey a "geopolitical view" on world literature and world music by exploring whether comparative literature has managed "to alter the West's internal literary maps as profoundly" as "musicians and ethnomusicologists [have] changed and expanded the West's musical maps" (Trumpener 189) in the 1990s. This growing interest in geopolitics and comparative literature has most recently been shared by the 2020 ACLA conference, with a presidential plenary session entitled "Geopolitics of Comparison."[1]

In view of this growing interest, it seems timely to ask what comparatists understand "geopolitics" to mean in relation to their field. To come back to the so far most thorough discussion on this issue, Trumpener relates geopolitics to two different disciplinary dimensions. On the one hand, geopolitics is understood as the influence of "political cataclym[s]," such as fascism, the Cold War, the collapse of Communist rule in Eastern Europe, and September 11th, on the reshaping of the discipline's "cognitive patterns and maps" (Trumpener 191).[2] On the other hand, geopolitics points to the "power differential between cultures and languages" (Trumpener 186), including what Emily Apter (57) has called "linguistic class struggle." The first meaning concerns comparison as a method (for a recent discussion, see Felski and Friedman). The second meaning concerns the circumstances of literary creation.

How do these two meanings relate to the definition of geopolitics by geopoliticians? The term is polysemic and has resulted in a wide variety of usages, such as in the concepts of the "geopolitics of capitalism," the "geopolitics of environmentalism," the "geopolitics of race," the "geopolitics of cinema," the "geopolitics of literature" (Chih-Ming), and now the "geopolitics of comparison." In all these cases, the core of the field is the study of power relations aimed at controlling territory. A broad definition of the study of geopolitics claims that it "uses components of human geography to examine the use and implications of power"

(Flint 27). A narrower definition, however, connects the field to the emergence of a new order of space. Geopolitics names "an ensemble of heterogeneous intellectual efforts to think through the geographical dimensions and implications of the transformative effects of changing technologies of transportation, communications, and warfare on the accumulation and exercise of power in the new world order of 'close space,'" as claimed by Gearóid Ó Tuathail (12).

Note that these three factors coincide with the circumstances which surrounded Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's awareness of a new literary order, namely, *Weltliteratur* as accelerated by "greater ease of communication," "wider prospects in relationships between men" and "frightful wars … [that have resulted in nations] having imbibed much that was foreign" (Strich 350, 349 and 351). Such a coincidence is not casual and deserves, therefore, special consideration. By the late nineteenth century, "the surface of the globe appeared for the first time as a system of 'closed space,'" argues Tuathail (12), "an almost completely occupied and fully charted geographical order." In Europe, the spatial closure took place between the Congress of Vienna, in whose aftermath Goethe elaborated the concept of *Weltliteratur*, and the end of the Bismarckian system, a period which John Agnew (67), in turn, has roughly identified as "the first global geopolitical order … [when] the norms and practices of liberal capitalism [were] carried into the rest of the world."

The worldwide expansion of the territorial nation-state as the container of society, which resulted in "a single unified globe of occupied space" (Tuathail 21), went hand in hand with the expansion of "literature" (*Nationalliteratur*, for Goethe) within a single unified literature of the world (*Weltliteratur*) as the ultimate aim of a power–knowledge relationship, namely, comparative literature. Otherwise, Goethe (165, 164) could not have conceived of an epoch in which "world literature is at hand," when one values what is foreign by identifying "strong resemblance[s]" (*Ähnlichkeit[en]*) and "remarkable contrast[s]" (*merkwürdige[]*

Gegens[ä]tz[e]), and neither could he have read *Huājiān Jì* ('The Flowery Scroll') as a "Chinese *novel*" (emphasis added; *chinesischen Roman*).[3]

It is my contention that the correlative constitution of comparative literature and imperial power relations (Foucault 27) within the spatiality of modernity as a whole has not received the attention it deserves. To be more specific, comparative literature has disciplined verbal art across the world within the injunctions of imperialism and liberal capitalism insofar as the expansion of the territorial nation-state benefited from the expansion of (national) literature and vice versa. Cases in point of this interlocked expansion are the resemantization of *wenxue* (Liu), *bungaku* (Karatani), *adab* (Snir), and *logotechnia* (Lambropoulos) as "literature" by the end of the nineteenth century. It is no wonder, therefore, that all the scholars who address such resemantization speak of *modern* literature.

Does this mean that comparative literature's destiny is to be but a(n) (un)willing accomplice of (neo)imperialism? Not necessarily, provided that comparatists rebuild comparative literature by, on the one hand, bringing to light significant evidence of the discipline's history within the historical and geographical context of power relations and, on the other hand, confronting the "coloniality of knowledge" (Lander) on three levels, between the poles of Goethe's "ambitious, overarching concept" of *Weltliteratur* and Johann Gottfried Herder's "model that thinks simultaneously about literary similarities and the political force field within which literature takes place" (Trumpener 186). First, there is the illocutionary level, namely, unveiling what comparative literature *does* to the object of study. It cannot *do* a universalized "work [which] enters into world literature by … being read *as* literature" (Damrosch 6), but, rather, what Kojin Karatani (18–19) has called "the historicity of literature itself—of 'literature' as a kind of 'landscape.'" A rebuilt comparative literature has to disclose the origins of literature as an "epistemological constellation" (Karatani 22), as well as prior and alternative histories and understandings of texts gathered under the category

of "literature." Second, there is the perlocutionary level, whose discussion has been obstructed by Henry H. H. Remak's definition of the discipline until recently. "What (besides itself) does an act of comparison make happen?" asks Haun Saussy (*Are We Comparing Yet?* 7). I see this interrogation of comparison best addressed by Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan (459) when he claims that "a comparatist project has to … act as though the comparison is being made in an ideal world and at the same time deconstruct such an idealist ethic in the name of lived reality and its constitutive imbalances." Third—and here, the reverse order of speech act theory is indicative of the disciplinary priorities—there is the locutionary level, the actual utterance, both "literary" and disciplinary, within the Herderian (geo)politics of language. In this essay, I will briefly discuss this locutionary level in terms of "linguistic culture."[4]

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In a conversation that took place in the context of the July 2018 session of the Institute of World Literature at the University of Tokyo, Pheng Cheah (Cheah and Damrosch 312) claimed that he "had initially planned on writing on a couple of Indonesian novels … but then [he] thought that if [his] audience has not read Amitav Gosh, it's even more unlikely that they would have read this Indonesian novelist, Eka Kurniawan, one of whose novels had not yet been translated at that time." Cheah is here talking about his 2016 book *What Is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*, in which, as a result of the abovementioned "pragmatic reason," "all the [literary] texts [he] discuss[es are] written in English" (Cheah in Cheah and Damrosch 312). In contradistinction to this, in 1995, Charles Bernheimer (1) claimed that, in comparative literature, "the eager graduate student … discovers that … more is expected of her than of her peers in the national literature departments—more knowledge of languages, more reading of literatures." Bernheimer made this statement on the occasion of the last ACLA decennial report of the twentieth century.

Whereas some scholars may attribute this paradox to the increasing role played by translation in the change of focus from *comparative* to *world* literature, the truth is that this problem is an integral aspect of the field at the abovementioned disciplinary, locutionary level. I am not thinking only of the exclusion of translation in the terms posited by René Wellek in 1958, when building a new professional ethos for the comparatist, but also of, on the one hand, the most immediate audience of scholarship—students—as when George Steiner (149) noticed that "in more and more curricula 'comparative literature' has come to signify 'a reading of great books … in the Anglo-American tongue,'" and, on the other hand, the most distant audience—the general public. In the latter context, I would like to recall Harriet Anderson's request to Erich Auerbach in relation to the English translation of *Mimesis*. "I am not sure you realize," says Anderson to Auerbach in a letter dated 6 August 1952, "that even relatively well-educated Americans have really a very elementary reading knowledge of one or at best two modern foreign languages.… The reader without some ease in Spanish, French, and German will miss some of the excitement and pleasure of following the unfolding of your analysis."

What I am stressing here is self-observation and reflexive investigation, in accordance with my preliminary remarks. Comparison qua method, either named *parabolē* by Aristotle or *bǐ* by Liu Xiang, is a *natural* activity in which even non-human animals (Callanan) engage. In the words of Marino, comparison "consiste dans un rapport quelconque entre deux termes, en vue d'établir les points communs et les écarts" (Marino 234; consists of any relationship between two terms with the aim of revealing both similarities and dissimilarities). The non-naturalistic dimension of comparison is, however, what needs to be interrogated. This non-naturalistic dimension includes the "will to power/knowledge", which enacts the comparison (Radgakrishnan 454).

To proceed with this interrogation in terms of the locutionary level, I will focus on the linguistic landscape of comparative literature as materialized in three dimensions: a) languages of scholarly publications, b) languages of the literary works under comparison and c) languages of secondary sources. The analysis is restricted to two key mouthpieces of the discipline in their countries, the journals *Comparative Literature* in the US and *1616: Anuario de la Sociedad Española de Literatura General y Comparada/Anuario de Literatura Comparada* in Spain.[5] I will examine both journals from a bibliometric-analysis perspective. According to R. N. Broadus's authoritative definition, "Bibliometrics is the quantitative study of physical published units, or of bibliographic units, or of the surrogates for either" (Broadus 376) as mainly applied to academic articles (Archambault and Vignola Gagné 10).[6] As far as I know, neither a quantitative study of comparative literature in general (for the humanities in general, see Zuccala), nor a comparative quantitative study of comparative literature as practiced in the US and Spain, has been undertaken so far. Of the main types of bibliometric indicators, I will focus on "publication count" (Archambault and Vignola Gagné 2), that is, the number of articles in both journals during the time frame since their foundation (1949 for *Comparative Literature*, 1978 for *1616: Anuario*) until 2019 in relation to several information subsets. Bibliometric analysis is usually based on databases that in many cases exist primarily for bibliographic purposes. This is the case with *Comparative Literature* and *1616: Anuario*, which have been included in bibliographic databases such as the MLA International Bibliography and Web of Science. However, neither of these databases covers key information for my research, such as the language of publication, the language of quoted literary works, and the language of secondary sources, to name but a few. Consequently, I had to build my own bibliometric database.[7] As my aim here is merely exploratory, I use a 95 percent confidence interval and a 10 percent error rate for my manually compiled data.

According to a late-1940s flyer announcing the creation of *Comparative Literature*, published with the cooperation of the comparative literature section of the Modern Language Association (which later became an ACLA-affiliated publication), the journal was intended to "provide a forum for those scholars and critics who are engaged in the study of literature from an international point of view." In an internal document, Harry Levin thought of this aim as an essential requirement for the journal to be "much more than an American version of the *Revue de la litterature comparee* [*sic*] or an international supplement to the PMLA." Similarly, in the early 1970s, the founders of the *1616: Anuario* thought of comparative literature as "una técnica y una táctica de trabajo sumamente aprovechables y de un gran valor humanístico en el mundo actual, en el que las relaciones de comunicación se hacen cada vez más estrechas e inevitables" (López Estrada 11; an extremely profitable technique and research tactic, with a highly humanistic value in our world, in which communication links are closer and unavoidable). Though *Comparative Literature* preferred to "receive articles written in English," states the above-quoted flyer, it would "also welcome those presented in French, German, Italian and Spanish," a list to which Wellek, in an internal statement on the editorial policy ("Some Recommendations"), added Russian, though it "should not aim at the motley appearance of definitely bi- or trilingual journals." My bibliometric analysis shows, however, that a linguistic culture of monoglossia pervades the history of *Comparative Literature* in terms of publication languages, with English articles amounting to 98.13 per cent of the total.[8] Monolingualism is 15 points lower in the case of *1616: Anuario*, with Spanish articles amounting to 82.97 per cent, English articles, 10.09 per cent, Portuguese articles, 3.47 per cent and Galician articles, 2.52 per cent (see Table 1).

Languages of Publication	***Comparative Literature***	***1616: Anuario***
French	1.87%	—
English	98.13%	10.09%
Galician	—	2.52%

Italian	—	0.95%
Portuguese	—	3.47%
Spanish	—	82.97%

Table 1: Languages of Publication in *Comparative Literature* (1949–2019) and *1616: Anuario* (1978–2019)

As both journals are the voices of their respective national associations of comparative literature (in the case of *Comparative Literature*, first as the official journal of the ACLA and later as an independent journal affiliated with the ACLA), monolingualism should be related to the hegemonic language of each academic setting, with the obvious advantage of English being the language of international communication and, hence, the larger readership for research published in *Comparative Literature*. Another crucial factor for the choice of the publication language is the affiliation of contributors. Seventy-four per cent of contributors to *Comparative Literature* are affiliated with universities in the US, with those associated with universities in the UK and Germany occupying the second and third positions (13.48 per cent and 3.37 per cent, respectively). In the case of *1616: Anuario*, 63.29 per cent of contributors are affiliated with universities in Spain, with those associated with universities in the US and Portugal in the second and third positions (11.39 per cent and 6.33 per cent, respectively) (see Table 2).

Countries of Affiliation	***Comparative Literature***	***1616: Anuario***
Australia	2.25%	—
Canada	2.25%	1.27%
China	—	5.06%
France	1.12%	3.80%
Germany	3.37%	2.53%
India	1.12%	—
Ireland	1.12%	—
Italy	—	1.27%
Portugal	—	6.33%
Spain	—	63.29%
Sweden	—	1.27%
United Arab Emirates	—	1.27%
UK	13.48%	—

US	74.16%	11.39%
No affiliation	1.12%	2.53%

Table 2: Contributors' Countries of Affiliation in *Comparative Literature* (1949–2019) and *1616: Anuario* (1978–2019)[9]

One would expect a much higher diversity in the case of the languages of the literary works under analysis, in accordance with the disciplinary aim of reading literary works "in their original language" (Auerbach, *Mimesis* 492). The data corroborate such diversity, though, once again, a central position is reserved to literature in the "national" language (Table 3).

Languages of Literary Works	***Comparative Literature***	***1616: Anuario***
Ancient Greek	1.00%	0.76%
Arabic	—	—
Bengali	0.50%	—
Catalan	0.50%	2.27%
Chinese	1.49%	1.52%
Danish	0.50%	—
English	30.35%	10.61%
French	20.90%	12.12%
Galician	—	5.30%
German	11.44%	6.06%
Greek	2.99%	3.79%
Hebrew	0.50%	—
Italian	4.98%	2.27%
Latin	9.95%	4.55%
Persian	—	0.76%
Polish	0.50%	—
Portuguese	1.00%	1.52%
Russian	1.00%	0.76%
Sanskrit	0.50%	—
Spanish	6.97%	29.55%
Swedish	0.50%	0.76%
No language	4.48%	16.67%

Table 3: Languages of Literary Works in *Comparative Literature* (1949–2019) and *1616: Anuario* (1978–2019)

In *Comparative Literature*, the top three positions include literature in English (30.35 per cent), French (20.90 per cent) and German (11.44 per cent). In *1616: Anuario,* there are three

languages in the top four positions—Spanish in the first position (29.55 per cent), French in the third (12.12 per cent) and English in the fourth (10.61 per cent). The category "no-language", for articles that do not analyze any literary work, occupies the second position (16.67 per cent).

As in the case of publication languages, one may anticipate a pragmatic reason for quoting literary works in translation, such as that translation is used to allow the reader to follow the comparative analysis. However, translation is much less used than expected—24.52 per cent in *Comparative Literature* and 19.13 per cent in *1616: Anuario* (see Table 4).

Literary Works	***Comparative Literature***	***1616: Anuario***
Original	75.48%	80.87%
Translation	24.52%	19.13%

Table 4: Literary Works, Original vs. Translation in *Comparative Literature* (1949–2019) and *1616: Anuario* (1978–2019)

Furthermore, it is relevant to identify which languages are read in translation and into which target language. *Comparative Literature* appears, once again, as a journal with a linguistic culture of monoglossia, insofar as literary works in 14 out of 16 languages are translated into English (see Table 5). *1616: Anuario*, in turn, is much less monolingual: literary works in only 8 out of 16 languages are translated into Spanish (see Table 6).

Source Language	**Target Language**	***Comparative Literature*** **(number of works)**
Ancient Greek	English	1
Bengali	Spanish	1
Chinese	English	1
Danish	English	1
English	German	1
French	English	10
German	English	6
Greek	English	4
Hebrew	English	1
Italian	English	4

	French	1
Latin	English	12
Polish	English	1
Portuguese	English	1
Sanskrit	English	1
Spanish	English	4
Swedish	English	1

Table 5: Literary Works Read in Target Language in *Comparative Literature* (1949–2019)

Source Language	**Target Language**	***1616: Anuario*** **(number of works)**
Arabic	English	1
Chinese	English	1
English	French	1
	Spanish	3
French	Spanish	2
Galician	Catalan	1
	Spanish	1
German	Spanish	3
Greek	Portuguese	1
	Spanish	2
Italian	Portuguese	1
	Spanish	1
Latin	Spanish	1
Russian	Spanish	1
Spanish	Galician	1
Swedish	Portuguese	1

Table 6: Literary Works Read in Target Language in *1616: Anuario* (1978–2019)[10]

The bibliometric analysis shows that, in terms of secondary sources, neither *Comparative Literature* nor *1616: Anuario* are strictly monolingual journals, though the share of languages mirrors former (French, German) and current (English) international scientific languages (for the asymmetrical circulation of theory, see Catelli). English, French and German occupy the first three positions in *Comparative Literature*, whereas these three positions are occupied by Spanish, English and French in the case of *1616: Anuario*. The difference between Spanish and English amounts to only 0.4 per cent, which is obviously relatable to Spanish-speaking comparatists reading publications in Spanish (see Table 7).[11]

Languages of Secondary Sources	*Comparative Literature*	*1616: Anuario*
Albanian	0.40%	—
Basque	—	0.40%
Catalan	0.40%	0.80%
Chinese	—	1.20%
Danish	0.40%	—
Dutch	0.40%	—
English	33.60%	25.20%
French	26.09%	19.20%
Galician	—	2.80%
German	19.37%	11.20%
Greek	—	0.40%
Hebrew	0.40%	—
Italian	5.14%	6.80%
Latin	1.19%	0.80%
Persian	—	0.40%
Polish	0.79%	—
Portuguese	0.79%	4.40%
Russian	3.56%	0.80%
Spanish	5.93%	25.60%
Swedish	0.40%	—
Yiddish	0.40%	—
No language	0.79%	—

Table 7: Languages of Secondary Sources in *Comparative Literature* (1949–2019) and *1616: Anuario* (1978–2019)

My final set of data may provide us with a more exact picture of the state of the discipline, as represented by scholarship in the journals of the American (first an official journal, later an affiliated journal) and Spanish comparative literature associations. Changes in disciplinary state are defined by "paradigm shifts," which Thomas S. Kuhn (66) described as "discarding some previously standard beliefs or procedures and, simultaneously, … replacing those components of the previous paradigm with others. [They are] shifts that result from the invention of new theories." An important problem is, of course, identifying such paradigm shifts (see De Langhe, Prabhakaran et al.). One might refer to the ACLA decennial reports, especially those that identify a major trend within the discipline in their titles, such as the 1990s report *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism* (Bernheimer) and the 2000s report *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization* (Saussy). However,

"multiculturalism" and "globalization" are key descriptive concepts rather than theoretical or methodological concepts. If we recall that Remak's abovementioned 1961 definition of comparative literature was a direct reply to Wellek's 1958 diagnosis of disciplinary crisis and that, of the three comparative axes identified by Remak, new theories have been proposed only for the interliterary axis, one may conclude that, since the mid-twentieth century, there have been three major paradigm shifts. These are postcolonial studies, East/West studies and world literature studies, as marked by, respectively, Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*, Earl Miner's *Comparative Poetics* and David Damrosch's *What Is World Literature?* To support my claim that each of these three books mark a paradigm shift, I turn to three textbooks from different academic environments. In 1993, Susan Bassnett (76) claimed that "the arrival of the term 'postcolonial' on the critical scene must surely be one of the most significant developments in comparative literature in the twentieth century." In turn, Waïl S. Hassan and Rebecca Saunders (19) have called for "comparative approaches to postcolonial studies," which would allow "postcolonial studies to move beyond monolingualism and narrow textualism." Secondly, Claudio Guillén (*The Challenge* 70–71) saluted the emergence of East/West studies for their "valuable and promising opportunities for investigations based on the third model [that] permits the dialogue between unity and diversity that stimulates comparativism to focus on the open confrontation of criticism/history with theory." Finally, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (26) has claimed that "world literature as a paradigm combines, first and foremost, a primary curiosity with a realistic observation of circulation and critical valuation, that will mix and balance the particulars with the main streams."

In my bibliometric analysis, I observe the linguistic landscape during the period previous to the emergence of the next paradigm shift, that is, 1981–90 for postcolonial studies, 1991–2000 for East/West studies, and 2001–19 for world literature studies. In *Comparative Literature*, literature in English is hegemonic (45.83 per cent) in the age of

postcolonial studies; literature in English (27.27 per cent) and French (27.27 per cent) are hegemonic in the age of East/West studies, with Chinese amounting to only 3.03 per cent. Again, literature in English (51.61 per cent) and French (32.26 per cent) are hegemonic in the age of world literature studies, followed at a great distance by literature in languages such as Catalan, German, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. In *1616: Anuario*, in turn, literature in Spanish is hegemonic (64.71 per cent) in the age of postcolonial studies; literature in Spanish (37.50 per cent) and French (25 per cent) is hegemonic in the age of East/West studies, with no sign of Eastern languages. Literature in Spanish (43.48 per cent), English (19.57 per cent) and French (13.04 per cent) is hegemonic in the age of world literature studies, followed at a great distance by literature in languages such as Galician, German, Catalan, Chinese, Persian, Portuguese and Russian (see Table 8).

Periods	**Languages**	***Comparative Literature***	***1616: Anuario***
1981–90	Catalan	—	5.88%
	French	16.67%	23.53%
	English	45.83%	—
	German	8.33%	5.88%
	Greek	4.17%	—
	Latin	16.67%	—
	Spanish	8.33%	64.71%
1991–2000	Catalan	—	12,50%
	Chinese	3.03%	—
	English	27.27%	—
	French	27.27%	25%
	Galician	—	12.50%
	German	15.15%	12.50%
	Italian	9.09%	—
	Latin	6.06%	—
	Spanish	12.02%	37.50%
2001–19	Catalan	3.23%	2.17%
	Chinese	—	2.17%
	English	51.61%	19.57%
	French	32.26%	13.04%
	Galician	—	6.52%
	German	3.23%	4.35%
	Latin	—	2.17%

	Persian	—	2.17%
	Portuguese	3.23%	4.35%
	Russian	3.23%	—
	Spanish	3.23%	43.48%

Table 8: Literary Works in Source Languages during the Ages of Postcolonial Studies, East/West Studies and World Literature Studies in *Comparative Literature* (1949–2019) and *1616: Anuario* (1978–2019)

One might quite rightly object that these data are misleading, insofar as these consecutive expansions of the inter-literary axis of comparative research make it imperative to take into consideration the role of translation. In this regard, my bibliometric analysis shows that, in *Comparative Literature*, the top source>target languages are Latin>English for postcolonial studies, French>English for East/West studies and, again, French>English for world literature studies, closely followed by German>English and Italian>English (see Table 9). In *1616: Anuario*, in turn, the top source>target languages are English>Spanish and German>Spanish for postcolonial studies and Russian>Spanish for East/West studies, whereas world literature studies has seen the emergence of several source languages translated into several target languages (see Table 10). The contradiction between, on the one hand, the source>target language of literary works under analysis and, on the other hand, the aims of each paradigm shift is so obvious that it needs no magnification, even in the more "open-minded" case of articles in *1616: Anuario* during the age of world literature studies.

	Source Language	**Target Language**	***Comparative Literature* (number of works)**
Age of Postcolonial Studies (1981–90)	Ancient Greek	English	1
	Greek	English	2
	Latin	English	6
	Spanish	English	1
Age of East-West Studies (1991–2000)	Bengali	Spanish	1
	French	English	3
	German	English	2
	Greek	English	1
	Hebrew	English	1
	Italian	English	1

	Latin	English	2
	Spanish	English	2
Age of World Literature Studies (2001—)	Danish	English	1
	French	English	5
	German	English	4
	Italian	French	1
		English	3
	Latin	English	1
	Portuguese	English	1
	Spanish	English	1
	Swedish	English	1

Table 9: Source>Target Language of Literary Works during the Ages of Postcolonial Studies, East/West Studies and World Literature Studies in *Comparative Literature* (1949–2019)

	Source Language	**Target Language**	***1616: Anuario* (number of works)**
Age of Postcolonial Studies (1981–90)	English	Spanish	1
	German	Spanish	1
Age of East-West Studies (1991–2000)	Russian	Spanish	1
Age of World Literature Studies (2001—)	Arabic	English	1
	Chinese	English	1
	English	French	1
		Spanish	1
	French	Spanish	1
	Galician	Catalan	1
		Spanish	1
	German	Spanish	1
	Greek	Portuguese	1
	Italian	Portuguese	1
	Spanish	Galician	1
	Swedish	Portuguese	1

Table 10: Source>Target Language of Literary Works during the Ages of Postcolonial Studies, East/West Studies and World Literature Studies in *1616: Anuario* (1978–2019)

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Whereas, by the mid-twentieth century, René Wellek related the crisis of comparative literature to method, inasmuch as the latter is non-specific (Wellek, "The Crisis" 149), René Étiemble, in turn, related it to language, insofar as mastering "l'allemand, l'anglais, l'espagnol, le français, l'italien. . . ne suffit plus" (Étiemble 35; German, English, Spanish, French, Italian is no longer enough). Wellek's immediate response to Étiemble kept both

issues apart. Sixty years later, interrogating comparative literature from a geopolitical perspective shows that neither comparison and languages can be kept apart, nor are they the only problems that need to be addressed. According to Claudio Guillén (*Entre lo uno y lo diverso* 39), "Tenían que haberse abierto camino, para que fuera posible la Literatura Comparada, la idea de literatura nacional y el sentido moderno de la diferenciación histórica" ("The idea of national literature and a modern sense of historical differentiation were necessary precursors for the study of comparative literature," Guillén, *The Challenge* 24). From a geopolitical point of view—in the restricted sense of the new "genre of geo-power within the capitals of the Great Powers" (Tuathail 12), historical differentiation accelerated by confronting "[c]eux qui n'avaient point d'histoire" (Hamidou Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë* 48; "those who had no history," Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 64) and introducing comparison as an evaluation tool. For the Great Powers, comparison with the Other legitimized the *mission civilisatrice*. For those who had no history or, to be more precise, for their Westernized elites, access to the historical being could only be achieved by retrieving the "national time" (Serequeberhan 66 *apud* Fanon), for which (national) literature was instrumental.

Imperial power produced comparative literature, and comparative literature supported imperial power. By applying speech act theory to comparative literature, the fact that comparative literature, like all other disciplines, not only *presents* information but also *performs* actions, becomes self-evident. In my application, comparative literature's locutionary act comprises both the actual scientific literature and the utterances to be examined; the illocutionary act results in the classification of the material object of study as either "literature," or "art" or "other areas of knowledge and belief" (Remak 3). Finally, the perlocutionary act deracinates the two or more items under comparison and yokes them

together with the motivation of gaining new knowledge (Radhakrishnan 456). In this essay, I have focused on the locutionary act.

An analysis of the language-related aspects of comparative literature seems most appropriate, inasmuch as the discipline has been involved since its foundation in the study of the international and transnational dimension of literatures. This dimension is best encapsulated in interlingualism, in accordance with the Humboldt–Whorf hypothesis, either in its stronger version—"a speaker's language sets up a series of lexical and grammatical categories which act as a kind of grid through which s/he perceives the external world and which constrain the way in which s/he categorizes and conceptualizes different phenomena" (Pütz and Verspoor ix)—or, in its weaker version—"language may not determine the way we think, but … it does influence the way we perceive and remember" (Pütz and Verspoor ix–x). This is reflected in the major share of papers that compare literary works in their source languages in *Comparative Literature* and *1616: Anuario*. That English and Spanish are the hegemonic scientific languages is expected for a journal that operates within the English language community and one that operates in a community that aspires for its language—Spanish—to become an international scientific language. Though monolingualism is not dominant in terms of secondary sources, the three top positions, which amount to 70–80 per cent, are occupied by a current international scientific language (English), two former international scientific languages (French and German) and a language that aspires to be an international scientific language (Spanish).[12] Finally, the number of source languages of literary works under scrutiny shows that a substantial share—between 50 and 62 per cent—corresponds to four languages—English, Spanish, French and German. Neither of the three paradigm shifts—postcolonial studies, East/West studies and world literature studies—has had, therefore, a real influence on comparatist practice, as manifested in *Comparative Literature* and *1616: Anuario*.

In 1952, Erich Auerbach anticipated that, as the result of the "process of imposed uniformity, which originally derived from Europe … and serves to undermine all individual traditions," "a single literary language" would impose itself and "herewith the notion of *Weltliteratur* would be at once realized and destroyed" (Auerbach, "Philology" 2 and 3). A rebuilt comparative literature, self-aware and self-critical of an imperial history that has naturalized the perception of "literature," should be a most pressing task today when the discipline, at least in the US and Spain, is mostly limited to only 0.05 per cent of the world's languages.[13]

[1] An earlier, shorter version of this paper was to be presented at the presidential plenary session of the 2020 ACLA conference in Chicago, which was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[2] There is a long tradition in comparative literature textbooks of punctuating the discipline's history with military confrontations within Europe, among which the Napoleonic Wars and World War II stand out (see Villanueva 101–04). In contrast, "the violence of Africa's encounter with Europe" (Serequeberhan 55), along with the encounter of other parts of the world with Europe, has not punctuated the discipline's history, and yet, such encounters made possible the access to unknown instances of verbal art across the world.

[3] The debate surrounding which specific work and which translation Goethe was reading during the winter holidays of 1827 is heated (see Debon, Purdy, O'Bell, Detering and Tan). I find much more relevant the fact that neither Goethe hesitated to classify such work as a novel, nor have critics discussed the implications of such a classification. "In diesen Tagen … habe ich vieles und mancherlei gelesen, besonders auch einem chinesischen Roman," said Goethe (Eckermann 230) to Eckermann ("Within the last few days … I have read many things, especially a Chinese novel," Goethe 164). Goethe's genre choice reflects an unavoidable dimension of understanding, namely, the process starts with an etic approach. Comparative literature, however, as all other comparative disciplines, aims to the *décentration* (decentering), inasmuch as "le processus comparatif … implique … un franchissement des frontiers ou, en termes plus techniques, un accroissement du champ de comparabilité, créant une relative proximité avec l'objet comparé et induisant de ce fait des changements chez le sujet comparant" (Jucquois 30; the comparative process implies a crossing of borders or, more technically, an augmentation of the field of comparability by

creating a relative proximity to the compared object and causing changes in the comparing subject).

[4] By combining a Foucauldian understanding of disciplines as "discursive practices" with a sociolinguistic understanding of disciplines as "discourse communities" (Swales 21–32), I read disciplines (here comparative literature) pragmatically to elucidate how they disseminate actual utterances with an ostensible meaning (locutionary act), for whose performance a specific action is performed (illocutionary act) with consequences affecting the receivers, both disciplinary peers and general public (perlocutionary act).

[5] This Spanish journal comprises two periods, one from 1978 to 2006, under the title of *1616: Anuario de la Sociedad Española de Literatura General y Comparada*, and another from 2011 onwards, under the title of *1616: Anuario de Literatura Comparada*. The year in the title is a reference to the deaths of William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes, but, interestingly, not of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, allegedly the first mestizo writer of the Americas, who died in the same year.

[6] It may be objected that, in comparative literature, knowledge dissemination media include books as more important than—or at least as important as—articles. I fully agree (see Huang and Chang). The problem lies in that databases in the humanities that include books, such as the MLA International Bibliography, are exceptional. And, when they do include books, the information needed for my research here, which is easier to manually retrieve from articles, is missing. Since comparative literature, more often than natural science, has been published in books (see Hicks), the results of my bibliometric analysis are provisional, awaiting a more stringent quantification of books.

[7] I would like to express my gratitude to Jaime López, who generously assisted me in creating the database.

[8] Another factor for publishing in English needs to be taken into account: "Publications, especially scientific journals, as a rule only have a chance to be included in the Citation Indexes if English is their only language of publication" (Ammon 9).

[9] In affiliation countries of contributors to *1616: Anuario*, it needs to be pointed out that "United Arab Emirates" stands for an US university with a satellite campus in Abu Dhabi, to which the researcher is affiliated.

[10] In relation to the data provided in Table 4, the data of Tables 5 and 6 show the source language of literary works, as well as the target language, that is, the language into which they have been translated, which is the version used for the analysis of the article in question.

[11] "Anglophones do not, or do, only to a very limited extent, take notice of research findings published in languages other than English. In addition, non-Anglophones do not take notice of publications in languages other than English except those in their own languages" (Ammon 24).

[12] "The GLNs [global language networks], mapped from millions of online and printed linguistic expressions, reveal that the world's languages exhibit a hierarchical structure dominated by a central hub, English, and a halo of intermediate hubs, which include other global languages, such as German, French, and Spanish. Although languages such as Chinese, Arabic, and Hindi are immensely popular, we document an important sense in which these languages are more peripheral to the world's network of linguistic influence" (Ronen et al.).

[13] Some self-observation is in order. This article belongs to the category "no-language" in terms of "languages of literary works" due to its meta-disciplinary dimension. A total of 58 items of secondary literature are included in the list of references, with the following distribution per language: 84.7 per cent (English), 6.8 per cent (Spanish), 5.1 per cent (French), and 3.4 per cent (German). It reproduces and contributes, therefore, to the

hegemony of English as language of scientific communication. Hopefully, my argument in favor of a subaltern geopolitics of comparative literature will still be discernible.

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