

Teaching Western Literatures to Chinese Students: A Comparative Approach

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Abstract

Teaching a Western literature to Chinese students presents various difficulties, especially from a cultural point of view because literary texts are often seen as something complicated, "culturally" distant and therefore not stimulating. The following paper tries to reflect on which principles should guide the teachers of this discipline when it is addressed to Chinese undergraduate students, through an analysis of the various possible approaches to the teaching of literature (historical, stylistic, genre based, thematic, hermeneutic, modular, etc.). The starting point of this paper is the need for a more comparative, intertextual and interdisciplinary view of the literary text: literature is a spider web, not a straight line. To truly understand a literary text, students need to focus their attention on a deep contextualization (historical period, society, literary movements, genre, theme, other texts, etc.) using a wide range of didactic tools (for example concept maps or hypertexts). The final objective will be finding keys of interpretation and using them in an autonomous reading.

Keywords: didactics of literature, didactic approaches, comparative literature, Chinese students, didactic tools

Objectives

The following paper seeks to analyze what the real needs, both linguistic and literary, of Chinese college students are when they have to face a Western literature course. The starting point is a comparative, intertextual and multidisciplinary vision of literature and how such a vision offers a "global" view that allows the students to pass from a general perspective (historical period, literary movement, author's thought, society of the time, etc.) to one focused on "details" (a single text or single fragment) and vice versa. To do this, in addition to a set of requirements that we should have in mind when we organize this type of course, we've decided to focus on two tools that can be used within individual lessons: conceptual maps and hypertexts. The ultimate goal is to create independent readers who are able to find and create their own cultural reference points and use them in subsequent readings.

Research Questions

1. What are the main needs and/or difficulties for a Chinese student who is confronted with the study of Western literature?
2. At what level of foreign language knowledge should one begin with the study of literature and why?
3. What teaching approaches are more suitable for Chinese students and what vision of the literature comes out?
4. How should courses be organized to favor that particular vision of literature?
5. What tools can we use during our daily lessons to improve that particular vision of literature?

Methodology

This paper is primarily theoretical and literature-based. It starts with an analysis of the principal didactic approaches to literature and the learning needs of Chinese students, then there’s a comparison between this two subjects to find the most appropriate didactic path for our pupils. After identifying it as a comparative and intertextual vision of literature, essential to create a web of cultural references, we move to its practical applications both at the level of internal organization (traditional or modular courses) and at that of classroom tools. With regard to the material used, I have excluded both dissertations focused solely on teaching a single national literature or a single author, as they tend to show mostly didactic proposals and they’re often not supported by a general theoretical framework, and studies that concentrate on the didactic use of literature only to teach a foreign language, as in this case the analysis of a literary text is often and willingly seen as a simple didactic tool for learning a given language and loses its dignity as independent educational activity.

Theoretical framework

When we speak in general of didactics, there are normally two essential points to consider: what to teach and how. In the case of teaching of foreign literature to foreign university students, the first question is easily answered: The so-called classical “canon” of literature inherited, for example, from high school education, a kind of journey between the main authors and literary movements from the origins to the mid-twentieth century. More complicated to define is the way to teach, how material in the classroom should be presented to students, what they should do with that material, and what goals should be achieved.

When we think about these concepts, it is necessary to start from the idea of literature as a communicative act whose basic structure consists of three elements: a sender (the author), a recipient (the reader), and a message (the literary text).

Literary criticism, depending on the historical period and its orientation of thought, has focused on different elements, as can be seen in the table below (Stagi Scarpa, 2005).

Table 1

Central element	Type of literary criticism
Author	Marxist Critique, Historicism, Cultural Studies
Text	Structuralism, Formalism
Recipient	Reader’s Response, Hermeneutics

This critical subdivision has also clearly influenced the didactics of literature, which in different historical periods has responded in different ways to the question “What does it mean to studying/teach literature?”. First of all, we have to start with the previous question, “What is literature and how can we analyze it?”. From this point, approaches to this subject are differentiated depending on where the teacher focuses the center of attention (writer, text, reader, literary genre, theme, etc.). Several approaches also involve questioning the role of the teacher, who will assume different positions according to the type of teaching proposed: defender of a traditional encyclopedic knowledge in the case of an approach that focuses on the historical context and authors, technical specialist of metrics, stylistics, narratology, etc. in the case of a text-oriented approach, or mediator and facilitator in the case of an approach that focuses on reader’s interpretations.

Scarpa (2005) proposes the following distribution:

Table 2

Approach	Central role	Teaching
Historical-chronological	Author	Focus on the author and the historical context
Stylistic and linguistic	Text	Focus on text and language, textual analysis
Hermeneutic	Player	Focus on the reader's interpretation
Genre	Literary genre	Focussing on belonging to a literary genre
Theme	Themes of the anthropological imagination	Focus on a particular cultural theme by linking it to history and genres

Having seen this scheme, the natural question that we ask ourselves is which is the “best” approach, the most profitable for our students. Starting from the assumption that each of them is not a watertight compartment but rather can be combined with others during a course of study, the answer will of course depend on our final goals for our students. If we want our students to acquire the literary “tradition” of a certain country or a historical period, the best approach is historicism, with its list of authors and currents, but it tends not to consider the text, used only as mere example. If we want our students to be able to dissect any type of text regardless of the context in which it was created, we will use a stylistic approach; however, this tends to be “cold” and, if misused, it might be perceived only as a sterile search for technical elements. If we want our students to work on various texts using a common element to guide them, we can use the approach of genres or themes, but this risks reducing the complexity of literary work to a single reading key. If we want our students to reflect on the text and find their own meaning for what they are reading, the hermeneutic approach will be the one most suitable to us, with the risk that too much freedom may produce a series of anarchistic and overly subjective analyses.

Having established that each approach has advantages and disadvantages and that it is necessary to alternate and/or combine according to time and needs, let us now focus on our center of interest, the Chinese university student.

Chinese undergraduate students and literature study

The problems and needs of Chinese students are strictly related with the peculiarities of their learning habits: Both Wong (2004) and Littrell (2005), for example, consider Confucianism the reference point for the Chinese learning model in order to reach the same general characteristics:

- For the Chinese student, every initiative must start from the teacher, a repository of knowledge who cannot be contradicted or criticized.
- The lesson must be “closed” and always have a more or less similar structure.
- The teacher should always provide clear and precise answers.
- Great importance is given more to the class as a group than to the individual, and the student speaks only when questioned.
- The central focus of the study is learning content through practical examples.
- Learning occurs through mnemonic repetition of “lists” from primary school onward.

Therefore, for Chinese college students, the possibility of choosing a didactic is almost impossible due to the nature of the courses they have to follow: Within the eminent historical-chronological approach, where normally there is never a “monographic” part but only the purely “basic” one, there seems to be no room to maneuver to analyze the literature from different points of view. Courses in this field provide a detailed history of authors and works, and normally students learn to translate almost without thinking the various texts read in class. While the stylistic approach continues to enjoy some respect, the themes- and genres-based approaches are almost unknown, as they are difficult to insert into a purely “basic” standard course. Less interest is given to the student’s opinion and personal interpretation of the work (hermeneutic approach); for the Chinese student there is only one correct interpretation, and it’s provided by the teacher.

As for the students, they prefer not to have any surprises and to read the text at home before the classroom explanation so they have full control of the situation in order to avoid questions that might make them or their teacher “lose face” (Wong, 2004). The same thing happens when presenting ppts or extra materials in class; pupils avoid taking notes that may contain errors, instead preferring to ask the teacher for the material in its original entirety and take it home to review it.

Standard Western literature courses and related issues

In various Chinese universities, the degree courses in foreign languages offer only two literary subjects: History of Literature and Texts of Literature. The first one, as the name suggests, is purely focused on a succession in chronological order of literary movements and authors, and it is worth recalling that in this type of course one does not consider text reading except for short fragments used as examples.

The second kind of course, even if inserted in a historicist approach, as the name suggests, focuses more on the actual reading of texts, thus using an approach that we would describe as a stylistic, a form-based text analysis (stylistic, versification, rhetoric).

In most cases, however, these two courses do not generally follow a parallel path; History of Literature develops over a single semester (the second of the third year) but Texts of Literature covers two (the second of the third year and the first of the fourth). This means that, despite the two subjects starting together, one of them suddenly accelerates, ending when the other is basically at its halfway point.

Both subjects, as well as others more connected to the sphere of “culture”, are therefore positioned between the penultimate (third) and the last (fourth) years of study because literature is considered a point of arrival of language learning for its supposed difficulty from the point of view of language and meaning. In fact, literature is experienced by the majority of students as an extremely complicated subject matter; the students are not accustomed to this kind of language and its specific rules, and during the first two years they have little opportunity to engage with this “new world”, as normally manuals and language course programs tend to exclude literature from everyday lessons in favor of texts considered more “communicative” such as dialogues, newspaper articles, short essays, and so on. In terms of the content, the absence of solid cultural bases does not create much of a problem on the single cultural element, but on its overall view; what is missing is that spider web of diachronic, synchronous, geographic, artistic links which allows students to contextualize literary works. Without this, literature becomes a list of watertight compartments (authors, texts, currents, etc.) to memorize in which the reading part of the text is ancillary. These shortcomings and distortions lead students to see literature as unmotivating and extraneous to them. They often do not feel pleasure in reading, they’re unable to work autonomously because they have no general reference

points that allow them to put every element in the right place, and above all, they don't develop their own critical sense, instead learning passively what the teacher is saying.

In addition, if the students follow the classical historicist approach, they are forced to start from the most chronologically remote texts, which are far more complex both from linguistic and cultural points of view. In the study of European literature, for example, the first period analyzed will be the medieval one, normally characterized by complex language and socio-cultural elements that require a wide contextualization such as Christian doctrine, feudal structure, communal society, the birth of national states, the political equilibrium between the papacy and the empire, the relationship with the classical world, the vision of the "other", concepts of life, love, war, etc.

We can, therefore, say that the main problems of Chinese students are a misguided vision of literature as the arrival point of language learning, a lack of solid cultural bases necessary for understanding Western literature and the use of not very effective approaches. Their main need is therefore the creation of a didactic pathway that takes into account their peculiarities, so it is not possible to transfer the programs and methods used in European universities without having first adapted them.

Literature as part of language learning

As mentioned, in Chinese universities literature is normally excluded from standard foreign language courses, and its appearance in the last two years causes various problems because of the "novelty" of the point of view of the lexicon and style; literature seems to be something totally different from the language studied every day in the classroom.

The only way to avoid this effect is to introduce literature to students in the first year, engaging it more as a single written document in a certain language than as a product of a certain historical period or a literary movement. Our interest in the beginning should therefore be more limited to the field of written comprehension. Surely in this first moment the text can be cut, manipulated, and taught in any way that feels useful, and we should prefer contemporary authors (e.g., from the early twentieth century). Magnani (2009) sees in this entry of literature into traditional language classes the possibility of using a hermeneutical approach we can define as "post-communicative": Languages are no longer learned to communicate but through their use in various fields. The various assumptions, the search for meaning, and the discussion within the class become an opportunity to guide students to interact with text the understanding of which does not appear to be the final objective, which is to satisfy the impulse to communicate.

With regard to the right moment to introduce literature in the classroom, in the classical Chinese four-year structure of the university the first two should spent solely on the habit of engaging with literary texts, while the last two finally proceed to the actual study of literature in a more or less traditional sequence. If in the first year we were to introduce some literary element during reading activities, from the second year this concept can be expanded and we can also propose reading some of the classics of contemporary and past literature (perhaps in a reduced or simplified form) or creating an ad-hoc course of selected readings, perhaps associated with the ubiquitous course of Culture and Civilization, which is often somewhat disconnected from other courses and consists of a simple list of topics to memorize. When we have to deal with topics like geography, festivals, traditions, etc., it may be interesting to make them more culturally identifiable by means of a true written "human testimony".

A comparative, intertextual and multidisciplinary vision

This “hermeneutical” approach, based on interpreting and searching for meaning, can also be used in the courses of the last two years (History of Literature and Texts of Literature), which are more oriented to the historical-cultural aspect of literature, but the problem of an anarchist or impressionist interpretation may arise: Can all the meanings discovered by students, especially when the cultural distance is as wide as in the case of Western literature for Chinese students, be considered acceptable? A convincing answer comes from Luperini (2013), who argues that interpretations are unlimited but not infinite, as at the didactic level they always have to respect two elements outside the reader, namely the text and the class. The reader, with his or her knowledge and expectations, according to the hermeneutic theory of Gadamer’s fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 2001), should constantly “converse” both with the text and its extensive background of previous interpretations as well as with the other classmates who may have complementary or opposite interpretations. Hermeneutics moves from the individual to the text itself and to the group in a continuous exchange of information that has its center in the reading act.

But how can we have a community of readers of this type? The proposed solution is to get out of the classical subdivision of separated approaches to move to a common goal that carries all the work in the classroom: a comparative, intertextual and multidisciplinary vision of literature. Only through a continuous dialogue, not with the single text, but with various texts and their internal and external components, is it possible to appreciate and value every single reading. Clearly there will be a (chrono)logical view to guide the student, but only by creating a huge web of references towards the “other”, which can be historically and geographically near or far; we must contextualize the work by giving it the right position and value through guiding criteria that can give meaning to reading. This is the only way we can get out of the main problem of text being disconnected from the “world”, a problem that leads to learning “empty” contents, as they are not communicating with each other, which keeps the student from understanding the text in its true complexity and appreciating the evolution of the literary history of a country as a whole. Our research question regarding which approach is the “best” one, is therefore not set in the right way: there is no better approach because all can be used as long as they are included in the aforementioned comparative general vision, a sort of super-approach that encapsulates them all.

Changing the traditional structure of courses

In the next two chapters we will try to answer the research question about the organization of the courses, which can follow a more “traditional” structure, in the sense of familiarity to Chinese students, or a more “modern” one, organized according to the principle of modularity.

To return to the structure of our last two years of university, besides the two above-mentioned literature courses, other “cultural” courses, such as Society and Culture, History, Art History, etc. often appear. In order to realize our comparative project, everything should be chronologically organized in parallel to create a continuum that can show students the same topic from different perspectives, giving them general reading keys. From the standpoint of “standard” approaches, those likely to be best suited to this kind of didactics are the genres- and themes-based approaches, perhaps inserted into a historical framework and analyzed through a stylistic-formal approach when considered necessary. Such a strategy would reduce or eliminate the classic “single author” chronological approach, replacing it with a wider vision for ages or major events. In case educators still want to retain scanning for authors, the maximum number of writers studied in a Chinese standard course of 16 lessons should not exceed the number of 5-6 in

order that students have the opportunity to do a thorough study and work in class and at home.

In addition to the need for greater linkage between other cultural disciplines and literature, the two branches into which it is divided the study of Literature (History and Texts) should find a way to maintain a continuous dialogue by merging into a single course with a more theoretical starting point and then a more practical reading one or vice versa depending on how the lessons will be organized. The whole plan could be organized in the two semesters of the third year and the first of the fourth, with a breakdown of the various programs into three parts; for example, for European literature, there might be a subdivision based on three macro-periods: Middle Ages (X-XIV century), Modern Age (XV-XVIII century) and Contemporary Age (XIX-XX century).

An alternative solution: A modular approach

The solution proposed for traditional courses, despite the fact that it may appear theoretically solid, presents a major problem from a practical point of view: The number of hours of lessons for students would multiply or other courses essential to training students would need to be sacrificed (e.g., standard language courses, phraseology, translation, audiovisual workshops, etc.). But there may be a way to maintain the above structure within a few hours; the so-called modular approach, a totally different way of dealing with the previously seen “culture” didactics, abandons the idea of a traditional encyclopedic teaching where students must know “a bit of everything” in favor of the creation of various didactic units linked to each other in a (chrono)logical order. In this case these can be of different kinds of approach (historical, theme, genre, a portrait of an author or a single work), and by doing that we can create a different course every year, similar to the so-called European university monographic courses, which allow students to work on a small amount of material with a precise goal. Again, our aim will be to provide students with a method of analysis through the links among the various parts of the module and the different modules themselves, accepting that it would be impossible to learn the entire traditional canon and using it in a more practical and functional way. This leads to the so-called “education to the imaginary”; every work of art (literary and non-literary) is considered a testimony we can analyze in various ways—for example, as Adriano Colombo (1996) says, “from an ethical, aesthetic, and cognitive point of view”—thereby respecting its contextualization process and its complexity. This subdivision also allows us to independently extract the “historicity” of a text instead of starting from preconceptions handed down from above by virtue of a continuous comparison of elements; the student’s analysis method passes from the deductive type typical of the historicist approach (“this text belongs to X because it possesses elements Y and Z”) to an inductive one that focuses on the reader and his discoveries (“elements Y and Z are present in various texts, so we can decide to combine them under the X label”), already partially present in hermeneutical, genres- or themes-based approaches.

The modular approach can also be useful in preparatory lessons for traditional courses, especially when they address far-reaching temporal or cultural elements. This structure could be applied to a higher level by offering European-Western culture preparatory modules for students of the same faculty who are faced with courses of different languages with common elements (e.g. the understanding of a such a distant yet geographically cohesive society as that of medieval Europe, or the need for “extra national” concepts such as Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassicism, Romanticism, etc.)

Tools in the literature class: Conceptual maps and hypertexts

It is worth analyzing two teaching tools that perfectly embody this comparative, intertextual and multidisciplinary vision of literature: conceptual maps and hypertexts.

Before analyzing the conceptual map concept, it is necessary to give a clear definition of it according to the requirements of its creator, Professor Joseph Novak (2010). The conceptual map is a graphical representation of the relationship network between several concepts. It is normally equipped with the following features:

- It is oriented towards expressiveness: Text descriptions are extended.
- It comprises two elements, the conceptual nodes and connectionist relations (arrows equipped with a label that shows the type of relation/connection between the various nodes).
- The general connection is reticular, and there can be or not a “central” node departure.
- Iconic, textual, chromatic or positional encodings are used to make clearer the relationship and role of each element (for example, the different geometric shapes of the various nodes)

We have to be careful not to confuse these kind of maps with the mental ones, theorized by cognitivist Tony Buzan, which have their own peculiar characteristics:

- Hierarchical-associative structure: Each node has a single “prior”
- Centrality of evocativity: Use of images, colors, and symbols to stimulate the associative process
- Personal use: Unlike concept maps, mind maps are more personal and can only be comprehensible to their creator, who develops a network of symbols, designs and colors that allow him to better remember the concepts and the various branches they create.

The fusion of elements of the two types of maps is instead called *solution map* and is used in various fields.

Among conceptual maps there are some with a purely scholastic use, namely structural maps. This kind of map shows us the structure of a learning unit (whether it is a lesson, module or whole course), and it provides students a skeleton of the knowledge they will need to gain with a particular emphasis on concepts, the various connections, their positions, and priorities. The various nodes can have different types of connections (sequential, tree, or network) depending on the needs. Structural maps are therefore a useful tool for allowing students to understand what they need to know and what the teacher expects them to know (Valsecchi Polpe, 2011). The structural map is the perfect graphical representation of the web of knowledge discussed above; it is the demonstration of how the study of literature should not be linear (a series of authors and/or texts) but three-dimensional. Through the immediacy of the nodes it's possible to jump from one concept to another, and we can decide to expand it or view it from another angle by passing to different nodes, to which we can connect images, audio tracks, pictures, etc. Thus we pass from a mnemonic-guided learning to a constructivist/personalized one: It is the student that creates the most suitable course for him- or herself and can deepen and develop each part independently. Full or partial development of one or more maps can also become homework, and it can be used both in a single lesson and in the course in general. Every single node can be expanded and transformed into a new concept map and vice versa.

Another conceptually similar tool is hypertext, a non-linear but reticulated text consisting of a series of nodes (other texts, audio, video, etc.) that can be accessed by clicking on certain hotspots that are links. The hotspot can be a single word, a phrase, or an image that functions as a “door” to a node; the text comes out from the two-

dimensionality of standard reading and becomes deeper, comprising several layers the reader may freely explore. Reading through the text becomes active, and the general structure requires the user not to be passive, but to act continuously. Landow (1992) argues on this subject that hypertext is a convenient and efficient tool for holding courses that need the contribution of other disciplines because of its connectivity and accessibility features, and it offers teachers the continuous virtual presence of teachers of other disciplines.

Hypertext is thus perfectly suited to insertion into a comparative, intertextual, and multidisciplinary vision precisely for its ability to connect infinite nodes of different types according to a path that can be created by the teacher or the student; every text seen in class can become a hypertext with references to other works, insights, maps, works of art, explanatory videos, etc. Even a poem can become a hypertext with links to rhetorical figures, themes, genres, other works, pictorial representations or sculptures, etc. The student could extend the network of references provided by the teacher by adding additional links appropriate to his needs. As in the case of conceptual maps, the passage from the general view to a single element is managed by the student, who can thus create and memorize connections and reading keys. This kind of work can also be used as a home exercise or group work to link all the information seen in the classroom up to that point.

Both tools, then, start from the idea of showing connections and allowing users to be an active participant in the reading and understanding process by creating their own custom reading and understanding path. Both also provide different degrees of freedom depending on the structure that is provided to the learner (conceptual maps) or the number of links and the possibility of modifying them (hypertext). This freedom allows the teacher to better manage the problem of the allegedly low autonomy of the Chinese student; he or she can start from a passive and guided reading and then slowly provide the student increasing autonomy (also by comparing with classmates) to finally attain unguided reading and understanding.

Final Results

- Students better comprehend literature not as a simple list of data but as a web with an infinite number of links.
- Literature is perceived as a part of the culture of a country to contextualize it inside a larger multidisciplinary framework (essential when the cultural distance is quite big).
- The study of literature becomes, in the broadest sense, “discussion” with the “external” context, with other texts, with previous interpretations of works or poems, with the opinions of other students, etc.
- The final result is not a simple acquisition of concepts learnt by heart, but the attainment of reading keys that will guide students in an autonomous reading.
- Through the use of concept maps and hypertext, the teacher can guide the students through this view of literature while giving them a healthy amount of freedom.
- The results obtained are particularly effective for the problems encountered by Chinese students in the study of literature for four reasons. 1) Cultural distance and study in watertight compartments are reduced thanks to a more vivid and broader view of literature and the creation of links which provide reading keys for future text analyses. 2) This kind of learning obliges the student not to memorize, but to create a custom learning path. 3) Courses, whether modular or traditional but in parallel, are organized to be always expandable, easily editable and reconnectable to external elements. 4) The use of the tools put into practice in the classroom

gradually introduces autonomy in reading and analyzing.

Limitations

The abandonment of the traditional structure of the historicist learning process is not without problems or concerns at the time of its practical realization:

- This approach may be difficult to balance with classical historicism, which remains in some ways the most linear and easiest to follow at the beginning for students.
- This possibility of indefinitely expanding our source material can create problems related to time management.
- The comparative approach can initially scare or distract students for the large volume of information they have to manage.
- The work necessary to arrive at autonomy in reading can be rather long and requires a motivated student.

There is a question of whether evaluation should remain the same as in the classical historicist approach or whether the criteria should change.

Final Thoughts

As we have seen, the possible didactic approaches are numerous, and possible solutions that we can apply in the classroom depend on many internal and external factors, not least the time available. As it turns out, Chinese university students, because of the great distance between their language and culture and those of the West, need a well-organized route along the four-year study whereby they ultimately obtain the ability to read literary texts almost completely autonomously with a series of research tools to guide them.

As described previously, to achieve this we must have clear some basic concepts related to the study of foreign literature:

1. Studying literature does not mean memorizing dates, names of authors, literary movements, works, etc. The data and concepts learned should be a tool for understanding, not themselves the end of the literature.
2. Studying literature does not mean dissecting a single text from a formal point of view (rhetorical, stylistic, versification, narratology). Despite the usefulness of “technical” knowledge to analyze a text, the text can be truly understood only when compared to the reality of its period and the different opinions about it over the centuries.
3. Studying literature does not mean reading a totally decontextualized text and having a strongly personalistic opinion based on a partial or distorted vision of the work. The text also exists outside the individual reader but continues to survive thanks to the continuous search for the meaning.
4. Studying a text means a historical and geographical contextualization and respect for all the previous interpretations over the years.
5. Studying literature means a 360-degree analysis of a text and its infinite connections with other previous texts and other cultural elements (historical, philosophical, artistic, theme- and genre-based).
6. Studying literature means, above all, putting the reading act and the pleasure for it in the center. This is made possible by different hermeneutical communities that allow us to discuss and better understand every human production.

If the communicative triangle we saw before was formed by author, text and reader, in this new vision of literature, we can transition from this old model to one made by texts (always in the plural), readers aware of their role and a hermeneutical community. These three elements can be combined in infinite ways with each other by means of a

comparative, intertextual and interdisciplinary vision of study. This can cause some cracks in the traditional didactics of literature born on high school benches and often carried without changes in university classrooms. But this old structure increasingly shows its age because of the extension of the teaching scope (the whole Western culture seems difficult to compress in standard courses and manuals) and the need to adapt our didactic model to students with different needs, learning habits, and expectations.

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