Comparative Literature & World Literature

Comparative Literature & *World Literature*

Journal Description

In the form of print as well as online with open-access, *Comparative Literature & World Literature* (*CLWL*) is a peer-reviewed, full-text, quarterly academic journal in the field of comparative literature and world literature, whose purpose is to make available in a timely fashion the multi-faceted aspects of the discipline. It publishes articles and book reviews, featuring those that explore disciplinary theories, comparative poetics, world literature and translation studies with particular emphasis on the dialogues of poetics and literatures in the context of globalization.

Subscription Rates

Individual subscription: $ 40/per year
Student subscription: $ 20/per year (A copy of a valid student ID is required)

Sponsors

School of Chinese Language and Literature, Beijing Normal University (P. R. China)
The College of Humanities, the University of Arizona, Tucson (USA)

Editorial Office

Address: *Comparative Literature & World Literature* editorial office, School of Chinese Language and Literature, Beijing Normal University, No. 19 Xinjiekouwai Street, Beijing, 100875, P. R. China.
Email: cwliterature@bnu.edu.cn
         cwliterature@email.arizona.edu

Comparative Literature & World Literature

CONTENTS

Articles

Reviews

Articles

A Wartime Tale of Two Cities:

Transnational Literary Interaction and Intellectual Cosmopolitanism from Madrid to Wuhan

Nan Qu

(Beijing Institute of Technology)

Abstract

After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, Wuhan was quickly given the name "Oriental Madrid." The juxtaposition of Wuhan and Madrid points to the deep connection between China and Spain facing the harsh reality of the World War. This connection implies the leftist international front's mode of action towards world revolution, as well as a leftist consciousness and a coordinated action plan within the wartime world intellectual community. Behind the reality of the anti-war and anti-fascist community, there is also an inherent transformation of literary imaginations, emotional mechanisms, life experiences, and even their perspectives on civilization. Taking the "Oriental Madrid" as a symbol, a method of cultural production and dissemination with the characteristic of "cosmopolitanism" was widely manifested during the 1930s to the 1940s and throughout World War II.

Keywords: literature and art during the Second Sino-Japanese War, Wuhan, Madrid, leftist intellectual community, wartime cosmopolitanism

Introduction

After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, Wuhan was quickly given the name the "Oriental Madrid." The literary tendency that established a corresponding relationship between Wuhan and Madrid has become a common public discourse and social consensus, shaping the imagination and the mode of thinking of wartime China. The literary processes and historical reasons for Wuhan being named the "Oriental Madrid" need to be examined in the context of the cross-border interaction between China and Spain during the Second Sino-Japanese War, as well as the complex and globally interrelated state of affairs. The positioning of the "Oriental Madrid" within the context of battlefield imaginations serves not only to indicate that Wuhan has evolved into an international cultural front but also to underscore the presence of a globally interconnected approach to wartime literary production and action. Taking this as an opportunity, many aspects of Chinese wartime literature and art could be embedded and reinterpreted through the literary landscape and historical perspective of transnational interaction.

Wartime Odyssey: Julian Bell, from Wuhan to Madrid

From the 25 to 27 September 1938, the *Constellation* (*Xingzuo* 星座) supplement of *Sing Tao Daily* (星岛日报) published a three-part essay titled "A Memory of Mine: Remembering Julian Bell" written by Ma Er 马耳 (Ye Junjian 叶君健). The essay started with the grievous news of Julian's death on the battlefield of the Spanish Civil War: "This man was dead. For an extremely long time, he was almost forgotten" (Ma "A Memory").

Julian Bell, a young British poet, arrived at the National University of Wuhan in China in October 1935. Bell was quite famous for his celebrated family members: his aunt was Virginia Woolf, known for her "stream of consciousness" writing style; his parents (Clive and Vanessa Bell) were core members of the Bloomsbury Group (Stansky and Abrahams 181–253). In Ma's detailed descriptions, Bell was presented as a tall, golden-haired gentleman radiating a noble Parisian air. However, this "highly well-bred poet," who attempted to reform Chinese educational principles and taught modern British literature in Wuhan, often felt "indescribably lonely." As his complaint goes, "[E]xcept Lin Shuhua 凌淑华, there are few people with whom I can simply converse" (Ma "A Memory"). This statement implies an anecdotal romantic relationship between Bell and Ling, who was the wife of Chen Yuan 陈源, Bell's academic colleague. An interesting tidbit was that Ling published her short story *A Poet Goes Mad* (疯了的诗人, 1928), co-translated with Bell, in *T'ien*

Hsia Monthly (天下月刊)'s April 1937 issue.1 Nevertheless, the origin of Bell's loneliness goes far beyond unfulfilled love. In fact, it might have revealed his cognitive chasm from the Chinese intellectuals. After Bell's one-year teaching job in Wuhan, he left China via Hong Kong in February 1937 and rushed to the frontier of the Spanish Civil War in June 1937. He first landed in Barcelona and then reached Madrid. Eventually, he died in mid–July 1937 during a bombardment while working as an ambulance driver in the battle of Brunete (Stansky and Abrahams 254–287). The battle was a part of the Republicans' heroic and persistent efforts to defend Madrid from Francoist armies' counterattack. In any case, Bell's death caused a small-scale commemorative activity among intellectual exiles in Hong Kong at the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

"¡No pasarán!"—A Transnational Warscape and Soundscape: Defense of Madrid, Defense of Wuhan

Among Bell's wartime transnational odyssey, it was Wuhan/Madrid rather than his real homeland—Britain—that became his original Ithaca, which then re-motivated his literary politics. The Spanish Civil War, which lasted for nearly three years from 1936 to 1939 and which made Bell a collective hero, galvanized a highly politicized literary movement on an international scale. Upton Sinclair's novella *¡No Pasarán!: A Novel of the Battle of Madrid* (1937), which was translated into Chinese in 1939 (Ji), made Madrid, the capital of Spain, a gathering place for large numbers of transregional intellectuals and turned it into a metaphorical heart of the entire wartime revolutionary communities. The siege of Madrid created a highly symbolic cosmopolitan warscape, and henceforward a soundscape, which brought forth several melodies that gained widespread popularity. One of these famous songs was *Coplas por la Defensa de Madrid*. Intriguingly, songs about the defense of Madrid were imported into China speedily and even aroused intense arguments in domestic media, such as in *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury* (大美晚报). In Nie Gannu's 聂绀弩 words, the Chinese audience seemed to be able to comprehend Madrid's profound sadness, perhaps with their empathetic melancholy stemming from Li Zhi's 李贽 saying: "borrowing others' wine glasses and pouring in your own mood" (借他人酒杯，浇自己块垒) (Nie).

In the summer of 1936, Chinese lyricist Mai Xin 麦新 and composer Lü Ji 吕

---

1   More details of this love affair can be found in Patricia Laurence's *Lily Briscoe's Chinese Eyes: Bloomsbury, Modernism and China* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2003) and in *K: The Art of Love* (London: Penguin Press, 2011), a fiction work by Hong Ying 虹影, a famous Chinese contemporary female writer.

骥 created an indigenous soundtrack, "Defense of Madrid" (保卫马德里), which infused multiple generations' wartime memories and came to represent a lyrical means of expression that entailed acoustic politics. The entire creative process also revolved around the historical context of the international communist movement. At that time, Lü Ji, who led the Song Research Association, first proposed to write songs to assist Spain in the discussion on "the integration of music with political circumstances" (歌咏如何结合政治形势). The materials used by Mai Xin came predominantly from current political publications such as *Jiuguo Shibao* (救国时报), published by the Communist Party of China in France. Ma's enthusiasm and awareness of a "global mutual support for the war of resistance" mainly stemmed from his communications in Esperanto with a Polish worker. The worker's letters not only expressed support for the Chinese people's resistance but also related the story of how his younger brother joined the International Brigade and participated in the defense of Madrid (Zhang Shiying 204). The song was published in the World Association's magazine *Today's World* (现世界) and was translated into ten languages by the Esperanto Academy for external distribution. It can be said that the song "Defense of Madrid" had been woven into the international literary and artistic framework from its conception, through its creation and dissemination, and was inherent in the development process of left-wing literature and art. Creators Lü Ji and Nie Er 聂耳 jointly formed the leftist music group, which was under the leadership of the Chinese League of Leftist Theatrical Figures and was involved with the Chinese League of Leftist Writers (Lü). The march mode presented by the "New Melody," as well as the short and orderly structural arrangement, have some resonances with elements found in the "March of the Volunteers" (义勇军进行曲) composed by Nie Er. In addition, the Amateur Choirs and Song Research Association can both be considered branch organizations of the leftist music group. They mobilized groups such as workers and students to rehearse and promote choir movements from the inner cities for the frontlines of the battlefield.

The internationalist and anti-fascist song "Defense of Madrid" responded to and explored the activism of left-wing literature during the war. According to Liang Luo's analysis, the Chinese left-wing avant-garde artists of the 1930s joined together and developed an internationally coordinated method of leftist literary practice (Luo). The internationalist organizational style and literary imagination established by the lyrics of "All World" and "All Humanity" further enhance the "affective power" (D. Wang) of lyrical forms such as songs, serving a left-wing political role in unifying national resistance and inspiring mass revolution internally. It is not difficult to understand that in the summer of 1937, Yan'an organized the Anti-Japanese War

parade and chose this song as a choir track. The slogan held high at the forefront of the procession was also written by American journalist Helen Snow in Spanish as "¡No Pasarán!" (Tsou N. and Tsou L. 164–166).

As a matter of fact, in contrast to Bell's transnational trail in 1937, one particular case of literary heroism originating from Madrid also became a characteristic historical narration of Wuhan in 1938. According to *Shen Bao*'s (申报) interview with some militarists on 24 June 1938, based on the tendency of rhetorically referring to the defense of Madrid within Chinese intellectuals' military discourse, Madrid indeed supplied strong inspirations for the recent defense of Wuhan. Just in the year of 1938, a propaganda slogan, "Defense of Great Wuhan" (保卫大武汉), was put forward by the National Government's Military Commission and appeared frequently in reports, essays, movements, and daily conversations among citizens. Obviously, it is the Battle of Wuhan that mainly triggered this wartime glossary, but it was the "Defense of Madrid" which, to some extent, brought forth the birth of that literary discourse due to the parallelism between Madrid (Spain) and Wuhan (China), in turn further elucidating the wartime transnational tale of two cities.

The song "Defense of Madrid" also underwent local transformations and became widely broadcasted. In 1938, Chen Gexin 陈歌辛, who was then a music professor at the Shanghai Sino-French Academy of Drama, created the anti-Japanese song "No Enemy Passes Through" (不许敌人通过) and directly applied the slogan "Defense of Madrid" to the local context of China's defense war. As a form of street-level political activism, collective singing activities were relatively easy to operate and had a significant impact on public mobilization. In order to stimulate the morale of the nation, strengthen mass cohesion, and intensify political propaganda, both the Nationalists and the Communists focused on Wuhan during the war, seizing the opportunity of mass activities such as celebrating the May Day (庆五一), commemorating the one-year anniversary of the Anti-Japanese War, and launching a singing movement. According to Stephen MacKinnon's observation, Zhou Enlai 周恩来 served as the Deputy Minister of the Political Department of the Military Commission of the Nationalist Government at the time, while intellectuals such as Guo Moruo 郭沫若 and Tian Han 田汉 served in the Third Office of the Political Department responsible for cultural propaganda work. They chose "Defense of Madrid" as a popular song in the Anti-Japanese War literary campaign in Wuhan. Similar to the creation process of the "Defense of Madrid," the Wuhan Singing Movement was also part of the leftist revolutionary literature and art (MacKinnon).

The circuitous singing of "Defense of Madrid" was still insufficient in order to incite anti-Japanese sentiment. The literary recreation that directly combined

Madrid with wartime China needed to be put on the agenda as soon as possible, and the entire recreation process was still based on the activism of leftist internationalism. On the eve of the Battle of Wuhan in 1938, young students Sha Lü 沙旅, Sha Zijian 沙子建, and Er Dong 尔东 (Chen Erdong 陈耳东) from the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yan'an wrote lyrics, while art teacher Zheng Lücheng 郑律成 from the Lu Xun Literature and Art University composed the song "Defense of Great Wuhan." The central lyrics of the song demonstrated a continuing relationship with "Defense of Madrid":

> Wuhan is the center of the Anti-Japanese War
> Wuhan is the biggest metropolis today
> We must defend her resolutely
> Like the Spanish defense of Madrid

> 武汉是全国抗战的中心
> 武汉是今日最大的都会
> 我们要坚决地保卫著她
> 像西班牙人民保卫马德里

The composer Zheng Lücheng was born in North Korea and was exiled to China in 1933. As a member of international anti-Japanese organizations such as the Korean National Liberation Alliance, he was likely to express support for the North Korean Volunteer Corps in their international campaign to support Wuhan under the leadership of the Third Office and to express his support through composing this song (Li).

The concept behind "Defense of Great Wuhan" was to pair Wuhan with Madrid, establishing a spatial rhetoric of the two cities. Although the tone and melody were different from "Defense of Madrid," both were also related to Nie Er's "March of the Volunteers." In the mass movements, such as the donations and fundraising organized by Zhou Enlai and Guo Moruo from the Third Office, the singing parades became the most effective literary practice due to the number of participants and media coverage. "Defense of Great Wuhan" was designated as the core song and widely sung. In August, it had already resounded through the streets and alleys of Wuhan. Xian Xinghai 冼星海 presided over music work in the Third Office, personally organizing and directing a series of singing activities, while insisting on exploring more diverse and efficient singing forms. He was acquainted with Lü Ji, Mai Xin, and Zheng Lücheng and was familiar with the historical logic and internal

connections behind "Defense of Madrid" and "Defense of Wuhan." Therefore, he attempted to create a more concise rhetoric of the dual city linkage on this basis. On 14 August 1938, Xian Xinghai wrote the song "Defense of the Oriental Madrid" (保卫东方的玛德里) and guided several amateur singing training classes to perform this song (Figure 1). He wrote a special article, "How to Sing Defense of the Oriental Madrid" (怎样唱 "保卫东方的马德里"), at the end of September, attempting to establish norms and models to promote larger choral movements (Xian, *Volume 1*: 227–230). At this point, Wuhan has been succinctly portrayed as the "Oriental Madrid" in the songs of the Anti-Japanese War, just as the lyricist Guang Weiran 光未然 wrote in the song "Defense of the Oriental Madrid":

> Great Wuhan, Great Wuhan, it is a golden city with iron walls
> He is the Verdun of China, the Oriental Madrid, Madrid
>
> 大武汉，大武汉，他是金城汤池，铜墙铁壁；
> 他是中国的凡尔登，东方的马德里，马德里。
> (Xian, *Volume 2*: 70)

The literary phenomenon of calling Wuhan the "Oriental Madrid" originated from these cross-border historical processes, from "Defense of Madrid" to "Defense of Great Wuhan." This phenomenon is rooted in the global antiwar and anti-fascist historical context and zeitgeist. The spatial rhetoric of the juxtaposition of the two cities reveals the close connection between Chinese wartime literature and the international wartime conditions, and cross-border linkages and mechanisms of literary productions. This mechanism of literary cross-border action largely revolves around the left-leaning internationalist literary and artistic front, integrated into the movement of intellectual groups generally turning left and toward global solidarity. As the reporter James Bertram in Wuhan observed at that time, the "Oriental Madrid" came directly from the deployment of the CCP (Bertram's report was dedicated to Griff McLaurin, who was one of the first international volunteers to be killed in the Spanish Civil War in November 1936):

> The communists at this time had already worked out a plan for the defence of Hankow, which involved direct arming of the city's industrial workers (the largest Chinese proletariat outside of Shanghai), and envisaged Hankow becoming another Madrid. This plan was still opposed by certain Kuomintang officials, and there was little immediate likelihood of this be-

ing adopted. Though the Chinese Communist Party had its own open organization in Hankow. (...) But the United Front held triumphantly through all this; and only those who knew the full story of internal intrigue and the difficulties to be surmounted, could appreciate the strength of this achievement. (Bertram 342–343)

The leftist literary and artistic practices based on these international linkages, as well as their awareness of the world's anti-fascist united front, contributed to shaping the literary imaginations and strategies of wartime China. Chinese literature and art also used this international connection to gain and strengthen national identity internally, thereby realizing the organization and mobilization of domestic resistance and revolution. The cross-border literary imagination of the "Oriental Madrid" was created through singing, and it quickly spread; it was incorporated by wartime writers such as Lou Shiyi 楼适夷, Kong Luosun 孔罗荪, and Lu Ling 路翎, and penetrated into the collective consciousness of the masses.

On the evening of 27 June 1938, shortly after the Battle of Wuhan started, Xian Xinghai went to room no. 30 of the Lodge Hotel in Wuhan to talk to Joris Ivens about "receiving the film" (Xian 223). In early 1938, Dutch documentary film director Joris Ivens, along with his assistant John Fernhout and the Hungarian photographer Robert Capa, set out to visit wartime China. With funding and commission from the American film company History Today Inc., they filmed a movie about the Chinese War of Resistance. As the main members of the leftist international front, the three had plans to go north to contact the Communist Party but were hindered by the control of the Kuomintang. Starting in February of the same year, they took Wuhan as their central stronghold, traveling back and forth to the front lines of the battlefield to carry out filming work. The film is the second installment of the *History Today* series, following the team's first film, *The Spanish Earth*, which was completed shortly before on the frontline of the Spanish Civil War and co-narrated by John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Archibald MacLeish, and Prudencio de Pareda. The second film, *The 400 Million*, which was later released worldwide, was quite likely related to the film that Xian Xinghai and Ivens discussed in Wuhan. At this time, at a more macro level, it supports the international spatial linkage between China and Spain.

At the beginning of the movie *The 400 Million*, a subtitle informs: "Europe and Asia have become the western and eastern front of the same assault on democracy." The words "Europe and Asia" clearly refer to Spain and China. In this context, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937

not only marked the beginning of World War II between the East and the West but also provided a path for cross-border joint action for the left-wing intellectual communities, as well as a sense of spatial linkage on the battlefield. Just as the cartoon in *The New York Times* showed (Figure 2), this kind of transregional parallelism successfully drew international attention and represented how the worldwide anti-fascist movement confronted similar wartime situations geographically and culturally.

Undoubtedly, this parallelism created a range of themes and tensions, which also laid the foundation for intellectual cosmopolitanism in the 1930s and 1940s. Furthermore, due to this parallelism, several other topics also needed to be unraveled carefully. These topics include how Wuhan was construed literarily as the "Oriental Madrid," especially under the effects of leftwing intellectuals, what position Wuhan had on the wartime world map, and how at the time, Chinese men of letters resonated with and then appropriated elements of the Spanish Civil War imageries. In other words, the last theme was expressed by David Der-wei Wang as follows: how literature takes its own action in view of the transboundary context (Wang). All the discussions above, by probing into the cross-boundary perspectives of the global system, attempt to broaden the network of urban studies and address other potential topics, problems, and tensions in the current research of Chinese anti-Japanese wartime literature and culture. Chinese activist intellectuals always echoed with Spain supportively. Around the date of Julian Bell's death in Spain, a famous Chinese periodical *Yi Wen* (译文), edited by Huang Yuan 黄源 and once sponsored by Lu Xun 鲁迅, set up a special issue for Spain (西班牙[内战]专号).

Figure 1 The score of a song titled "Defense of 'Oriental Madrid' Wuhan" (Music by Xinghai Xian and lyrics by Weiran Guang, 1938. Source: Weiran Guang's Manuscripts, courtesy of Central China Normal University Library)
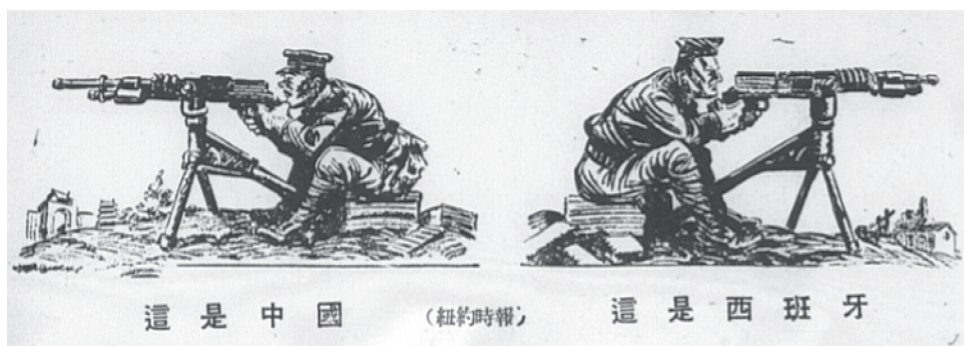
Figure 2   A cartoon about the transregional parallelism between China and Spain
［Source: *Guowen zhoubao* (国闻周报) vol.14(42), 1 November, 1937］

A Tradition: Transregional Images of Battlefield Poets

In two of Bell's letters ("In Pyrenees Mountains" and "In Madrid") translated by Ma Er, some descriptions of Spanish sceneries provided an apparent analogy to Sichuan province's sceneries. Besides Bell's own narrations, it is rather interesting that Chinese writers also seem to emphasize Bell's transregional battlefield trails from China to Spain and created certain transregional images of battlefield poets based on the extent to which the poets built such transnational parallelism in literature. As in Ma Er's poem, China fought against fascism for freedom hand-in-hand with "the kingdom of Don Quixote," marked by Bell's death (Ma Er "Yearing").

Yet you are immortal in our work and memory,
and the gunfire of the Fascists will not destroy your brothers across the world.
Now, they shook their hands bravely and lovingly.
In the East, as in the kingdom of Don Quixote,
we keep up the struggle for liberation and bread.
Oh, you eventually left us, when we're going to embrace the dawn.

然而妳永生在我們的工作和記憶裏，
法西斯的炮火毀不了妳世界上的兄弟。
現在，他們英勇和友愛地握起了手。
在東方，正如在唐吉訶德的國度，
繼續著妳為解放，為面包而奮鬥。
呵，妳終離去了，在我們要黎明的時候。
(Ma "Yearning")

The article "The Spanish Civil War and the British Intellectual" by writer Lin Shuai 林率 (Chen Linrui 陳麟瑞, Liu Yazi's 柳亞子 son-in-law) indicated:

> Last year, right after the tragic Battle of Shanghai (13 August 1937) broke out, there came the news that Bell was killed in Spain. (...) The number of sacrificed British in action was far more than this one, merely because Bell had come to China and was more familiar to us Chinese. (Lin)

Intriguingly, in the article, Lin associated "Bell's death" with "a preserved valuable tradition" (Lin). But what actually does this "tradition" refer to? Perhaps further research could throw some light on this.

Continuity of the Two-Cities Tale: *the Auden Generation* from Madrid to Wuhan

Next, we will further discuss how the transregional images of battlefield poets between China and Spain were created and how the awareness of solidarity and cosmopolitanism between East and West was brought about. Actually, it was Bell himself who popularized and then embodied that tradition. In the *T'ien Hsia Monthly* issue from October 1936, he published a poetry review titled "W. H. Auden and the Contemporary Movement in English Poetry." Bell had told Ma Er numerous anecdotes about this famous British poet Wystan Hugh Auden (Ma Er "Auden"). As Xu Chi's essay "Introduction to Auden and Isherwood's *Journey to a War*" indicated, Auden rushed to Spain together with Bell during the worldwide upsurge of efforts to defend Spain and its capital, Madrid (Xu).

As we all know, there was a group of young poets at Oxford University during the 1930s, led by W. H. Auden, and included members such as Cecil Day-Lewis and Stephen Spender, called the School of Auden (or the Auden Generation). Later on, some young poets at Cambridge University, such as Julian Bell and William Empson, also joined the literary activities of this Auden Circle. Under pressure from the "old masters" (such as T. S. Eliot), this new, younger generation developed their unique poetic qualities, such as pure intelligence, anti-romantic cynicism, a satirical method, and the incorporation of the mundane words and material facts of life into poetry. But what really matters is their conversion to socialism and communism to resist the poetic tendencies of the bourgeoisie and the Bohemian (Swingler). At the conclusion of Auden's propaganda play *The Dance of Death*, the entrance of "Karl Marx and a couple of young communists" was introduced. In turn, William Empson once wrote a ballad, *Just a Smack at Auden*, to ridicule Auden's political sen-

sitivity (Haffenden). It included the line "Treason of the clerks," which originated from the French novelist Julien Benda's work *La Trahison des Clercs* (1927), denouncing some political writers in contrast to belles-lettres authors, such as Maurice Barrès, Charles Péguy, and William James.

> Just a Smack at Auden
> Waiting for the end, boys, waiting for the end.
> What is there to be or do?
> What's become of me or you?
> Are we kind or are we true?
> Sitting two and two, boys, waiting for the end.
> (…)
> What was said by Marx, boys, what did he prepend?
> No good being sparks, boys, waiting for the end.
> Treason of the clerks, boys, curtains that descend,
> Lights becoming darks, boys, waiting for the end.
> (Empson 81–82)

Most intriguingly, as Ma Er's poem depicted, Bell's travel plan to the Spanish battlefield was stimulated by his British poet friends, as Auden and his poetry mates shared the same transnational journey to Spain. In 1937, Auden acted as a broadcaster in Barcelona and wrote a famous but politically controversial long poem, "Spain" (then changed its name to "Spain 1937"); the poem contained many dramatic contrasting implications such as misery versus hope. The lines "Madrid is the heart" and "Our hours of friendship into a people's army" reflected his consciousness of international solidarity (Auden 89–92). Meanwhile, the metaphoric line "the young poets exploding like bombs" vividly illustrated the Auden Generation's wartime posture, which actually reenacted Bell's tragic death in a bombing. Other members of the Auden Generation also wrote poems depicting the intellectuals' Spanish battlefield experiences, some of which were translated into Chinese at the time. The British Volunteer Army, which walked through "the wasted olive-groves" symbolizing Spain, and the news of the fall of Spanish cities was circulated through the poetry of the Auden Generation to wartime China:

> It was not fraud or foolishness,
> Glory, revenge, or pay:
> We came because our open eyes

Could see no other way.

Beyond the wasted olive-groves,
The furthest lift of land,
There calls a country that was ours
And here shall be regained.
Here in a parched and stranger place
We flight for England free,
The good our fathers won for her,
The land they hoped to see.
(Day-Lewis, "The Volunteer" 190–191)

这绝非奸诈，也不是愚蠢，
不是光荣，复仇，或是薪金：
我们来因为我们张开眼睛，
再也看不到别的途径。

在那荒芜的橄榄林之外，
那最遥远的壹片土地，
是我们的祖国我们如此称谓，
而这里的壹个是必须光复的。

在这焦灼的异国的土地，
我们战争为了自由的英吉利，
为我们祖先争给她的诸般美丽，
为我们希望看到未来的土地。
(Tr. Yuan Shuipai, "The Volunteer")

All the lessons learned, unlearned;
The young, who learned to read, now blind
Their eyes with an archaic film;
The peasant relapses to a stumbling tune
Following the donkey's bray;
These only remember to forger.

But somewhere some word presses

In the high door of a skull, and in some corner
Of an irrefrangible eye
Some old man's memory jumps to a child
—Spark from the days of liberty.
And the child hoards it like a bitter toy.
(Spender, "Fall of a City" 104–105)

壹切课程已学得的，废弃；
幼小者，学习念书的，现在盲了，
由于壹张古旧的膜将眸子掩蔽；
农民们又回到那蹒跚的故态中，
跟随驴子的鸣声低低；
这些只有记忆可以忘记。

但，在什么地方有些字烙印
在高墙上壹个头骨，在墙角，
壹只不可毁灭的眼睛，
有些老人的记忆跳跃到壹个孩童
——火花来自往昔的力的时间，
孩子珍藏它如同壹个悲伤的玩具。
(Tr. Yuan Shuipai, "Fall of a City")

Backed to the brown walls of the square
The lightness lorry headlamps stare
With glinting reflectors through the night
At our gliding star of light.

Houses are tombs, tarpaulins cover
Mysterious trucks of the lorries over.
The town vacantly seems to wait
The explosion of a fate.

Cargoes of iron and of fire
To delete with blood and ire
The will of those who dared to move
From the furrow, their life's groove.
(Spender, "At Castellon" 67–68)

回到方场的棕色墙垣，
无光的卡车头灯注视
闪光的反射镜通过夜
向我们滑翔的光明的星。

屋宇是牧（墓）场，防水布遮盖
秘密的运输车辆。
城市静默的仿佛在等候/壹个命运的爆裂。

铁与火的货色，
用恚怒与血抹却/那些意志，敢于动弹/从沟壑，他们的生命之槽。
(Tr. Yuan Shuipai, "At Castellon")

The above three poems resemble Auden's poetic principles, and they were widely used in describing the transnational battlefield experience of writers. For example, the usage of some rigid industrial images, such as lorry headlamps, glinting reflectors, tarpaulins, revealed their modernist style. The unique battlefield scene consisting of a skull, an irrefrangible eye, and a child's bitter toy represented abstract themes, such as life and humanity, war and death, and the relationship between extermination and rebirth, which were related to their poetic idol T. S. Eliot's negative capability (and impersonality) theory.

Remarkably, the wartime tale of the two cities continued. During the first half of 1938, Auden came to the frontier of China's battlefield with his novelist companion, Christopher Isherwood. They made this trip partially due to their publishers' commercial interest in exotic locations and partially due to their own wish to escape the public censure of their homosexual relationship. Later, the couple published their rather famous travel notes compilation *Journey to a War*, which includes Isherwood's long essay "Travel Diary," along with plenty of photos and commentaries, Auden's six travel poems (from London to Hong Kong), as well as Auden's twenty-three sonnets under a collective title "In Time of War" with a commentary. With their passion still lingering from the defense of Madrid, they arrived in the "Oriental Madrid" Wuhan in March 1938. At the time, Wuhan was a hinterland city soon to be thrown under the wartime flames of defense. From Isherwood's transnational observation, "[H]istory, grown weary of Shanghai, bored with Barcelona, has fixed her capricious interest upon Hankow," while Wuhan was "the real capital of wartime China"(Auden and Isherwood).

Figure 3 A group photo of W. H. Auden (left), Ma Er (middle), and Christopher Isherwood (right). [Source: *Kangzhan wenyi* (抗战文艺) Vol.1(4), 14 May, 1938]

On 21 April 1938, they received a welcoming banquet (so-called literary tea) in Wuhan held by Chinese intellectuals, such as Tian Han, Hong Shen 洪深, Mou Mou-tien 穆木天, and militarists accompanied by politicians. During this occasion, they met Ma Er, "once a pupil of Julian Bell"; it is hard to imagine how they must have reminisced about this passed-away muse (Ma Er May 1938). In any case, Auden revisited Bell's Wuhan University the next day and received a gift of a painted Chinese fan from Ling Shuhua (inscribed with the old poem: "The mountain and the river in the mist not broken in pieces / We should only drink and forget this immense sorrow," beneath which Ling herself added: "During this national struggle / I paint in wonder to forget my sorrow"). On 24 April, they met the battlefield photographer Robert Capa at Agnes Smedley's house, who found the somewhat mute expression commonly seen among the Chinese people during wartime unsatisfactory for the camera in comparison to the Spanish reactions and was aching to return to Madrid. It is no wonder that all the historical details above were in place to herald in the wartime tales of the two cities or two countries. More specifically, cosmopolitanism suited the transnational recognition of those intellectuals, as Auden's sonnets manifested geographically here.

> Think in this year what pleased the dancers best:
> When Austria died and China was forsaken,
> Shanghai in flames and Teruel retaken,
>
> France put her case before the world: "Partout

Il y a de la joie." America addressed
The earth: "Do you love me as I love you?"
(excerpt, XXII, *In Time of War*)

想想本年度什么让舞蹈家们最满意：
当奥地利死去，中国被丢到一边，
上海一片战火，而特鲁埃尔再次失陷，

法国向全世界说明她的情况：
"处处皆欢乐。"美国向地球致辞：
"你是否爱我，就像我爱你那样？"
——《战争时期（XXII）》（节选）
(Tr. Ma Mingqian, XXII, *In Time of War*)

Giving us courage to confront our enemies,
Not only on the Grand Canal, or in Madrid,
Across the campus of a university city,

But aid us everywhere, that in the lovers' bedroom,
The white laboratory, the school, the public meeting,
The enemies of life may be more passionately attacked.
(excerpt, *In Time of War*, Commentary)

给我们勇气去直面我们的敌人，
不仅在大运河上，或在马德里，
席卷大学城的整个校园，

并且在每一个地方给我们以助力，在爱人的卧房，
在白晃晃的实验室，在学校，在公众集会上，
那些与生命为敌者会承受更加激越的攻击。
——《诗体解说词》（节选）
(Tr. Ma Mingqian, *Commentary*)

The compilation *Journey to a War* elicited Chinese intellectuals' enthusiasm and was translated into nearly six Chinese versions by Hong Shen, Lang 朗 , Wang Shen 王忠 , Xu Chi, and Shao Xunmei 邵洵美 . Poetry reviews written by Cecil Day-Lewis (such as 大众诗歌论: 评奥登编《牛津通俗诗选集》, translated by Yuan

Shuipai 袁水拍 , and *A Hope for Poetry* 《一个对于诗的希望》, translated by Zhu Weiji 朱维基) and many special essays on Auden were published even in Chinese overseas propaganda periodicals, such as *Chinese Writers* edited by Dai Wangshu 戴望舒 . Specifically, such awareness of anti-fascism solidarity, as reflected in these transnational battlefield experiences between China and Spain, was fully reciprocated by the Chinese intellectuals during the Second Sino-Japanese War. But, as previously pointed out, whether the aforementioned "preserved valuable tradition" merely referred to the Auden Generation was still in question. At the Wuhan welcoming banquet, the Chinese playwright Tian Han improvised a seven-character quatrain dedicated to Auden (Tian 244). Alluding to the wartime awareness of the international community, the poem evidently associated China with the British and Spain:

> Really, the ends of the world are neighbours:
> Blood-tide, flower-petals, Hankow spring,
> Shoulder to shoulder for civilization fight.
> Across the sea, long journey, how many Byrons?
> (tr. Isherwood)

> 信是天涯若比鄰，
> 血潮花片漢臯春。
> 並肩共為文明戰，
> 橫海長征幾拜倫？！
> (Tian Han's original classical version)

> 真地，世界的四端像鄰居壹樣；
> 血潮，花瓣，漢口的春天，
> 肩並肩地為文明作戰。
> 在海外，長長的路途，多少個拜倫？
> (Zhu Weiji's colloquial version)

As the concluding line of the poem shows, the historical tradition seems to be related to another British poet, George Gordon Byron. From the beginning of the twentieth century, Byron, mostly known as a heroic and enlightenment poet, was eulogized as a Mara Poet 摩罗诗人 (Mara is the pronunciation of a Sanskrit word which means devil) by Chinese intellectuals such as Lu Xun. As Bertrand Russell's work *A History of Western Philosophy* indicates, "Byron inspired a corresponding

manner of thought and feeling among intellectuals and artists" (Russell 2007). Intriguingly, Byron was revived in the Chinese literary field during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Chinese translators such as Wang Tongzhao 王统照 (*Spanish Nostalgic Poetry* [西班牙怀古诗]) and Liu Wuji 柳无忌 (*Adieu, Adieu! My Native Land* [去国行]), and reviewers such as Ye Lingfeng 叶灵凤 also traced their lineages back to Byron and took him as a literary inspiration. The most important reason in this context may be that this romantic poet also went through a distinct transnational battlefield journey while pursuing revolution and freedom. He had rushed to Spain, fighting the invasion of Napoleon's army at the time. Eventually, he died in Greece. The translator Wang Tongzhao even plainly connected Byron's Spain-themed poem with the Spanish Civil War (Byron). More pertinent Chinese literary texts that mentioned British classical poets with Spanish battlefield experiences are recorded extensively. Before Lin Shuai published his essay "Byron in Spain," another essay of his, "Spanish War and British Poets," revealed an even longer spectrum of the above-mentioned tradition. During the period when the British government provided military assistance to Spain (1808–1814), the famous lake poets Wordsworth and Coleridge compiled pamphlets supporting the British army and strongly condemned the Cintra peace negotiation between the British and the French. Coleridge even published his letters on the Spaniards in the newspaper *Courier Daily*, which regarded Spanish patriots with strong combat experiences as endless bolts of lightnings with the rapidity of the flash. Another lake poet, Robert Southey, translated from Spanish *Chronicle of the Cid*, wrote *The Life of Horatio, Lord Viscount Nelson*, both about that Spanish war, and called for international revenge against Napoleon. What is more, poet Walter Savage Landor raised funds to establish a voluntary army supporting Spain and interweaved his Spanish experience into his tragedy *Count Julian* (Lin). So far, the Chinese wartime intellectuals had fully discovered the tradition known in the community of the British poets, who shared the transnational battlefield trails between Spain and China and the spirit of wartime solidarity, regardless of any synchronic and diachronic (contemporary and historical) dimensions. All of these factors resonated timely with China's propaganda requirements against Japan's violence.

Intellectuals at Wartime: Writers of Thoughts, Writers of Action

The wartime tale of two cities efficiently revived the literary tradition of taking part in real fighting and getting away from ivory towers to be a writer of action, notwithstanding the doubtful existence of a pure ivory tower. The heroic reality and the appearance of literature formed a co-constitute relationship. With their transna-

tional travels to various battlefields, even putting aside the communist emotion that had built Auden's popular success, the intellectuals could still achieve their aesthetic aspirations, a similar poetic rhythm, and a "non-lyrical" attitude that turned readily to satire or didacticism by way of returning to the central tradition of pre-Romantic poetry inextricably intertwined with experience. Thus, not only new literary genres (such as political essays) and principles but also intellectual thoughts contemplating the position and usefulness of literature could be radically transformed for Chinese wartime intellectuals. This tradition unraveled the internal mechanism by which Spain resonated with China via British intellectual poets, and this clearly transcended the structure involving only two cities.

This wartime tradition was directly inherited by a young Chinese poetic generation, the Nine Leaves Poem School (九叶诗派), a well-known Chinese modernist school consisting of nine young poets and students of literature. After Beijing was occupied by Japan in 1937, countless college professors and students were forced to exile to southern China. They flocked to Changsha and Kunming and joined the Southwest Associated University, which originated from Peking University, Tsinghua University, and Nankai University. There, William Empson selected some pieces from Auden as his core teaching texts, and he gave lessons on Modern British and American poetry (Zhang Songjian). This teaching group also included Robert Payne and Robert Winter. Most of Empson's Chinese students who made up Jiuye School, such as Wang Zuoliang 王佐良, Yang Zhouhan 杨周翰, Du Yunxie 杜运燮, preferred Auden to Eliot in terms of politics, and they all were quite familiar with Auden's poem *Spain 1937* (Wang Z.). Beyond the popular Auden style, the Jiuye members also followed the Auden Generation's political passion for participating in the war, valuing transnational experiences and being personally involved in society through activism. Undoubtedly, the young Chinese poet Mu Dan 穆旦 was the most typical among this group. In 1942, Mu joined Chinese expeditionary forces allied with the British army and participated in the Burma Campaign. The tragic battlefield scene was depicted in his poem "The Phantasm of the Jungle: An Elegy for the Dead Bones on Hukang River" (森林之魅：祭胡康河上的白骨). Here, compared with William Empson, who taught the global awareness of the Auden Generation, including their support for the Spanish Civil War, to the young Chinese poets, maybe Julian Bell should be recalled as he advocated for André Malraux and Ernest Miller Hemingway's decisions to join the Spanish Civil War, during his time teaching in Wuhan.

"*Je ne discute pas: Je constate*": Literariness via Heteroglossia, Interrogated Rather than Suppressed

However, under the literary tradition of calling for action, the young poet Julian Bell's contemporaries triggered his sympathy as well as anxiety. In Bell's 1936 poetry review titled "W. H. Auden and the Contemporary Movement," young poets of that time were described as pitiful, "selling the *Daily Worker* or distributing subversive propaganda at the street corner rather than contemplating flowers and sunsets." However, political tendency definitely had its reasonable role. Indeed, it was inappropriate to merely sustain old-fashioned romanticism in wartime or any other era. Nevertheless, one thing is rather clear—literary quality will be obliterated if we only have some political attitude left. What truly frightened Bell was that any literary students playing for safety would decide to prefer either Pope or Donne, both of whom nourished the Auden Generation's rough but definite meters, rather than Wordsworth, Keats, or indeed any of the great romantics. It was Byron who truly demonstrated the tradition by retaining a poetic personality while faithfully recording the public outcries of the era as a man of action. Therefore, Bell found Auden's clique's extremely brash attitude dangerous. I would argue that what matters most is not the rough difference between art and politics, some degree of detachment versus commitment, or the definition and possibility of being an activist writer because of the risk of doctrinism or opportunism. Literariness is suppressed when only one emotional doctrine dominates, no matter how transregional the external traits are. Literariness exists via heteroglossia.

There is no doubt that Auden also easily aroused controversy through his poetry. The eighteenth poem of Auden's *Journey to a War*, which was read aloud at that Wuhan welcoming banquet, became Auden's first poem translated into Chinese during the Second Sino-Japanese War. It provoked Chinese readers' doubt and complaints, as well as such responses from Pearl S. Buck 赛珍珠, the most well-known foreign female writer in Chinese literary circles, whose novel *The Patriot* on wartime China was highly praised in the same Chinese literature periodical that published negative reviews of Auden's *Journey to a War*. The ambiguous lines, such as "Far from the heart of culture he was used: / Abandoned by his general and his lice" (他被使用在远离文化中心的地方，/又被他的将军和他的虱子所遗弃) and "His jokes were stale; like wartime, he was dull; / His name is lost forever like his looks" (他的玩笑是陈腐的，他沉闷如战时，/他的名字和模样都将永远消逝)，seemed a brutally dangerous thought within the wartime context (Yao). As a result, certain Chinese translators, such as Hong Shen, Wang Zhong 王忠, Shao Xunmei, and Mu Dan, all made some sort of modifications to Auden's original lines. Its tone,

contrary to those Chinese heroic propaganda poems, may not be explained by any simple reasoning. As Bell pointed out, Auden was "a congenital moralist," who doggedly persisted in a somewhat overbearing and hectoring morality in his work. For instance, George Orwell criticized Auden's poem *Spain* and questioned the validity of the Auden Generation's left-wing standpoint.

> But notice the phrase "necessary murder." It could only be written by a person to whom murder is at most a *word*. Personally I would not speak so lightly of murder. It so happens that I have seen the bodies of numbers of murdered men—I don't mean killed in battle, I mean murdered. Therefore I have some conception of what murder means—the terror, the hatred, the howling relatives, the post-mortems, the blood, the smell. To me, murder is something to be avoided. So it is to any ordinary person. The Hitlers and Stalins find murder necessary, but they don't advertise their callousness, and they don't speak of it as murder; it is "liquidation," "elimination," or some other soothing phrase. Mr Auden's brand of amoralism is only possible if you are the kind of person who is always somewhere else when the trigger is pulled. So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know that fire is hot. The warmongering to which the English intelligentsia gave themselves up in the period 1935–9 was largely based on a sense of personal immunity. (Orwell 36–37)

From Orwell's perspective, the lines "the conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder," and "History to the defeated / May say Alas but cannot help or pardon" seemed to be letting totalitarianism free without punishment. Auden then changed the line "necessary murder" to "the conscious acceptance of guilt in the fact of murder." It is no coincidence that Bell felt suspicious toward the communist orthodoxy of the Auden Generation, who seemed more fascist rather than Marxist in Bell's eyes. As he observed, their "emotion, morality, violence, the mysticism and the belief in leaders, the taste for romantic war, all these would fit so much better into a Fascist rather than a communist ideology" (Bell). Most interestingly, Auden, Stephen Spender, as well as other left-wing intellectual writers, such as Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, John Dos Passos, and André Malraux, rushed toward the opposite side of the left wing, which seemed to prove Bell's observation. So, how should we analyze those conflicts and these ever-changing literary attitudes? Besides the definition of intellectual writers, maybe literature should be regarded as some indispensable dimension of intellectual history, or at least as an active, mo-

tivating factor that helped to develop the history of thoughts. Writing arguments is the way where literature boosts intellect while participating in and remedying the defects of propaganda. It is literature that triggers intellectual inquiries, sharpens the imaginary, and, most remarkably, encourages constructive discourses, thus circumventing a simple system with a single doctrine. So Bell concluded his review with "je ne discute pas: je constate" (I will not discuss or judge, I merely observe) selected from André Gide's autobiographical novel *L'immoraliste* (*The Immoralist*), who also acted prudently in the transnational 1930s and will be further discussed in my research. From the perspective of a macro-historical scale, literature should be interrogated through a range of interrelated perspectives rather than totally suppressed by one certain propagandist mechanism.

What Is *T'ien Hsia* (天下): Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism

In the May 1938 issue of *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, an English periodical established by Chinese intellectuals, an essay titled "Chinese Cosmopolitanism and Modern Nationalism" by Harry Paxton Howard discussed the concept of *t'ien hsia*, or Chinese cosmopolitanism, in a modern context. As the old Chinese saying goes, "Within the four seas, all men are brothers" (四海之內皆兄弟), and the intellectual basis of China's wartime unity abided by the old tradition of the Chinese literati. What is more, the foreign invasions continuously reinforced China's modern nationalism. So foreign governments, such as Russia and Britain, unintentionally devised strategies to facilitate a strong Chinese wartime unity in their maneuvers to gain control over China. In this aspect, the Japanese invasion seemed to help rebuild China's solidarity, which promoted Chinese literati to consciously and effectively collaborate with Spanish wartime literary movements. Thus, the wartime tale of the two cities reviving a transnational spirit had at the same time facilitated the rediscovery of the Chinese cosmopolitanist tradition itself. Perhaps further discussions should focus on the redefinition of cosmopolitanism beyond external interactions and the complex relationship between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. Indeed, to some extent, there should be further inner differentiations among the so-called cross-boundary coalitions and the global anti-war intellectual networks. For example, when Chinese translator Zhu Weiji 朱维基 analyzed Auden's *Journey to a War*, he overwhelmingly indulged in the May Fourth literary tradition instead of being pinned down by Auden's own intellectual concepts. Additionally, Julian Bell mentioned a situation in which his students were more fascinated by Percy Bysshe Shelley and Byron than his own favorites, such as Alexander Pope and John Dryden. Indeed, the aesthetic differences between Chinese sentimentalism and Western rationalism also revealed

the firm tradition that underlies the complexities of transnational wartime actions. In a nutshell, the wartime tale of two cities offers more potential and complex topics awaiting further research.

Coda

In 1938, Wuhan, located at the center of the Anti-Japanese War, was portrayed as the "Oriental Madrid" through literary creations and public discourses, thus demonstrating the production mechanism of Chinese literature's cross-border linkages during the war and its close connections with international wartime conditions. In terms of literature and reality, Wuhan has become an international battlefield and a cultural space, which implies the leftist international front's mode of action towards world revolution, as well as a leftist consciousness and a coordinated action plan within the wartime world intellectual community. The mobile and interconnected battlefield space shaped more open-minded experiences and global imaginations for the Chinese people in the Anti-Japanese War. In terms of public relations during the collective war, various literary groups and activists consciously carried out cross-border exchanges and organized individuals on a wider scale. Thus, a cultural production and dissemination method with the characteristic of "cosmopolitanism" was widely manifested during the war from the 1930s to 1940s and extended throughout the period of World War II.

During recent years, there have been many research breakthroughs on "cosmopolitanism" in wartime literature, such as *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture (1931–1941)* by Katerina Clark and *Transpacific Community: America, China, and the Rise and Fall of a Cultural Network* by Richard Jean So. This article discusses the "Tale of Two Cities" during the wars involving Wuhan and Madrid. Based on prior research, it seeks to further investigate the multifaceted phenomenon of wartime "internationalism." Specifically, it aims to understand the origins of "cosmopolitanism" as a discourse, the workings of the wartime cultural networks and mechanisms underlying "cosmopolitanism," and the improved recognition, analysis, and comprehension of the individual voices of intellectuals. Moreover, it seeks to discern the boundaries and distinctions between countries within the international cooperative context of the battlefield. The seemingly integrated wartime "internationalism" actually contains more tensions and complexities.

The spatial form of the juxtaposition of Wuhan and Madrid points to the deep connections between China and Spain that existed in the harsh realities of the World War. As both facts and symbols, the Eastern and Western countries, through

the international linkages of the antiwar and anti-fascist front, have formed a "wartime community." Many aspects of this "wartime community" were highlighted in Wuhan, which rose to the status of the International Capital of Literature and Art in 1938 and emerged as an important venue in the trajectory of international poets' cross-border aid to the war. The international poets at war were even shaped into a certain "tradition" by the Chinese and foreign wartime literary circles. Behind the reality of the forming of communities, there is also an inherent transformation of literary imaginations, emotional mechanisms, life experiences, and even their perspectives on civilizations. This transformation of mentalities and perspectives invites us to continue exploring new paradigms of literary research on the Second Sino-Japanese War.

Works Cited:

Auden, W. H. "Spain 1937." *Another Time*. New York: Random House, 1940. Print.

Auden, W. H., and Christopher Isherwood. *Journey to a War*. London: Farber & Faber Limited, 1939. Print.

———. *Journey to a War* 战地行纪. Tr. Ma Mingqian马鸣谦. Shanghai: Shanghai yiwen, 2012. 291, 319. Print.

Bell, Julian. "W. H. Auden and the Contemporary Movement in English Poetry." *T'ien Hsia Monthly* (October 1936): 215–219. Print.

Bertram, James. *North China Front*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2004. Print.

Byron, George. "Spanish poems with the theme of meditating on the past" 西班牙怀古诗 (Xibanya huaigu shi). Tr. Wei Pei 韦佩 and Wang Tongzhao 王统照. *Shidai wenxue* 1 (1941): 14–17. Print.

Day-Lewis, C. *The Golden Bridle: Selected Prose*. Ed. Albert Gelpi and Bernard O'Donoghue. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017. Print.

———. "The Volunteer" (from Overtures To Death). *Collected Poems of C. Day Lewis*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1938. Print.

———. "The Volunteer." Tr. Yuan Shuipai 袁水拍. *Sing Tao Daily* 489 (29 January 1940). Print.

Empson, William. *The Complete Poems of William Empson*. Ed. John Haffenden. Miami: UP of Florida, 2001. Print.

Guowen zhoubao 14.42: (1 November 1937). Print.

Haffenden, John. *William Empson: Among the Mandarins*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.

Ji Yu 季愚. "Upton Sinclair's novella *¡No Pasarán!*" 辛克莱的《不许通行》 (Xindelai de "Buxu tongxing"). *Guangming* 2.11 (1937): 1471. Print.

Lee Hye Sun 李惠善. *A critical biography of Zheng Lücheng* 郑律成评传 (Zheng Lücheng ping zhuan). Tr. Li Yuhua 李玉花. Beijing: Zuojia, 2014. Print.

Lin, Shuai. "The Spanish War and British Literati." *Sing Tao Daily* 124 (2 December 1938). Print.

Lü Ji 吕骥. "Remembrance of leftist music group under the leadership of the Chinese league of leftist theatrical figures" 回忆左翼剧联音乐小组 (Hui yi zuo yi ju lian yin yue xiao zu). *Renmin yinyue* 4 (1980). Print.

Luo, Liang. *The Avant-Garde and the Popular in Modern China: Tian Han and the Intersection of Performance and Politics*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2014. Print.

Ma Er 马耳. "Auden." *Sing Tao Daily* 75 (14 October 1938). Print.

———. "One Memory: Yearning Julian Bell" 抗战中来华的英国作家：W. H. 奥登、C. 伊粟伍特 (Kangzhan Zhong lai hua de yingguo zuojia: Aodeng, Yisuwute). *Kangzhan wenyi* 1.4 (14 May 1938): 27–28. Print.

———. "One Memory: Yearning Julian Bell" 一个记忆：怀裘连•倍尔 (Yi ge jiyi: Huai qiu lian bei er). *Sing Tao Daily* 56–58 (25–27 September 1938). Print.

———. "Yearning: Commemorating Julian Bell" 怀念：纪念Julian Bell (Huai nian: Ji nian Julian Bell). *Kangzhan wenyi* 2.4 (30 July 1938): 60. Print.

MacKinnon, Stephen. *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China*. Los Angeles: U of California P, 2008. Print.

Orwell, George. "Inside the Whale." *Inside the Whale and Other Essays*. London: Penguin Books, 1957. 36–37. Print.

Nie Gannu 聂绀弩. "Can the song 'Defense of Madrid' be sung?" 玛德里曲可不可以唱 (Madeli qu ke bu keyi chang?). *Zixiu daxue* 1.13 (1937): 233–236. Print.

Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. Print.

Shun Pao. 24 June 1938. Print.

Spender, Stephen. "At Castellon" [from *Part Three*]. *The Still Centre*. London: Faber and Faber, 1939. Print.

———. "At Castellon." Tr. Yuan Shuipai 袁水拍. *Sing Tao Daily* 504 (16 February 1940). Print.

———. "Fall of a City." Tr. Yuan Shuipai 袁水拍. *Sing Tao Daily* 504 (16 February 1940). Print.

———. "Fall of a City" [from *Part Four (1936–1939) Poems About the Spanish Civil War*]. *Collected Poems (1928–1953)*. London: Faber and Faber, 1955. Print.

Stansky, Peter, and Abrahams, William. *Julian Bell: From Bloomsbury to the Spanish*

Civil War. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2012. Print.

Swingler, Randall. "Spender's Approach to Communism." *Left Review* (March 1937): 109–112. Print.

Tian Han. "Welcome Auden and Isherwood to visit China" 欢迎奥登、伊粟伍特访华 (Huanying Aodeng, Yisuwute fang Hua). *Complete works of Tian Han: Volume 11* 田汉全集 (Tian Han quanji). Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi, 2000. 244. Print.

Tsou Nancy 倪慧如, and Tsou Len 邹宁远. *When the World Was Young: Chinese Who Participated in the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939)*. Guilin: Guangxi Normal UP, 2013. Print.

"Unanimous mobilization for the defense of great Wuhan" 一致动员保卫大武汉 (Yi zhi dong yuan bao wei da wu han). *Xinhua ribao* (9 August 1938). Print.

Wang Zuoliang 王佐良. "Mu Dan: Origin and destination" 穆旦：由来与归宿 (Mu Dan: Youlai yu gui su). *The nation has stood up: Cherishing the memories of the poet and translator Mu Dan* 一个民族已经起来：怀念诗人、翻译家穆旦 (Yi ge minzu yijing qilai: Huainian shiren, fanyijia Mu Dan). Nanking: Jiangsu renmin, 1987. 1–2. Print.

Wang, David Der-wei. *The Lyrical in Epic Time: Modern Chinese Intellectuals and Artists through the 1949 Crisis*. New York: Columbia UP, 2015. Print.

Xian Xinghai 冼星海. *Complete works of Xian Xinghai: Volume 1&2* 冼星海全集 (Xian Xinghai quanji). Guangzhou: Guangzhou gaodeng jiaoyu, 1990. Print.

Xu Chi 徐迟. "Introduction to Auden and Isherwood's *Journey to a War*" 奥顿、依许乌德《前线访问记》弁言 (Aodun, Yixuwude "Qian xian fangwen ji" bianyan). *Sing Tao Daily* 2 (2 August 1938). Print.

Yao Dan 姚丹. "Misreading and inheritance: W. H. Auden's *Journey to a War* and 1940s Chinese poetry" 误读与传承：奥登《在战时》与40年代中国诗歌 (Wudu yu chuancheng: Aodeng "zai zhan shi" yu sishi niandai zhongguo shige). *Xinshi pinglun* 1 (2012): 108. Print.

Zhang Shiying 张世英. "*Defense of Madrid*: A battle song reflecting the spirit of internationalism" 《保卫马德里》：反映国际主义精神的战歌 (Baowei ma de li: Fanying guoji zhuyi jingshen de zhange). *Collected works in memory of Lü Ji: Volume of memories* 吕骥纪念选集：缅怀卷 (Lü ji jinian xuanji: mianhuai juan). Ed. the Chinese Musicians Association. Beijing: Renmin yinyue, 2022. 204. Print.

Zhang Songjian 张松建. *Setting out of modern poems again: An innovative exploration toward the 1940s modernist poetry tide in China* 现代诗的再出发：中国四十年代现代主义诗潮新探 (Xiandai shi de zai chufa: Zhongguo sishi niandai xiandai zhuyi shi chao xin tan). Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2009. Print.

Author's Profile:

Nan Qu is an Assistant Professor at the Beijing Institute of Technology. He received his MA (2016) and PhD (2021) degrees from the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Peking University; he was also a visiting scholar at the EALC of Harvard (2018–2019). His research and teaching interests cover literature and culture from the late Qing Dynasty to modern China. His current book project is concerned with the transnational literary interaction between the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Spanish Civil War during the Second World War.

Meaning beyond Images in the *Yinxiu* Chapter in *Wenxin diaolong*:

With *Zhouyi* as a Major Reference

Keyang Dou, Tiejun Bu, and Tingkai Zhang[1]

(Jilin University)

Abstract

As one of the major chapters on the theory of literary creation, the chapter "Yinxiu" did not receive adequate attention in previous research on *Wenxin diaolong*. There are three reasons for this: suspicion on a large added paragraph in the chapter, authority of Liu Xie's discussion of the theoretic interpretation and aesthetic features, and the chapter *Yinxiu*'s close and direct ties with *Zhouyi*, a major reference of *Wenxin diaolong*. However, these arguments neglect a key issue: there is an implicative chain of literary theoretic evolution, i.e., *Zhouyi-Yinxiu-yijing*. Nonetheless, we can also provide strong refutations of this chain and provide new perspectives. We need to transcend the objective textual debates and focus on the history of interpretation of the paragraph added to the chapter *Yinxiu* to await the final judgment of the academic community. It is the Xiang Thought originated from *Yixue* that became the aesthetic origin of the concept of *Yinxiu*, which further formed the early stages of the evolution of the theory of *yijing*. In summary, the image of *yinxiu* is an open and appealing image, and the aftertaste of which requires further pondering.

Keywords: *Wenxin diaolong*, "Recondite and Conspicuous," *Longxue, Zhouyi, Yijing*

---

1   This article is completed with the contributions from Jiayu Fang. Jiayu is studying for Master of Literary Theory in the College of the Humanities, Jilin University.

In the comparison between the literature of the East and the West, the continuous apprehension of one concept, or one type of feature, of the performance of literature is shared by both sides: the obscurity or ambiguity of the poetic language in literature. If we regard the *Seven Types of Ambiguity* by William Empson as the most representative banner reflecting the understanding of the vagueness in the linguistic strategies in the creation of literature, *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*; hereafter *Wenxin*), would be the corresponding masterpiece in the history of literary theory in China, to elucidate the similar concepts in literary creation theories. In the domain of *longxue* 龍學 (scholarship of *Wenxin diaolong*), the comparative study between *Wenxin diaolong* and *Zhouyi* 周易 (*The Book of Changes*) is also a heated issue bringing about fresh and fruitful debates in the field of the scholarship of traditional literary theory of China. The reference to *Zhouyi* is, most of the times, applied in the research of those most renowned chapters and topics in *Wenxin diaolong*, such as "Wenbi" 文筆 ("Writings with Rhymes and Writings without Rhymes"), *Dao* of Nature 自然之道 , "Fenggu" 風骨 ("Wind and Bone of Literature") and "Qingcai" 情采 ("Emotion and Literary Expression"), and so on. However, as one of the most important chapters on the theory of literary creation, the chapter of "Yinxiu" 隱秀 ("The Recondite and the Conspicuous") did not receive adequate attention compared to the above-listed chapters, especially regarding the comparison of *longxue* with *yixue* 易學 (scholarship of *Zhouyi*), which is one of the most popular *longxue* topics both in China and overseas.

In summary, there are three major reasons for this phenomenon:

First, when discussing the chapter, Wai-yee Li claimed: "Unfortunately, we no longer have the complete chapter, and the present version has little to say about the functioning of the principle of latency (i.e., 隱 the Recondite)" (Cai page number?). As we know, the historical text of the chapter *Yinxiu* was incomplete, and there was a paragraph of about four hundred characters added later to the original text. It was for this reason that Dao's ultimate grace had been neglected in *Wenxin* (Liu 140). In this respect, the added paragraph was rarely accepted by *longxue* scholars in the last two hundred years, and it became a traditional practice to only refer to the remaining paragraphs when discussing the chapter "Yinxiu," neglecting the for-hundred-character replenishment. And it might be for this reason that the chapter "Yinxiu" did not acquire equal status in *longxue* compared to chapters such as *Fenggu*, *Shensi* 神思 ("Spiritual Thought or Imagination"), *Bixing* 比興 ("Metaphor and Allegory"), and so on.

Second, since Liu Xie had made a detailed and integral interpretation of *yin* (re-

condite) and *xiu* (conspicuous) in the remaining fragments of "Yinxiu", it seems that the two concepts have been thoroughly elucidated, and no further discussion on the aesthetic value on the concepts are necessary in the literary study in the domain of *longxue*.

Finally, in the present statement of *yixue*, there seems to be not much to reveal the relationship between *Zhouyi* and *Wenxin*. After scanning the remaining fragments of *Yinxiu*, we can easily find evidence of citing of *Zhouyi* as a metaphor to expound *yin* and *xiu*, which has become a universally accepted argument.

Based on the three aspects discussed above, it seems quite certain that no further debate is necessary on the chapter "Yinxiu". However, if we reverse the angle from textual study to the reception history of the concepts, new ideas and interpretations would still be produced in the further excavation.

1. The *Wirkungsgeschichte* (History of interpretation) vs. Textual Falsification: The First Debate

First, regarding the identification of the authenticity of the added paragraph, we cannot be convinced by the interpretations of the concepts of *yin* and *xiu*, which are confined within the study of the remaining fragments. At this point, Zhou Ruchang and Zhan Ying's refutations are the most persuasive. In his *New Debates on Previous Suspicions of the Chapter Yinxiu in Wenxin Diaolong*, Zhou Ruchang pointed out that the famous quotation of Zhang Jie's "Emotion beyond language is called *yin*, and description of high fidelity is summarized as *xiu*" (Zhang, 9-10) might not necessarily be determined as the lost sentence from the chapter *Yinxiu*, for this might come from his remembrance which was not so reliable. This is possible because Chinese historians seldomly copied every character strictly from the original: "In many quotations are not only omitted the heads and ends but deleted the characters, words, and sentences or even rebuilt paragraphs" (Zhou 18). In this respect, it is not so persuasive to apply the difference of quotations as the solid evidence in support of determining the added paragraph as a falsification. While referring to Tao Yuanming as Pengze in the added paragraph, Ji Yun pointed that this reference was not seen in texts in the Six Dynasties era (222–589 AD), but Ji's discovery was refuted by Zhou Ruchang: "Only recently did we see scholars' reference of Tao Pengze from *Collections of Bao Mingyuan* 鮑明遠 , and hence Ji's authoritative discussions had been defeated" (Zhou 20). Regarding other phrases such as "working all out of soul" (嘔心吐膽) and "forging for lives and ages" (鍛歲經年), the *Siku* (四庫 , *Siku quanshu*, A collection of classics, history, philosophy and literature organized by the imperial court of Qing dynasty) seemed to recognize them from

the *Liuyi Comments on Poetry* (六一詩話), *Minor Biography of Li He* 李賀小傳 , and *Grades of Poetry* 詩品 , which had all been refuted by Zhou. Zhan Ying also pointed out that quotations such as "Yang Xiong had nightmares because of his inability to continue writing" (揚雄輟翰而驚夢) found in chapter *Shensi* and "Ziyun's ideas may be considered the most profound both in the language he employs and the themes he treats (…) and in his untiring efforts to think things through" (子雲屬意，辭人最深⋯⋯而竭才鑽思) in "Cailue" 才略 ("Literary Talents") were all similar approaches to citation as the situation in chapter *Yinxiu* (Zhan 25). Thus, Zhan Ying continued, "given all evidence above, it is arbitrary to determine the quotation of 'working all out of soul' was cited directly from Li Shangyin's *Minor Biography of Li He*" (Zhan 25). "Forging for lives and ages could never explain the suffering of life" also aligns with this situation. And the argument that recognizes the reference of Ban Jieyu as the "Common Lady" from *Grades of Poetry* could not stand as solid evidence either (Zhou 19).

Moreover, one more piece of evidence was very convincing, i.e., Huang Kan's comment:

> Furthermore, the original text clarified that the convergence of ideas was a natural process other than artificial fabrication, even the supplements also acknowledge the principle that no man-made decorating and revising were necessary, as of the inclusion of "galloping minds" (馳心), "indulging thoughts" (溺思), "all out of soul" (嘔心) and "forging ages" (鍛歲), and so on, which developed into such serious obtuse contradictions far beyond the original styles of yanhe. 彥和 (Huang 195)

In his view, phrases such as "working all out of soul" and "indulging minds" had all betrayed the pursuit of naturalness in literary writings expressed in Liu Xie's remaining chapters. Particularly against this, we can see Zhan Ying's refutation indicated his equal concern for natural beauty and artificial beauty:

> Natural beauty (自然會妙) is like that of plants lit up in the splendor of their blossoms, and the colorful adornment may be compared to silk dyed red and green. The red and green of dyed silks are deep and, indeed, rich and fresh; and the blossoms that brighten the trees, whose beauty is completely exhibited on the surface, glow in blazing glory. (Liu 360)

The "colorful adornment" is the product of writers' "forging for ages," which

is apparently different from the "painstakingly engraving and carving to attain artistry," which was strongly opposed by Liu Xie. In his other chapters, Liu Xie did not show a thorough opposition against the artificial conception in writing, as was stated in chapter *Shensi*:

> A spirited scholar, with the essentials of the art of writing in his mind, is quick to meet situations with an instantaneous response even before he has time for consideration; while a man of profound thought, whose emotional reactions are complicated and who is ever aware of all possible alternatives, achieves light and maps plans only after prolonged questioning and inquiring. (Liu 244)
>
> 若夫駿發之士，心總要術，敏在慮前，應機立斷；覃思之人，情饒歧路，鑒在慮後，研慮方定。

This means that the so-called "man of profound thought" must go through very careful considerations before their creation of literary work comes to an end. Therefore, there could not be any deep abyss between the pursuit of naturalness and prolonged consideration. Thus, this evidence proving the added paragraphs as falsification does not hold water.

In our view, the identification of the authenticity of the added paragraph is correlated to the objectivity of the whole book, which entails such a question: Is it convincing if we cite sentences from the added paragraph to expound the literary theory of Liu Xie? But we also have to face another question: Is it justified to neglect the four hundred suspicious characters from the discussion on *yin* and *xiu*? To date, in the study of Liu Xie's literary theory, the verification of authenticity is, first of all, a part of the textual study, which is a fraction of the overall study of *Wenxin*. Since *Wenxin* is an overall summary of literary practices and theories before Liu Xie, we should try to transcend the domain of verification on texts but put emphasis on the metaphysical understanding of the literary theory of Liu Xie.

Evidently, the literary theory indicated in the added paragraph coincides with the remaining paragraphs and even the whole book. For instance, the sentence "Orthodoxy at first and marvelous in the end, illuminating in the core and genteel from the outside, making itself continuously and everlastingly attractive to readers" (始正而末奇，内明而外潤，使玩之者無窮，味之者不厭) shows a close undertaking of the metaphors of "mutual bodies and reversing lines" and "rivers contain pearls and jade" in the former paragraphs and stresses that, *yin*, as a substantive concept would be a transmission of information between various layers of interpretation. In this

sense, the literal interpretation is the branch and outer stratum, while the meaning hidden beyond the linguistic expression is the origin and inner layer. Such a natural and hidden beauty would definitely allow the readers an endless aesthetic aftertaste, which is an interpretation of *yin* in descriptive language. In another sentence, "Luscious clouds are formed naturally, without artificial decoration; the elegant styles are set tactically, with no need of measuring" (煙靄天成，不勞於妝點；容華格定，無待於裁熔), the key feature of *xiu* has been stressed: what is "formed naturally" does not require extra artificial decoration. This idea not only echoes the discussion of "painstakingly engraving and carving to attain artistry" in later chapters but also complies with the Dao of Nature, as the key term of theory in *Wenxin*. Here, Ji Yun's comment seemed quite reasonable: "Endless pursuit of naturalness is the ultimate goal of Liu Xie, which is an undoubtable fact." (source?) Even Ji Yun agreed that the consilience of the added paragraph to Liu Xie's literary theory. From "As of the literati who were conceiving" (夫立意之士) to "how could they define the hardship" (奚能喻苦), Huang Kan asserted that this pursuit of arduous work contradicted the former chapters, but this argument was refuted by Zhou Ruchang and Zhan Ying. However, it is necessary to add that the previously mentioned "pursuit of naturalness" was, in a greater sense, a natural and lively fusion of an aesthetic horizon and a hidden beauty in the readers' eyes. Furthermore, the "motivating mind" and "forging ages" in this paragraph focused on literary creation and indicated that any stroke of genius of writers had come from the years of arduous work. Only after endless arduous work can writers achieve the state of "hiding talent in language" and "displaying wisdom beyond text," which renders readers "delighted after discovering beauty" and "hilarious for embracing elegance." Apparently, the literary ideas in this paragraph display a diachronic process from the conception of an idea to the completion of the work, which, in the end, is appreciated by the readers. When a finished work of literature is presented to a reader, the aesthetic significance must be implicitly indicative and naturally elegant; thus, this aesthetic tendency does not contradict the explanation of the fusion of subjective effort in the process of literary creation. In reverse, those who can unveil the hidden aesthetic beauty in a literary work must be those who have achieved a high level of aesthetic appreciation, i.e., those "aesthetically implicative" (蘊藉者) and "outstanding and penetrative" (英銳者). In another instance in chapter "Zhiyin" 知音 ("An Understanding Critic"), Liu Xie said:

> Men of unrestraint and frank type will beat time in appreciation when they hear a tune; those who are aesthetically implicative are often keenly

perceptive, inclining to the lofty way of retirement; the superficially clever will look at ornate patterns with throbbing hearts, and those who love the extraordinary will listen to what is odd with ears picked up. (Liu 442)

慷慨者逆聲而擊節，醞藉者見密而高蹈；浮慧者觀綺而躍心，愛奇者聞詭而驚聽。

Actually, the most important discussion focused on the two sentences of "recondite passage" and "conspicuous sentence," which were referred in the added paragraph to explain *yinxiu*. On the sentence, "To verify the hidden beauty, a few articles can be referred" (將欲徵隱，聊可指篇), Ji Yun commented that "there is one paragraph missing in the book, and the study on the Recondite should not be limited to poetry only" (see Huang 133). On "If you would discuss *Xiu*, citing sentences is the only measure," Ji Yun thought that it "went even further from the original" (see Huang 133). However, in Zhan Ying's study, the instance in the added paragraph was also a good match to the remaining paragraph, like "Chensi's (陳思) *Yellow Siskin* (黃雀), Gonggan's (公幹) *Green Pine* (綠鬆), both were prodigal and high spirited, rendering themselves significant in allegory," which corresponds to the "Heroic in giving free play to their vitality, open and artless in the application of their talents" (慷慨以任氣，磊落以使才) in chapter "Mingshi" 明詩 ("An Exegesis of Poetry") (Liu 40). Another sentence in "Mingshi," "Only Xi's works [Xi here refers to the family name of Ji Kang 嵇康] are characterized by pure and lofty emotions, and Ruan's far-reaching and profound in meaning" (嵇志清峻,阮旨遙深) (Liu 43), together with "Tixing's" 體性 ("Style and Nature") "Sizong was free and easy, he sang in a spirit of a recluse a tune which wafted into the distance; Shuye was romantic and gallant, gave us high spirit and bright colors" (嗣宗倜儻，故響逸而調遠；叔夜俊俠，故興高而采烈) (Liu 43), could also make an inter-verification. It could match the example of "The conception was mysterious and thought decent, so (his poems) were significantly graceful" (境玄思澹，而獨得乎優閒) (Liu 43), which was cited in the added paragraph from Ruan Ji's *Poems from My Heart* 詠懷詩 .

Thus, although its academic status remains controversial, we can see that in terms of literary theory, the added paragraph did not break apart from the remaining paragraphs or other chapters in *Wenxin*. Furthermore, if we turn to the *Wirkungsgeschichte* by Gadamer as the kernel of the evaluation system for the textual study, the value of the latter interpretation could never be neglected. Even though we admit that the paragraph was added by someone other than Liu Xie, it is still an excellent expounding of Liu Xie's literary theory. In this sense, it is not de-

sirable to ignore the added paragraphs of *Yinxiu* when outlining and reframing Liu Xie's literary theory. However, since the status and content of the added paragraph remain challenged by the majority of the academic community, even if we believe that the added paragraph should not be discarded, we still cannot equate it with the parts that were definitely written by Liu Xie. If we cite it as evidence for study, we need to indicate the specific circumstances of the added paragraph to wait for the academic judgment.

2. From Theory of *Yinxiu to Yijing* 意境: The Implicative Correlation

Second, though Liu Xie had made a clear and thorough explanation of the meaning of *yin* and *xiu*, there is still some room for further interpretation, not only of the aesthetic features of the two concepts but also of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the interpretation of Liu Xie on the concepts. In the history of Western literary theory, dual concepts such as irony and paradox, also appeared often. However, most dual pairs of concepts in the West were restrained in the close reading of text, focusing on linguistic skills; while the pairs of concepts in China would always transcend from the linguistic level to the aesthetic understanding. Tong Qingbing categorized the various ideas of interpretation of the aesthetic features of *yin* and *xiu* into four schools (Tong 7).

First, the Rhetoric School 修辭說, with Huang Shulin 黃書琳, Huang Kan, Fan Wenlan 范文瀾, Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫, Shen Qian 沈謙, and so on as major representatives. Huang Shulin summarized *yin* as implicative beauty and *xiu* as outstanding, both interpreted as skills in literary creation (Huang 132). Zhou Zhenfu also clarified: "*Yin* and *xiu* can be defined as being implicative and outstanding respectively in the theory of rhetoric" (Zhou 350). Shen Qian also said so in another way: "With the two concepts, Yanhe made a good metaphor of the aesthetic conception in a state of linguistic implicativeness and grammatical prominence, i.e., the rhetoric implicativeness and prominence " (See Zhang 601).

Second, the Literary Style School 風格說, with Liu Shipei 劉師培, Fu Gengsheng 傅庚生, and Zhan Ying as representatives. Liu Shipei separated the two groups of concepts of "fenggu" and "yinxiu" as opposing styles in literature: one tends to be rigid and the other flexible (See Zhan 1486). Fu Gengsheng summarized *yin* as "deliberate decoration" and *xiu* as "natural beauty" (See Zhan 1489). Zhan Ying regarded *yin* and *xiu* as two mutually opposing and supporting styles (Zhan 1489).

Third, the School of Artistic Expression Methods 藝術表現方法說, with Zhong Zi'ao 鍾子翱 as the representative. His description of this view is following:

When a piece of literary work is forming an artistic figure, the perfect method is the combination of the two styles of *yin* and *xiu*. Only under such a circumstance can readers see an actively touching and lively characteristic figure in the literary work. (See Tong 6)

Fourth, the Artistic Image School 意象說, with Yu Yuan 郁沅 as the representative, who said:

The chapter *Yinxiu* focused on the discussion of the features of artistic images. *Yin* concerns the view of the idea, and xiu concerns the view of the image. *Yin* correlates the descriptions of "implications beyond text," "duplicate indications beyond text" or just "duplicate implication," i.e., the implications in the artistic image are multi-layered, one stratum being expounded, yet another or even two following strata are hidden. And *xiu* should be the "outstanding in a passage," (…) *xiu* is not only referring to the marvelous sentences but also includes satisfying and concrete descriptions. (Yu 61)

If we make an overall observation on the structure of *Wenxin*, it gives no cause for much criticism to regard the concepts of *yin* and *xiu* as the categories of skills in literary creation or, in other words, "rhetoric methods" or "styles of creation." It is here that we could make an intricate comparison between *yinxiu* and "ambiguity," for the concepts share similar values and strategies in rhetoric theory. However, the authentic comparison would not rest on the stratum of language, for the strata of image and metaphysical features were the ultimate purpose for comparison. From introductions in Liu Xie's "Xuzhi" 序志 ("Preface"), we can see that *Yinxiu* could be included in the creation theory of "analyzing emotions and outlining styles," while chapters such as "Kuashi" 誇飾 ("Exaggeration"), "Shilei" 事類 ("Categories") and "Lianzi" 練字 ("Word Choice") are all closely connected to chapter *Yinxiu*, and all of the chapters mentioned above discuss concrete and specific literary creation topics. However, the aesthetic features of *yinxiu* have gone far beyond the domain of literary creation.

On the one hand, the interpretation of *yin* has exceeded the horizon of chapter *Yinxiu*. The concept of *yin* appears fifty-three times in the book of *Wenxin*, in chapters such as "Yuandao," "Zhengsheng," "Zongjing," "Zhengwei" 正緯 ("Emendation of Apocrypha"), "Xieyin" 諧讔 ("Humor and Enigma"), "Shizhuan" 史傳 ("Historical Writings"), "Yinxiu," and so forth—all together nineteen chapters. The

discussion on *yin* as a skill in literary creation is not confined to chapter *Yinxiu*. For instance, the descriptions such as "couched in rich and cryptic language, they contain subtle meanings, solidly grounded and profound" (符采復隱，精義堅深) in *Yuandao*, "to use obscure language to hide ideas or to employ an artful parable to point to certain facts" (遁辭以隱意，譎譬以指事) in "Xieyin", and "not deemed as outstanding with abstruse implications" (不以環隱為奇) in "Yidui" 議對 ("Discussion") are all theoretically indicative and in line with the gist of *Yinxiu*. In the view of the integral book, the description of *yin* is not limited to skill but refers to an aesthetic effect as well. The examples include: "it has boundless implications, its critical judgments are of high literary quality, and its symbolism deep" (旨遠辭文，言中事隱) in "Zongjing" and "the purpose of the work is deep and profound, and the language connotative and terse" (睿旨幽隱，經文婉約) in *Shizhuan* and so forth. All of the above examples could function as responses to chapter "Yinxiu"; for instance, the statement of "Orthodoxy at first and marvelous in the end, illuminating in the core and genteel from the outside, making itself continuously and everlastingly attractive to readers" is also a description focusing on the aesthetic effect.

What is more noteworthy is that Liu Xie did not simply stress the positive value of *yin* but indicated the negative side of *yin* as well. In chapter *Zhengwei*, "the records are so obscure so long ago" (世夐文隱) was also described as one of the reasons why "a body of strange and fantastic literature has developed" (好生矯誕). In *Shensi*, "When the key works smoothly, there is nothing which will not appear in its true form; but when its operation is obstructed, the spirit loses its rationale" (樞機方通，則物無隱貌；關鍵將塞，則神有遁心) proves that *yin* happens to make an opposition to the patency and smoothness of ideas. Other examples, such as "its facts should stay evident (as in bulletin) and its meaning should remain obvious" (露板以宣眾，不可使義隱) in *Xiyi* 檄移 ("War Proclamation and Dispatch"), and "in dealing with events he should strive for clearness and thoroughness, and he should never seek originality by seemingly profound but vague presentation" (事以明覈為美，不以深隱為奇) in "Yidui", all argue that *yin* is not always effective and influential especially in certain types of literary work. Thus, in the overview of the whole book of *Wenxin*, different from the intention of William Empson, Liu Xie did not limit the interpretation of *yin* as a skill in literary creation or aesthetic effect.

In this sense, though he picked out the idea that "their work may have profundity, but not the quality of recondite" in *Yinxiu*, Liu Xie was not making a negative argument on the inappropriate instances of *yin* in the previous quotations; the key fact in this quotation is the distinction between profound (abstruse, *ao* 奧) and implicative (*yin* 隱). Similarly, *xiu* has been expounded many times in other chapters

besides "Yinxiu". But the most essential, or conspicuous, *xiu*, described as "colorful decoration and detailed description" (繪事图色), is not always stressed in a positive tone.

On the other hand, the theoretical relationship between *yin* and *xiu* is also worth revealing. The two concepts are opposite and complementary to each other at the same time. *Yin* stresses functions such as implicative and indicative, *xiu*—outstanding and exemplifying. In other words, the two concepts belong to the field of idea and the field of linguistic expression, respectively. Liu Xie juxtaposed such paired concepts in many chapters other than "Yinxiu," for example, in "Fenggu," "Bixing," "Rongcai," and so on. However, on many occasions, Liu Xie put two concepts into one comprehensive category, such as "If *fenggu* is not adapted, any literary skill will lose its magic" (風骨不飛，則振采失鮮), "To be firm and exact in diction, and in resonance sure, without being heavy: this is meant by the vigor of *fenggu*" (捶字堅而難移，結響凝而不滯，此風骨之力也) in chapter "Fenggu"; "Bixing of ancient poets are perfect perceptions resulting from their responses to the stimuli of facts" (詩人比興，觸物圓覽) in chapter Bixing; "Without *rongcai*, how could it procure beautiful employment" (非夫熔裁，何以行之乎) in chapter "Rongcai" and so forth. In contrast, *yin* and *xiu* have almost never been connected to one concept; whether in the remaining fragment or the added paragraph, the two are always so different according to standards in various levels (an opposing position). Throughout the entire chapter of *Yinxiu*, *yin* and *xiu*, the two concepts are always discussed separately and have never been juxtaposed as a conceptual pair except appearing together in the title of the chapter. What makes this study curious is that Huang Kan connected the two concepts into one in his *Supplement of* "Yinxiu" 補隱秀, such as "however, the origin of 'Yinxiu' is formed in 'shensi'"; "Thus we know the achievement of ultimate naturalness could naturally render an authentic beauty of *yinxiu*; the recourse to artificial art could only breach the essence of *yinxiu*"; "the procuring of *yinxiu* is top rarity" (Huang K. 196).

In this situation, on what basis do we judge the relationship of the two concepts as both opposite and complementary to each other? The backgrounds are not limited to parallel sentences such as "The beauty of the Recondite lies in its mystery, and the most spectacular elements of the Conspicuous are displayed in the startling transcendence" (隱以復意為工，秀以卓絕為巧) and "the passages of *yin* are illuminating the realm of literature, and the texts of *xiu* are promoting the aesthetic level of collection of literature" (隱篇所以照文苑，秀句所以侈翰林) but are based on the cultural interests of Liu Xie in *Wenxin*, i.e., his pursuit of eclecticism. Liu Xie's construction of literary theory always starts from a living Dao of Nature that has

transcended common lives and stresses an epistemology that "when the stem stands up, the branches naturally follow; and when one understands a unifying principle, he understands all about the ten thousand categories" (振本而末從，知一而萬畢) in chapter "Zhangju" 章句 ("Paragraph and Sentence"). Therefore, although *yin* and *xiu* are in separate (opposing) situations, the two can always act in unity on the horizon of the Dao of Nature.

It is in this sense that the *yinxiu* interpreters of later generations regarded the two concepts as one unified aesthetic category, which is mutually opposing and simultaneously mutually dependent. Furthermore, these two concepts, with their interpretations, also make up a rhetorical correlation of mutual illustration, though their aesthetic features are separately introduced. The illuminating lines such as "the practice of forming a new hexagram by realigning the limits of another, or recalling how rivers contain pearls and jade," and "realignment of the lines of a hexagram gives birth to the 'four images,' and the pearls and jade in the depths of the water cause the formation of square and round waves" can serve as metaphors to describe both *yin* and *xiu*. What is even more curious is that "natural beauty" and "colorful adornment" have also summarized the common essence of *yin* and *xiu*, which is the integration of natural and artificial beauty, and the integration has come to a perfect state. It is in this context that the statement "The expressions of *yin* is no different from *xiu*" (隱處即使秀處) has arisen.

Thus, the discussion on the two concepts have gone far beyond the level of rhetoric skill or literary creation styles and have extended to various angles, which makes it possible for researchers in the fields of literary creation theory, literary texts, and literary appreciation to understand and reveal the theoretic secrets in the "Yinxiu" chapter.

In fact, a heated and sufficiently discussed literary concept has already found its aesthetic correlation with the "Yinxiu" chapter, and this concept is *yijing* 意境.2 The aesthetic features of *yin* and *xiu*, such as the ultimate and unlimited implications and indications of *yin*, the attractive emotions and outstanding expressions of *xiu* could just form the best verification for "the perfect fusion of emotion and nature," which is regarded as the most typical definition of *yijing*. In the "Yinxiu" chapter, the metaphor that "realignment of the lines of a hexagram gives birth to the four images" not only describes the aesthetic features of *yin* and *xiu* but also indicates the aesthetic state of beauty beyond images, which is also the essence of

---

2　Related research on *Yijing* and hexagrams is also noticed in the academic communities oversea; see Liu N. However, most of the research focuses on studies from the Tang dynasty, not on the pre-Six-Dynasties comparison .

yijing. As we know, the most profound implication of *yijing* is the metaphoric transcendence or transmission of the aesthetic it signifies. This metaphor inspires poetic comments with reference to the "music beyond the chords and meaning outside the texts" (弦外之音、言外之意). Mei Shengyu's 梅聖俞 "describing the unimaginable scenes in a state of face-to-face display, and infiltrating endless illuminations beyond linguistic expression" (狀難寫之景如在目前，含不盡之意見于言外), and Yanyu's 嚴羽 metaphors below are cases in point.

> The marvelous poems are always so crystal pure that it is almost untraceable, like the music in the void, expression in illusion, the moon in the water and reflection in the mirror, illustrating a state of unlimited extensiveness beyond the limited linguistic expressions. (Yan 139)

These examples reflect the aesthetic influence of the *Yinxiu* chapter, forming a theoretical chain in the history of Chinese literary theory.

In this sense, Tong Qingbing remarked that the aesthetic significance of *yinxiu* had exceeded the four schools mentioned previously and should be redeemed as the most pioneering concept for the formation and perfection of the literary concept of *yijing*, which is no doubt the core category of literary theory of China. As he commented,

> *Yin* stresses the principles of abstraction of *yi* (意) in *yijing*, and *xiu* stresses the criteria of description on *jing* 境 in *yijing*. When both the principles and criteria are achieved, *yijing* is thus formed. If we borrow Sikong Tu's (司空圖) theory of 'Image beyond Image' (象外之象) to enhance the discussion, *xiu* is the first *xiang*, and *yin* makes the second, the requirement of image inside the image is *xiu*, which can be outlined as outstanding and colorful, as if it is alive in the near sight. The image inside the image is only a start toward image beyond the image, and the requirement of the image beyond image is *yin*, which is described as duplicated implications, emotions beyond language, complicated implications beyond text, and implicative inclusiveness of indicated meaning. (Tong 8)

Xiao Honglin also made a comment on the relationship between *yin* and *xiu*, pointing out that the meaning beyond text in "Yinxiu" is major evidence for the famous "aftertaste" in the history of literary theory of China. The description of the untold but imaginable "taste beyond taste," which formed the theory of aftertaste,

converged with the rich implications in limited language—the "taste within taste." This aftertaste revealed a key feature of Chinese literary theory—the preference for the void rather than the solid. As Xiao commented, "such interpretation made itself a mutual reinforcement of the void and the solid as well as the fusion of emotion and scene" (Xiao 359-360). Gu Feng also remarked that Liu Xie's *Wenxin* formed the foundation of the *yijing* theory, while the theory of *yinxiu* established the theoretical basis for the lively and profound fusion of emotion and scene (Gu 48). In summary, the most important aesthetic value of the *Yinxiu* chapter lies within its relationship with the theory of *yijing*.

3. The Interpretive Chain: *Zhouyi-Yinxiu-Yijing* 周易—隱秀—意境

Finally, the discussion arrives at the aesthetic connection between the "Yinxiu" chapter and *Zhouyi*. "Yinxiu" quotes *Zhouyi* on three occasions. As we have indicated above, the quotations of *Zhouyi* concern the "Four Images," "Mutual Body," and "Reversing Lines." Though controversies exist in the study of the interpretation of those quotations, the impact on the interpretation of the literary phenomenon of *yinxiu* is limited. However, a couple of issues still remain.

First, on a literal level, the links between the chapter "Yinxiu" and the book *Zhouyi* only include the three quotations, and previous studies seldom go beyond these citations. In this respect, Liu Xie could have borrowed only a few parlances of interpretation of *Zhouyi* in the Han dynasty to outline the aesthetic characteristics of *yin* and *xiu*, and this approach is only limited to the technical level of literary creation because the linguistic morphologies of "Yinxiu" are similar to the symbolic structures and combinations of lines and hexagrams in *Zhouyi*. However, is this summary convincing to all?

Second, since the so-called "Mutual Bodies," "Reversing Lines," and "Four Images" were not systematically elucidated in the pre-Qin version of *Zhouyi* but existed in *Zhouyi* research in the Han dynasty, can we still compare *Wenxin* research with the earliest state of *Zhouyi* research and the pre-Qin edition of *Zhouyi*?

Third, we already know that the concept of *yinxiu* is not only theoretically related to *yijing*, but further formed the theoretical preparation for the birth and evolution of the very concept. In this process, the influence and traces of *Zhouyi* are evident because it was the metaphors of the "Four Images" and the transcendent and far-reaching features of "Mutual Bodies" and "Reversing Lines" that inspire scholars' association with the "Image Beyond Image," "Fusion of Emotion and Scene" 情景交融, and the "Realm Beyond Image" 境生象外. However, in terms of the receptive or interpretive chain of *Zhouyi-Yinxiu-yijing* 周易—隱秀—意境, the analyses

or debates always remained vague and uncertain. In fact, all three issues discussed above lead to a topic which is very fundamental in *Wenxin* research and even in the study of Chinese literary theory as a whole—the chronical theoretical process from "Yinxiu" to *yijing*, and *Zhouyi* is the most important reference that we cannot easily skip. Now, along the route of thoughts presented by the three issues, we would like to explore the aesthetic features of *yinxiu* in reference to *Zhouyi*.

As we know, Liu Xie embraced *Zhouyi* in a comprehensive manner. The starting point of Liu Xie's literary theory, the Dao of Nature is very closely related to *Zhouyi*. While his theory of literary creation, literary stylistics, and literary criticism were illuminated, the influence of *Zhouyi* was ubiquitous, whether in the overall structure of the whole book or on such topics as *zhezhong* 折衷 (compromising idea), *tongbian* 通變 (change and development), *zhiyi biwan* 知一畢萬 (acquiring unifying principle leads to omniscience of knowledge), *qizheng hucan* 奇正互參 (inter-referencing between odd and original), and *yanyin zhixian* 沿隱至顯 (along the course of the recondite to the conspicuous).

We can find even more evidence of quoting and transforming concepts and images from *Zhouyi*. From the perspective of the whole book, the quotations in the "Yinxiu" chapter are widely spread. However, none of the "Four Images," "Mutual Body," or "Reversing Lines" can show a strict and direct correspondence with the concept of *yinxiu*. For example, we cannot define *yin* or the feature of the recondite as an "illusion" (假象), let alone *xiu* a "real image" (實象). Neither the irreversible *shaoyang* (少陽) and *shaoyin* (少陰) nor the reversing *laoyin* (老陰) and *laoyang* (老陽) can correspond to any end in the mutually interpreting pair of concepts as *yinxiu*. As for the *bengua* 本卦 (original hexagram), *zhigua* 之卦 (reversed hexagram), *biegua* 別卦 (category hexagram), and *fugua* 復卦 (complex hexagram) in the process of interpreting hexagrams, none of the above can directly refer to the noumenon of the *yin* or *xiu*. Therefore, when Liu Xie referred to the ontology of the recondite or the conspicuous or used the metaphor of "rivers containing pearls and jade," he used the approach of association, in addition to defining *yinxiu* with the four images or reversing hexagrams. Apparently, Liu Xie adopted the methodology of the "use of image" (用象之法) from *Zhouyi*, but his interpretation of *yinxiu* has stretched far beyond this use of image. The other scholars' notes on the sentence of "The recondite, as a form, (…) unobtrusively reveals hidden beauty" usually stress that Liu Xie's original intention was to describe the implicative feature with the metaphor of the "impermanent principle while defining the hexagram" (取義無常). However, this explanation on the recondite is not convincing enough. The so-called recondite as a feature of the implicative is not simply a description or reappear-

ance of the process of the conversion from *bengua* to *zhigua* but a metaphor of the paradigm of the divination process. Now, how do we describe this paradigm? It is a mode of thinking, and in the context of *Zhouyi*, this mode of thinking transcends the specific procedure of divination and can, conversely, provide guidance for every process of divination. It is therefore embedded in each use of image, but it has also transcended the definition of use and is instead a unification of "noumenon and function" (即體即用). And it is the mode of thinking in *Zhouyi* that becomes the noumenon for the recondite introduced by Liu Xie.

The existence of such a mode of thinking in *Zhouyi* has long been recognized by the academic community. Since the occurrence of the cultural phenomenon of divination, it has existed along with every process of divinatory activity. Divination practices were inevitably guided by this paradigm, while constantly reflecting, summarizing, and describing this mode of thinking, deepening people's understanding of it. Therefore, since the text of *Zhouyi* was formed, this paradigm has deeply penetrated the spirit of the Chinese culture. This symbolic system is mainly based on simple divinatory symbols. When people interpreted these symbols and hexagrams, they would also follow the direction of this paradigm and produce a new metaphysical cognition of the meaning of the line or hexagram, with the stratum of the image system as the media in the process of cognition. This is a cyclical process going from *yi* 意 (cognition of meaning) to *yan* 言 (language) via *xiang* 象 (image), which represents the process of divination. Conversely, from *yan* to *yi* via *xiang* is the process of interpretation. In this regard, Wang Zhenfu produced two illustrations to depict the paradigm in both *Zhouyi* and the formation of the aesthetics of art (Figure 1).
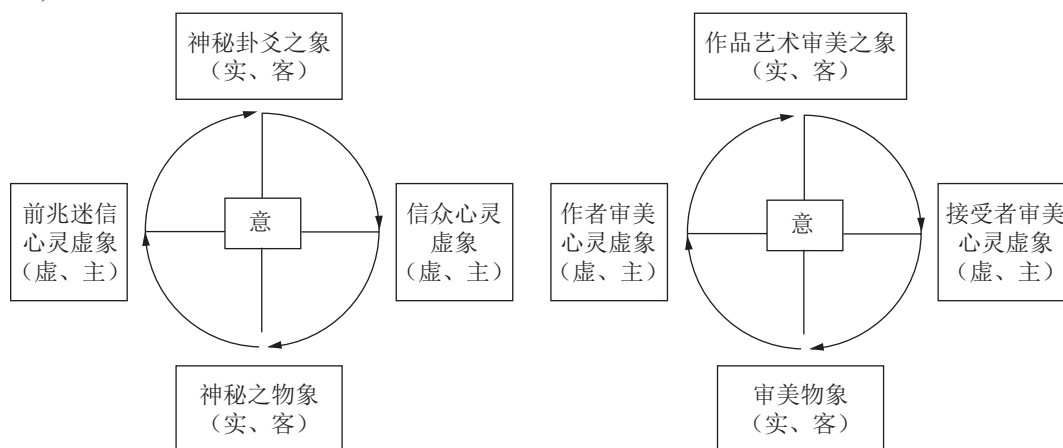
The picture on the upper left can be regarded as a "mode of transition from 'meaning' to 'image'" ("意" "象" 的轉換模式); Wang continued, "[T]hese are the four strata from 'meaning' to 'image' in original divinations." Correspondingly, the

transition of "artistic aesthetic" following the same pattern is depicted in the picture the top right. In this regard, Wang Zhenfu further explained:

> Structurally, the aesthetics of art is similar and interrelated to witchcraft. As was pointed out by Lukács in his *die Eigenart des Aesthetischen*, "The practices of witchcraft carried the seeds and sprouts of the prototype that later developed into independent scientific attitude and art." This statement appears to be most appropriate for the divinatory culture of witchcraft of *Zhouyi* in China. The images and numbers in *Zhouyi* did match the criteria as the sprouts for the future art aesthetic and scientific attitude. For the "Image," Kong Yingda made a convincing comment in the *Rectification of Zhouyi*: "The Essence of *yi* is Image. To clearly expound the human society with reference to physical image is a good resemblance of the metaphor in poetics" (凡易者，象也。以物象而明人事，若詩之比喻也). In his *Wenshi tongyi* 文史通義 (*On Literature and History*), Zhang Xuecheng also remarked: "The images of *yi* are interrelated to the *bi* and *xing* in poetry" (易象通于詩之比興). Now it's clear that *yi* is interrelated to poetry for the aesthetic appearance of "Image." (Wang 258–260)

This graphical process depicts the relationship between literature and the application of image and number as the media in thought in *Zhouyi* research, which is a good interpretation for the paradigm embedded in the process of "Realignment of the lines of a hexagram gives birth to the four images," which, in a much widely accepted interpretation, is called the "Xiang Thought" "象思维," or thinking in terms of images.

In this sense, Liu Xie's reference of *Zhouyi*, his metaphor of the "Mutual Body" and the "Four Images" as the "Noumenon of Yin" had all been inspired by the paradigm of "Xiang Thought" in *Zhouyi* research, which formed the ultimate foundation for the interpretation of the aesthetic concept of *yinxiu*. At the same time, the concept of *yinxiu* invented by Liu Xie can serve as the most vivid manifestation of the "Xiang Thought," rendering the concept beyond the realm of linguistic and rhetoric discussions. This can be demonstrated by the following statement from the added paragraph in "Yinxiu": "Working all out of soul (…) defining the hardship," which stresses training in thoughts. The training is in an arduous and time-consuming *zhuta putuan* 竹榻蒲團 (personal cultivating on a bamboo bed and futon) cultivation style in Chinese Buddhism, which does not simply refer to the process

of literary conception. Hence, could we see the metaphors, such as "it resembles the ignorance of an erudite scholar when a passage lacks reconditeness, and it's like the lacking treasure in an elegant house when a sentence is weak in the conspicuous," from the added paragraph? That is, only after arduous and painful work can one procure the penetrating and transcending way of thought, and only after the procuring of the "Xiang Thought" can a scholar be rich in thoughts and literary expressions.

Furthermore, *Yizhuan* 易傳 (*Commentaries on Yijing*) provides the following comments:

> The scholars would observe the images and ponder the statements when staying tranquil, and would investigate the changes and study the divination. (Huang 531)
> 君子居則觀其象，而玩其辭；动則觀其變，而玩其占。

> Observe up into the adornment in the sky, investigate down on the logic of the land, and acquire the ultimate truth in the universe. Retrospect the origin of the world, to fully understand life and death. (Huang 535)
> 仰以觀於天文，俯以察於地理，是故知幽明之故。原始返終，故知死生之說。

And it is only after that could researchers of *Zhouyi* "receive blessing from the heaven, which is absolute auspicious" (Huang 133) (自天祐之，吉無不利).

After clarification of the origin of the mechanism of thought of the *yinxiu*, we can make further analysis on the recondite and conspicuous in the "Yinxiu" chapter. The so-called "ideas which are beyond linguistic expression and are comprehended indirectly through abstruse overtones, which unobtrusively reveal hidden beauty," are not defining a concept but depicting an aesthetic state. And the metaphor of "the practice of forming a new hexagram (…) contains pearls and jade" simply refers to the state of *yinxiu*. Evidently, the noumenon of *yin* is not depicted as an entity in the field of ontology, nor as a concept in a strict sense, but described as a non-entity, a metaphysical and dynamic existence, which is similar to the images of lines and hexagrams in *Zhouyi* that keep changing in cycles. In this sense, the value of the noumenon of *yin* is "change" (变) and "aggregate" (蕴)—both are dynamic descriptions rather than static definitions. As of *xiu*, "Elegant mist pervades in the mountains, and gorgeous ladies possess their extreme beauty" (遠山之浮烟靄，變女之靚容華); both stressing a vague and shadowy beauty, which is difficult to de-

fine and describe. Therefore, *yin* and *xiu* are two different levels of concepts, applying to two different scopes.

Furthermore, the "Marking Passage" (指篇) and "Quoting Sentences" (摘句) have both focused on the foiling of an implicative image like "Various depths and different densities display themselves naturally to readers" (深浅各奇, 穠纤俱妙), and the metaphor of "The red and green of dyed silks are deep and, indeed, rich and fresh; the blossoms that brighten the trees, whose beauty is completely exhibited on the surface, glow in blazing glory" (朱綠染繒, 深而繁鲜; 英華曜树, 浅而煒煒) also stresses the use of *yinxiu*, which is the use of the image. The "brightened trees" and "dyed silks" do not strictly correlate with one tree or one piece of silk but describe a symbolic image that is based on the entity of the image and transcends it with a state of "Image beyond Image." This kind of image is transcendental, and also intuitive and sensible, therefore enabling itself to "move the mind and startle the ears" (动心惊耳). In summary, the image of *yinxiu* is an open and appealing image, and the aftertaste of which requires further pondering, like "The observers and recipients enjoy the endless aftertaste from inside" (玩之者無窮, 味之者不厭). And only after that can the "aesthetically implicative perceive the recondite and relaxed, the outstanding and penetrative disclose the conspicuous and delighted" (使醞藉者蓄隱而意愉, 英銳者抱秀而心悅).

In conclusion, it is the dynamic process of forming the objective and materializing image into a transcendental and intuitively sensible "Image in the Idea" (意中之象) with descriptive language that vividly depicts the essence of the "Yinxiu" chapter. In this process, not only the shadow of *Zhouyi* but also the origin of the theory of *yijing* appear. Many scholars regard Liu Xie's introduction of the concept of image (意象) as the starting point of *yijing* theory. In fact, it is the "Xiang Thought" illuminated by the system of hexagrams and lines in *Zhouyi* that connects the theory of *yijing* and all the theoretical preparations in the "Yinxiu" chapter.

Works Cited:

Chen Li 陳莉. "Research on literary, aesthetic idea in Liu Xie's *Yinxiu*" 文心雕龍·隱秀篇中的文藝美學思想 (Wenxin diaolong yinxiupian zhong de wenyi meixue sixiang). *Xinyang shifan xueyuan xuebao* 5 (2006): 100–103. Print.

Gadamer, Hans G. "Truth and Method" 真理与方法, trans. Hong Handing. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2010. Print.

Gu Feng 古風. "Exploration of *yijing*" 意境探微 (*Yijing* tanwei). Beijing: Baihuazhou we-

nyi. 2001. Print.

Huang Kan 黃侃. "Notes on *Wenxin diaolong*" 文心雕龍札記 (*Wenxin diaolong* zhaji). Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006. Print.

Huang Lin 黃琳. "Review of *Wenxin diaolong*" 文心雕龍匯評 (*Wenxin diaolong* huiping). Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006. Print.

Huang Shouqi 黃壽祺, and Zhang Shanwen 張善文. "On the influence of *Zhouyi* on *Wenxin diaolong*" 試論周易對文心雕龍的影響 (Shilun *Zhouyi* dui *Wenxin diaolong* de yingxiang). *Wenxin diaolong xuekan* 4. Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1986: 391. Print.

Huang Shouqi 黃壽祺, and Zhang Shanwen 張善文. "The annotation and translation of *Zhouyi*" 周易譯註 (*Zhouyi* yizhu). Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1998. Print.

Li Ping 李平. "*Zhouyi* and *Wenxin diaolong*" 周易與文心雕龍 (*Zhouyi* yu *Wenxin diaolong*). *Zhouyi yanjiu* 3 (1991): 32–46. Print.

Liu, Ning. "From 'View' (境象) to 'Flavor' (韻味): The Difference between Sikong Tu's Theory of 'Flavor More than Taste' (味外之旨) and the 'Yijing' (意境) in the High and Mid-Tang." *Sunkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 2.1 (2002): 191–209. Print.

Liu Xie 劉勰. *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*. Tr. Vincent Y. Shih. Hong Kong: Chinese UP, 1983. Print.

Liu Yongji 劉永濟. "Collation and explanation of *Wenxin diaolong*" 文心雕龍校釋 (*Wenxin diaolong* jiaoshi). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007. Print.

Tong Qingbing 童慶炳. "An exploratory investigation of the 'author's real intention to be insinuated between lines' in *Wenxin diaolong*" 文心雕龍《文外重旨》說新探 (*Wenxin diaolong* wenwai zhongzhi shuo xintan). *Shanxi shifan daxue xuebao* 2 (2007): 5–10. Print.

Wang Zhenfu 王振復. "On the chronical thread on the aesthetics of China" 中國美學的文脈歷程 (Zhongguo meixue de wenmai lichen). Chengdu: Sichuan renmin, 2002. Print.

William Empson. *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1949. Print.

Xiao Honglin 肖洪林. "On the 'aftertaste' of Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong*" 論劉勰的餘味說 (Lun Liu Xie de yuweishuo). *Wenxin diaolong xuekan* 4. Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1986. Print.

Yu Yuan 郁沅. "On the structure and the aesthetic system of literary creation theory of *Wenxin diaolong*" 論文心雕龍的綱及創作心理美學體系 (Lun *Wenxin diaolong* de gang ji chuangzuo xinli meixue tixi). *Wenxin diaolong yanjiu* 1. Beijing: Beijing daxue, 1995. Print.

Zhan Ying 詹锳. "Discussion of theory of *Yinxiu* in *Wenxin diaolong*" 文心雕龍的隱秀論 (*Wenxin diaolong* de *Yinxiu* lun). *Hebei daxue xuebao* 12 (1979): 24–36. Print.

Zhou Ruchang 周汝昌. "New debates on previous suspicions of the chapter *Yinxiu* in *Wenxin diaolong*" 文心雕龍·隱秀篇舊疑新議 (*Wenxin diaolong Yinxiu* pian jiuyi

xinyi). *Hebei daxue xuebao* 2 (1983): 18–24. Print.

Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫. "Modern Interpretation of *Wenxin diaolong*" 文心雕龍今譯 (*Wenxin diaolong* jinyi). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986.

Zong-qi Cai, ed. *A Chinese Literary Mind: Culture, Creativity, and Rhetoric in Wenxin Diaolong*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2001. Print.

Author Profile:

Dou Keyang is an associate professor at the College of the Humanities, Jilin University. His research interests focus on comparative literary theory and Chinese Hermeneutics.

Bu Tiejun is an associate professor at the School of Foreign Language Education, Jilin University. His research interests center on comparative literature.

Zhang Tingkai is a candidate for Master of Art at the College of the Humanities, Jilin University. His research mainly focuses on comparative literary theory.

The Chinese Sci-Fi Fandom and the Making of *The Three-Body Problem* as a Cultural Icon

Shuwen Yang (Stanford University)

Abstract

Using *The Three-Body Problem* trilogy as an example, this paper provides a chronological overview of the development of Chinese sci-fi fandom and close readings of selected grassroots fan productions. The fan culture fostered by *The Three-Body Problem* fan community is already phenomenal and should not be viewed solely as a transitory byproduct of the trilogy's popularity; rather, it embodies a participatory culture intrinsic to Chinese science fiction.

It is essential to contextualize this fandom within the landscape of the rapidly expanding accessibility to the Internet and the burst of online literature, which can help explore the following questions: How might sci-fi fan fiction redefine the sci-fi genre itself? How do fans construe the themes of Liu's novels, and what do their reinventions reflect about our society? In this article, I argue that Chinese science fiction engenders a realm for grassroots reinvention and creative reinterpretation, as well as harboring the potential for content democratization in the digital age. Furthermore, I posit that examining Chinese sci-fi fandom sheds light on netizen democratization, official-grassroots cooperation, and gender dynamics, which can offer valuable insights into the future development of Chinese sci-fi.

Keywords: Chinese sci-fi, Fandom Studies, *The Three-Body Problem*, Liu Cixin, sci-fi fan

Introduction

The Three-Body Problem trilogy, written by Liu Cixin and published from 2008 to 2010, is undeniably one of the most renowned contemporary Chinese science fiction works. Its significance is evident not only in its broad concept, commer-

cial success, global readership, and numerous awards but also in the profusion of fan productions associated with it. *The Three-Body Problem* fandom has flourished across various time periods and platforms, starting from fan fiction on platforms like ShuimuTsinghua (SMTH) BBS and Baidu Tieba in 2010 to a large number of derivative videos on Bilibili in 2014. Remarkably, even before the official production of *The Three-Body Problem* television series by Tencent and Netflix, many fans had already undertaken their own creative endeavors and produced the Minecraft animation of the trilogy, *My Three Body* (*Wode santi*, 2014).

While Anglophone research already encompasses a substantial body of research on science fiction fandom, there has been relatively little and unsystematical study in the Chinese-language field. This paper argues that fan culture fostered by *The Three-Body Problem* fan community is already phenomenal and should not be viewed solely as a transitory byproduct of the trilogy's popularity; rather, it embodies a participatory culture intrinsic to Chinese science fiction (later referred to as sci-fi in this paper). It is essential to contextualize this fandom within the landscape of the rapidly expanding accessibility to the Internet and the burst of online literature. How might sci-fi fan fiction redefine the sci-fi genre itself? Is it possible that sci-fi fandom also plays a significant role in the popularization of science? How do fans construe the themes of Liu's novels, and what do their reinventions reflect about our society? This paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the Chinese sci-fi fandom, taking *The Three-Body Problem* series as a case study. It argues that Chinese science fiction engenders a realm for grassroots reinvention and creative reinterpretation, as well as harboring the potential for content democratization in the digital age.

Discussions, communities, and fan productions revolving around Liu's works, especially *The Three-Body Problem* trilogy, have emerged sporadically on various online platforms, which can be roughly categorized into three distinct stages. The first stage (2000–2010) unfolded on Baidu Tieba and Shuimu Tsinghua (SMTH) BBS, where it was mainly the male intellectuals who engaged in in-depth discussions about the trilogy and produced fan fiction known for its "hard sci-fi" features. Noteworthy within this stage is the Three-Body Problem Bar, an online community where fans created a virtual "civilization" and later documented its detailed history. As early as the phase was, key topics such as copyright, censorship, and the concept of "democracy" already played central roles in the fan discourse, foreshadowing their continued relevance in present-day discussions.

The second stage (2011–present) witnessed a proliferation of fan productions in new media formats, particularly on platforms like Bilibili and Weibo. This marked a

notable shift from a small circle of fans primarily focused on literary work formats to a broader dissemination of content through mainstream media channels, thus paving the way for the eventual commercial filming of the trilogy. From this stage onward, fan productions should not be solely viewed as derivative works but instead recognized as entities that are open to appropriation and reimagining by the media industries.

During the period spanning 2015 to the present, which partially overlaps with the second stage, slash literature and comics created by female fans became more and more visible. In the early stages, the fan community was male-dominant, with an emphasis on exploring the scientific and technological aspects of the trilogy. It was not until around 2015, following the popularization of Lofter, that more female fans began posting their own fan productions on the platform, leading to the emergence of a distinct slash culture. The three stages will be discussed in detail in this paper, following a short literature review.

Following this periodization, the details of content democratization can be sorted out in three aspects. Firstly, languages from the trilogy become strategies for fans to form a community, circumvent censorship, and provide a possibility to discuss issues at the national level. Fans are able to borrow the expressions from the trilogy to testify to their actual participation in events such as "running a government" and "writing a historiography." The two examples are San Ti Bar and Tixiao Tongjian. Furthermore, fans' recreation of the original text also brings hybridity to sci-fi, moving beyond the Western "hard sci-fi" tradition to incorporate traditional Chinese cultural elements. Fan creations open up new possibilities for addressing questions of "Chineseness" and the future direction of Chinese sci-fi.

In the second stage, fan creations on newer media platforms precede business investments, with fans' ideas becoming source material for producers. This allows fans to infuse their own concepts into the works. Examples include the trilogy animation on Bilibili and role casting/role-playing events on Weibo. The third stage highlights how female fans utilize online slash literature as a kind of hidden archive to document the "queerness" not only within sci-fi texts but also in their interactions within the community. They successfully insert themselves back into the sci-fi narrative.

Literature Review

The Three-Body Problem fandom has thrived over an extensive period of time. For example, the term "dimensional reduction" (*jiangwei daji*) has gained wide usage in the IT industry, resulting in the publication of several books that analyze

classic business cases. Much like cultural studies scholar Constance Penley's observations regarding *Star Trek* fandom, in China, an astonishingly complex popular discourse about civic, social, moral, and political issues is filtered through the idioms and ideas from the trilogy.

This paper situates *The Three-Body Problem* fandom in the thread of Constance Penley's study on *Star Trek* fandom back in the 1990s and Henry Jenkins's study on "convergence culture" in the twenty-first century. In the study of American sci-fi fandom, Penley argues that the *Star Trek* TV show has been borrowed by both NASA to reinforce its public standing and female slash writers who rewrite the storyline and establish their subjectivity in sci-fi. Contemporarily, Jenkins studies the convergence of old and new media, through which the fans work as collective intelligence to democratize the original works and form a participatory culture, which further complicates the forms of fandom and fan fiction. Following Jenkins's idea, in discussing the context of fandom of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi*), Tian Xiaofei compares the changes brought about by the Internet and new media forms in the contemporary moment to the Tang–Song transition in Chinese history, when "new social and cultural structures, new forms of information dissemination, and new ideologies and concepts" emerged (266). The technology of the Internet is playing a crucial part in reshaping the Chinese literary and cultural landscape, where sci-fi stands out for both its literary and technological features, thus closely related to the web culture in China.

While fan fiction has been studied structurally and systematically in Anglo-American research, in the field of Chinese Studies, research to date has generally focused on Chinese online literature and slash literature as a whole body of texts; for example, Hockx's work on Chinese Internet Literature focuses on "how Chinese Internet Literature challenges literary conventions and hierarchies, and how it operates within the specific context of the PRC's publishing system" (44). Shaohua Guo's monograph *The Evolution of the Chinese Internet* focuses on the development of online platforms and the different logics people interact with them. Jin Feng's monograph *Romancing the Internet* focuses on female-written online literature where women create cultural capital for themselves. In fan fiction studies, Tian's article "Slashing the Three Kingdoms" explores the *Three Kingdoms* fan productions, specifically slash literature, while also touching upon other forms such as music videos (viddings). However, only until very recently did several panels discuss Chinese sci-fi fandom, the study of which is still an ongoing process. On Weibo and Wechat official accounts, San Feng has put together many valuable materials about fans' derivative works, and He Liu did a series of reviews on the fan communities

in Chinese universities, which are highly valuable. This paper aims to fill the gap in Chinese sci-fi fandom studies, introducing what Chinese sci-fi fandom is and how the lens of fandom can provide us with different perspectives to examine the sci-fi industry in the digital age.

Most of the fan productions are based on *The Three-Body Problem* trilogy. While fans of the trilogy or Liu Cixin's other works cannot wholly represent general fans of Chinese sci-fi, this paper chooses the trilogy and its fandom as a representative example and aims to briefly delineate an overview of domestic fan productions. The fans studied in this paper specifically refer to the people who love the trilogy and create fan works, while posts and discussions by general Internet users are also included and studied in order to explore the larger significance of this new literary, cultural, and social phenomenon.

Early Stage

SMTH BBS and The Three-Body X

The first published fan fiction of the trilogy, titled *Three-Body X: The Redemption of Time* (*Santi X: Guanxiang yuzhou*), made its initial appearance as a serialized piece on SMTH BBS and the Liu Cixin Bar in Baidu Tieba, starting from 5 December 2010. Its author, the fervent Liu Cixin's fan Bao Shu, finished the entire fan fiction within a mere seventeen days (Bao "Postscript"). *Three-Body X* swiftly gained widespread recognition and managed to capture the attention of Yao Haijun, the editor of *Science Fiction World* at that time, who played a crucial role in facilitating its eventual publication. Notably, because it emerged online shortly after the release of *Death's End*, it became one of the earliest works of fan fiction dedicated to the trilogy and the only one to be published. Bao Shu's decision to share the novel on SMTH BBS and the Liu Cixin Bar in Baidu Tieba itself offers a tantalizing clue for tracing where the earliest fandom takes shape and provides insights into the nature of these platforms and their respective user bases.

SMTH BBS is a popular bulletin board system in Chinese university circles, originating in 1995 at Tsinghua University. Renowned for its preeminence in scientific and engineering research domains, Tsinghua served as the cradle of this virtual community. Its core ethos has been encapsulated by the motto, "The intellectual enclave rooted in Tsinghua, bridging the realms of ivory towers and the tangible world of society."

In the same year that the BBS was launched, a sci-fi discussion section was es-

tablished, which became the earliest online forum for Chinese Internet users to discuss sci-fi. However, during the late 1990s, as Internet accessibility remained limited, the roster of registered users on SMTH BBS barely surpassed several dozen by the close of 1995. It was only in 1996 when the user count surpassed three digits (*Wikipedia*). The BBS experienced multiple transformations and periods of closure in its early years due to political exigencies. A significant milestone occurred on 16 March 2005 when access to SMTH BBS was restricted to on-campus IPs. Nevertheless, in early 2006, it resumed accessibility to external IPs, contingent upon users confirming their identity through a valid email account (*Wikipedia*). Numerous discussion groups on the platform remained tightly controlled, barricading themselves against external engagement, thereby constraining access to this space.

The earliest users of the BBS primarily constituted young students, educators from eminent Chinese institutions, and individuals of erudition who possessed Internet access and valid email credentials. In essence, the typical participants were academic scholars or intellectuals who had embraced emerging media technologies and honed their adeptness in engaging with these burgeoning spheres of knowledge exchange. Bao Shu, as a student at Peking University, conformed to this archetype. Although detailed user identities are unavailable, the attributes of the platform offer insights into the earliest online sci-fi enthusiast community in China.

While the original website is no longer accessible, the content of *Three-Body X* and the recognition it gained provide valuable insights into its audience persona. The first segment of *Three-Body X*, recounted from the perspective of Yun Tianming, delves into how the Trisolarans meticulously analyze Yun Tianming's cognitive processes and study his strategies to combat Earth during and after the Deterrence Era. The latter portion, from a third-person narrative, progressively unveils the cosmological history of the Universe, portraying the transition from a state with ten dimensions to a singular one-dimensional existence. This narrative mirrors the philosophical underpinnings of Lao Tzu's aphorisms, such as "Tao begat one; One begat two; Two begat three; Three begat all things," and the idea that "everything converges into unity." This can be seen as an exemplar of how Chinese sci-fi adeptly weaves traditional Chinese cultural elements into its fabric.

In a deft manner, Yun Tianming endeavors to restore the Universe to its original ten-dimensional state, often referred to as the "Edenic Age." In contrast, the original work leaves unexplored how the Trisolarans capture Yun's brain, as well as the future of Universe 647, where Cheng Xin leaves behind five kilograms of Ecosphere. Bao Shu's complementary work attests to the role of fan fiction in providing comprehensive supplements to the original narrative, in line with Pen-

ley's observation that "some fans feel compelled to elaborate on the rudimentary aspects of science and technology in the canon, and these enthusiasts have predominantly been male" (117). In the new version of SMTH BBS today, the sci-fi section continues to be dominated by discussions centered on the intricacies of the scientific and technological dimensions of the trilogy. This underscores the enduring fascination of its user base with the scientific and technical facets of these literary works.

Aside from technological details, it is also worth noting that, as Bao Shu says in his postscript, one of his intentions is also to compensate for Yun Tianming's unfulfilled love for Cheng Xin (Bao "Postscript"). In the first part, the only listener of Yun Tianming's experience is AA, who in the original work is the assistant of Cheng Xin and meets Yun on DX3906 and later lives a happy life with him. The fan fiction is faithful to the original work as Yun Tianming and AA are the only human beings left on DX3906, but throughout the story, AA is erotically portrayed as a "naked" and "beautiful white body." Because Yun Tianming is emotionally unstable when recounting his sufferings in the Trisolar world, AA has sexual intercourse several times with him to express her love for him and calm him down. Sophon, the manager of Universe 647, also appears naked when Yun Tianming first meets her because, as the owner of the universe, Yun does not "set her to wear clothes" (Bao *The Three-Body X*). The readers of the work also focus much on sex; according to Bao Shu's postscript, although his original intention of using the "X" in the title was to refer to "uncertain and infinite possibilities," "since everyone says it is related to sex … Well, all right" (Bao "Postscript"). The popularity of *The Three-Body X* and its male fantasies might, to some extent, indicate the gender ratio of its readers and how in 2011, sci-fi, its fan fiction, and the fan platforms were male-dominated.

Liu Cixin himself was also an active user of SMTH BBS, interacting a lot with fans and answering their questions on the platform. While Liu Cixin has agreed to the publication of *The Three-Body X*, he does not hold a highly positive attitude toward fan fiction as a phenomenon. In a 2013 interview with *South Daily*, Liu argues that fan fiction negatively influences the original author. For example, according to Liu, the most significant unfinished plot line is Yun Tianming's story, about which he plans to write another novel, but "the road is blocked so I cannot go further" (Ye). Although he allows the publication of fan fiction, Liu also raises concerns about copyright issues but does not go further into the issue. The tension between the author of the canon and the fan writer, and the issue of copyright emerged very early in this stage but was not systematically dealt with, which requires further explora-

tion in the field of legal studies.

Baidu Tieba (San Ti Bar) and Alternative Historiography

Baidu Tieba, established on 3 December 2003, is one of the most-used Chinese communication platforms during the early twenty-first century. Users may search for a topic-of-interest forum known as a "bar." Liu Cixin Bar is a community where fans of Liu Cixin gathered even before the trilogy was published. While the establishing time of Liu Cixin Bar cannot be traced accurately as Tieba does not allow the function, the earliest post is dated April 2004 and invites the readers to share their general impressions and thoughts on Liu's sci-fi works. Liu has appealed to a number of fans since he published his works in the magazine, and these fans formed the earliest group of trilogy fans. Under the "Digest section" of the Liu Cixin Bar, half of the posts are under the section on Liu Cixin and his works, while the other three sections are on fan productions, the front line of science, and general discussion on sci-fi. The 754 digest posts in these three sections show the users' inventiveness, their passion for sci-fi, and other discoveries in science and technology.

In contrast to SMTH BBS and the Liu Cixin Bar, which are rather loose communities where fans gather and discuss related topics and Liu's works generally, The Three-Body Problem Bar (San Ti Bar) has a more complicated history, as written by a user named 250 yihao zailushang on Bilibili. The fans established a "civilization" in the bar and wrote a detailed historiography about its development. One of the famous pieces is called *Ti Xiao Tongjian*, imitating Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government (*Zizhi tongjian*), a pioneering reference work in Chinese historiography from 1084 AD (Song dynasty) in the form of a chronicle recording Chinese history from 403 BC to 959 AD. The table of contents of *Ti Xiao Tongjian* is still available, but the full text on Tieba has been deleted. Parts of the texts are preserved by fans in an Android app titled Tixiao Tongjian. Below are screenshots of the app and part of the content list (Figures 1–4).

Left screen:

关于

体校通鉴

我是三体吧公民，我对三体吧宣誓：我愿意继承前辈们理性讨论，拒绝斯逼的传统，愿意继承前辈们将三体吧建设为高质量贴吧的光荣与梦想，抵制水贴、抵制民科，准备着，为建设高质量三体吧而奋斗！
宣誓人：

历史记录 人物传记
政治笑话 同人小说
精品帖集 内容搜索

全面屏显示

Right screen:

北京市第三体校

圣战

中世纪

田园时代

三权分立

体校共和国

议团制改革

全面屏显示
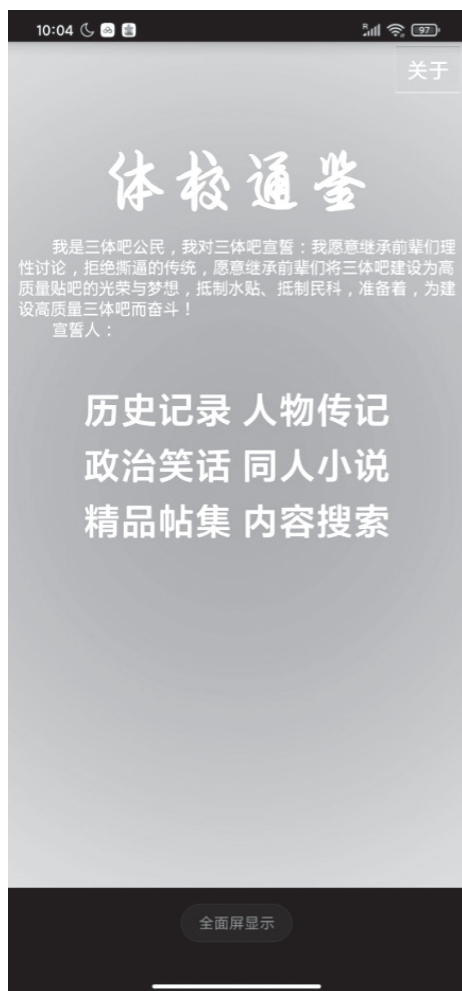
三、政治史

（一）体校时代

（二）圣战

（三）中世纪

（四）第一共和国（田园时代）

（五）番外篇: 三体吧远征军

（六）第一共和国（三权分立）

（七）第二共和国（图腾改革）

（八）　番外篇: 自爆自吧

（九）第三共和国

四、后记

五、参考资料

Chapter 3	Political History
(1)	The Athletic School Era
(2)	Holly War
(3)	Middle Ages
(4)	First Republic (Edenic Age)
(5)	Extra chapter: The Expedition of San Ti Bar
(6)	First Republic (Separation of Powers)
(7)	Second Republic (Totem Reform)
(8)	Extra chapter: How We Our Own Bar
(9)	Third Republic
Chapter 4	Postscript
Chapter 5	References

Figures 1-4 A screenshot of part of the table of contents of Tixiao Tongjian;
author's English translation.
(Source: 250 一号在路上, https:///www.bilibili.com/read/cv3691789, accessed Aug, 2021)

Several other posts also document the history of the San Ti Bar from 2006 to 2012 and are preserved in San Ti Bar. One of them starts with "Ancient War," an event that happened during the establishment of San Ti Bar. The cause of the "Ancient War" might sound a little bit absurd, as the Chinese characters of *The Three-Body Problem* (三体) are also the abbreviation of Beijing No. 3 Athletic School; thus, the San Ti Bar was initially established by the athletic school students. In June 2006, the fans of Liu Cixin approached to the San Ti Bar and started a quarrel with the students because the fans wanted to use the bar title. The "war" gradually intensified and was even raised into a national issue, with its core debating question being "Which benefits China more? Science and Technology or athletics?" (250 yihao zai lu shang). Despite its "nonsensical" immediate cause, the war, to some extent, demonstrates how Tieba provides Internet users with a possible democratic debating space. More interestingly, the argument that "science and technology" can "benefit China" more indeed defines "sci-fi" from the perspective of the fans. In fans' perception, sci-fi is a genre that promotes science and technology across the nation and enhances China's military power, which might lead us to examine the overlap between military fans and triology fans in the future.

After the four-month "Ancient War," the original manager of the San Ti Bar stepped down. The new manager, Dulander, deleted all the "Ancient War" posts and established the rules of the San Ti Bar. "Congratulations! Science Fiction has

conquered the San Ti Bar" is the post bears witness to the "historic moment" until August 2021. The post cannot be found later.

One of the legacies of the war is that the abbreviation for the athletic school, Ti Xiao, was kept and became the title of a later historiography but also became a way to circumvent censorship on literature bars that happened in June 2016. The author of *TiXiao Tongjian* highly praised the development of the bar. In the preface, he writes,

> Because the majority of its users are highly educated, the bar has a tradition of 'always discussing with rationality instead of getting into catfights.' It has its bar charter, electoral system, and the form of the management team is also based on separation of power. (…) The bar is the first bar ever in Baidu Tieba that retains its democratic system after the user number reaches ten thousand, which is very similar to the Western democratic system ("Tixiao Tongjian", quoted by 250 yihao zailushang).

"TiXiao Tongjian" provides detailed documents of and comments on past bar managers, praising or criticizing their management, and emphasizes the tradition of the bar having "no fear of power." To conclude with these materials, the bar has almost established a democratic civilization that fans take pride in.

Languages and terms from *The Three-Body Problem* trilogy are constantly referred to in the "historical writing." Apart from some of the managers' irresponsibility, censorship also negatively influenced the Bar. Several important events, for example, the one in June 2016 when all the literature bars were censored on Tieba, were also documented in *The History of the San Ti Bar* as a "chaotic time" (*luan jiyuan*), a term from the trilogy. Also, in this period, a large number of posts were deleted, and users stopped posting, so the bar was referred to as the "storyless world" (*wu gushi wangguo*), which is also a quotation from the trilogy, emphasizing the importance of individual storytelling in this democratic system. When there are struggles or revolts in the bar because the users are not satisfied with the bar management, it is recorded as "the gluten sea is back" (*taotiehai huilai le*), in order to portray the chaos, but also, to demonstrate the power of the fans' protest in the bar. Borrowing language from the trilogy, the fans encode their information, imitating the character Yun Tianming, who has to deliver messages to the Earth under surveillance from the Trisolarans. The original work provides a highly metaphorical language that allows users to talk about politics and democracy. Experiences in sci-fi work are "lived" vividly in fan communities in real life. Fans' passionate docu-

mentation also provides an alternative history of the censorship events that were not publicly recorded online and becomes the shared memory of the trilogy fans.

The QiDian (Starting Point): Chinese Online Literature Website

QiDian Chinese Net is a literature website founded in 2003. The website was initially established for the Chinese Magic Fantasy Union but later also became famous for its other genres, such as martial arts, military and war stories, and science fiction. Apart from its genre sections, it also has two large sections for male and female readers. By the end of August 2021, the website had 53,729 pieces of works under the keyword "Three Body (Santi)," with 14,038 of them under "female" and 36,566 under "male."

Another famous fan fiction, *The Three-Body Problem: A Tale of the Post-Milky-Way Era* (*Santi zhi houyinhe jiyuan chuanshuo*), was first serialized on QiDian Chinese Net from January 2015 to March 2015 (San Feng) but was not finished because the author's account was blocked by the online censorship. The complete text is not available today, but according to a summary of the plot (reinforce), the author imagines the development of the starship civilization, which in the original work is only shortly introduced when Zhang Beihai chooses to fly to the planet NH558J2 and thinks that "the new human civilization would forever voyage on a starship" (Liu, *Dark Forest* 648). The unfinished novel spends a large portion on the technology tree, string theory, and quantum mechanics. Therefore, the readers consider it to be "hard sci-fi," which is similar to *Three-Body X: The Redemption of Time* (2011).

Although Qidian is a literature website, and it is hard to trace interactive communities and a whole picture of fandom on it, I still include it because the characteristics of the website can give us some clues about the audience's definition of the genre. Much of the trilogy fan fiction posted on this website combines features of both science fiction and traditional Chinese fantasy, posing questions for the definition of the genre in a Chinese context. More broadly, when we look at online sci-fi nowadays, the popularity of genres like "fantasy," "magic," "martial arts," and "cultivation" (*xiuxian*) in online literature has, to some extent, become elements that Chinese science fiction writers experiment with in their creative process. Online sci-fi literature and fan fiction have gradually gained mainstream recognitions in recent years. In the latest list of "Chinese Science Fiction Galaxy Awards," *We Live in Nanjing* (2021), an online sci-fi novel written by Tianrui Shuofu, won the first prize. Meanwhile, the highly acclaimed film *A Journey to the West* (*Yuzhou tansuo bianjibu*) (2022) brought a sci-fi narrative to rural Sichuan, intertwining with superstitions related to lion statues, donkey-powered mills, and local folklore. This represents

another path in the development of Chinese sci-fi, one that is rooted in folklore, legends, online literature, and grassroots culture.

In the analysis of "Cultivation through C programming language" (*C yuyan xiuxian*), a famous piece that combines cultivation novel (*xiuxian xiaoshuo*) and sci-fi, Jin compares the combination to late Qing translation strategies, when science and technology were introduced to China through building a corresponding relationship between Western scientific terminologies and language in traditional Chinese fantasy (Wang). For example, "chemistry" (*huaxue*) is translated as *jinshi*, referring to the process of turning stone into gold. The website and the tradition of Chinese online literature can be an example of how Chinese fantasy inspires the sci-fi genre and how fan fiction actively influences the mainstream understanding of what sci-fi is.

Summary

While I argue that the early-stage period ends in 2010, fan works created on these platforms and other literature sites continue to exist. In "A List of Works Derived from *The Three-Body* Trilogy," San Feng summarizes forty-one works, ranging from novels to songs, games, cosplays, and even theme restaurants. Among them, there are several unfinished fan fiction and word games posted on Tieba even after 2015. Nonetheless, the periodization makes sense because of the apparent shifts in the medium in the following years, but each website, although more or less experiencing a decline in usage in the change of medium, still sustains its activity and discussions on sci-fi.

In summary, fan fiction and communities centered around Liu Cixin and his trilogy began taking shape in the Liu Cixin Bar while he was still working on the second and third volumes. Initially, discussions about the original work were limited to intellectuals and long-time fans. After the trilogy's publication, fans primarily congregated on SMTH BBS and Baidu Tieba, with SMTH BBS mainly attracting science and technology intellectuals and Tieba having a more diverse user base. Early fandom discussions included topics like democracy, censorship resistance, and more. The Qidian Chinese Literature Website emphasized the importance of discussing science fiction and fantasy in a Chinese context. Overall, the early trilogy fandom was characterized by a male-dominated group focused on "hard-sci-fi," providing a platform for political and resistance discussions and genre definitions.

The Shift to Video Platforms

> Fans have always been early adopters of new media technologies; their fascination with fictional universes often inspires new forms of cultural production. Fans are the most active segment of the media audience, one that refuses to simply accept what they are given, but rather insists on the right to become full participants. None of this is new. What has shifted is the visibility of fan culture. The Web provides a powerful new distribution channel for amateur cultural production. (Jenkins 131)

These observations by Jenkins apply equally to the Chinese context. While the earlier discussion focused on a limited number of fans celebrating the trilogy, shifts in the media landscape have made fan culture more prominent. When discussing the "unexpected" popularity of the trilogy, Xia Jia also emphasizes its circulation through mass media and the World Wide Web. The trilogy was recommended by a large number of Weibo Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and has generated a series of fan productions such as original theme songs, music videos, cosplay, fan comics, and fan groups adopting the name "ETO," all of which mainly circulate on Weibo (Xia).

Adding to Xia's summary of trilogy fandom, Bilibili should also be included in the discussion, as the theme songs and music videos she mentions mainly originated here. In this section, I analyze Bilibili and Weibo, the two platforms that have hosted numerous fan productions. The argument here is that grassroots convergence of the canon plays a pivotal role in propelling the commercialization of *The Three-Body* trilogy. This fan-driven momentum serves as a cornerstone for the trilogy's transformation into a transmedia franchise. Two key points will be addressed in this section: first, how the current state of media evolution reinforces the right of ordinary individuals to actively contribute to their culture; and second, the need to challenge and redefine the concept of "fan works" as "derivative work."

Bilibili: "When Piracy Becomes Promotion"

Before delving into the platforms, it is worth noting that Chinese fan fiction draws from various cultural traditions, including Western sci-fi fandom (e.g., Star Trek) and Japanese fan fiction subculture. This influence is exemplified by the adoption of the Japanese term *doujin* (*tongren* in Chinese) for fan fiction in China. In her discussion of the *Three Kingdoms* fandom, Tian also highlights that "the more direct influence on Chinese Internet fan fiction came from Japanese fan fiction sub-

culture" (Tian 225).

The Japanese influences do explain why it is Bilibili that cultivates such a variety of trilogy fan productions, as well as why the earliest fan productions of the trilogy in new media mainly take certain forms. Launched in January 2010, Bilibili was originally a video website themed around animation, comics, and games (ACG), renowned as a platform for "two-dimensional space" lovers (*erciyuan aihaozhe*). It has become one of the largest video-sharing platforms where uploaders can post their original or derivative works, with an average of 336 million monthly active users in the fourth quarter of 2023 (Thomala). For the purpose of user expansion, the website has gradually become a comprehensive platform where there are different sections of topics of interest, including science and technology, military, fashion and beauty, music, dance, etc. Despite all these shifts and expansion it experienced, the forms of posted works mainly keep the conventions from the ACG subculture. The earliest fan productions of the trilogy include fan-made "character songs," "vidding music videos," and animation.

One of the representative fan productions on Bilibili is *My Three Body* (*Wode santi*, 2014), made by Shen You Ba Fang and his team. It follows the patterns of ACG culture, using Minecraft as the method to create an animated world to narrate the story of the first volume. The whole crew functions as a virtual community, and after the first episode was launched, more and more fans volunteered to join the team and contributed their professional skills. Shen You Ba Fang talks about his intention to create the work, "as a fan of the trilogy, a lot of people ask me 'what is *The Three-Body Problem*?' I just want to let them know" (Qiu). It is another example of how the fan community works as a collective intelligence with inventiveness and determination.

Other fan productions posted on Bilibili include music videos written and edited for specific characters from the trilogy, which draw out aspects of the characters' emotional lives or otherwise get inside their heads. There are also many explanatory videos of the trilogy, where uploaders summarize the plot into ten-minute videos so that the viewers can be quickly familiarized with the content of the books. These types of videos are causing great debate as the copyright issue is difficult to deal with, but at the same time, these works are rather effective promotion strategies, with some reaching high-quality standards. For instance, a video called "Reading *The Three-Body Trilogy* in 84 Minutes," uploaded by Wen Yue Xiao Qiang, received 111,280,000 views in total. This video features off-screen narration summarizing the plot, accompanied by excerpts from various films and TV shows to visualize the narration's content. Viewers lauded the video as "the actual first *San Ti*

movie" while criticizing the unsuccessful commercial attempts to film the trilogy.

These fan productions primarily stem from affective investments, driven by the passion to promote the work and provide emotional compensation for specific characters. A significant catalyst for this surge of fan content on Bilibili was the failed attempt at visualizing the trilogy. A 2019 news report titled "The Visualization of *The Three-Body* Trilogy in 10 Years: Why It So Hard?" traces the unsuccessful journey of the trilogy's film adaptation (Tang). The initial adaptation efforts began in 2009 when the CEO of YooZoo Interactive discussed the first volume's copyright with Liu Cixin. In 2013, YooZoo Interactive acquired the novel's copyright and officially initiated the film adaptation. However, the project collapsed after just two months of shooting due to the producer's resignation, with no clear explanation for the next steps. Unconfirmed reports attribute the failure to censorship issues, while other sources suggest that the absence of a sci-fi filmmaking tradition in the Chinese-language film industry and difficulties with special effects contributed to the project's demise because the production team "refused to contact a Hollywood special effects team" (Tang).

Against this backdrop, fan-made visual adaptations of the trilogy gained popularity. In stark contrast to the troubled and unsuccessful official visualization process, the first season of *My Three Body* was released in 2014. Furthermore, in 2015, *Waterdrop*, a tribute to the book *Dark Forest* depicting the traumatic Doomsday Battle, was released and garnered several international awards in subsequent years. A viral comment encapsulated the sentiment, stating, "Fandom overrides the official/commercial productions" (*tongren bisi guanfang*), mocking the failures of official commercial attempts.

When examining companies' attitudes toward fan productions of a particular work, Jenkins categorizes them as "prohibitionist" or "collaborationist." In the case of Chinese sci-fi, corporations in China have found it necessary to collaborate with, and sometimes heavily rely on, fans to aid in the commercialization of the trilogy. Following the success of *My Three Body* season 1 in 2014, it attracted capital investment and further funding. The second and third seasons of *My Three Body* received investments from the San Ti Universe company, with the fan crew becoming an integral part of the corporation. In June 2019, Bilibili, in conjunction with San Ti Universe and YHKT Entertainment, launched *The Three-Body Problem* animation project. It can be argued that fan-created works actually helped Bilibili establish its reputation and culture in animation adaptation, making it a recognized platform for cultivating successful fan animations. In this context, the term "derivative" should be reconsidered, as fan works can no longer be seen solely as derivatives of main-

stream materials but must be acknowledged as open to appropriation and reworking by the media industries themselves.

Weibo, Virtual Communities, and Role-Play

At a similar time as the rise of Bilibili, Weibo was also becoming influential in China, and a large number of trilogy fans started to gather on it. This section takes a fan group called "The Three-Body Problem Weibo Group" (*Santi Weibo hui*) as an example to show how the commercialization of the trilogy attracted fans, and how the fans started to form their own culture against the background of the failed film adaptation.

On 16 October 2014, after the launch of *The Three Body Problem* film project, the representative of YooZoo, the company in charge of the adaptation, established an account called Three Body Problem Film and actively interacted with Weibo fans, inviting users to suggest possible casting, a singer of the theme song, and design logos for the series. On 26 December 2014, a WeChat group was established so that the producer of *The Three Body* film could talk to fans face-to-face and ask their opinions on the adaptation of the work. On 4 May 2015, the Weibo fan group was established, the group limit of which was five hundred people; on 11 June 2015, there were 496 fans in the group. Until today, 3 August 2021, 393 people remain in the group.

Figure 5   A Screenshot of Santi Dianying's Weibo, author's own source.

As Weibo also allows the posts and reposts of different types of fan productions, many fan productions are simultaneously posted on Bilibili and Weibo. However, the feature that allows Weibo users to interact with each other under both real and fake identities also cultivates a series of unique phenomena, especially cosplay. Early in 2011, a Weibo account named San Ti—Ye Wenjie appeared online, imitating the character Ye Wenjie by quoting her lines and imitating her tones to talk to Weibo users. "San Ti—Ye Wenjie is also an active user in the Weibo Fan Group." Following her "lead," a number of people changed their nicknames to characters from the trilogy. I was in charge of two Weibo accounts in the fan group, "San Ti—Cheng Xin" and "ETO-Hong Kong." Until today, the account I once used as "ETO-Hong Kong" still has several fans with an "ETO-" prefix.

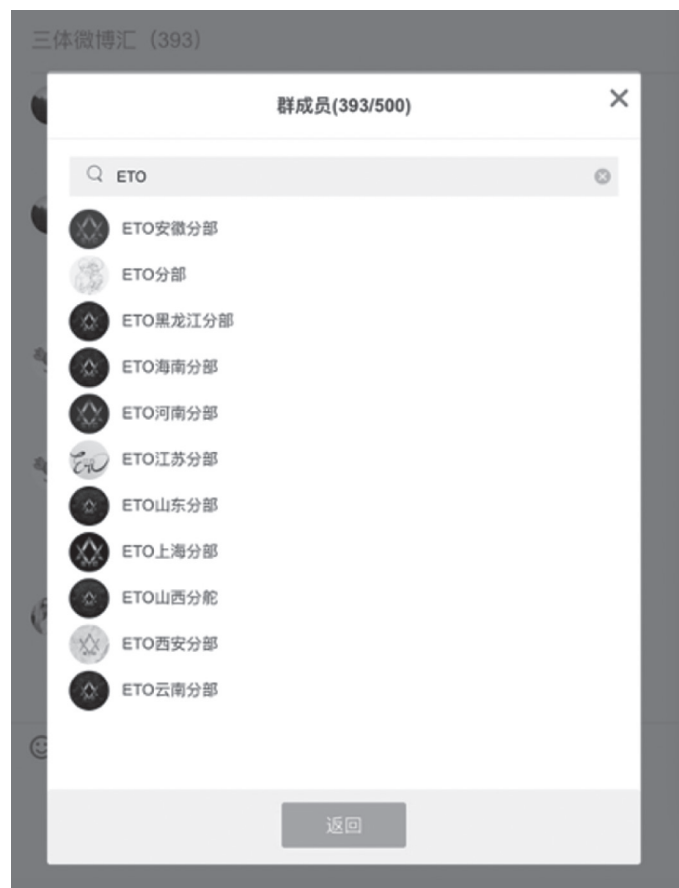Figure 6 A list of "ETO-" plus "City Name" users, author's own source

The online role-play provides a sense of belonging to a virtual community for the fans of the marginalized sci-fi genre and allows them to live a second life in the sci-fi world. Users with a prefix relate to each other through adopted personas and avatars, tending to view one another as extrapolations of these highly performa-

tive roles. Most of the interactions are in "quoting style" or "dialogue style." Facing COVID-19 in 2020, San Ti—Ye Wenjie still talked the way the character talks. In a post, she quoted, "In nature, nothing exists alone. —Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*," the book that Bai Mulin gave to Ye Wenjie. Several users interacted with "San Ti—Ye Wenjie"; one asked, "Leader, what should we do?" Ye replies, "Prepare the vaccinations." The second user complains about the difficulty of conducting biodemography research, and Ye encourages them by saying, "Comrade, we should be fearless when doing research."

Figure 7　Ye Wenjie's interactions with Weibo users, author's own source

The voices of these fans are indeed widely heard and can also be seen as both affective investments and promotion strategies. In a book titled *I am Liu Cixin*, a collection of interviews and essays on Liu, the preface is a letter to him from "the young woman holding the nuclear bomb" (*hedan nühai*) expressing her love for Liu and his works. In her self-introduction, she identifies herself as the character who briefly appeared on pages 189–212 in the 2008 version of *The Three Body Problem*. Regrettably, her character met its demise at the hands of Da Shi in the book. She explains that her book character has become her identity on Weibo and a part of her life. She goes on to introduce other users adopting characters from the trilogy, including "San Ti—Ye Wenjie," "San Ti—Cheng Xin," "Listening Post 1379," and

even unique usernames like "Ant on the Tomb" and "Luo Ji's Bulletin." These fans meticulously capture minute details from the story, immersing themselves in role-playing, mimicking character voices, and "recreating the joys and sorrows in real life while crafting new plots and sharing their thoughts." The nuclear-bomb girl articulates their motivation as follows: "All of this arises from our humble desire to keep your characters alive because you've said that science fiction is a way of life" (Hedan nühai).

Fan communities emerged on both Bilibili and Weibo for the same reason: initial expectations for, and later disappointment with, the film adaptation of the trilogy. In 2016, members of the Weibo group were among the first to learn that the film might not see the light of day. Consequently, they began discussing what collaborative creative projects they could undertake. One idea was the creation of a radio drama, and several group members volunteered to participate. Although the video drama was ultimately produced by the San Ti Universe Corporation, the discussions in the group and, more broadly, the formation of fan communities on Bilibili and Weibo indicate and contribute to the active involvement of fans in the commercialization of the trilogy from its inception. In essence, sci-fi fans began to take ownership of the trilogy at a relatively early stage.

Slash Literature

A literature platform left out in the discussion of the first stage is Jinjiang Literature City, which, like Baidu Tieba, was also established in 2003. The website is famous for romance novels written by women, as stated in its own slogan, "the largest Chinese-language women's literature website in the world." The earliest fan fiction on this website can be dated back to March 2012, written by user Jiang around one year later than *The Three-Body X*. The piece, titled "*Three-Body Problem* Fan Storiette," is not a complete story but consists of short, scattered pieces on how the characters in the trilogy can be paired as couples. The author imagines that after the "dimensional collapse," the earth's civilization is preserved, and the genes of the dead are kept and cloned in the far future so that all the characters can live at the same time and be paired (Jiang). The couples include Shi Qiang and Luo Ji, Zhang Beihai and Dongfang Yanxu, etc. It has gained an average of 4,874 hits per chapter. Apart from this earliest piece, there are around thirty other pieces of fan fiction of the trilogy on Jinjiang Literature City posted between 2012 and 2021, with around five hundred hits per piece. Compared to the numerous posts in Liu Cixin Bar, San Ti Bar, and SMTH BBS, which reach dozens of thousands, it can be seen that the major users of Jinjiang do not belong to the fan group of the trilogy. To conclude

again, the earliest forms of sci-fi fan fiction of the trilogy were not slash literature written by females, but Baoshu and other fans' fiction, commonly considered hard sci-fi, containing a male fantasy.

Lofter was established in 2011, with its initial marketing positioning it as a community for "artistic" people, namely the ones interested in photography, drawing, fashion, and so on. In 2016, Lofter officially launched its "fan fiction trending list," categorized into place-based sections, including domestic, European and American, Japanese, and other regions.

Figure 8 "Fan Fiction Trending List" on Lofter under different categories, author's own source

The trending hashtags are generated by an algorithm, calculated through four indicators: the number of subscribers, the number of articles published, the number of views, and the amount of interaction (the sum of recommendations, likes, comments, and reposts). As demonstrated in the three images, none of the CPs (couples) are BG (boy and girl), but all BL (boys' love). The trending list proves that Lofter had become the dominant place where female writers post their slash literature works, and the list also attracted more and more fans to the platform. Until today, it is still the most significant fan fiction group specifically for slash literature, opening up a space for the slash subculture. The trilogy also has its hashtags on Lofter. Under the hashtag "The Three-Body Problem," there are 13,262 pieces with 29,050,000 views of the hashtag in total in August 2021. In April 2024, the number has increased to 44,405 pieces. The establishment of the platform and the emergence of slash literature might indeed reciprocally enhance each other, as there is no clear evidence about which one appears first. The female fans' participation might

have started even earlier but only became visible after the platform was established.

The fan fiction and fan community are forming their own culture on Lofter. It is very common for authors to write fiction or draw paintings to express their love for each other. The language used is also unique on this platform. For example, the users refer to the authors they like as "wives/madams" (*taitai*) to show their admiration for them. As Busse argues, the interactions between slash writers are in many cases also sexualized, like the characters in their writings (159). While the users' real identities are hidden, Lofter itself can be considered a platform that welcomes queer performances and fans' own voices, as illustrated in the slash literature that pairs Shi Qiang and Luo Ji together.

To provide a brief overview of what slash production looks like, one example is the fan comics of Shi Qiang and Luo Ji under the "Shi/Luo" tag. These artworks attempt to explore the possible homosexual relationship between two straight male characters, incorporating elements of subculture and expressing subtle erotic feelings that were lacking in the portrayal of the characters in the original works. These fan-produced texts also demonstrate influences from Japan, the Western sci-fi tradition, as well as the pre-modern Chinese literary tradition, as argued in Tian Xiaofei's work. While some of the works are still subject to gender stereotypes, they can nonetheless be interpreted as a resistance to gender discrimination in the trilogy and in the real world. As argued by Hemmann in her analysis of Japanese "media mix" and BL in *doujinshi*, the female gaze has created its own overtly homoerotic readings and interpretations that creatively subvert phallocentrism implicit in many mainstream narratives (Hemmann "*TWC*"). It is not common to see such gender relationships on Chinese official media, and works like this also risk being reported and deleted online. Although authors of such slash works do not often explicitly express their intention of creating such work, and it might be just for fun, the existence of these works still provides a space for the resistance from gender minorities.

Conclusion

The overview of the development of fandom attempts to briefly picture what the sci-fi fandom looks like throughout the past two decades. During this process, issues such as the conflict between authors and fans, fandom's function as a place for democracy, the shift from marginalized culture to mass circulation, and gender issues all become important topics nowadays. It is fair to say that fandom is indispensable to the development of Chinese sci-fi, from the first volume of *Nebula* to the cooperation between the San Ti Universe Corporation and fan communities. Through a study of *The Three-Body Problem* Fandom, we see how the grassroots

fan base forms a foundation for the commercialization of Chinese sci-fi while providing a source of creativity for writers and readers alike.

The 2023 Chengdu Science Fiction World Conference and the release of the Tencent and Netflix adaptation of The Three-Body Problem highlight the ongoing formation of Chinese science fiction fandom. However, many online fandom materials are also transient. More documentation and research of these materials are certainly required in order to further explore the nuances of this evolving fandom and its potential implications.

Works Cited:

250 yihao zai lu shang 250一号在路上. "A story of a bar: The struggle of San Ti Bar" 一个贴吧的故事——三体吧的斗争 (Yige tieba de gushi: Santi ba de douzheng). *Bilibili*, 1 Oct. 2019, https://www.bilibili.com/read/cv3691789?from=articleDetail. Web. 12 Jul. 2021.

autapomorphy. "[History] the history of San Ti Bar"【历史】三体吧历史 ([Lishi] Santi ba lishi). *Baidu Tieba*, 25 Mar. 2012, https://tieba.baidu.com/p/1475791556?fr=good&red_tag=0027095519. Web. 7 Jul. 2021.

Bao Shu 宝树. "Postscript of *The Three-Body* X"《三体X》后记 (Santi X houji). *Science Fiction World*, 13 Jun. 2011, https://site.douban.com/sfw/widget/notes/105885/note/155907622/. https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/597521133?utm_id=0 Web. 7 Jul. 2021.

———. "*The Three-Body* X, The redemption of time" 三体X：观想之宙 (San Ti X guanxiang zhi zhou). *Kehuan xiaoshuo wang*, 1 Jun. 2011, http://www.00txt.com/santix_guanxiangzhizhou/. Web. 7 Jul. 2021.

Busse, Kristina. *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2014. Print.

———. *Framing Fan Fiction: Literary and Social Practices in Fan Fiction Communities.* Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2017. Print.

COROT_7B. "Memorize history, look at the future, Tixiao Tongjian (Version 1) (History from 2006 to 2019)"【铭记历史，展望未来】体校通鉴（第一版）（2006至今历史） ([Mingji lishi, zhanwang weilai] tixiao tongjian diyiban (2006 zhijin lishi). Archived as Andriod App Format, 26 Oct. 2021, https://pan.baidu.com/s/1EY_lqVBlyywTtuaT029LKQ. Web.

De Kosnik, Abigail. *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016. Print.

Future Affairs Administration 未来事务管理局. "On the visualization of *The Three-*

Body Problem world: The dimensionally reduced solar system is a chip" 《三体》视觉创作谈第2弹：降维的太阳系是一张晶片 (San ti shijue chuangzuo tan di er dan: jiangwei de taiyangxi shi yizhang jingpian). *Sina Weibo*, 6 Apr. 2019, https://weibo.com/ttarticle/p/show?id=2309404358204489395241&sudaref=darkfromage.lofter.com&sudaref=www.google.com. Web. 30 Jun. 2021.

He Liu 河流. "Origin from archaeology, rebirth from disillusion" 缘起考古, 幻灭新生 (Yuanqi kaogu, huanmie xinsheng). *Si Shi Er Shi*, 6 Mar. 2023. https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/-JGVvwAj8scNkUSwsIXvuw. Web.

Hedan nühai 核弹女孩. "A letter to science fiction writer Liu Cixin, from the girl holding the nuclear bomb" 核弹女孩"给科幻作家刘慈欣的一封信 (Hedan nühai gei kehuan zuojia Liu Cixin de yifengxin). *I am Liu Cixin* 我是刘慈欣 (Wo shi Liu Cixin). Ed. Du Xuewen 杜学文 and Yang Zhanping 杨占平. Beijing: Beiyue wenyi, 2015. 1–2. Print.

Hemmann, Kathryn. "Queering the Media Mix: The Female Gaze in Japanese Fan Comics." *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 2015. no. 20. https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2015.0628.

Hockx, Michel. *Internet Literature in China*. New York: Columbia UP, 2015. Print.

Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York UP, 2008. Print.

———. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2012. Print.

Jiang 绛. "*The Three-Body Problem* fan storiette" 三体同人小段子 (Santi tongren xiaoduanzi). *Jinjiang Website*. https://www.jjwxc.net/onebook.php?novelid=1463731. Web.

Liu Cixin 刘慈欣. *Remembrance of Earth's past trilogy* 地球往事三部曲 (Diqiu wangshi sanbuqu). Hainan: Hainan dianzi yinxiang, 2018. E-book.

Liu, Cixin. *Dark Forest*. Tr. Joel Martinsen. New York: Tor Books, 2015. E-book.

———. *Death's End*. Tr. Ken Liu. New York: Tor Books, 2016. E-book.

———. *The Three-Body Problem*. Tr. Ken Liu. New York: Tor Books, 2014. E-book.

Penley, Constance. *NASA/TREK: Popular Science and Sex in America*. New York: Verso, 1997. Print.

Qiu Man 求漫. "While we are still waiting for the *Santi* film, a group of poor students just made it" 当大家还在纠结三体电影版时，一群穷学生把它拍出来了 (Dang dajia haizai jiujie Santi dianyingban shi, yiqun qiongxuesheng bata paichulaile). *Sohu News*, 25 Jan. 2018, https://www.sohu.com/a/218833522_556712. Web. 30 Jun. 2021.

reinforce. "How do you comment on the *Three-Body Problem*: A tale of the post-Milky-Way era?" 如何评价《三体之后银河纪元传说》？ (Ruhe pingjia *Santi* zhi hou yinhe jiyuan chuanshuo?). *Zhihu*, 9 Oct. 2019, https://www.zhihu.com/question/29915266/answer/851746321. Web. 30 Jun. 2021.

San Feng 三丰. "A list of derivative works of *The Three-Body Problem* trilogy" 三体衍生品汇总 (San Ti yanshengping huizong). *Sina Weibo*, 5 Jul. 2015, https://weibo.com/p/1001603861243168425097?pids=Pl_Official_CardMixFeedv6__4&feed_filter=2&sudaref=www.google.com&sudaref=www.google.com. Web. 20 Aug. 2021.

Shen You Ba Fang 神游八方. "My Three-Body Season 1." YouTube, 11 Jan. 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14INFFQPrfo. Web. 30 Jun. 2021.

Tang Hao 汤皓. "The visualization of *The Three-Body* trilogy in 10 years: Why is it so hard?" 《三体》10年影视化之路，为何如此之难？ (Santi 10 nian yingshihua zhilu, weihe ruci zhinan?). *Sohu News*, 2 Sep. 2020. https://www.sohu.com/a/416080660_120388781. Web. 30 Jun. 2021.

Thomala, Lai Lin. "Average number of monthly active users of Bilibili Inc. from 4th quarter 2019 to 4th quarter 2023." *Statista*, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1109108/bilibili-average-monthly-active-users/. Web. 30 Apr. 2024.

Tian, Xiaofei. "Slashing Three Kingdoms: A Case Study in Fan Production on the Chinese Web." *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 27.1 (2015): 224–277. Print.

Wang Kanyu 王侃瑜. "Overseas Chinese sci-fi studies: A document of sci-fi China workshop: avatars, aliens, anthropo" 海外中国科幻研究 | 科幻中国：异形，异次元，异托邦工作坊实录 (Haiwai Zhongguo kehuan yanjiu| kehuanzhongguo: Yixing, yiciyuan, yituobang gongzuofang shilu). *Si Shi Er Shi*, 29 Apr. 2021. https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Qv8V4mSw62DGX_bn890Tig. Web.

Wikipedia. "SMTH BBS, How It All Began." *Wikipedia*, last edited 8 Aug. 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMTH_BBS#1995:_How_it_All_Began. Web. 30 Mar. 2024.

Xia Jia 夏笳. "Chinese science fiction in the post-*San Ti* era" 后三体时代的中国科幻 (Hou santi shidai de zhongguo kehuan). *People's Daily*, 7 Apr. 2015, http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0407/c1003-26806973.html. Web. 12 Jul. 2021.

Xue ran tu teng 血染图腾. "The San Ti bar charter" 三体吧宪章 (San Ti ba xianzhang). *Baidu tieba*, 29 Jan. 2020, https://tieba.baidu.com/p/6465150972. Web. 12 Jul. 2021.

Ye Yonglie 叶永烈. "With the reemergence in sci-fi publication, scholars worrying about the lack of talents in sci-fi writing" 科幻出版重现生机 专家学者心忧创作人才缺乏 (Kehuan chuban chongxian shengji, zhuanjia xuezhe xinyou chuangzuo rencai quefa). *South Daily*, 7 Aug. 2011. https://www.chinanews.com.cn/cul/2011/08-07/3239319.shtml. Web.

Zhang Jiaxin 张家欣. "From artistic youth to 'rotten women,' Lofter, a platform's journey" 从文青到腐女，LOFTER，一个兴趣社区的奇幻漂流 (Cong wenqing dao funv, Lofter, yige qihuan shequ de piaoliu). *Bilibili*, 22 Apr. 2018, https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/35991112. Web. 12 Jul. 2021.

Author Profile:

Shuwen Yang is a PhD student in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Stanford University. She is interested in science fiction, online literature, and fandom studies. Email: yangsw@stanford.edu

Yunte Huang. *Daughter of the Dragon: Anna May Wong's Rendezvous with American History.* New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation. 2023. ISBN: 9781631495809. 400 pp.

Zhiqin Jiang

(Shandong Normal University)

Yunte Huang's book *Daughter of the Dragon: Anna May Wong's Rendezvous with American History* gives a comprehensive and vivid account of the life of Anna May Wong, who "arose literally from a Chinese laundry" and became "the first Chinese American star in Hollywood" (35). Anna Wong was the first Chinese American to receive the honor of "Hollywood Walk of Fame" (315), the first Asian American to be featured on US currency (Anna May Wong quarter), and was crowned as "The World's Most Beautiful Chinese Girl" by *Look* magazine (13). The book *Anna May Wong's Rendezvous with American History* has been rated as "10 Best California Books of 2023" by *The New York Times* and "Best Books of 2023" by Smithsonian, BookRiot.

Based on Anna May Wong's life and career diachronically, this book consists of six parts apart from Preface and Epilogue. Part One, "Fun in a Chinese Laundry," depicts Anna's childhood, growing up in Los Angeles' Chinatown, and her early talent for acting. She was born in 1905, the year of the dragon in the Chinese lunar calendar, indicating a certain predestination of the future film star's performance in the movie *Daughter of the Dragon*. At the time of Anna's birth, America's anti-Chinese movement was on the rise; with the Chinese Exclusion Act passed by Congress in 1882, the white racists' harassment of Chinese immigrants was a common sight. Anna's school life at a predominantly white public school was coupled with harsh bullying from American boys: hair pulling, pushing, and being called ethnic and racial slurs, to name a few. Anna's fight against racial bias originated in her childhood and lasted throughout her life. During the 1910s, Hollywood's silent films became enamored with the exotic charms of Chinatown, and motion picture com-

panies came down into Chinatown to film scenes now and then. Anna became so obsessed with movies that she went to the cinema very often with the tips she saved from laundry deliveries, and she fantasized about becoming a movie actor one day. She playacted with little dolls, imitating movie scenes that appealed to her most. These were the first baby steps that ultimately led Anna to her future acting career.

Part Two, "Becoming Anna May," narrates Anna May Wong's first encounter with Hollywood, as she was playing minor roles in several movies. In 1919, she played an extra Chinese girl carrying a lantern walking by in the movie *The Red Lantern*. She changed her name from "Anna Wong" to "Anna May Wong," so her name would read well on the screen credits. The extra role in *The Red Lantern* marked the start of her brilliant film career, followed by a series of subsequent more significant parts in movies. In *Dinty* (1920), she played a young maid/mistress of a Chinatown gangster and vice lord. In *Bits of Life* (1921), she played the wife of a Chinese man moving to America who ran opium dens. In *The Toll of the Sea* (1922), she played her first lead role, a white man's lover named Lotus Flower, who was abandoned by that man and committed suicide, throwing herself into the sea at the end. Anna May won positive reviews for her "Lotus Flower" role. *Variety* raved about her "extraordinary fine playing," and *The New York Times* gave her a big thumbs-up: "She makes the deserted little Lotus Flower a genuinely appealing, understandable figure" (66). Anna May was becoming a rising star who came to symbolize the East. *The Thief of Bagdad* (1923) was a turning point for her: in contrast to her previous roles as "either a timid Chinese maid or the lovestruck, self-sacrificing Madame Butterfly" (74), she cast an albeit supporting role as the duplicitous Mongol slave—"a mixture of terror and sensuality." The Mongol handmaid played by Anna May had upstaged the Bagdad thief, showing a kind of "exotic beauty and superb talent of the young Chinese actress" (77). Hollywood experienced a China fever around 1927, and several Chinese-themed films were released that year. Anna May appeared in all of them. But due to racial discrimination, Anna May was only on the periphery, playing minor roles as a handmaid to the female protagonist, a nameless Chinese girl, or a vaudeville dancer. In such a toxic cultural milieu, Anna May decided to sail for Europe in 1928 in the hope of a better future.

Part Three, "Orientally Yours," tells the story of Anna May Wong's brilliant career in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. She arrived in Weimar Berlin in the spring of 1928, at a time when Berlin's artistic avant-garde was in full swing. She was eager to be treated differently than she was when she was discriminated against in Hollywood. Fortunately, Berlin did not disappoint her. "Anna May was seen by Germans as an icon of China, embodying all the exoticism and mystique

of the Orient, thus distinguishing her from other American imports" (102). She was very happy there and soon learned to speak, read, and write basic German. Anna May's first German film, *Song* (1928), was a smash hit, "showcasing for the first time her multiple talents as an actress, cabaret dancer, vaudeville artiste, and a pioneer in that tricky art of racial masquerade" (107), and the German film critics praised for her performance lavishly, commenting that the film was "the drama of Anna May Wong" (109). Even the philosopher Walter Benjamin was fascinated by her.

In June 1928, Anna May went to France to make her second film in Europe— *Pavement Butterfly*, of which "the reviewers praised Anna May as the lead actress, noting her 'personality and exotic charm'" (118). In the fall of the same year, she arrived in London for her new film *Piccadilly*. At that time, the aesthetics of chinoiserie in London helped to boost Anna May's popularity in the United Kingdom. Though a Chinese American, she was regarded as a Chinese in the atmosphere of vogue of China and received the honorary title of Cultural Ambassador of China even though she had never set foot on Chinese soil by then. Also in London, Anna May performed *The Circle Chalk* on the stage of New Theatre. But her high-pitched, bell-like voice incurred harsh reviews from British critics. Vocal delivery became Anna May's big disadvantage, as talkies were gradually taking over silent films during the late 1920s. Anna May "was one of the greatest treasures of the silent film. With deepest regret, one cannot help noticing that a lot of this appeal has been lost with the introduction of dialogue" (135).

Part Four, "Daughter of the Dragon," describes Anna May Wong's coming back home to America and playing lead roles in several Hollywood movies. Feeling homesick in Europe after two and a half years abroad, Anna May sailed back from Europe in late October of 1930, transforming from a fashionable girl when she left America to a "sophisticated woman attired in elegant European fashions and affecting an upper-class British accent and highborn manners" (146). She was first offered a lead role in the play *On the Spot* (1930) on Broadway and then played the lead role in the movie *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931), her first American talkie. This movie manifested her excellent acting skills on the one hand and brought long-term negative effects to her on the other hand. She was denounced for helping create the stereotypical Asian woman and even was labeled as "the screen's foremost Oriental villainess" (136). In her self-defense, Anna May confessed, "When a person is trying to get established in a profession, he can't choose parts. He has to take what is offered" (157). Facing the same berating when she later came to China, Anna May emphasized that being a Chinese American actress, she did not have much

of a choice. She hoped that people could understand the image of "Daughter of the Dragon" from an artistic point of view and did not equate her with the role she played. However, even if she did not play this kind of roles, a white actress would have picked it up, and Anna May would lose the only chance to play the role of Chinese. In 1932, Anna May co-starred with Marlene Dietrich in the movie *Shanghai Express.* Although this film did well at the box office, and Anna May could have been the best supporting actress had there been the category at that time, she only earned a salary of one-thirteenth of Dietrich's. In the well-known Chinese-themed film *Good Earth,* the male and female lead roles were never intended to be offered to non-white actors and actresses; this, along with the "kissing taboo" at the time, which prohibited romance or kissing between an interracial couple on screen, blocked Anna May from ever receiving the consideration as the female lead. She was offered to play Lotus instead, the youthful concubine of male protagonist Wang Lung; however, she declined. "I do not see why I, at this stage of my career, should take a step backward and accept a minor role in a Chinese play that will surround me entirely by a Caucasian cast" (180). Yet again disappointed with Hollywood's racial discrimination, as well as inspired by her father and her siblings being back to Guangzhou in 1934, Anna May thought about leaving America for a second time, going to China to find out her true identity: whether she was really Anna May Wong or Wong Liu Tsong.

Part Five, "China," tells about Anna May's journey of root-seeking in China. She first arrived in Shanghai, attracting much attention from journalists. Shanghai, which became the fifth largest city in the world in the early 1930s, made Anna May feel like "a Chinese Alice who has wandered through a very strange looking-glass." She "was amazed by the galloping tempo of social life, with invitations pouring in, the telephone ringing steadily in her hotel suite like a burglar alarm out of control" (202). Here, she met Lin Yutang, Mei Lan-fang, Butterfly Wu, and other celebrities. Their hospitality made her feel at home. After her ten-day stay in Shanghai, Anna May went to Hong Kong. Though warmly received by the social elites, she was upset by the local newspaper's headlines, accusing her roles in Hollywood films of being an insult to Chinese people. First in Shanghai, later in Beijing, and in other cities, both in China and in the United States, she received the same accusation. She was not even allowed to visit her father and siblings in Taishan, Guangdong. She had to explain time and again that "she was not responsible for the interpretation of Chinese roles in American films as these parts were given to her by the directors. She had no say in the matter" (211–212). Anna May later visited many other cities, including Suzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing, and Tianjin. Among the cities she visited,

Anna May spent most of her time in Beijing. She arrived in Beijing on 14 May 1936 and "was greeted by a large crowd of reporters and local cinephiles" (230). She stayed in Beijing for another three months, studying Beijing opera with the hope of presenting it to the world, learning Chinese, collecting books on Chinese drama, asking tailors to make her authentic Chinese dresses. Anna May's trip to China aroused her strong sense of Chinese identity and a deep love for Chinese culture and art.

Part Six, "The Big Nowhere," portrays how Anna May Wong, back in America, contributed what she could to support China's Anti-Japanese War. Returning to California on 28 November 1936, Anna May was "determined to do something in support of China." In a press release, she announced, "Though I am American born of American born parents, I am a full-blooded Chinese and more Chinese than ever" (247). In 1938, Anna May played the lead role in *Daughter of Shanghai*. She was happy that the film outpoured sympathy for China. With a certain degree of popularity in the film industry and a certain amount of personal savings, and more importantly, with a strong sense of Chinese identity, Anna May had the possibility to choose a role now. She refused to play any role detrimental to China. Not only that, she tried every means to support China's Anti-Japanese War: "She auctioned off her film costumes to raise money for China war relief" (261), sponsored a sale of rare Chinese *objets d'art*, helped to host charity events, attended a China Aid Council, directed an evening program for the United China Relief Fund, made a trip to Australia, appearing as an ambassador and spokesperson for China, hosted an "Anna May Wong Ball," autographing photographs of herself at a small charge, and donated the money to the relief fund. "She attempted to rally support for China in any way she could" (270). Anna May's loudest anti-Japanese pronouncement was conveyed by playing roles in anti-Japanese films. Her lead role in *Bombs over Burma* (1942) and *Lady from Chungking* (1942) shaped anti-Japanese images. She expressed her own feelings through the female protagonist's mouth, "China's destiny is victory. It will live because civilization will not die. Tyrants, dictators, the murderers of peace, all will be betrayed" (279). Anna May donated her salary from these two films to the United China Relief Fund. She also wrote a preface to *New Chinese Recipes*, a cookbook reissued in 1942 to raise funds for the United China Relief Fund. She was eager to bring Chinese food to mainstream America, and her efforts paid off. Americans began to go into Chinese restaurants in America in hordes, bringing rare businesses during wartime. It can be said that Anna May Wong worked tirelessly to undo Western stereotypes of China.

Anna May's acting career faced difficulties after World War II. Apart from rac-

ism, there were sexism and ageism in Hollywood. As a minority female actress, Anna May saw her career in film gradually coming to a halt in the 1950s. She then ventured into television but was not very successful. To maintain a roof over her head, she was even forced to sell some of her fine jewelry. Then, she slid into alcoholism, which deteriorated her health greatly. On 3 February 1961, Anna May Wong unexpectedly died of a heart attack at the age of fifty-six. The woman born in the Year of the Dragon, played the lead role in *Daughter of the Dragon*, had been to the Palace of the Dragon Lady, and concluded her acting career with a television episode called *Dragon by the Tail*.

The New York Times and *Los Angeles Times* wrote highly complementary obituaries of Anna May Wong. The former dubbed her "one of the most unforgettable figures of Hollywood's great days" and "a movie symbol of 'the mysterious East.'" The latter called her "one of the first to bring the charm of the Orient to the American screen," "a symbol of Oriental mystery," and "a beauty of poise and culture" (309). Anna May had the "exotic" charm with signature bangs, radiant almond eyes, and second skin-like silky *qipao*, which manifested her Chineseness. One Society of New York named her "The World's Best Dressed Woman". She was a talented multilingual who could speak Chinese, French, German, and English fluently and could switch easily from one language to the other. She was a first-rate actor, a skilled dancer, a fashion lover, and a vaudeville singer all combined. In addition to befriending celebrated directors and popular film stars of the time, she also made acquaintance with German philosopher Walter Benjamin, British writer Somerset Maugham, Chinese writer Lin Yutang, China's "Queen of Peking Opera" Mei Lanfang, Chinese film star Butterfly Wu, and many others, revealing her global vision and broad range of knowledge. Anna May Wong created a miracle in the early Hollywood film industry.

Just as the author Yunte Huang emphasized in the "Preface" of *Anna May Wong's Rendezvous with American History*, it is not a typical cradle-to-grave biography. The book has a deeper meaning in Anna May Wong's rendezvous with American history. Anna May is a prism through which one can have a clear understanding of the misfortunes Chinese Americans encountered in the early twentieth century due to racism in the United States, the development of the Hollywood film industry, and the significance of Chinese American icons as world cultural heritage.

Anna May's life and career were filled with racial discrimination and misunderstanding. Her rise from a laundryman's daughter to a global celebrity was accompanied by injustice, racism, sexism, and ageism. Her unique sign "Orientally yours" signed on her publicity photos revealed "both a quiet acquiescence and a tongue-in-

cheek defiance of the public perception of her as an exotic icon" (107).

The Chinese Exclusion Act added to her school year's bullying by white children. Discrimination against Chinese and Chinese Americans made Anna May play roles of the weak and the marginal most of the time—either to be rescued so as to highlight the heroic behaviors of the white protagonists or to fall into misfortune to set off the compassion and love of the white heroes. As a Chinese American actress, she was not allowed to outshine white actors or actresses. The submissive Madame Butterfly and the mannish Dragon Lady were the roles she had no choice but to play.

The anti-miscegenation laws were a significant barrier to Anna May's career. She was not allowed to kiss or even be kissed by a white man on the screen. This interracial marriage prohibition also affected her own love and marriage prospects. She could not marry a white man due to racism, nor a Chinese man, because the Chinese traditionally looked down upon a woman involved in the entertainment industry.

The story of Anna May's life and career also revealed the history of the American film industry, while giving us a glimpse of the prospects of television, which drastically changed the cultural landscape of America in later years. As an actress, Anna May not only made a successful transition from silent films to talkies but also lived through the shift from film production to television series. Through the prism of Anna May Wong, we have a bird's-eye view of Chinese Americans' social history, world film history, and popular culture history all together. Prejudice, discrimination, misunderstanding, and identity dilemma still exist in today's multicultural era, and intercultural dialogue becomes more and more important. Anna May Wong's life story might provide some inspiration for marginalized groups to defend themselves, to determine their identity, and to open intercultural dialogues. Her "Orientally yours" probably would echo in our ears constantly.

Containing fifty-four black and white photos, and well organized, *Daughter of the Dragon: Anna May Wong's Rendezvous with American History* is an interesting, inspiring, and worth-reading book.

Author Profile:

Zhiqin Jiang is a professor of Comparative Literature and World Literature at Shandong Normal University. She is the author of *The Overseas Dissemination of Contemporary Chinese Literature and National Image Construction* (Jiangxi Edu-

cation Publishing House, 2020), *American Image of China* (People's Publishing House, 2010), *Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan: Image of China in American Popular Culture* (Nanjing University Press, 2007), etc. Her research interests include Chinese and foreign literary relations, the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature, and translation studies. Email: zqjiang3289@sina.com

Xuemo. *Into the Desert*. Tr. Howard Goldblatt and Sylvia Li-chun Lin. San Francisco: Long River Press, 2022. ISBN-10: 1592652549. ISBN-13: 978-1592652549. 274 pp.

Dian Li

(University of Arizona)

"Mountains of sand reached into the sky, dropping the sun closer to the grounds than when they'd set out." This is the first sentence of the Chinese writer Xuemo's novel *Into the Desert* in its English translation. Here, "they," as we quickly learn, are a father-daughter pair embarking on a nighttime trip into the desert. As we appreciate the beauty of the desert led on by this sentence, we are also besieged by the ominous feeling of a coming disaster: the reference to a fox (never a lucky animal in Chinese folklore), the howling wind, and the bitter cold (often, signs of the destructive forces of nature). Two pages later, the daughter, who was just nine years old, was left alone by her father: "She sat down to wait for Papa. Drowsiness slowly descended and enshrouded her like an enormous net."

The abandonment of a child is cruelty that no one can bear; worse yet, imaging how this child would have fared by herself in the unforgiving desert disturbs us endlessly, giving us a lingering anticipation that will foreshadow our transition from the Prologue to the main story of the novel, which turns out to be an extensive journey into the same desert, a place of both fear and spirituality.

"Early in the morning, before the sun made an appearance, Ying'er and Lanlan left their village for the salt lakes in the heart of the Gobi." So begins the long journey into the desert in Chapter 1, which is cast in a detached but suggestive third-person narration rich in verbs but stingy in adjectives. We will find this style to be characteristic of Xuemo, a contemporary Chinese writer who is among the most frequently translated authors in recent times. Xuemo's reputation is steadily rising in the West with the publication of half a dozen novels and short story collections

84 | Comparative Literature & World Literature

by several translators. Undoubtedly, his English readers will be enthralled with this novel that was masterfully rendered by Howard Goldblatt and Sylvia Li-chun Lin.

Like many good openings of great novels, Xuemo's line quoted above provides useful information to keep us engaged, such as time, place, characters, and action, while managing to hold us in suspense over many other things, partly because what we have read in the Prologue clashes with our life experiences, which we will inevitably bring to bear in reading literature. Common sense tells us that a journey into a desert is always a risky adventure, and it is often done by men, if at all, so we wonder why these two women choose to take this trip. This is a question that will keep us spellbound with the unfolding of the story in which Ying'er and Lanlan confront risks and challenges along the way.

As Ying'er and Lanlan stocked their supplies—water, food, bedrolls, utensils, guns, and so on, which would be carried by the two camels, we need to do some preparation of our own, particularly for those reading Xuemo's novel in English translation for the first time. The word "Gobi" marks the place in the story in western China, near Liangzhou, where Xuemo grew up. Since he uses his hometown as the background for almost all his fictional works, Xuemo is known as a *xibu* (the west) writer in China. Geographically speaking, the west in China has many unusual features, such as the Gobi deserts, the rolling plateaus, and the rocky massifs, all in proximity to the Yellow River Basin, commonly referred to as the cradle of Chinese civilization. Thus, in the cultural imagery of the Chinese people, the west always conjures up a double image—one of the unyielding spirit of life forces that have sustained Chinese people in time and history, and the other of evocative primitivity, rawness, wonder, and ruggedness, which are often set in opposition to the representation of the coastal east as a place of elaborate rituals and refined culture. In arts and literature, the west has long become a mythologized place where heroic swordsmen roam on horseback, carefree shepherds play lute by the campfire, or exiled official-literati from other parts of China seek spiritual redemption by reconnecting with nature and hard labor.

Xuemo is a western writer who came from the west, which means that he is in this mythology but not bound by it. His *Desert Trilogy*, of which *Into the Desert* is a part, is clearly more a work of imagination than a project of autobiography, but the imagination occurs at the very place, not from a distance of self-serving exoticism. It is also an imagination marked by Xuemo's time as well as his characters'—the late twentieth century, which is a time of unprecedented social and cultural changes in China. The grand narrative of China's rise in modernization and economic prosperity, which started in the 1980s and continues today, should be familiar to all of

us, but there always will be untold stories—stories in the margins and on the side—waiting to be told or written. China is a vast country, so an imbalance in economic development is inevitable, especially in border towns and remote regions such as the western parts of the country. People from these places struggle in the precarious new society created by fervent capitalistic impulses and governmental policies. When "Getting Rich is Glamorous" becomes an official slogan, money has the potential to be the ultimate arbiter of all things of value and meaning in life, which will destabilize the social fabric of rural communities steeped in tradition. The great migration of workers, a historical internal translocation of people from the countryside to the city that has provided the labor force to make China a manufacturing powerhouse, offers a compelling narrative of chasing the Chinese dream while also creating many stories of broken promises, frustrated desires, and agonizing rootlessness.

Now, we are in a better position to understand why Ying'er and Lanlan team up to embark on this trip into the desert. Yes, there was salt waiting at the end of the trip, which they would bring back for money that might help solve their individual problems. We realize they were making a choice in their lives, an unusual choice and probably an unwise one, to be sure, but they chose an uncertain future over a certain present that had been prescribed for them. This is a sure sign that they were living in the new age of precarity and were fully aware of it. On the other hand, they would have to pay a heavy price for their choice during the trip, including life-threatening situations on multiple occasions.

Journey has been a common theme in literatures of the world since antiquity. The best narrative of the journey always involves physical challenges and metaphorical propositions through which self-discovery, communal bonding, and circumstantial change can be substantiated. Xuemo has accomplished all these and more in the novel with the flair of a masterful storyteller. There is no parallel in contemporary Chinese literature that has presented the desert as a subject of nature with such vibrancy and precision: its majestic landscape, its protean personality, and its awesome power to cause death and sustain life. In the same vein, Ying'er and Lanlan's encounter with the desert is presented as a story of negotiated interdependence, a sort of give-and-take that is central to any beneficial relationship. For every danger that the two women experienced, such as the poisonous snake, the vicious jackals, the sinking sands, or the violent storm, there is an element of existential crisis about suffering and joy, about body and soul, about life and death, through which Ying'er and Lanlan got tested not only in their ultimate physical limits but in their mental strength as well. Despite excruciating pains of both kinds, we also wit-

ness the presence of wonders repeatedly—twice they were saved by water extracted from the roots of desert plants—which bonded them more than ever. Perhaps sisterhood is meant to be the focal point of the journey if we consider how they poured their hearts out for each other at moments of near death, when they could live free because constraints imposed by traditional codes and social contracts did not matter anymore. At the end of the novel, before the climatic event of the story, Ying'er changed into a blouse that she had worn while being chased by the jackals in the desert. The narration goes: "It was not made of fine materials, but was a cherished item" (256). This minor detail speaks eloquently about the significance of the journey for the two women.

The triumph of Ying'er and Lanlan against the elements of nature by itself is a story for the ages, and Xuemo's riveting portrayal of it will place him among the best writers of the survival-in-nature genre. However, the novel is more than that. Like anything else on earth, the desert does not exist without the touch of humans. After all, we have been in the so-called Anthropocene epoch for quite some time. It is no surprise that "into the desert" also means to be mingled with humans who exploit the desert for profit. The salt lakes, the destination of the road trip for the two women, are both part of the desert and separated from it. It turns out that there was a society of salt miners already there. Initially, similar suspense continues to haunt us following Ying'er and Lanlan's new start at the makeshift mining village: Will they get the salt that they came for? Is there a happy ending around the corner? The hope is quickly dissipated in the harsh life of salt mining, constrained by an unforgiving environment and the social fabric contaminated by profit. In fact, there is a certain familiarity to an experienced reader of literature: cut-throat infighting among workers, brutal exploitation of the laborers by the entrepreneurs, sexual rivalry between men, and ruinous jealousy among women, even though details of each theme manifest themselves differently. Their aspirations frustrated, Ying'er and Lanlan have no choice but to return home by the way they came.

The last part of the novel finds Ying'er and Lanlan back in village life, where they struggle anew under "the bondage of the exchange marriage" (111). On the surface, everything was the same: the demands from their families kept coming to them for more sacrifices at the expense of their own interests and desires. Their responses this time, however, would be fundamentally different. For the first time, we see a resolve from both women not to comply. Lanlan went to a Buddhist cave for meditation. She would be reciting the Vajravarahi Mantra to keep the oppressive nagging out of her ears. Ying'er would pretend to agree to remarriage with a man of her parents' choice because he would provide enough money for her brother to get

a new wife, which is, in essence, another bondage of the exchange marriage. In the middle of the wedding ceremony, however, Ying'er made a life-altering choice that would turn the exchange marriage inside out.

Xuemo's choice of resolution for Ying'er and Lanlan is an echo of classical Chinese literature in the genre of tragedy, which finds plenty of examples in suicide and *chujia* (leaving home life), even though Lanlan's embrace of Buddhism does not adhere to the strict definition of leaving home to become a practicing nun. What the two women share is a similar conviction to the triumph of the spirit over the forces of earthly desires and materialistic demands. For that, Buddhism is a natural ally for both women, and it figures prominently in Lanlan's progress toward self-determination, but Daoism, Confucianism, or some folkish spiritual beliefs such as Fatalism are all referenced repeatedly throughout the story. In this connection, spiritualism, rather than a particular institutionalized religion, would more appropriately reflect the richness and complexity of the novel. Xuemo once said, "I am spiritual but not religious." This is true of the novel as well. Xuemo seems to suggest that, to counter the ruinous effect of materialistic patriarchal society where a transactional relationship always begets more relational transactions, spiritualism may be our last choice of resistance.
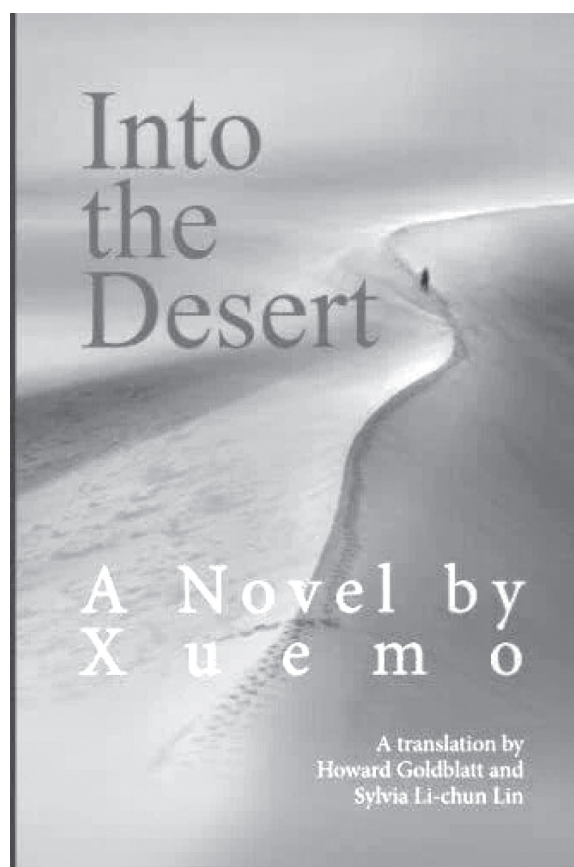
Author Profile:

Dian Li is a Professor of Chinese Literature at the Department of East Asian Studies, the University of Arizona, USA. His primary research interests are modern Chinese films and poetry, critical theory, translation studies, and comparative literary studies. He is the author of three monographs, two book-length translations, and over seventy papers, essays, and reviews, and his most recent book is *The Aesthetics of Empathy in Modern Chinese Literature* (2022). He is Associate Editor of *Comparative Literature & World Literature.*

Haun Saussy. *The Making of Barbarians: Chinese Literature and Multilingual Asia*. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2022. ISBN: 9780691231976. 193 pp.

Li Haiying

(Beijing Normal University)

The concepts of "center" and "periphery," "self" and "other," and "civilization" and "barbarism" seem timeless among cultures all over the world. This consensus indicates people's level of identification with one or more cultures to some extent. Culture is distinguishable in the context of the "center" and "periphery" societies, and over the lengthy growth of civilization, certain behaviors and ideas are chosen as the foundation or soul of a country. Constantly developing people's notions of groups through shared memories and cultural history helps to create a sense of group identification. In the discourse of cultural essentialism, the "mainstream" and "minority" become completely different, the "central" and "peripheral" boundaries are distinct, and group consciousness is constrained to specific mode norms. In this book, Haun Saussy makes an effort to overcome the dichotomous opposition between the center and periphery by moving away from the Eurocentric perspective of comparative culture and the Chinese-centric perspective of ancient Chinese historical writings. He placed "periphery" and "barbaric" at the core of his study by exposing variability within the purportedly homogeneous "Chinese-character cultural sphere" (Saussy 76) and paying attention to ancient Chinese translational activities.

Haun Saussy detailed the history of the link between Chinese culture and its surrounding cultures in the first chapter. As a medium for cultural exchange and information transmission, translation has undoubtedly played a bridging role. Translation is necessary for inhabitants of a peripheral culture; translation is necessary, imposed, sometimes a lifeline; for inhabitants of a central culture, introducing a foreign text is optional, decorative, and, at most, educational. Translation from culture the of the central area spreads into peripheral areas. It will reinforce the center position, in addition to the translator's personality and motive. On the other hand, in the process of transcribing text, the reporter recreates the original text or

redefines the text rooted in Chinese into other sounds. This forms a special type of transformed text, which is the text of peripheral countries' languages based on Chinese literature. Can this sound conversion be called a translation? This is similar to a Chinese text, although it is not read in the Beijing dialect. In the ancient period, a foreign intellectual who had grown up with Chinese culture would consider it not a foreign language. But could they grasp it if read in Chinese? It may appear that this language transformation simply occurs at the phonetic level because it has already completed the transformation of the original text to some extent, and its connotation has altered. It has also changed the understanding of the text by readers with varying levels of education. Haun Saussy pointed out that residents of the center may have one understanding of the meaning of language ability, while residents of the periphery may have another; men and women may have different perspectives on a translated text, and members of different social classes may understand a translated text differently. Haun Saussy's advice at this stage is to put translation as much as possible in the sociocultural context of the original text in order to show its whole picture in varied contexts rather than to seek clear and consistent standards for assessing what translation is.

So what is the function of translation in cultural exchange? Translation can be seen as a public educational tool in the process of cultural exchange between the center and the periphery. Its impact on readers is similar to the impact that language learning has on individuals. It connects the center and periphery in most cases. In the conflicts and constant changes between cultures in East Asia, translation is sometimes overwhelmed, and the "Failures to translate—whether absence of translations, nontranslations, or unsuccessful translations—instruct us about boundaries; they break the frame," writes Saussy (137). Incomprehensible languages, unrecognizable letters, unacceptable customs, and distributed vassals may all be the reasons for translation failure. This precisely reflects, to some extent, the interconnectedness between the center and the periphery.

"However we define China—and there are many answers to that question on offer these days, in bookstores, in journals, and on the political stage—it has always been multicultural" (Saussy 33). As Haun Saussy pointed out at the beginning of Chapter Two, ancient China centered around Chinese characters and formed a unique "Chinese-character cultural sphere" in East Asia. The group living on the edge of China, referred to in the ancient Chinese book—*jiuyi* (九译), also referred to as *yi* (夷)—is often marginalized in traditional cultural history. However, Haun Saussy believes that the "Chinese-character cultural sphere" (Saussy 76) is not a completely homogeneous cultural system. Despite efforts by supporters of central-

ization to de-marginalize, marginalized culture still remains in China's history. The term *siyi* (四夷) appears frequently in Chinese classics. The term *yi* has always been used throughout Chinese history, regardless of how the names of ancient Chinese dynasties alter. *Yi* does not signify a specific ethnic group but a collective term for ethnic groups outside the center. In ancient Chinese concepts, there were generally four directions besides the center, that is, around the center, so the marginalized ethnic groups were called the *siyi*. Some scholars believe that the use of the name *yi* is to exclude the person referred to from the fields of etiquette, morality, rationality, ritual, music, *li* (礼), and *wen* (文). It seems that it is difficult for writings of people from outside of the central culture to reach the status of literature, and it is also difficult to participate in the creation of texts that have already become regarded as Chinese literary heritage. In fact, after the fall of the Han Dynasty, many emperors ruled over parts of China. A sizable proportion of them were referred to as "barbarians." The Northern Wei, the Liao, the Jin, and even the glorious Tang had foreign or mixed-race rulers. After the end of the Six Dynasties, Sui, and Tang, multicultural China became a reality, and the emphasis on retroism, returning to basic principles, and classical purity sounded like a refusal to admit what actually occurred, rejecting the use of standards as a substitute for observation. Memoirs about foreign countries were included in the end chapters of each dynasty's history. From records of etiquette and music in Chinese classics, Haun Saussy discovered the indelible trace of *yi* in the central culture.

The ideas of the "Chinese-character cultural sphere" and "world without translation" were covered by Haun Saussy in Chapter Three. Saussy contends that while appearing at first glance to be an undivided sea of knowledge interchange, the realm of Chinese character culture is far from a free-trade zone of knowledge. The idea of "a world without translation" may have come into being as a result of the Japanese or Korean readers having internalized the meanings of Chinese characters and texts, making them appear less "foreign." It may also be attributed to the following viewpoints proposed by Allen and Liang Qichao:

In ancient times our nation was often in contact with alien races. But the foreigners' culture was always treated as lower than our own, and the relationship was always conducted using our language and characters. The dragoman was not worth mentioning. (Quoted in Saussy 59)

Another relevant factor is the fact that certain classics cannot be stored or distributed privately because of national security concerns. These forms of communi-

cation, as noted by Haun Saussy, fall into various categories that are distinguished by the unidirectional and bidirectional flow of information, filtered and layered. It is a question for literary historians, somewhat for geographers, and chiefly for politicians to define these mobile elements because they determine the content of the work we see.

However, the conclusion that there was no translation in ancient China based solely on these texts is too hasty. The invention of Korean kanji, Japanese hiragana and katakana, as well as various Vietnamese writing systems, including current romanization, inherited the characteristics of Chinese characters and have long interacted with them but are not completely equivalent to them: over time, this will change, first with diphthongs and in some cases, ultimately, with monophones. Foreigners read slogans in their own language. The pronunciation of Chinese text itself can become the object of reading. That is to say, a new writing system has developed in the process of constantly supplementing markers—transforming Chinese text into its own readable text through paraphrasing and rewriting. If this is not translation, what is it? In front of numerous existing texts, there is no doubt that regardless of its form, it is translation. In Chapter Three, Saussy mentions Kornicki's viewpoint. Kornicki[1] believes that ancient Chinese translation was a "one-way translation" with no backflow. They flow out of China and are learned by other countries—that is to say, foreign people are Confucian and sinicized. Kornicki believes that "not much flowed back in the other direction; given 'the literary self-sufficiency of China,' there was little demand there for works written abroad." (Saussy 70). Haun Saussy gave his own opinion on this argument. He saw the figure of poetry in the northwest region from the poems of Wang Changling and Li Bai because in ancient China, the northwest region could be said to belong to the barbarian region, which indirectly reflects the shift of northwest culture toward the central culture. The producers of folk songs and the authors of palace poetry carried out a cultural transfer by integrating scenes, characters, and customs from the northwest, bringing new themes from the border back to the center.

Chinese culture develops through the constant transfer of peripheries and centers. The binary opposition of *zhong* (中) and *wai* (外), as well as *hua* (华) and *yi*, has established China's unique historical literary context. Popular explanations of

---

1   Peter Kornicki is an English Japanologist. He is an Emeritus Professor of Japanese at Cambridge University and an Emeritus Fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge. His works include *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century, Language, Scripts, and Chinese Texts*, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Japan*, and *Early Japanese Books in Cambridge University Library*.

the distinction between *hua* and *yi* and the definition of *hua* are all presented in some special regions, which can reflect the priorities and constraints of their age, as seen by the discussion in Chapters Four and Five. It takes a long time for cultures to evolve. The majority of artistic works are made to last, so individuals who create them or conceptualize them do not have to deal with current situations like diplomats or officials do. Perhaps we should first explore a tendency toward group consciousness rather than uniform rules. However, culture is typically more powerful and stable than political parties, ethnic groups, geographic regions, or even linguistic groups. Culture needs to be defended or protected precisely because it uses symbolism to create distinctions that may not be readily apparent in physical reality. So let us talk about the distinction between *hua* and *yi*, or better still, the specific problem of the distinction between *hua* and *yi*. What is China, in short? Haun Saussy introduced Ge Zhaoguang's interpretation of Chinese culture from a "central" perspective and also introduced how Uyghur historian Kahar Barat's "peripheral" perspective understood the formation of Chinese culture.2 The widely recognized reality is that China's central culture spreads toward the periphery, but the historical writing of "central" culture is not the same as that of "peripheral" regions. Behind them is a narrative of expansion and harmony. Ethnic literature and cultural history are also constructed in the same way. Haun Saussy believes that the nature of Chinese culture is not just "sinicization"—it is an uninterrupted process of variation, which is constantly influenced and integrated by indigenous, border, and heterodox cultures. Translation of the periphery has been assimilated into a part of the country's cultural heritage, preserving the culture known as "barbarians" on the periphery. Not only in China, but also elsewhere, culture of the periphery can be considered "marginalized" and "barbaric."

So standing at the "center" and looking at the "periphery" or standing at the "periphery" and looking at the "center" are important perspectives for understanding this framework. Looking at the "periphery" from the "center" is the core way for Chinese people to understand themselves. The Chinese word "culture" itself represents "people with education." Through education, people have learned the art of governing a country and self-cultivation. But if we are limited to the perspective of the Chinese language and are content with the imagination of the "center" and

---

2   Saussy (88) refers to Ge Zhaoguang, "What is China?" 何为中国 (He wei Zhongguo?) extracted from China: Reconstructing Historical Narratives on 'China' 中國：重建有關 "中國"的歷史論述 (Zhong guo: Chong jian you guan "Zhongguo" de lishi lunshu), Beijing: Zhonghua, 2011, translated by Jesse Field and Qin Fang as Here in "China" I Dwell— Reconstructing Historical Discourses of China for Our Time (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

blindly seek the essence of "center" culture, then, we will not see the "barbarism" shaped by the "civilization," the communication and diversity in the world, and the shaping of the "center" culture by the "periphery" and thus lose the possibility of peeking into the full picture of history.

Author Profile:

Li Haiying is PhD candidate at the School of Chinese Language and Literature, Beijing Normal University. Her interests include comparative literature and world literature. Email:kaieeli88@163.com.