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

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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. Kornicki1 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.

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