

Dynastic Crisis and Cultural Innovation: From Late Ming to Late Qing and Beyond. Edited by David Der-wei Wang and Shang Wei. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005. Pp. x + 620. \$60.00/£38.95.

This volume assembles seventeen fascinating articles by some of the most engaging, currently-active scholars of late- and post-imperial Chinese literature in North America—as well as one in Taiwan. Indeed, the word “cultural” in the title is somewhat misleading, since the contributions to the volume deal with just a certain aspect of culture, literary and journalistic productions. Most, however, are done in such a way as to illuminate broader dimensions of the cultural scene. The book offers a feast of estimable proportions to anyone who works humanistically on China from the late sixteenth century through the Republican period.

Most satisfying to this reviewer—as a historian who specializes in the late Ming and early Qing periods—are the following strengths of the volume: (1) prominent engagement of the contributors with matters that “turn on” the historically-minded reader, such as the socioeconomic conditions and material or popular culture in which the writings under discussion were imbedded, and close attention to factors of temporality—how the passage of time, or the qualitative sense of living in a particular time, has borne on various aspects of literary production; (2) the highlighting (among the longterm dynamics that one would expect to see in the evolution of any rich literary tradition) of particular elements from the late Ming that carried forward in time, and elements from the late Qing that fed into the twentieth century in previously unnoted or unexpected ways; (3) the frequent emergence, with fresh insights, of relations between national crisis and the feminine—issues of women as serious writers, as symbols of loyalty, and as agents of collective conscience; and (4) the uniformly high quality of the contributions, which apply excellent scholarly analysis and insight to subjects that readily engage a wide range of interests, and which thankfully eschew the sort of post-structuralist lit-crit babble that has “turned off” many potential readers of literary scholarship in the recent past.

For instance, Sophie Volpp, in “Texts, Tutors, and Fathers: Pedagogy and Pedants in Tang Xianzu’s [湯顯祖] *Mudan ting* [牡丹亭],” and Carlos Rojas, in “The Coin of Gender in *Pinhua baojian* [品花寶鑑],” in different ways offer intriguing perspectives on the profile of actors and drama performance among writers who addressed middlebrow audiences in the early seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, respectively. Volpp shows how the notion of theatricality lay at the centre of mutual critiques between the theretofore dominant “archaists” and the emergent “anti-archaists,” whose challenge (with purportedly greater “authenticity”) to literary orthodoxy formed a major current in the late Ming. Rojas, for his part, exposes us intimately to the social world of female-impersonator actors and their male benefactors, tracing the circulation of certain fetishized persons and objects (especially bracelets) to explore contemporaneous attitudes about biological sex *vis-à-vis* performative gender.

Materiality in the form of new modes of publishing also is brought to the fore, first by Shang Wei in his article “The Making of the Everyday World: *Jin Ping Mei cihua* [金瓶梅詞話] and Encyclopedias for Daily Use.” Noting this late-Ming novel’s liberal extraction of content from increasingly popular *riyong* 日用 reference works, Shang makes the case that a

new, virtually ethnographic, vision of reality was changing the conventional way of structuring knowledge by departing from the “official-elite system of cultural reference” (p. 74). Looking to the last decades of the Qing period, Rania Huntington, in “The Newspaper, *zhiguai* [志怪], and the Sorcery Epidemic of 1876,” and Alexander Des Forges, in “A New Mode of Literary Production in the Late Qing: The Invention of the Installment Plan,” present wonderfully complementary views of the consequences of writing and reading about things “as they happen”—whether in reality, rumour, or the ficator’s imagination—rather than well after events have been digested or whole novels have been completed. Huntington compares items about “strange” occurrences in traditional *zhiguai* sources such as *biji* 筆記 to the treatment of such reports in Hong Kong and Shanghai newspapers of the 1870s and 1880s, revealing the changed “nature of readership, authorship, narrative, and information ...” (p. 356) in the dawning era of China’s periodical press. Des Forges, in his piece, finds that the shift to serialization of Chinese fiction, beginning in Shanghai around the turn of the twentieth century, not only changed the expectations of readers but also occasioned a fundamental rethinking on the part of authors of how to write novels.

Insights on changing temporal sensibilities which tangentially enhance the work of Huntington and Des Forges are more central to the article by Robert Hegel, “Conclusions: Judgments on the Ends of Times,” in which he examines several historical novels of the middle Ming, late Ming, and early post-conquest periods to discern outlooks on dynastic stability and legitimacy and to what degree the traditional concept of oscillation between times of order and disorder held cogency. The unsureness about a positive return to stability that he sees in certain authors and editors of the post-conquest period is compared to even greater despondency, urgency, and anxiety about the direction of current affairs in Liu E’s 劉鶚 novel *Lao Can youji* 老殘遊記 (1904–1907). It is, however, in Judith Zeitlin’s contribution, “The Return of the Palace Lady: The Historical Ghost Story and Dynastic Fall,” that relations of temporality to culture and politics are developed most poignantly. In this masterful study, Zeitlin discusses the debt of historical ghost tales (about traumatic historical events, not individual mortality) to traditional *huaigu* 懷古 poetic sentiment in the “impulse to recall what has vanished,” a mourning and lamentation of irretrievable loss (p. 153). Also revealing a quite different, though equally sad, sense of being-in-time, one that looks more forward than backward, is Keith McMahon’s study, “The Fall of the God of Money,” about an 1878 collection of comments and short narratives, *Yanhua* 煙話, by opium addict Zhang Changjia 張昌甲. While the question of why opium addiction became so widespread in China during the nineteenth century can be approached from several angles, not limited to people’s subjective moods, McMahon adds a fascinating perspective to the mix of factors by explaining Zhang’s feeling of being a Chinese caught between two ages—the Confucian past and the Christian future—in a “global space” where only willful self-neutralization made sense.

Like McMahon’s, Dorothy Ko’s article “The Subject of Pain” shows us vividly, with insights from physical culture, a sector of late-Qing and Republican-period society in which self-damage was purposely inflicted—in this case by footbinding, a practice which, along with opium-smoking, became emblematic of “bad old” China. She demonstrates with remarkable sensitivity and sophistication how the rising polemic against footbinding

partook of a modern consciousness in which the subjective meaning of bodily pain could be acutely articulated, particularly in a full-throated female voice. She thus points to the decades of 1870–1910 as a time of “profound transformation” in the vocabulary of pain, as relations among individual, nation, and state were being reconfigured (p. 484), especially in female references to the female body.

In these ways, Ko joins Wai-ye Li, Siao-chen Hu, and Kang-i Sun Chang in richly explicating the significance of women—as characters, voices, and authors—in times of sociopolitical crises in China. The first article to do this in the volume, Li’s “Women as Emblems of Dynastic Fall in Qing Literature,” focuses on images of women as *femme fatales*, victims, and heroes to represent “a spectrum of attitudes on the relationship between the individual and larger historical processes” (p. 93), in works mainly of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Shifting the subject to women’s authorial voice, Hu, in her article “The Daughter’s Vision of National Crisis,” places admirable scholarly judgement behind the view that a well-known conquest-period *tanci* 彈詞 text, *Tianyuhua* 天雨花, was indeed written by the female preface-writer Tao Zhenhuai 陶貞懷, despite characteristics that suggest male authorship—such as strong loyalist sentiment; serious, orthodox intentions; refined language; and a horizon that extends “far beyond the inner chambers and the marketplace” (p. 205). Hu makes the point that the political potential of *tanci* was largely lost in middle Qing times, but that it was revived in the late Qing, at the hands of such female revolutionaries as Qiu Jin 秋瑾, as a means of educating women to think in new ways. This article by Hu on *tanci* offers good synergy with that on poetry by Chang (discussed below) in documenting the emergence of women’s voice *as witness* during the Ming-Qing transition. Certainly there was no need to strain in order to include token articles on women in this volume: the feminine is conspicuous and significant in the literatures of stressful times.

The less satisfying aspects of the volume are editorial. The overall conception succumbs to unclarity and inflation, with two consequences that detract from its cohesion: (1) dearth of correspondence between the introductory claims of the editors and what the collective contributions actually do; and, related to this, (2) over-inclusion of articles, making for a hefty volume (over 600 pages) of variously focused material.

The introduction, written by the co-editors David Wang and Shang Wei, begins creditably by articulating the felt needs that gave rise to their collaborative project: insufficient attention to relations between the late Ming and the late Qing and to “the long, problematic process through which the Ming legacy was appropriated, reinterpreted, and thus transformed into the lived historical experience and imagination of the late Qing”; the tendency of scholars to emphasize Western sources of change in late Qing, “to the relative neglect of the internal, Chinese sources”; and the tendency of those who study the late Ming to overlook or deny that “salient characteristics of late Ming culture—the romantic impulse, sensationalism, eroticism, and iconoclasm” extended into, and in some respects continued throughout, the eighteenth century (p. 2). But then the over-reaching begins, first with an assertion of continuity from late Ming to late Qing and the suggestion that “the period from the mid-sixteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century [be viewed] as one historical unit,” which had “lingering influences on the modern (even postmodern) imaginations ... ” (p. 3). Hereupon the editors set forth their “second and

certainly more significant issue ... the nature of Chinese modernity and its sources,” which they feel has been misunderstood due to what they questionably label as “teleological” and “Marxist” modes of historical interpretation (pp. 3–4). Thus, on page 9, we arrive at the following somewhat unclearly phrased statement of the goals of the volume:

to draw the critical configurations of the late Ming and the late Qing as literary-cultural innovations in a time of imperial disintegration; to trace the genealogies that inform the formal and conceptual transformations from the late Ming to the late Qing; and to rethink the “premodernity” of the late Ming and late Qing in the context of the age of modernism.

All this would be a tall order for the most single-minded monographic author; it proves to be an overly ambitious set of goals (even if one accepts all the premises) for a collective volume of articles by diverse authors, at least some of whom, it appears, did not originally conceive their research with the editors’ project in mind.

Take, for instance, Part I, “The Late Ming and the Early Qing.” Among the constituent five articles, just two (those by Wai-yee Li and Siao-chen Hu) refer substantially to the middle or late Qing. And those articles stress comparative differences and interruptions between the phenomena they address in the two periods, not continuities. The article by co-editor Shang Wei himself is more representative of this Part: it attends overwhelmingly to the late Ming, making references mostly backward in time, and allotting just four lines to mention of a late-Qing novel that in one respect is comparable to the *Jin Ping Mei*.

Correspondingly, in Part III, “The Late Qing,” none of the five articles makes any reference specifically to literature of the Ming-Qing transition. The complementary articles by Huntington and Des Forges make broad references to the *zhiguai* and novelistic literature of the Ming and Qing periods, but again, differences rather than continuities are stressed. As in the case of McMahon’s articles in this Part, comparisons to developments in the contemporaneous West, rather than to seventeenth-century China, occupy the authors’ interests. The one article that clearly fulfills a stated goal of the editors is that by Patrick Hanan, “The Narrator’s Voice Before the ‘Fiction Revolution’.” Hanan identifies significant changes in the fictional narrator’s posture during the nineteenth century that anticipate features of the “first wave” of modern Chinese fiction in the years 1896–1900, especially the “involved author” technique that Hanan associates with the felt crises of those years.

A daunting responsibility, thus, falls to Part II, “From the Late Late Ming to the Early Late Qing,” to show the sorts of continuities that would support the thesis that the late sixteenth through the early twentieth century forms “one [literary-]historical unit.” Perhaps indicatively, this Part consists of just two articles. The one by Gang Gary Xu, “Ethics of Form: *Qing* [情] and Narrative Excess in *Guwangyan* [姑妄言],” a bit difficult to understand in some of its theses, compares the tension between romantic passion and sexual desire in late-Ming and mid-Qing fiction and drama. He particularly focuses on the recently-discovered novel *Guwangyan* (1730), asserting that this work “represents a significant link between the pornographic fiction of the late Ming and the early Qing, the scholar-beauty

romance of the early Qing, and the fiction of exposé of the late Qing” (p. 238). Coupled with this is a very well-crafted piece by Ellen Widmer, “*Jinghua yuan* [鏡花緣]: Where the Late Late Ming Meets the Early Late Qing,” in which she judiciously analyzes the stylistic features and “critical vision” of the early nineteenth-century fantasy *Jinghua yuan*. She finds therein key stylistic linkages to late-Ming novels and early-Qing *tanci*, as well as anticipations of the use of fiction for social criticism that developed more fully toward the end of the Qing.

Perhaps because Part II, for all its strengths in quality, is rather short to sustain the editors’ conception, a Part IV is added, entitled “From the Late Ming to the Late Qing and Beyond.” Of the five articles in this Part, only that by Kang-i Sun Chang, “Women’s Poetic Witnessing: Late Ming and Late Qing Examples,” approaches fulfilling the promise of the volume. Comparing the intense interest in writing testamentary “poetic histories” (*shishi* 詩史) on the part of literate women of the troubled Ming-Qing transition and mid-nineteenth century, respectively, she argues that women poets of the Ming-Qing era established new ground for themselves among male counterparts by giving poetic expression to their experience of historical disruption, drawing on the remote precedents of Cai Yan 蔡琰 (of Han) and Du Fu 杜甫 (of Tang). While women of both early and late Qing looked back to these models, however, the nineteenth-century poetesses do not seem to have been conscious of their seventeenth-century predecessors.

Three other contributors to Part IV—Theodore Hutters, Dorothy Ko, and Robert Hegel—variously refer backward and forward in time among writings of the Ming, Qing, and Republican periods. Though none especially supports a case for the late Ming through the early twentieth century as a distinct unit in Chinese literary history, Hutters’s article can be read in the vein of examining possible antecedents of modernity in premodern Chinese literature. He asserts that the technique of narrational subjectivity was readily available to Qing-period writers, though for good reasons they often chose not to use it. Hutters’s prime example of this is Wu Jingzi’s 吳敬梓 *Rulin waishi* 儒林外史, in which the notable absence of subjective representation, he argues (unconvincingly to this reader), represents a deliberate, determined strategy on Wu’s part in response to unspecified conditions of his day in the mid-eighteenth century. This is contrasted with the intense interiority of the main character in Wu Jianren’s 吳趸人 novel *Henhai* 恨海 (1906), which Hutters sees as reflecting a desperate need for inner refuge from uncontrollable situations (rather than, one presumes, Western literary influences). Thus, rather oddly, he tries to establish a continuity of potential for narrative subjectivity by citing a Qing work in which this characteristic is not in evidence.

In the last article of the collection, “Second Haunting” by co-editor David Der-wei Wang, we find out what the words “and beyond” in the book’s title refer to. Wang begins by pointing to the richness, and increasing closeness, of interactions between humans and ghosts in Ming-Qing fiction, but this is to set up his main subject: the disappearance (or submergence) of the ghostly in Chinese fiction from the May Fourth period to the 1980s and its resurgence in the modern mode of “phantasmagoric realism” since that time. He uses this “return of the ghost” to examine an interesting development in modern (or, one might say, postmodern) Chinese realism: the introduction of fantastic elements “as if they were an integral part of the real” (p. 581). Aside from looking back to a premodern

tradition of ghost tales in China, this article is about discontinuity and the appearance of radically new phenomena on the Chinese literary scene. Its inclusion truly takes any cohesive concept of the volume out of reach.

Moreover, the main substance of some of the contributions (by Shang, McMahon, and Des Forges) has previously been published elsewhere, and there is considerable overlap between two of the articles: both Wai-ye Li and Judith Zeitlin extensively treat the storied heroine Lin Siniang 林四娘. In retaining both of these treatments, the editors might better have placed Zeitlin's first, since she gives greater historical and bibliographical background on the Lin Siniang phenomenon than does Li, with her different thematic agenda. In sum, one might have hoped for tighter editorial control.

Yet one cannot but admire the energetic purview, challenging discernment of problematics, and keen sense of quality and interest on the part of Wang and Shang. If one is to be faulted for something, then over-enthusiasm is far from the worst. I, for one, am glad to own this stout volume of wonderful articles that they have been brought forth, and I expect that many others will be grateful to them also.

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Amid the Clouds and Mist: China's Colonization of Guizhou, 1200–1700. By John E. Herman. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007. Pp. x + 344. \$49.50/£31.95.

明中葉以降中國西南地區（四川、雲南和貴州）邊土的開發和當地少數民族逐漸漢化，特別是清雍正（1723–1735）年間改土歸流政策大規模地落實，川、雲、貴地區也隨著中央勢力不斷滲透及漢族移民源源湧入，而與中國本部一體化。除了至為偏遠的高原及人跡罕至的河谷外，中國國家的軍事、政治、社會文化及經濟制度牢固控制著西南。凡此幾已成為中國史學者的共識。作者指出，過去西方學界對漢族南進，將妨礙他們前進的外族及外族文化淹沒的基礎因素，大多以五十餘年前 Harold Wiens 書中所提出的論點為據。¹ Wiens 認為漢移民因推力及拉力（戰亂、天災、苛政、經濟機遇）互動，從中原邁進尚待開發的南疆，可分為四個歷史階段：西晉、東晉、宋代和十八世紀；在中國的悠長歷史中，國家在這一過程僅起次要作用。Wiens 並沒有將南疆土著視為歷史敘事不可或缺的組成部份；在他筆下，他們似被動地等待被優越的中國文化征服及同化。作者表示，Wiens 對中國向南擴張的解釋，不過是據分類過的中國片斷歷史文獻證據拼湊而成的記錄，只是眾多解釋中可能的一種。至於 1949 年後的中國大陸，史家咸以馬克思一

¹ Herold J. Wiens, *China's March Toward the Tropics* (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1954).