

within the stories to political and cultural history, but the book does not appear in his bibliography.

More careful editing would have solved many of the book's problems, such as the occasional internal contradictions. For example, on p. 127 Hsieh writes that "versions [of the swan-maiden motif] with monkeys or tigers are not pure swan-maiden tales since there is no actual theft" of the animal/woman's pelt which forces her to stay in human form and marry the man who steals the pelt; then on p. 133 he discusses the tale "Tianbao xuanren" 天寶選人, in which, as Hsieh himself notes, the story begins with precisely such a theft. There are also a number of mistakes in the synopses of stories, such as when he describes the female character in Shen Yazhi's 沈亞之 "Xiangzhong yuan jie" 湘中怨解 as a goddess when in fact she is a dragon (p. 173); similarly Hsieh writes that "Zheng takes a wife after beginning his affair with Ren" in "Renshi zhuan" 任氏傳 (p. 226) when actually Zheng had been married prior to meeting Ren.

Love and Women brings together a fascinating set of materials and asks provocative questions about them. While readers may wish for a more in-depth exploration of many of the issues raised, the book nonetheless provides a valuable introduction to works that are seldom covered in scholarship on this period, and should prove to be a useful resource for those interested in medieval history and literature or in the treatment of romance in Chinese literature.

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Different Worlds of Discourse: Transformations of Gender and Genre in Late Qing and Early Republican China. Edited by Nanxiu Qian, Grace S. Fong, and Richard J. Smith. Leiden: Brill, 2008. €109.00/\$162.00.

The twelve chapters in this volume bring together an impressive array of scholars from around the world in an exploration of the dynamic years of the late Qing and early Republic. While there has been copious research published on both of these periods separately, only very few have explored the connections between the two and how people living through these years negotiated the transition from Imperial subject to Republican citizen. Even fewer studies have grappled with the gender dimensions and their considerable impact on the creation of new knowledge and cultural products. Qian, Fong, and Smith have provided us with an invaluable insight into this period and reveal the importance of exploring the interactions between the often arbitrary borders of historical periods. The editors note from the outset that the volume seeks to look behind the conventional division between "tradition" and "modernity."

The editors have a strong point to make in this regard. The end of dynasties or the commencements of new regimes are often, treated as “Ground Zero” points for no other reason than for academic convenience—we have to start a chronological narrative somewhere. Scholars routinely start their studies at points of major political “handover” as if they were new departures in every sphere of social, intellectual, and economic life. This habit often leads to a very cursory treatment of the pre-existing conditions and influences. But more importantly, this “periodization of convenience” misses the considerable insights provided by explorations of the messy and muddled years of transition. *Different Worlds of Discourse* takes up the challenge of examining the transition years between the Qing and Republic and in so doing produces an immensely readable and important volume.

The volume is divided into three sections. Part One, “Transformations of Gender Roles” includes contributions from Harriet Zurndorfer, Hu Ying, Grace Fong, and Xiaoping Cong. Zurndorfer’s chapter takes readers into a dynamic critique of Liang Qichao’s 梁啟超 programme for the rebuilding of China by examining his defamatory commentary on a prominent woman *cainü* 才女 (talented woman), Wang Zhaoyuan 王照圓. The contradictory symbolic roles allocated to women within Liang’s schema become apparent in Zurndorfer’s analysis of Wang Zhaoyuan. On the one hand reformers like Liang called for the education of women and presented “women’s ignorance” as a key reason for the current weak state of China. Yet, on the other hand they derided educated “talented women” for their erudition in traditional scholarship as backward. Real women negotiated the complex terrain in which reformers like Liang were redefining traditional learning as obsolete and effeminate in order to claim space for a new form of modern learning that was masculine and authoritative in its masculinity. In this single chapter the value of exploring the messy transitional points in history from a gendered perspective becomes apparent. Part One continues with Hu Ying’s chapter on the social and political significance of the calligraphy of leading late Qing *cainü* Wu Zhiying 吳芝瑛 as the artwork and its creator moved from prominence in the Qing elite to engagement with Republican revolutionaries. Wu’s privileged status as a member of the illustrious Wu family and its Tongcheng 桐城 School drew her calligraphy into prominence in the Qing Court and confirmed her status as heir of the Wu family learning. Yet, as the political situation deteriorated at the turn of the century she engaged increasingly with national political concerns and turned her calligraphy to this purpose. As an artist/activist, sales of Wu Zhiying’s artwork supported payment of the Boxer War “reparations,” promoted women’s schools and women’s armies. Hu Ying’s key point in the detailed exploration of the evolution of the significance of Wu’s calligraphy as politically charged objects and the artist herself as a public-political figure is to reveal the transition between *cainü* and the “new women” that would later come to mark the first decades of the twentieth century. Hu Ying shows us that Wu Zhiying was neither completely a *cainü* nor a new woman—her individual artistic choices and evolving public engagement reveal her skills in establishing multiple effective political and social identities in this period of transition.

Grace Fong's chapter on another complex woman scholar, Lü Bicheng 呂碧城, continues Part One's exploration of the evolution of *cainü* in a transitional period. Lü was erudite in traditional learning and skilled in classical poetry and she took advantage of the changing social morays to take the public stage as a journalist and educator. Like Wu Zhiying, Lü was not constrained by an "effete tradition" of old style *cainü* learning—to the contrary it served as a solid base for her political and personal journeys. For example, Fong traces Lü's solo travels around the world and through China to show how women at this time were changing the perceptions of space and time. Lü's poems on famous scenic locations were consciously written from a female eye to contrast with the pages of poems on scenic spots written by male scholars over centuries. Most significantly of all, Fong shows us that during these transitional years, cosmopolitanism was upheld as an important social and political value. The unrelenting nationalism that developed and continues its dominance today stands in stark contrast to the explicit "globalism" (*shijie zhuyi* 世界主義) espoused and enacted by Lü Bicheng. Her engagement with "foreign" spaces in China is framed as a cosmopolitan experience and is akin to her later travels to Europe. Her enthusiasm for working with the interpenetration of Chinese and Western culture ensured her distance from definitive political or ideological affiliations. Such freedom to self-identify as "cosmopolitan" emerged from this productive and messy transitional socio-political space and would disappear as the twentieth century proceeded.

Xiaoping Cong's chapter on schooling in the late Qing traces the institutional changes that would take *cainü* and turn them into "girl students." Cong shows that the first girls' schools that emerged in 1907 were billed as extending the tradition of virtuous *cainü* but that they eventually became instrumental in reshaping the roles for women in society generally and for changing the face of education more broadly—particularly through the engagement of missionary schools in a sector that commenced with clan-based schools. Cong's well-documented chapter shows readers the ways schools mediated the vast gap that had previously existed between private "feminine" space and public "masculine" space. Although the first girls' schools were operated by clans and were often populated by members of the same extended family, the fact that the school buildings were physically operating outside of the domestic sphere was sufficient to prompt a dramatic shift in social morays. The girls' schools gave "good" women's access to public arenas and legitimated their appearance in projects related to national rather than familial concerns.

Part Two of *Different Worlds of Discourse* is titled "Transformations of Genres." It commences with Joan Judge's chapter on the impact of biographies of Western women on China and its interactions with the lengthy indigenous tradition of writing on female exemplars. Judge argues that the introduction of Western women as exemplars made radical challenges to the social norms—a task not achieved by the publication of equivalent biographies of Western men. Biographies of Western women included public political roles, often unmediated by family ties and sometimes with explicit feminist intent, that were not included in the Chinese exemplar classics like the *Lienü zhuan* 列女

傳. Judge shows that while these were often significantly new models for women's behaviour they had undergone a process of re-creation and adaptation from Japanese sources to enable their smoother entry into a Chinese readership schooled in an existing genre of exemplar biographies. In the context of this entire edited volume's overarching theme of the vibrancy of transitional periods, Judge's chapter provides vital insights into the early and instrumental role of Japan as a creative influence on China's exploration of "the West." By tracking the differences between the various versions of the biographies of women (original, Japanese and Chinese) or the commentary accompanying the biographies she reveals the complex view editors held about on appropriate behaviour for women. Joan of Arc, for example, was lauded as a heroine akin to Hua Mulan 花木蘭, but in Chinese versions she becomes a patriotic nationalist rather than a pious saint that channelled the voice of God. Similarly, in Japanese versions of the biography of American educator, Mary Lyon, her unmarried state was ignored in favour of her enthusiasm for promoting "good wives and wise mothers." The Chinese version of her story, translated from the Japanese, transformed Lyon's contribution to education as a heroic sacrifice to the greater good of country's educational advancement. Judge's detailed exegesis of the cultural borrowings and evolving stories provides a vital map of changing social ideals of gender roles.

Jing Tsu's chapter on female assassins in late Qing fiction examines the manner in which late Qing fiction used these unusual women as conduits for broader discussions about science, technology, and modernity. She shows that tales of remarkable female killers facilitated the exploration of the fantastical aspects of Western science as well as some of the now-banal pragmatic aspects of Western technology in the realm of popular commercial fiction. The chapter explores the apocalyptic thinking that circulated during the first decades of the twentieth century in conjunction with the advent of these new technologies. It links the widespread appearance of female assassins, secret agents, nihilists, anarchists and other radical women to the popular fascination for scientific knowledge and technological pragmatism directly to radical political change. Jing Tsu demonstrates that the remarkable fictional women circulating at this time were not regarded as particularly outlandish radicals or advocates of modernity but performed the crucial role of widening ways of thinking about the world among a wide audience of consumers of popular fiction.

Part Two concludes with Ellen Widmer's chapter on Zhan Kai's 詹堉 1907 novel *Bihai zhu* 碧海珠 (Jewels in an Azure Sea). She reveals how the novel explores relationships between *guixiu* 閨秀 (educated gentlewomen) and courtesans during this period of radical shifts in the value and type of education deemed suitable for women. We learn that the impact of modern ideals of feminine education simultaneously produced changes in the way men conceived of their interaction with both the *guixiu* and the courtesan. The novel centres upon the classic Confucian link between virtue and education and the tension that produces among those that do and do not have access to that education. The uneducated person could never really be considered "thoroughly virtuous." The modern

times of 1907, of course, produced modern schooling opportunities and therefore new anxieties about the former clear link between education and virtue. Modernization of schooling presented the possibility for courtesans to gain an education beyond the entertainment arts of poetry, music, and painting at which they were recognized and skilled. And, indeed, in *Bihai zhu*, a former courtesan seeks to enrol at one of these modern schools but she is repeatedly rejected because of her former occupation. Widmer's discussion of the late Qing anxiety about the proper education for courtesans frames Zhan Kai's novel in the context of the real-life courtesans who petitioned authorities to create modern schools for courtesans on the grounds that it would strengthen the nation. Zhan's story criticizes the *guixiu* for their lack of enthusiasm for the modern schooling (and thereby their lack of patriotism) with a time-honoured moral comparison designed to shame the target audience into action—"Even a courtesan can see the value in a modern schooling, why not you?" The late Qing *guixiu* fascination with courtesans (from imitating their fashion to admiring their art) made such an apparently unlikely tactic alluring to the fiction-reading population of the time. Widmer shows that *Bihai zhu* reveals how the patriotism of the entertainer's commercial world can be produced through the space created by modern schooling.

Part Three on new print media commences with a study by Rudolf Wagner on women in Shenbao 申報 publishing house materials—that included the famous *Shenbao* newspaper, numerous books and periodicals, including *Dianshizhai huabao* 點石齋畫報. Wagner alerts us to the revolutionary nature of the publishing house's position on gender noting that it was the first to devote space to exploring women's issues and to explicitly conceive of women as readers, and authors of its publications. In so doing, the Shenbao publishing house created a space for public discourse on women and gender to occur. Its revolutionary content includes questioning of footbinding and strict laws on sex segregation in the 1870s. In his detailed study of the variety of the publishing house's materials, Wagner's article shows convincingly that women's issues were already of great public interest three decades before the 1890s. Nanxiu Qian's chapter on *Nü xuebao* 女學報 explains the reason for this commonly held view. It was not until the 1898 reform period that the first periodicals especially written for women and edited by women appeared—and *Nü xuebao* is considered to be the first of these. Qian leads the readers through a detailed analysis of this 1898 journal and its successor journal by the same name of 1902 and queries the prominence of the latter. In so doing she explores the shifting significance of women as agents producing change (both discursively and actually) during the late Qing transition. Qian's conclusion explains that the later journal's radicalization of nationalism, its anti-*cainü* position, and ideas of racial war all combine to create a potent mix that was welcomed by those espousing anti-Qing revolutionary spirit. Its ability to link women's issues with a vigorous and radical political agenda gave the twentieth century journal broader recognition than its nineteenth century counterpart.

Two prominent PRC-based scholars Xia Xiaohong and Chen Pingyuan contributed

the next two chapters with translations done by Hu Ying and Anne S. Chao respectively. Xia Xiaohong provides readers with an interesting piece on *Tianyi bao* 天義報 and the feminist anarchist, He Zhen 何震. Xia argues that violence by women in the promotion of political agendas was central to He Zhen's message and that this was normalised within public discourse of the time (a point supported by Jing Tsu's chapter on female assassins). Chen Pingyuan's contribution explores pictorial magazines produced in Beijing between 1902–1908 as Beijing sought to catch up with the reforms in women's education and publishing that had taken southern cities by storm decades earlier. He shows that the pictorials were bi-focal—directed at women and espousing women's emancipation they simultaneously presented images of women for male voyeurism. The chapter provides a rich body of evidence that the pictorials were negotiating a serious social anxiety about the schooling of “good girls” outside of the home and their likely exposure to voyeuristic male gaze as they participated in this modern education. The novelty of “girl students” eroticised their form in the male eye and this created a simultaneous trend among courtesans to dress as if they were students too.

The volume closes with a chapter by Siao-chen Hu on longest-running periodical dedicated to women's issues: *The Ladies' Journal*. Hu explores the interconnections between women, literature and the emergence of modern China. She argues that previous conceptions of the journals early issues as having a conservative outlook are misguided and draws evidence for her challenge from the literary contributions to the journal. For example, Hu demonstrates that the journal's inclusion of a women author's “Literary Garden” (*Wenyuan* 文苑) was an early radical break from previous uses of this term when it was routinely reserved for men writers. In soliciting content for this section of its pages, *The Ladies' Journal* was instrumental in promoting public writing by women in and also preserving it for future generations—a feature earlier *cainü* writing rarely was able to achieve with its orientation towards private circulation of texts. Noble as this endeavour was, the journal failed to sustain the “Literary Garden” beyond its sixth year. Hu explains this phenomenon resulted from the rapid transformation in the nature of literature at this time and its increasing links with national political struggles. The engaging and thoroughly convincing evidence Hu presents shows that the traditional modes of women's writing did not simply disappear in an instant with the collapse of the Qing in 1911. Instead, *The Ladies' Journal* provided a forum for the traditional literary form and legitimated its public dissemination within a reformist rubric. This process enabled women writers of the 1920s to emerge within the New Literature movement with greater ease than would have been possible without the groundwork provided by such forums as “the literary gardens.” Hu's chapter shows us the precise steps through which this transformation occurred.

Taken together the chapters in *Different Worlds of Discourse* present readers with an engaging insight into period of change before the storm-like iconoclasm of the May Fourth. We read of a time in which well-entrenched social values were engaging productively with new ways of thinking, writing, educating, and imagining. The book has

a natural first audience among scholars of Chinese women's history, but its broader tackling of the issues of how cultural forms and cultural producers maintain relevancy in rapidly changing socio-political worlds is of interest to a broad historical and literary readership—including scholars of intellectual history, material culture, print culture, and literature. Very few books consciously look both backwards and forwards in time and for this reason alone *Different Worlds of Discourse* is an important work. It will be a first reference for all students and scholars of late Qing and early twentieth-century China.

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Herself an Author: Gender, Agency, and Writing in Late Imperial China. By Grace S. Fong. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008. Pp. xi + 238. \$55.00.

Grace Fong's *Herself an Author* is an important contribution to the growing and lively scholarship on women in late imperial China. Her close readings of texts (some of them exceedingly rare until she found them) illuminate ideas of authorship, subjectivity, and agency among women writers in late imperial China, as her subtitle suggests they will. Her commitment to close readings is demonstrated by the book's inclusion of the original Chinese texts of each poem she discusses. Not only does this serve an important rhetorical role in the book, underlining the importance of language itself, it has an important pedagogic value, for oneself as well as for one's students. Fong is an erudite and graceful translator, and reading the originals and her translations in parallel is a pleasurable and productive exercise. The book contains three appendices with complete translations of some of the key texts; this too adds to the depth and utility of the book. Fong refers to the work she has done uncovering texts as a "long-term archaeological endeavour" (p. ix) and the fields of Chinese literature and women's studies are indebted to her for that work. Fong and her colleagues have posted a large corpus of texts on a website which is a collaboration between the McGill and Harvard-Yenching libraries (<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/MINGQING/english/index.htm>). The website is searchable in many dimensions (author, book title, genre, ethnic group, geographical region); it is not an exaggeration to say that it has the potential to transform work on Chinese women writers and as well as every topic to which women writing is relevant. Readers who do not know this website are urged to familiarize themselves with it immediately.

But the archaeological work, however important, is a precursor to the main work of this book, which seeks to find modes of reading and evaluating Chinese women's poetry. Fong finds common cause with the critic Isobel Armstrong (writing about another group