

narratives from the *Zhuangzi* as part of their anecdotes—chapter 12 of the *Huainanzi* tells the story of wheelwright Bian 扁 to illustrate the opening lines of the *Laozi*, while chapter 5 of the *Hanshi waizhuan* presents a significantly different version of story to illustrate lines from Mao 235 (“Wen wang” 文王) of the *Shijing*. Long story short, that one chapter of the *Huainanzi* is an important document in both the history of early classical hermeneutics and the text formation of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. And there are twenty other chapters.

Improving access to the *Huainanzi* in the way that this new book does is important for research in those two areas, as well as for a host of others including history, history of science, musicology, religion, and virtually every disciplinary window onto Western Han life and society. It is a major accomplishment in every sense of the term.

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*Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture.* By Andrew F. Jones. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2011. Pp. 259. \$49.95/£36.95.

A rich text in its style, range of sources and observations, and its themes, *Developmental Fairy Tales* offers a series of studies in literature and the media of late Qing and Republican China on what it terms the “vernacularization” of evolution-inspired developmental thought. The book explores the role of Western science fiction “evolutionary adventure tales” in inspiring Chinese “narratives of national development,” from the late Qing dynasty novel *New Story of the Stone* 新石頭記 by Wu Jianren 吳趸人 to a selection of Lu Xun’s 魯迅 short stories and essays. Yet Jones aims to reveal the complex role of big ideas in less ambitious texts as much as literary works. To that end, the book calls attention to the scope and pervasiveness of developmental discourse throughout the media and educated élite. Hence, there are studies of the psychology of art education in the 1930s as disciplining and narrowing children’s perceptions toward a goal of realism, of animal fables instructing children in the invincibility of modern, Western civilization, and the celebrated 1930s film *Xiao wanyi* 小玩意 (Playthings), depicting the sacrifice of a female toy maker and her cottage industry that is unable to offer survival to others or to survive itself, as well as bourgeois Chinese children appearing in the illustrations of children’s magazines interacting with compliant animals as they practise music lessons to show

the children's capacities to understand themselves as mastering a form of superiority, representatives, even teachers of, civilized development through bourgeois education. The author acknowledges that he shares concerns with the earlier work of James Reeve Pusey in *China and Charles Darwin* (1983) and *Lu Xun and Evolution* (1998).<sup>1</sup> But where Pusey engaged in intellectual history and argued that forms of Social Darwinism contributed directly to the rise of Marxism and Maoism, *Developmental Fairy Tales* focuses on a cultural history of "literary and other forms of narrative" (p. 198) in the struggles of market society.

The book deliberately avoids a systematic study, and the question is whether it provides a coherent one. To organize his study, the author invokes but avoids commitment to a number of critical concepts: critical realism in fiction, vernacularization in the arts, Benjamin in visual studies, as well as evolutionary developmental thought as a master narrative of capitalist and imperialist modernity that undergoes sustained reflection.

In selecting texts, such a study might have surveyed literary works of a greater variety of authors, yet those that are categorized as critical realism are rejected. For example, Ye Shengtao's 葉聖陶 novel *Ni Huanzhi* 倪煥之 (1928) might have been selected to present the frustrations of a well-intentioned young teacher trying to introduce a Dewey-style education to the children of a market town that rejects his experiments. Dewey's developmental methods of education were, after all, grounded in a belief in evolutionary processes, and the character of the young schoolteacher Ni Huanzhi is selected for extinction as too tender for the political struggle needed. Or the study might have explored parables similar to Lu Xun's, such as Qian Zhongshu's 錢鍾書 "God's Dream" 上帝的夢, showing the demoralizing result of the race that God created in his image. However, a novel of critical realism such as Ye Shengtao's might simply illustrate the paradox of identity with what it opposes, since the novel is subject to what Marston Anderson once observed as "the tendency of critical realism to replicate the very structures of power (between the narrator and the narrated, the literate and illiterate, the reformer and those he seeks to reform) that it sets out to criticize" (p. 96). A parable such as Qian Zhongshu's might stretch the issues to ancient religious beliefs, and was already anticipated in texts like Lu Xun's "Mending Heaven" 補天, which also suggested that even the handiwork of a divine creator mocked its creator's vision. *Developmental Fairy Tales* does address the novels of "evolutionary adventure" through a study of Wu Jianren's *New Story of the Stone*. Yet here, too, fiction is seen as seriously limited: such a novel offers only

<sup>1</sup> James Reeve Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983); idem, *Lu Xun and Evolution* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998).

an unsustainable utopian narrative because its hero adopts “the very colonial violence he seeks to negate” (p. 60) and the narrative cannot provide a history/story of how the utopia in the novel has been achieved (p. 61).

Apparently, the caution in relying on critical realism in fiction does not extend to “realist” genres of photography and film. But this is not discussed. Rather, the contents of the book address an agenda of displacing realist fiction from the centre of attention of modern Chinese literature, and making way for the value of analysing other texts. The author states: “What I hope to foreground . . . is the way in which vernacular materials such as textbooks, children’s primers, and fairy tales, usually seen as ancillary to modern Chinese literary development, engage with the dilemmas of colonial modernity in ways that are just as complex and significant as realist fiction” (p. 6). The emphasis on children here arises from the understanding that developmentalism is not only an economic theory, but also “must be traced back to . . . a way of seeing children as figures for national history” (p. 105). Hence, the modern Chinese “discovery of the child” and preoccupation with the child ought to “revise our understanding of the ‘development’ of modern Chinese cultural history” (p. 112). It would be interesting to study children as figures for national history alongside women as similar figures, which scholarship in Women’s Studies has argued were seen as victims and subjugated beings also symbolizing and epitomizing the nation, and in need of enlightenment and salvation.

As much as the author’s approach does justice to the complexity and pervasiveness of developmental thinking, this is not a book to be taken entirely on its own terms. It does not foreground textbooks or primers beyond emphasizing their commercial importance to the publishing industry. Its attention to fairy tales beyond the allegories written by Lu Xun and Vasili Eroshenko is limited to the analysis of one animal fable for children and Zhou Zuoren’s 周作人 argument for the significance of writing for and by children. Once again, the paradox is privileged, this time that children were central to May Fourth nationalist discourse as potential saviours and to the “new culture industry that depends on the children’s market as a major source of revenue” (p. 112). Zhou Zuoren’s call for literature both for and also by children “emblemizes this double movement between rescuing children and being redeemed by them, between saving the children and consuming them as grist for the new literary mill” (p. 118).

In this light, developmental thinking in *Developmental Fairy Tales* represents any vision of historical change related to modernity, capitalism, or imperialism. This is a somewhat unwieldy concept, large enough to be worthy of generalizing about modern cultural history, yet selectively invoked to maintain a degree of control of the topic. Hence, “any attempt to define ‘development’ is quixotic, for the term itself is haunted by its own semantic instability . . . ” (p. 3). As a cultural entity, devel-

opmental thinking is “not . . . tantamount to economic growth, . . . [n]or . . . health, education, and welfare” but “a way of knowing, narrating, and attempting to manage processes of radical historical change” (p. 3). Yet, only a few lines before this statement, the author writes that Lu Xun’s essay “Modern History” 現代史 “poses a direct (if ultimately unresolved) challenge to what has been a governing faith in modern Chinese life and letters: the discourse of development.” It is, after all, a challenge to readers to accept that something is a direct challenge to something else that is so haunted by its own semantic instability that it eludes definition.

Perhaps, instead of “a way of knowing,” different aspects of developmental discourse might be explored as “various ways” in varied cases. Even as anti-capitalist a thinker as Walter Benjamin, who devoted his career to challenging the concept of history as progress, still was himself engrossed in the developmental belief that the growth of the individual child recapitulates a development of humanity as a whole through history, and that children’s experiences of liberation and sovereignty through play—and the role of fairy tales—were to be considered in formulating his philosophy of history. Conversely, as noted above, as committed a Communist as the author Ye Shengtao was, he still had a great appreciation for John Dewey’s philosophy of education.

Granted, *Developmental Fairy Tales* is devoted, above all else, to the ways in which discourses of beneficence mask practices of exploitation, that concepts manifest their opposites, and that boundaries are permeable. When the evolutionary discourse of social Darwinism is presented it is briefly in terms of cosmic necessity versus human agency, of what Pusey introduced as “develop” as an intransitive verb (as in “things develop”) versus a transitive verb (as in “to develop something/someone in response to development”). However, the book does not rehearse existing studies, and readers concerned with more specific elements of what Yan Fu 嚴復 thought in his rendering of what T. H. Huxley argued in *Evolution and Ethics* should look elsewhere in the scholarship on these two thinkers. Rather, *Developmental Fairy Tales* introduces the term “vernacularization” to “map the circulation of these ideas” (p. 67). The book is much taken by Miriam Hansen’s appropriation of the term “vernacularization” which she used in order to skirt what she saw as the “ideologically overdetermined term ‘popular.’”<sup>2</sup> Yet *Developmental Fairy Tales* does not pause to dwell on Hansen’s concerns, and writes of both “vernacular” and of “popular media culture” (p. 104), and neither replaces popularization with “vernacularization” nor discusses vernacularization in interpreting popularization in such media as films or magazines, for which Hansen introduced the term. Instead, *Developmental Fairy Tales* makes

<sup>2</sup> Miriam Hansen, “The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism,” *Modernism/Modernity* 6, no. 2 (April 1999), p. 60.

use of vernacularization first to blur the boundary between formal features of language or writing and conceptual features of language as discourse. Second, the book presents the penetration of Western language/discourse into Yan Fu's classical Chinese register. Third, the book asserts that this penetration of boundaries creates a reversal of oppositions, in that it "perhaps rather counterintuitively, reveals the way in which even Yan Fu's famously classical register is already participating in a process of the vernacularization of the Chinese language vis-à-vis the cosmopolitan national vernaculars of the West" (p. 67). Fourth, this seems to imply that if Yan Fu's classical Chinese functions as a "vernacularization" vehicle of Western national languages, then what such classical Chinese yielded to, the celebrated *baihua* 白話 vernacular national language movement, was a vehicle for Western imperial discourse: "it may be possible to understand *baihua* and the vibrant print culture constructed around it not so much in terms of its vernacularization of classical Chinese, but as a vernacular in relation to the languages of the imperial powers . . ." (p. 68).

Turning to visual studies, the inspiration of Walter Benjamin is another case in which boundaries are both broken and redrawn. In children's drawings published in a study of child development in 1936, "it is precisely their technical 'distortions' of line and proportion and perspective that register the socioeconomic distortions of colonial modernity with stunning clarity" (p. 102). More precisely, this interpretation of the children's drawings is effective for certain distortions, but not others. The shape of a woman's dress and her tiny arms may imprison her in modernity, or the length of a coolie's arms may read "as an index of his alienation from the fruits of his labor" (p. 103). Yet this imaginative critique draws a boundary around these features. Outside this boundary of analysis it does not pursue equally striking features of the drawings, such as the disproportionately short legs and small feet of both figures, and the lines drawn to suggest details of the patterns in their clothing. Does this mean that interpretation might be shared across different methods of analysis, certain aspects responding to a socially specific environment, and others to a more universal psychological development? Yet, the value of attention to fragments of cultural production of the Republican era outweighs particular reservations about how they are interpreted. These are the discarded, forgotten pieces of culture in which Benjamin believed "all the forces and interests of history enter on a reduced scale," and *Developmental Fairy Tales* is a well-researched exploration of the potential value of this method.

Ultimately, *Developmental Fairy Tales* is at its impressive best when offering its richly informed readings of the literature of Wu Jianren, Lu Xun, and one of his inspirations, Vasili Eroshenko. The reading of Wu Jianren's *New Story of the Stone* builds on the significance of this novel as seen by Patrick Hanan and Theodore Hutters to offer still richer insights. Likewise, the inspirations that the translations of

Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* provided Lu Xun and his vision of an "iron house" are exemplary studies. The attention that *Developmental Fairy Tales* gives to Lu Xun's essays, his understudied story "The Misanthrope" 孤獨者, and the relation of his work to Vasili Eroshenko's results in new insights among these rediscovered texts. In this way, *Developmental Fairy Tales* links some of the crassest features of the history of modern market culture in China to some of its finest moments of reflection. In arguing for the relevance of its topic to contemporary market society in China the book implies that for all the changes that have taken place there is still a place for the vision of genius it upholds in Lu Xun.

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*Stratifying Zhuangzi: Rhyme and Other Quantitative Evidence*. By David McCraw. Language and Linguistics Monograph Series 41. Taipei: Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica, 2010. Pp. iv + 135. \$30.00.

Although the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 has been popularly regarded in both traditional and modern times as the work of a single author, Master Zhuang, Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (fourth century B.C.E.), overwhelming modern scholarly consensus is that it is a collective work compiled probably over at least two centuries. However, concerning the text, which except for fragments exists only in the thirty-three chapter recension of Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312 C.E.), divided into three sections, *Neipian* 內篇 (Inner Chapters), *Waipian* 外篇 (Outer Chapters), and *Zapian* 雜篇 (Miscellaneous Chapters), agreement has never been reached, either as to how its chronological layers should be stratified or who contributed to its compilation, either individually or as members of schools of thought. Different ways of approaching the text, based on textual analysis, have been proposed, resulting in the reassigning of some passages in the *Inner Chapters* to the *Outer* and *Miscellaneous Chapters*, moving passages in them to the *Inner Chapters*, and classifying all chapters in terms of both chronological layers and "school of thought" affiliations. Earlier modern scholars tended to accept that the *Inner Chapters* were largely authored by Master Zhuang in the fourth century B.C.E. and that the other two sections were product by later "schools" of Master Zhuang's followers, but eventually more sophisticated approaches appeared that resulted in more detailed conclusions, first significantly by Guan Feng 關鋒 in