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Huang Xuelei (2014), *Shanghai Filmmaking: Crossing Borders, connecting to the globe, 1922-1938*. Leiden & Boston: Brill. xv + 381 pp. ISBN: 9789004279339

In his foreword to Huang Xuelei's *Shanghai Filmmaking*, Paul Pickowicz laments the current state of Chinese film studies, noting that 'our pre-occupation with the present seriously distorts our understanding of the truly complicated dynamics of Chinese filmmaking' (vii), and muses on the reasons for the scholarly obsession with recent Chinese cinema at the expense of more empirically grounded studies of Chinese film history. While I do not share all of Pickowicz's pessimism—there have been a number of worthwhile studies of Chinese film history published recently—I do share his belief that Huang's book sets something of a new standard when it comes to scholarship in this field. *Shanghai Filmmaking* is one of the most impressive studies of Republican-era Chinese cinema to be published in recent times.

Shanghai Filmmaking explores the production, distribution and reception of cinema in Republican-era Shanghai by examining in substantial depth the work of the Mingxing Motion Picture Company. Why Mingxing? Because, despite being one of the most influential film production companies of the era, and the maker of a number of movies that had a profound influence on Chinese cultural production for much of the twentieth century, the company has for the most part escaped scholarly attention. Huang does more than trace the development of Mingxing as a business and cultural enterprise, however, for she also reflects on what the films that this company produced can tell us about 'glocal mediascapes' (Chapter 4) in the early years of Chinese cinema. What is most remarkable is that Huang's analysis revolves around films which, for the most part, no longer exist or are at best difficult to access. Instead, she has mined company and government archives in mainland China and Taiwan, trade and film magazines, newspapers and printed ephemera to recreate a vivid picture of a company whose individual story mirrored that of Chinese filmmaking from the early 1920s through to the Japanese invasion of 1937.

Refreshingly, Huang has not been tempted to over-theorise her analysis (although her brief forays into literary theory leave the reader in no doubt of her familiarity with the relevant literature). Instead, she has chosen to define her study through reference to metaphors such as the 'many-forked path'—a concept she borrows from Jorge Luis Borges, and which she returns to on a number of occasions when trying to describe the complex network of overlapping trajectories that met in the world of Chinese cinema in the 1920s and 1930s. Elsewhere, she relies on the biographies of key individuals in Mingxing management, whom she refers to as 'tour guides' on her journey, and whose biographies help readers make sense of the Mingxing story.

It would be unfair to describe Huang's book as a corporate history of Mingxing, however. The contributions she makes have implications far beyond the study of a single company. Probably the most significant of Huang's arguments, for instance, is that the categorisations that have hitherto defined much of the historiography of early Chinese filmmaking are redundant, and have done little more than blind us to the realities of cinema production and reception in the 1920s and 1930s. Huang shows that directors, writers and financiers moved freely between the apparently distinct worlds of left-wing activism, commercial 'Mandarin Duck and Butterfly' fiction, right-wing KMT nationalism and May 4th intellectual debates. Indeed, Huang demonstrates that such categories were largely meaningless, or at best impossible to define, during the golden era of Shanghai filmmaking. The implications of such an argument are profound: Huang argues, for example, that the genre of the 'revolutionary film' - so long associated with the CCP - was not the monopoly of the Left in the 1920s, and that the commercial melodramas of the era, so often dismissed as vacuous and apolitical, often contained social messages of various ideological persuasions. Huang's thesis has the potential to undermine completely the standard approaches hitherto so dominant in Chinese film history.

Despite its title, *Shanghai Filmmaking* also represents a welcome shift away from the Shanghai-centric tone of much recent work. Indeed, Huang shows not so much how Shanghai dominated Chinese filmmaking, as how Shanghai owed so much to regional China, Nanjing, Hollywood, Europe and the overseas Chinese when it came to audiences, financing, skills and the

inspiration for films themselves. Her epilogue, for example, is in essence a series of testaments to the wide 'footprint' of Mingxing and its border-crossing cinema, from wartime Manchuria to Singapore.

This is a highly detailed study, and if there is one criticism that might be made about sections of the book, it is that Huang has provided a little more detail than necessary when it comes to the analysis of individual movies. This is particularly the case in Chapter 7, in which Huang's thread of argument is lost in the detailed descriptions of individual films. Far more convincing are the 'life stories' (as Huang describes them) of major Mingxing movies such as *Konggu lan* (Orchid in an Empty Valley, 1925) and *Gu'er jiuzu ji* (An orphan rescues his grandfather, 1923) in Chapters 4 and 5. There are also points throughout the book where one senses Huang is a little too sympathetic towards her topic of study, and where this may have hampered a slightly more critical analysis of the choices made by Mingxing's cast of creative talent. Huang can be forgiven such indulgences, however, for they are outweighed by the originality of her observations and the overall rigour of her research.

While *Shanghai Filmmaking* should be read by anyone with an interest in the history of Chinese cinema, it speaks to so many issues—from modernisation in the Republican era to the global reach of Hollywood in the interwar years—that it is sure to be of relevance to a wide audience. This is Chinese film history at its best.

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Smith Finley, Joanne (2013), *The Art of Symbolic Resistance: Uyghur Identities and Uyghur–Han Relations in Contemporary Xinjiang*. Leiden: Brill, 2013. xxvii + 453 pp. €149,00; \$194.00 ISBN 978-90-04-25491-6

Smith Finley's book is a timely and important contribution to the study of Uyghurs and their relations with the Chinese state and the dominant Han ethnic group in contemporary Xinjiang. As the author intends, the book fills our knowledge gap in two respects: firstly, the need for an in depth understanding of social, economic and political conditions in contemporary

Xinjiang, especially in the context of developments after the violent ethnic riots in Urumqi in the summer of 2009 that exposed fundamental fault lines in ethnic relations; secondly, the lack of availability of a nuanced and empirically based study of ethnic relations between Uyghur and Han in Xinjiang (p. xxii).

Smith Finley's research deploys the flexibility of ethnographic methods, under difficult fieldwork conditions that have progressively worsened during the lifetime of the research project, to put together a solid and extensive body of original empirical data, which is then organized and analysed into seven tightly knitted chapters. The research, conducted in the Uyghur language over a period of more than a decade, provides unprecedented insights into the lives of some of those who were significantly affected by the socioeconomic and political developments in the decades from 1991 up to the most recent times.

Smith Finley argues that Uyghur national identity formation involves a complex interplay between pre-existing "intragroup sociocultural commonalities ("We-hood") based on largely Islamic cultural values, assumptions and practices shared over 500 years, and a common sense enmity towards Han Chinese ("Us-hood") of contemporary times. She further argues that "individuals in Xinjiang are not merely passive recipients of state policies and representations; they are also creative agents capable of finding subtle, symbolic means of representing alternative identities and expressing opposition." (p.6). Uyghurs deploy culture as a means of symbolic resistance against both the Chinese state and the Han people.

By including Uyghur intragroup identity in her analytical framework, Smith Finley challenges the key proposition of some earlier studies that asserted Uyghur national identity was largely the outcome of the Chinese state's ethnic classification and categorization project. She argues that factors other than a mere ethnonym, such as "Uyghur", provided a sense of identity to the people of Xinjiang long before the name was adopted by the Chinese Communists. She recognizes the fluidity and intragroup identity differences among the Uyghurs and reframes the Uyghur identity as a hybrid located somewhere at the nexus of Chinese and Turkic Central Asian, Middle Eastern and European civilizations.

The book is divided into three parts and seven chapters. Part 1 is comprised of the Introduction and Chapter 1 that outlines the social, economic and political contexts of the study and sets out the theoretical and analytical

framework, situating the research in the wider study of ethno-political identities and identity in general. The Introduction critically reviews much of the previous literature and sets out the theoretical framework. Chapter 1 gives an account of the conditions in which contemporary Uyghur identities and Uyghur-Han relations have developed. It highlights crucial factors such as large scale Han migration, escalating social, economic and political inequalities, environmental degradation and lack of true indigenous political representation.

Part 2 is comprised of three chapters (Chapters 2-4), each dealing a different form of symbolic resistance. These three forms of symbolic resistance, i.e. ethnic stereotypes, symbolic boundaries and alternative Uyghur representation, characterized the period from 1991 to 1997. The author argues that ethnic stereotyping, which is the subject of Chapter 2, provided the Uyghurs with a “powerful sense of agency” (p.81). Chapter 3 shows the ways in which Uyghurs use culture actively to construct or reinforce “symbolic, spatial and social” boundaries to segregate themselves from the Han. The factors that account for the progressive decrease in social interaction through the 1990s include Han in-migration, escalating socio-economic inequalities, widespread ethnic discrimination and renewed state repression (p.172). Chapter 4 focuses on the alternative representation in Uyghur popular songs. Songs by two representative Uyghur singers, representing two different ends of modern-traditional spectrum, are analysed to show how metaphors in musical lyrics can be used to contest and subvert the state narrative on Uyghur-Han ethnic relations.

Part 3 deals with the situation after the 1997 Ghulja disturbances until the present day. Chapter 5 discusses the reasons for the Islamic revival since 1997. It traces the ways in which globalizing forces aided the flow of global Islamic ideologies into Uyghur society prior to 1997 and identifies the sources of the Islamic renewal. These sources include inequality and oppression, modernity and failed development (p.266), but are not derived “from violent fundamentalist ideology” (xxvi), contrary to Chinese government claims. Islam is a symbolic form of discontent and mostly “not the root of disaffection” but a “vehicle for alternative ethnic representation” (p.291). Chapter 6 deals with the new obstacles constructed to stop Uyghur-Han intermarriage, highlighting the increasingly religious justification. Chapter 7 focuses on Chinese-educated Uyghurs, showing the extent of intragroup diversity and differences and the

negotiation of a hybrid identity by this group of Uyghurs. The chapter discusses a range of options among urban youth and the fissions between those who are Chinese-educated and those who have received a more traditional Uyghur education.

The Art of Symbolic Resistance is an essential read for anyone who is interested in ethnic identities and interethnic relations in Xinjiang, and in China. It is also an indispensable volume in the field of emerging Uyghur Studies and conflict studies in post-1989 China.

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Van de Ven, Hans J., Diana Lary, and Stephen R. MacKinnon, eds. (2015) *Negotiating China's Destiny in World War II*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, ISBN 9780804798660, £42.

Negotiating China's destiny in World War II, edited by Hans van de Ven, Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon, consists of a collection of papers presented at the Chongqing conference in 2009. The conference was the last of a cycle on World War II in China that brought together Chinese, Japanese and Western scholars to discuss the still much debated years of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45). While the book recognizes the disruption that the Second World War brought to China - culturally, socially and economically - its main aim is to shed light on a still overlooked aspect: the diplomatic and cultural relations between China and the international powers. Although China played a key role during WWII in Asia, the requests for military and economic help launched by Chiang Kai Shek and his diplomatic skills have not yet received much scholarly attention. From these pages, it emerges that Chiang Kai Shek was the first international politician produced by China in the 20th century. In the introduction, Diana Lary presents the three themes covered by this book: i) Old Empires and the Rise of China, ii) Negotiating Alliances and Questions of Sovereignty, iii) Ending War.

Part one of the book focuses on the impact Japanese expansion in East Asia had on Western imperialism. This part is in turn divided into five

chapters, each dealing with a different country. In chapter 1, Marianne Bastid-Bruguier analyses the reasons for France's involvement in East Asia and the importance that France's diplomacy placed on maintaining French sovereignty in Indochina. In chapter 2, Rana Mitter explores Great Britain's role in China. Mitter analyses and compares the British approach at the start of the war in 1937, and at the end in 1945. Chapter 3, by Chang Jui-Te, focuses on the work of Shen Zonglian as director of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission's office in Lhasa during the 1940s. While the chapters on France, Great Britain and Tibet force the reader to consider that Western intervention in China was primarily, if not entirely, to safeguard the interests of the Western powers in Asia and to counter the Communist threat, the chapters on the Soviet Union and Canada present a different view. In Chapter 4, Yang Kuisong examines the complex and shifting relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Comintern. As the focus is on the CCP, it follows that the role of Chiang is not as prominent as in other chapters. Yang analyses the delicate balance the CCP sought to maintain during the 1930s-40s, and the road to independence from Soviet control. Chapter 5, written by Diana Lary, presents the unconventional relationship between Canada and China. As Lary explains: "Canada was regarded there [*in China*] as a relatively friendly, helpful country, unlike the rapacious European powers" (p.92). Lary's analysis deals less with diplomatic materials and presents as case studies the lives of four Canadians who had ties with China during the war: Victor Odlum, a senior army officer; Robert McClure, a missionary doctor; Norman Bethune, a surgeon who worked with CCP's forces; and Quan Louie, a Chinese Canadian airman. The aim of Lary's analysis is to show that even second-tier, frequently overlooked countries contributed to the war effort. In the case of Canada, it managed to develop cooperative and positive relations with China throughout the war.

Part two of the volume tackles Chinese wartime diplomatic efforts. This part is also divided into five chapters. Chapter 6 by Tsuchida Akio explores the strategic significance of the delayed declaration of war between China and Japan. In chapter 7, Yang Tianshi examines the relationship between Chiang and Jawaharlal Nehru and the anti-imperialist struggle that both countries engaged in during WWII. Li Yuzhen evaluates the intricate alliance between Chiang and Stalin in chapter 8. Through the analysis of Soviet and

Chinese party documents, Li proves that the cooperation between the two leaders, who distrusted each other, was fundamental for the war efforts against Japan and Germany. The thorny questions of sovereignty, frontiers and ethnic minorities are investigated by Xiaoyuan Liu in chapter 9. Liu's focus is on the American State Department attempts to design the borders of the new China after 1942. In chapter 10, Nishimura Shigeo traces the importance of the slogan "Recover the Northeast" in Chiang's domestic and international policies. Nishimura shows how nationalism and international politics were deeply intertwined in Chiang's plans from 1941. As Chiang Kai Shek pointed out in September 1941: "We must recover our lost land in the Northeast and rescue our north-eastern compatriots in order to wipe clean the humiliation and enmity of the era since the Mukden Incident" (p.178).

Part three, 'Ending the War', is composed of three chapters. Chapter 11, written by Wu Sufeng, explores the decisions made on post-War Japan by the Allies. From the documents presented by Wu, it appears that Chiang had little influence on the decisions made by the Allies over East Asian post-war policies. In chapter 12, Yang Weizhen analyses the intricate Sino-French negotiations over Vietnam at the end of the war. Yang's analysis shows that the reasons for China's oscillating policies towards Vietnam were caused by international considerations as well as internal disagreements between the central government and Yunnan's military commanders. Hans van de Ven concludes the third part of the volume with an exploration of the peace treaty between China and Japan in 1952. Van de Ven stresses once more the fundamental role that Chiang had in creating "a China-centred East Asia" (p.221), as well as the importance of the San Francisco Peace Treaty (1951) and the Taipei Treaty between China and Japan (1952) for the post-War order in East Asia.

What emerges from the 13 chapters, and is confirmed by Stephen MacKinnon in the conclusion, is Chiang's preoccupation with China's place in the international political environment. Through his diplomacy, Chiang hoped to achieve two goals: the first was to gain material aid from the Western and Soviet allies to win the war, despite distrusting them; the second was that Chiang hoped to bring China into the international arena as a victorious country, respected and considered as a peer by the Allies. Despite Chiang's diplomatic abilities in the international arena, his inability

to gain domestic support and his failed attempts to defeat corruption, misery and famine, proved fatal for his government.

Although *Negotiating China's Destiny in World War II* is effective in getting the reader to reflect on Chiang's real involvement in the international diplomacy of WWII, some of the chapters can prove quite difficult to read, as they draw extensively on diplomatic materials. It is quite easy to lose track of all the ambassadors, ministers, treaties and pacts that make an appearance throughout the various chapters. This is especially challenging if the reader is not an expert on each country's diplomatic and political history.

In sum, the greatest aspect of these thirteen chapters is that they are an excellent starting point to reflect on Chiang's diplomatic ability and on the true intentions of international powers towards China during WWII. Were the actions of the powers carried out with the genuine intention of helping China to defeat Japan? Or was the main aim to maintain influence in East Asia and contain the Communist threat? What impact did WWII have on the power balance in East Asia, and especially on relations between China and Japan? I agree with MacKinnon's conclusions that the current literature provides limited answers to these questions, but volumes like *Negotiating China's Destiny in World War II* are a first step in the right direction to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the consequences of WWII in East Asia.

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