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Reviews

Cynthia J. Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, University of California Press, 2005, 539 pp., ISBN 0-520-23126-0 (hbk.).

Writing some twenty years ago, in his book *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, Benjamin Elman bemoaned the fact that although printing in China had been extensively researched as a technology, 'its cultural impact remains poorly understood'.[1] Recent English language scholarship in particular has gone some considerable way towards rectifying this circumstance.[2] The volume under review both serves to sum up much of this work (along with that undertaken by Chinese and Japanese scholars over this period as well) and to provide some indication of likely and necessary future trends in research in this field.

Exemplary in this respect are the two essays that comprise 'Part I:

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[1] Interestingly, also writing twenty years ago, John Feather, in his 'The Book in History and the History of the Book', identified something of the obverse problem in the West: 'the tendency of some book historians to ignore or dismiss the technical history of printing has led to the neglect of many important issues in book history'. It has been in large part the considerable influence of the work of Don McKenzie that has helped remedy this circumstances; in his 'Texts, Forms, and Interpretations' (*On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane [Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997]). Roger Chartier argues that: 'By assigning to bibliography the fundamental task of comprehending the relations between form and meaning, McKenzie obliterated the old divisions between sciences of description and sciences of interpretation, and he made that discipline, based on techniques of its own, central to the study of symbolic practices' (83).

[2] See, for instance, Susan Cherniack, 'Book Culture and Textual Transmission in Sung China', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (1994), 54 (1): 5-125; *Late Imperial China* (1996), 17 (1) ('Special Issue: Publishing and the Print Culture in Late Imperial China'); Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Robert E. Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th-17th Century)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); and Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); and, most recently, Joseph P. McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006). Apart from Cherniack and Clunas, all the other scholars mentioned here were involved in this present volume.

Introduction' of this conference volume, Cynthia Brokaw's 'On the History of the Book in China' and Joseph McDermott's 'The Ascendance of the Imprint in China', both of which seem bound to be read with profit for a considerable time to come. The first of these displays both formidable control over the specifically China-related sources (both primary and secondary) whilst at the same time being thoroughly informed by relevant theoretical and methodological developments in the history of the book in the West. As such, it should serve to go some way to bridge the gulf that presently continues to isolate the history of the book in China from developments elsewhere. McDermott's extraordinarily rich trawl through a vast range of Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasty sources (Hu Yinglin's 胡應麟 (1551-1602) *Shaoshi shanfang bicong* 少室山房筆叢 [Notes from a Mountain Hut of Few Rooms], in particular) addresses the question of when it was that the imprint superseded the manuscript as the 'primary means for transmitting written culture in the lower Yangzi delta' (59). His answer, that this transference was delayed to as late as the sixteenth century, is a convincing one that serves to identify an aspect of print culture in China that seems bound to remain somewhat exceptional even once scholarship on print culture in China becomes more fully integrated into mainstream discourse – the more than 800-year long time lag between the invention of printing as a technology and its pre-eminence within the story of the book in China.

The remainder of the volume is divided into three further parts, dealing successively with the expansion of commercial publishing in China, with the development of various aspects of specialisation within the book market, and finally, with book illustrations.

In the first of these sections, Lucille Chia extends her masterful history of the commercial publishers of Jianyang in Fujian Province to a consideration of their connections with the major and rapidly expanding Nanjing book market. By focusing on the nature of the publishing boom of the late Ming period and its apparent decline in the Qing, she arrives at important, if tentative, conclusions about the formation of a 'uniform' print culture throughout southern China that lasted well into the Republican era. In this section also, Anne McLaren continues her excavations of issues of readership in late imperial China by identifying in the mid-sixteenth century what she argues is 'the emergence of a new discourse that sought both to legitimise the publication enterprise and to conceptualise the target readership' (152). It was a new and popular readership that now had at its disposal reading habits 'much broader than those prescribed in the Neo-Confucian model of intensive reading' (158). Concluding this section, Cynthia Brokaw returns with a discussion of the publishing activities of two families in the small western Fujianese township of Sibao as a case study in two interrelated trends in Qing dynasty print culture: 'the extension of publishing sites to hinterland areas of southern China and the development of important publishing concerns at the lower levels of the hierarchy of central places' (184). The paradox of her conclusions provides a salutary warning

against any tendency to over-empathise the uniformity of the appropriations of similar products of print culture in China: 'the homogeneity of titles and the longevity of the core titles posited here on the basis of the evidence from Sibao do not signify a uniformity of influence and response, or even necessarily a high degree of real cultural integration. Indeed, this long-lasting homogeneity of titles may have been rather superficial in impact, allowing a body of apparently shared references to disguise a multitude of different experiences and interpretations' (226).

By definition, the next section is somewhat more diverse in its preoccupations: Robert Hegel extends his earlier discussions of fiction to argue for a greatly expanded 'realm of popular print culture from the middle Ming through the end of the Qing' (260); Katherine Carlitz explores the self-referential world of Ming drama publishing by examining a number of the most finely printed Ming editions, attending particularly to their paratexts ('the appearance of the standard literati edition – the look of the prefaces and commentary on the page – must have worked as a sort of mirror for the literati reader, reminding him of the social cachet of his education' (297)); Evelyn Rawski reminds us of the extent to which print culture in China was always a multi-lingual one through her examination of printing in Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan during the Qing; and, finally, Xu Xiaoman, recently retired from the editorial board of the Shanghai guji chubanshe and the only China-based contributor to the volume, provides a fascinating insight into the production of family genealogies at the hands of 'genealogical masters' (*pushi* 譜師) in the lower Yangzi delta during the Qing and Republican periods.

The two essays that comprise the final section of the book are, methodologically speaking, perhaps the most interesting and innovative. Both essays afford that marked feature of print culture in China, the ubiquity of woodblock illustration, appropriate attention, and not simply as either an aspect of the popularizing tendency of book production or simply as decoration. In the first, Anne Burkus-Chasson investigates the 'visual hermeneutics' of a picture book entitled *Liu Yuan jing hui Lingyan ge* 劉源敬繪凌煙閣 [Portraits from the Gallery that Traverses the Clouds Respectfully Drawn by Liu Yuan] by examining the changing formats in which this book was produced. In the second, Julia K. Murray explores the changing meanings of illustrations as they moved from one printed context to another, with specific reference to three sets of didactic narrative illustrations: *Dijian tushuo* 帝鑑圖說 [The Emperor's Mirror: Illustrated and Discussed], *Yangzheng tujie* 養正圖解 [Cultivating Rectitude: Illustrated and Explained], and *Shengji tu* 聖蹟圖 [Traces of the Sage Illustrated].

The issue of overall coherence is often one that bedevils volumes, such as this one, that derive from conferences – in this case, the 'Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China' conference held at Timberline Lodge in Oregon in 1998. In this particular instance, however, whatever the various and often relatively minor differences of view or emphasis between the contributors, the essays work together as a sum that is greater than their

individual parts. This is to some degree a function of the range of traditional sources available to researchers in the field and the consequent uniformity of method; to a greater degree than is the case in research into European print culture, for instance, scholars are reliant upon close 'readings' of the books themselves as objects – rather than business records and so on – and this attention to the materiality of the book is welcome. Anne Burkus-Chasson cites Roger Chartier: 'The significance, or better yet, the historically and socially distinct significations of a text, whatever they may be, are inseparable from the material conditions and physical forms that make the text available to readers' (371); all the contributors to this volume seem to have cleaved true to this injunction.

Aspects of print culture in China remain to be further explored, of course (élite reading practices as well as the issues of expanding readership addressed in this volume, for instance, the role of libraries, both institutional and private, and so on), but the publication of this volume – along with books such as Peter Kornicki's magisterial *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998) – will mean that there is now no further excuse for mainstream discussions of books and print culture to ignore the history of the book in East Asia. In the case of printing in particular, it seems that one of the implications of attending to this history – one that in China certainly predates that of Europe by at least 500 years – is that it will serve to remind us that technological developments require particular social and economic contexts before they become significant and that the revolutionary effect of printing on reading habits and knowledge generation have tended to be exaggerated.

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Vaclav Smil, *China's Past, China's Future: Energy, Food, Environment*, New York and London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005, xvi + 232 pp. ISBN: 0-415-31499-2 (pbk.).

Vaclav Smil is a well-known scholar who has been interested in China's environment and society for over thirty years. Smil was responsible to a great extent for raising the environmental profile of China in the West. It is entirely fitting, then, that this book brings together many of Smil's past and recent writings, drawn from books, articles and reviews, to provide an extremely valuable overview of the state of China's environment over the twentieth century and up to the present, but with a particular focus on the past fifty years.

The book deals with three overlapping topics, energy, food and environment. Central to Smil's argument is that China must make the most

efficient use of its resources. Smil believes that adopting appropriate environmental policies and technologies will scupper doomsayers' predictions that China's continuing growth will bring environmental, economic and political disaster. Throughout the book, Smil provides examples of many successful innovations that have improved agricultural production or reduced pollution; at the same time, he points out the many problems facing its people and environments. The balanced approach of his work, neither unrealistically praising the Chinese model as some Western commentators were apt to do, nor presenting scenarios of social and environmental disaster as many do, is a fine example of scholarship. Equally fine, is his masterful and ingenious use of statistics.

The short introductory chapter provides a fascinating overview of the changes in Chinese society and environment over the last thirty years since the mid-1970s, when Smil's interest in China was first whetted. One of the most significant aspects of China's situation are the rural-urban and north-south resource and wealth imbalances. Unsurprisingly, too, for a scholar whose work relies a great deal on statistical data, Smil observes something of the frustration of having to deal with limited, incomplete and often deliberately inaccurate data sets in a society in which such issues are a perennial problem.

The second and first main chapter reviews China's past, present and future energy requirements. One of the most striking aspects of China's changing energy needs over the last thirty years has been the rapid decline of its dependence on traditional fuels, such as crop residues and woody phytomass, for cooking and heating, down from 90 percent in the early 1970s to 30 percent today. Nevertheless, as Smil points out, these inefficient and polluting sources are still the mainstay for some 100 million peasants, who mostly live in China's drought- and flood-prone interior. Smil also highlights the gross inefficiencies of smaller power plants using hydro, biogas and coal as fuel, but also some of the steady improvements that have been made in efficiency among other, generally larger, producers and users of power. Indeed, Smil finds China's ratio of annual energy supply with GDP particularly encouraging, as it indicates growing efficiencies among manufacturing and lowered rates of environmental problems.

Chapter three focuses on food production and consumption, beginning with the disastrous Great Leap Forward and continuing into the Cultural Revolution. This section provides a particularly useful discussion of the various population estimates given for the impact of the ensuing famine as well as a summary of the geographically and temporally different nutritional patterns that resulted. As Smil demonstrates, the key policy change for the vast majority of China's population took place from the mid-to-late 1970s, with the gradual establishment of *baogan dashu* (household responsibility system) and, around the same time, through the abolishment of communal farming. These reforms effected truly remarkable changes. Finally, by the mid-1980s and after decades of scarcity and hunger in which the mean food supply in 1977 was no higher than that in 1937, the majority of Chinese had

enough to eat. Still, this experience did, and still does, not apply to the whole of China. Regional and class disparities remain. By 2000 an estimated 9 percent of China's population were still undernourished, mostly located in rural areas and principally in the poorer area of central China. Ironically, for those whose diets have changed to incorporate eggs, fish, sugar, oil, meat, etc., such an embarrassment of riches has brought waste. Future diet patterns are likely to have a significant impact upon China's food systems, the subject of the last section of this chapter. Contrary to doomsayers such as Lester Brown, who charge that China will be unable to feed itself, Smil argues that through increasing efficiencies in areas such as animal husbandry, grain storage and transportation, and more efficient payment systems to farmers, China will be able to feed itself.

Yet, as Smil notes in the following chapter, 'its staggering mistreatment of the environment … may well be the most fundamental check on China's reach toward prosperity' (145). Pollution shaves off an estimated ten percent of China's annual GDP growth. And, while tree planting has increased and more natural gas is burnt, thereby lowering air pollution levels, in many areas environmental indicators are far worse. Air and water pollution, soil erosion, lowered water tables, flooding, drought, siltation, respiratory and water borne diseases, and many other depressing facts are related. As Smil observes, rather than a sudden collapse, it will be likely that China will face a 'protracted, multifocal, multicausal decline' (148). Yet, all is not doom and gloom. Smil states that China's sulphur dioxide levels today are actually ten times lower than that experienced in the United States in the 1970s. Impressive improvements have also been made in increasing the efficiency of large power stations. Government spending on environmental improvements in Japan and the West only started to make a difference once annual GDP per capita reached $5,000 (U.S.), yet China has already reached a comparable level of efficiency with a GDP per capita of around $2,000. Contrary to those who believe that economic growth with bring total environmental disaster and political instability, even war, Smil maintains that clear lessons can be learnt from elsewhere. As living standards have become higher, he notes, so pollution becomes 'a major stimulus to higher efficiency of energy and material conversions, and, through stricter regulations, eventually to an improved quality of life' (174).

The final section of this chapter on megaprojects is perhaps the most fascinating. Despite their 'responsibility for a small share of overall ecosystematic degradation and environmental pollution', notes Smil, they attract the most attention and symbolise the 'failures of our designs to minimize environmental change' and anticipate their risks (190). Smil goes on to relate the problems associated with the development of the Gorge of the Three Gates, begun in 1957, and the more recent Three Gorges Project, both of which have been built on the Yangzi River. He points out the problems associated with the projects, but is not against large projects *per se*; he supports them so long as they are environmentally sound and sensible. For instance, Smil champions the development of subways and high speed trains,

as a far more sensible alternative than China's present and ever-growing love affair with cars. The final chapter eschews any attempt at prediction, and instead offers a salutary lesson in the often impossible, and sometimes unintentionally amusing, aspects of such an imperfect art.

In conclusion, this is an excellent book that summarises many of the arguments and research that has stimulated Professor Smil's work. It provides a particularly useful summary of some of the main trends in China's food, energy and environmental use and, as such, should appeal not only to Sinologists but also to non-specialists and those wanting an overview of China's recent and current environment and society.

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Saurabh Dube, *Stitches on Time: Colonial Textures and Postcolonial Tangles*, Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, 2004, xv + pp., ISBN: 0-8223-3337-6 (pbk.).

This book is a valuable addition to the large corpus of theoretical tracts on postcolonial studies. Adopting an ethno-historical point approach with South Asia as his focus, Dube seeks to disentangle the many strands of colonial discourse analyses and postcolonial historiographical interventions that have been critical in marking the parameters of the field of postcolonialism. In doing so he inevitably traverses many of the key critical turns in the field that are familiar to scholars working in the area, but he also offers fresh insights into projects such as *Subaltern Studies* and a valuable critique of totalizing and overarching tendencies in much canonical postcolonial writing. Aiming to resist both the 'aggressive analytics of the modern nation' and the 'critical conceit of subaltern nationalism', Dube attempts to formulate a 'history without warranty' that calls into question 'the guarantees of progress under regimes of modernity' (20).

The book is divided into two sections: 'Colonial Textures' and 'Postcolonial Tangles'. Braiding large theoretical concerns with extensive archival research and fieldwork, Dube shows the way forward to a revitalized and historically-enriched postcolonialism, one that is able to avoid the pitfalls of an overarching meta-theorisation at the cost of ethno-historical detail. 'Colonial Textures' sifts through fine-grained life-worlds in its four chapters to give us sharp and complex vignettes of two sites in colonial India. One delineates the interface of North American evangelical missionaries and Christian converts in Chhattisgarh, the other analyses the interplay between colonial legal systems and Indian popular laws. Through such detailed, on-the-ground analysis Dube challenges on the one hand, authoritative

imaginings of the metropole and the colony through the master tropes of reason, race and enlightenment, and on the other, the reifications of colonial discourse analysis that inflate discursive power and downplay historical agency.

Missionary activity in Chhattisgarh, for instance, did not unproblematically represent imperial interests. There was tension in the missionaries' approach between naming converts as equal in the eyes of the Lord and seeing them at the same time in need of enlightenment. Dube also highlights the gap between the missionaries' perception of the complementarity between spiritual and temporal power and the policy of the British administration (especially after the Mutiny of 1857) to separate religion from politics. Added to this complex portrayal of the empire's civilizing mission, is Dube's foregrounding of the agency of the converts themselves in recasting evangelical idioms into vernacular practices. Dube's approach differs from the theoretical maneuvers of Homi Bhabha, who, in his classic essay 'Sign taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817', gives primacy to the cracks in authoritative colonial discourse denoted by such vernacular agency, in the process recasting agency itself in purely discursive terms. Dube resists such reification and is more intent on recasting the catechists and converts as active players in the history of missionary activity in colonial India. He demonstrates vividly the ways in which the native mission workers 'enacted their labour' to confound structures linking evangelism with empire, whether such labour was manifested in their quotidian household routine or in their avowal of nationalism or in their spiritual participation in the congregation.

Likewise, Dube's fieldwork at the interface of colonial legality and popular-community legalities as manifested in two local disputes on entitlements to property illustrates the entangled and embattled nature of the colonial governance in South Asia. What is interesting about his analysis is his meticulous tracing of the interlaced, conjoint nature of imperial legal practice in the colony, one that could be seen not just in terms of imposition from above of an alien system, but also as a cobbling together of colonial and local community laws to generate new hybrid notions of personhood, individual culpability and responsibility. He illustrates the strategic use made in many local disputes of the 'grammar of colonial law' to escape harsh punishment – such as the classic 'momentary lapse of reason' – even though the act may have been the result of particular modes of reasoning inseparable from emotion, such as those relating to violations of 'honour' or 'loss of face'. As the author puts it, 'the symbols, metaphors, and practices of colonial modern law were simultaneously an alien legality, a strategy of settlement and revenge and a pool of resources deployed selectively by Indian peoples to define new pathologies and fashion novel legalities within the domain of everyday life while also constructing fresh formulations of order within communities' (105).

In this context, it is worth discussing Dube's critique of the notion of colonial dominance propounded by the founder of *Subaltern Studies*, Ranajit

Guha. Dube cites Guha's classic statement in his celebrated book *Dominance without Hegemony*, where the latter says that colonial rule constituted an 'alien moment' of dominance, an autocratic regime 'singularly incapable of relating to the society on which it had imposed itself'. On the basis of his ethnohistorical analyses of missionary activity and colonial legality – both of which could not escape the impress of colonized subjects and popular legality respectively – Dube resists Guha's singular reading of colonial dominance in understanding colonial cultures. But what Dube does not venture into in his critique of Guha is the very specific intellectual context of the latter's notion of 'dominance'. When Guha calls colonial rule in India a form of 'dominance without hegemony', he doesn't mean that the colonial rule was all powerful and that the colonized had no agency whatsoever in the logics and mechanics of empire. That is a rather simplistic reading of Guha's project. Rather, what Guha's formulation enacts is a resistance to the simple application of the analytics of nationalism available to Western Marxism and to the stagist emplacement of India within the history of global capitalism in conventional nationalist and Marxist historiography. To call nationalism a bourgeois revolution, which both nationalist and Marxist historiographies did, was to affirm the presence of a class in India comparable to the European bourgeoisie that could project its own interests as the interests of the entire populace – what Gramsci called hegemony. This is something that India simply did not have at the time. In other words, colonialism, and subsequently nationalism, in India was capitalist dominance without a hegemonic capitalist culture, or, as Guha put it, 'dominance without hegemony'.

This discussion provides a good entry into the problematics of the second section of Dube's book called 'Postcolonial Tangles', wherein he undertakes a detailed review of the *Subaltern Studies* project and the influential writings of Partha Chatterjee, Gyan Prakash and Dipesh Chakrabarty. His analysis of both the intellectual innovations and the myriad tensions within *Subaltern Studies* is of value to any new entrant in the field of South Asian postcolonial historiography. The author locates the shortcomings of this path-breaking history project in its lack of rigour in theorizing culture, its self-proclaimed anti-statism and its rather inconsistent and contradictory engagement with the mutual determinations of structure and practice. More provocatively, Dube argues that for all its questioning of teleological models that ignored subaltern consciousness, the theoretical orientation of *Subaltern Studies* was itself, in the final analysis, beholden to such models (150):

> Even as the project questioned teleological schemes denying consciousness of the subaltern, the implicit sustained presence of frames of universal history and designs of revolutionary pasts also led the work within subaltern studies to understand history in terms of lack, absence or failure.

What Dube fails to address here is the fact that, while many of the subaltern historians – especially Guha, Prakash and Chatterjee who are the targets of critique here – invoke 'frames of universal history', their projects are by no means defined and delimited by such frames. What these historians seek to do is resist a nativist epistemological impulse to reject these frames altogether and instead, in a classic postcolonial gesture, engage radically with them so as to disturb their claims to speak for all times and all cultures. As we just saw in the case of Ranajit Guha's argument about the Marxist model of nationalism, they are, in fact, at great pains to point to the repeated unworkability of teleological historiographical frames in studying South Asian societies. In problematising the master themes of nation versus state or public verses private and state versus community, the subaltern historians and postcolonial scholars do much more than merely play variations on these categories, which is what Dube seems to suggest (161). They do radically 'rethink through [these] inherited categories' to cite Dube's general injunction to postcolonial studies (160). The author's comment, however, about *Subaltern Studies* not being nuanced enough in its registering of the interplay between state and community is very pertinent as his explication of the limits of the project's avowed anti-statism.

The final chapters of the book take us to an ominous manifestation of statism in late modern India in the form of Hindutva or Hindu nationalism. Dube writes perceptively and evocatively about the 'terror of state and the state of terror for many Muslim peoples and several Christian communities in Indian today' (165). Hindutva and its fallout dominate Indian history at present and Dube's is a comprehensive account of both the highways and the many pathways and blind alleys that historiographical and archeological ventures in this field have traversed in the last two decades. In taking up the challenge of speaking in a Hindu voice that abjures a homogeneous and 'authentic' reading of Hindu history, the final chapter of the book, 'The Enchanted and the Modern' is a timely and salutary meditation on the dangers of an epistemological nihilism generated by a rigid reading of the logic of difference in terms of incommensurability and incommunicability. There is also a strident rejection of the academic politics of victimhood, while at the same time an exhortation to confront the realms of power relations and regimes of disciplinary truths.

Stitches on Time is a fine, reflexive and sensitive account of the many challenges of postcolonialism, especially in the fields of history and anthropology. It is also a handsomely produced book with a contemporary painting by a dalit artist, Savi Sawarkar, on its cover. The artwork entitled *Peshwa in Pune* is a scathing portrayal of the politics of caste and the possibilities of subaltern representation in a socio-historical domain cross-hatched with authority and alterity. The author himself discusses the painting in some detail in his preface wherein he also tells the reader why he chose the grammatically flawed version of the well-known proverb 'Stitches in time…' for his title. For a book that has been so painstakingly produced, both intellectually and aesthetically, one wished there was more rigour in the

editing process. Repetitions of words and phrases almost to the point of tedium abound, as do unnecessarily longwinded sentences. One example of the latter is (163):

> To do so is to articulate the procedures of a history without warranty, binding the impulse to question the imperative to affirm in dispositions toward the past and the present and social worlds and academic apprehensions, not only in order to track the imaginative pathways of human practice, including the dark alleys and the murky underworlds of pasts, but also to redraw the shifting boundaries and intricate relationships between the everyday and the nation, community and state, difference and power, and history and modernity.

It is also surprising to see what are obviously earlier and later versions of the same piece of exposition, occurring in two different parts of the book. One ought to have been edited out altogether. In a discussion of Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*, Dube writes (156):

> While admitting that *Europe* and *India* are 'hyperreal' terms that refer to certain figures of the imagination, Chakrabarty critically points toward how a certain version of Europe stands reified and celebrated in the 'phenomenal world of everyday relationships of power'.

Later (181), he writes:

> Admitting that *Europe* and *India* are "hyperreal" terms that refer to certain figures of the imagination, Chakrabarty critically points toward how – in the "phenomenal world everyday relationships of power" – Europe is reified and celebrated as the site and scene of the birth of the modern.

These glitches apart, Saurabh Dube's book is a valuable text that gives both a comprehensive overview and a critical account of postcolonial scholarship in the context of South Asia.

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Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700-1900*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, xv + 504 pp., ISBN: 0 521 89103 5 (pbk.).

Bayly's ambitious study, first published in 1989, happily has been reprinted in paperback. This work remains an immensely learned and authoritative study of interactions between religious traditions in South India. The book forcefully highlights that the boundaries between religious traditions in South India have often been fuzzy, and her focus on shared idioms of religious orientation, such as notions of divine power and ritual status, has a relevance today that is perhaps even more salient than when the book was first published, given the growth of Hindu politics in recent years.

While Bayly divides the book into two parts, it is more fruitfully considered as having three divisions, the first a chapter on the history of South Indian Hinduism, followed by five chapters on Islam in South India, and then five chapters on Christianity. Bayly draws on a range of sources, including European accounts, official archives, newspapers, Tamil devotional, biographical, and shrine histories, and the occasional interview. Piecing together these sometimes disparate data, the author depicts South India in early colonial times as a place of shifting religious and caste boundaries, characterised by complex interactions between a variety of Indian and European actors. Underlying this complexity, however, she finds continuity in enduring concepts of divinity, consistent religious practices, and similar manoeuvrings for social and ritual status.

In her introduction, Bayly locates her study in theoretical discussions of religious conversion. While now dated, drawing on work published in the 1980s, this chapter fruitfully sets the tone for the remainder of the volume. Bayly considers conversion in terms of assimilation, cultural translation, and political power, and ascribes agency to a multiplicity of actors in the processes through which Islam and Christianity took root in South India. She is particularly drawn to examples in which Indians utilised European religious and colonial authority for their own ends. Thus, for example, 'the Paravas [a caste group] were determined to manage and transform the power of their foreign priests, and to adapt this power to support the strategies of their own indigenous status system' (9). She also seeks to undermine the conception of religious traditions as hermetically sealed systems of orthodoxy founded in textual canons, arguing instead for the affinity of religious practices across traditions, similar patterns of deification of saints, and shared social concerns and strategies among a variety of Hindu, Muslim and Christian groups. She argues that all are properly Indian, and so, for example, Christians 'were not identified as an isolated "minority" community cut off from the rest of the south Indian population so much as a Christian sect or caste within that society' (8).

In the first substantive chapter, Bayly describes a South Indian religiosity that came to be shared by Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Her

overview here only roughly corresponds to the dates of the subtitle of the book, 1700-1900. Indeed, the chronology of the chapter is unclear, as she organises the material thematically rather than chronologically. Her account does not give precedence to brahmanical forms of religious worship, but concerns itself with the processes through which upper-caste ritual and religious idioms came to be joined with practices around 'divinities of blood and power' (27). Her concern is primarily with the ways in which these deities, and the energies that people associated with them, were harnessed by religious and political leaders of a variety of groups, including Christians and Muslims. While her research of English primary and secondary sources in this chapter is impressive, the absence of sources in Indian languages is problematic when coupled with her claim for the chapter: to present 'a broad introduction to the religion, society and pre-colonial political traditions of South India' (19). While she specifies as well that she is most concerned with the non-textual, non-brahmanical features of South Indian religion that were to impact most on the shape of Christian and Muslim practices, the exclusive use of colonial and missionary accounts to reconstruct such a religious history leads to an account that is at times salacious, focussing on 'peys [ghosts], pattavans [demonic human characters] and blood-drinking amman goddesses' (71). Given the quality of scholarship in other parts of the book, and the theoretical sophistication with which she treats much of her material, this lack of critical care in drawing on heavily biased sources is surprising.

Bayly's account of the geography of religious practices is fascinating. Thus, she makes much of a distinction between the fertile river deltas in which medieval kings and orthodox brahmanism thrived, and arid regions which were home to less urbanised groups and religious practices organised around local gods and incorporating blood sacrifices. Her focus on these arid regions is an important corrective to the bias of much existing historical work on the region's religious and political history, yet I could not help but suspect that she marginalised too much the agrarian, urban centres of South Indian society, and with them the influence of brahmanical textual practices on the evolution of Christianity and Islam in the region. She summarises her approach to brahmanical religiosity in her conclusion: 'outside a few river-valley centres of Brahman-style worship, this form of "Hinduism" is a phenomenon of relatively recent historical formation' (454). Such summary dismissal of what were the largest and most productive political and religious centres of South Indian history requires more justification that Bayly gives.

The remainder of the book is far more balanced and considered, focussing on Islam and then Christianity. The Islam section has a wealth of material, and is generally well-researched, accomplishing in an impressive way the goals she sets out in her introduction: to give an historical account of the complex processes of assimilation and transformation through which Islam and Christianity developed in South India. Her examination of the warrior Yusuf Khan is exemplary. Khan fought rival Muslim leaders and French armies on behalf of the British East India Company from 1754 to

1759, and was executed in 1764 by the nawabi ruler. Like Sufi pir tombs, his grave site (*dargah*) came to be attributed with miraculous powers, and by the 1820s had become a popular pilgrimage site. Subsequently *dargahs* are said to have pieces of his dismembered body proliferated throughout the southern Tamil-speaking country. He became a popular cult saint not only among Muslims but also among warrior Hindu groups such as the Kallars and Maravas, and he became the subject of a popular Tamil *kummi* or narrative ballad, in which he is compared to a variety of Hindu gods and epic heroes. Bayly's account here convincingly demonstrates not only that the religious practices and deities of Muslims and Hindus often overlapped, but also that Islam in South India drew from Hindu practices in its development, and perhaps even more surprisingly, that Islamic modes of deification and martyr cults influenced the landscape of Hindu shrines and the pantheon of Hindu deities.

The organisation of the Islam section of the book is somewhat confused, with the distinction between chapters unclear. Thus, chapter 2 discusses 'The development of Muslim society in Tamilnad', chapter 3 'The Muslim religious tradition in south India', and chapter 4 'The south Indian state and the creation of Muslim community'. The chapter divisions and order of the Christianity section is better organised, divided into three geographic divisions that run in something like chronological order, followed by a chapter on Christian saints and finishing with a chapter on colonial impact. This is the strongest section of the book, and probably not coincidentally the original subject of the author's Ph.D. dissertation. While she states in her preface that she did not intend to write 'a standard history of Christian missions or a comprehensive account of Muslim expansion throughout the south' (xi), her chapters on Christianity work well as a detailed historical introduction to the development of Christianity in South India.

She places the earliest Christian communities in South India in the sixth century CE and possibly even earlier. This precolonial history is fascinating, and undermines the common misconception of Christianity as an alien religion introduced into India by European missionaries. In subsequent chapters, Europeans make an appearance as significant actors, but unlike some colonial histories, Bayly's work consistently highlights the power held by Indians in these interactions. Chapter 9 on the Christian Paravas is excellent in this regard, as is Chapter 11, which documents the ways that caste groups worked to manipulate Jesuit ecclesiastic authorities in order to secure a variety of ritual honours that were linked to social status, much as in Hindu temple rituals. Indeed, her account of the ways in which modern caste communities developed in interaction with church communities is provocative. Bayly followed up this interest in the history of caste with her subsequent book *Caste, Society and Politics in India: From the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge, 1999).

It remains unclear to me what the inclusion of Islam in this study adds to her conclusions. In her preface, she writes that the treatment of Islam

would make her study more 'useful', and that she was drawn to the 'parallels as well as sharp contrasts in the experience of the two "conversion" religions in south India', and that 'it was impossible to resist the challenge involved in trying to set the Muslim saint-martyr next to the Christian virgin' (x). Yet she does not utilise the additional material in novel ways to address the book's central concerns of inculturation and conversion, and the comparison in which she engages does little more than, as she writes, 'set' elements from one tradition 'next to' those of another. This is in many ways two books treated within a single framework, and as a result Islam, Christianity, and indeed Hinduism are too often homogenised. While the conclusion would have been a good place to engage in explicit comparison, it merely repeats what has come before.

Today, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings* remains significant as a detailed historical account of Christianity and Islam in South India. While the book's treatment of conversion and tradition is no longer groundbreaking, its analytical accomplishments remain unchallenged and salient to an India in which many religious leaders and powerful politicians consider Christianity and Islam to be alien religions. It also remains unparalleled in providing a sweeping view of two hundred years of religious history, and Bayly's careful scholarship will ensure that it remains useful for some time to come.

Reviewed by RICK WEISS
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Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India,* Aldershot and Burlington, Ashgate, 2006, 336 pp., 60 colour illus., 180 black-and-white illus., ISBN: 075463681 (hbk.).

Hermione de Almeida and George Gilpin's *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* is a welcome addition to the field of British Indian studies. The authors have, amidst a large number of publications on the subject, made a significant contribution to the study of the role of art and the development of British imperial identity and ideology. Indeed, this book is original, fresh, engaging, and a fine accompaniment to the pioneering publications on the subject by Mildred Archer or Pauline Rohatgi, *Under the Indian Sun. British Landscape Artists* (Marg, 1995).

de Almeida and Gilpin reflect upon imperialism and how imperial artists, those who actually visited and painted in the colonies, invented and constituted imagery through exchanges, hybridization and disjunctions. The painters who visited British India sketched their travel experiences, depicting ruins in as dramatic a manner as Piranesi did for Rome as well as the daily

activities of the natives and religious sites. In addition, they fulfilled commissions from wealthy natives, civil servants, military officers and merchants at home and abroad. In their pictures, the painters blended conventions from both colonised and coloniser cultures. In doing so, they shaped what the authors call the 'prospect' of India as both real and imagined. Their study reveals how the painters went beyond orientalising preconceptions to offer imagery of colonial encounters and their interstices. Many artists forged new visual modes or modified conventions to convey the unexpected in new views of the other's body, nature, culture, travel and encounters.

For the early servants of the East India Company (EIC), India was exotic, a place of gleaming marble palaces, sensuous dancing girls clad in bejewelled silk and rulers who sat on thrones of solid gold. For many Britons who set out to India, their dream was to possess what India had. They were attracted to the fantastic, to the extraordinary, living a life distinct from that expected of genteel society in Britain. In India, British men could have a *bibi* (Indian women who formed relationships with British men), they could smoke hookahs, they could dress like the local rulers and live in a kind of free splendour that would not have been allowed in Britain. For the artists, the portraits of the British provide us with a glimpse of the idealised life within this Garden of Eden. The authors do not stop at the generalisations that such imagery might provide but give their readers an in-depth look at the comparison between the Christian idea of original sin and the Garden of Eden and that of such artists in India as James Forbes. But, as the writers point out, even Forbes began to witness what would be a significant change in the attitudes of the British towards their prospects in India, a move from intrigue to symbolic control by the early nineteenth century.

de Almeida and Gilpin's construction of the Romantic vision of India begins with their examination of the iconography of the tiger, the tree and the cave, studies in power and eroticism. The antagonism between the two powers, India represented by the Tiger and England the lion, is seen not only in the celebrated toy of Tipu Sultan, *Tippoo's Man-Tiger Organ* (1795, Victoria and Albert Museum, London) but also in the commemorative medal, designed by Bolton and Kuchler. Here the lion fiercely trouncing the tiger, an event celebrating Tipu's defeat of 1799, replaces the playfulness of the wooden instrument devouring Sir Hector Munro. The Asian might of the tiger is being ripped away by the British lion in a savage attack. As the authors demonstrate, the tiger, with all of its spiritual and royal connotations, later becomes demythologised through the savage sport killings of the British.

The tree represents fertility, the Eden-like Paradise in Genesis and, of course, the erotic. While early Britons enjoyed the shade that the canopy of the Banyans provided, the tree, another sacred symbol of the Indian subcontinent, is deconstructed by British artists to be nothing more than morality gone wild. The prospect of the tree's shamefulness becomes connected with what is perceived as the wantonness of Indian women. The

erotic nature of cave shrines and the playful sexual poses of mithunas was not lost on the many late eighteenth century Evangelicals who held seats on the Court of Directors or who, like Wilber Wilberforce and Charles Grant, served as Members of Parliament. These men condemned the religious practices and loose morals of the natives while providing the arguments for a means to end such barbaric practices. de Almedia and Gilpin conclude with a richly researched study of how the prospect of India that found form in pictures of the landscape, people and its culture became ever more reduced in significance in order to justify British occupation.

The chapter, 'Devolution of an Indian Prospect' outlines how, over time, the romantic vision of India became diminished, so much so that Sir William Jones and the early Orientalists became the laughing stock of later imperial minds who regarded India and its people as nothing more than crude and barbaric. The desire to bring civilization and civilized 'manners', so much a part of the social and economic reforms of Jeremy Bentham and the Evangelicals, to those who, in their minds, needed moral rehabilitation set in motion the growth of the Anglican Church on the sub-continent and laid the framework for total domination of Indian society. One of the major examples of this process outlined by the authors is the Hindu practice of *sati,* outlawed in 1835 but still practiced today in some villages of the subcontinent. The horrific sacrifice of homogenised widows, read as the collective ignorant pagans, caught the imagination of the British public and artists alike, among them, Sir Richard Westmacott who cast the bronze pedestal base of the statue honouring Sir William Bentinck now on the grounds of the Victoria Memorial, Kolkata (1841). Here in all its emotion, generic Indians attempt to restrain a young widow from jumping on her husband's funeral pyre, a visual statement implying that those occupied agreed with British policy. Art thus became engaged with the expansionist enterprises of the EIC and the imperial policies of its leaders both at home and on the subcontinent.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the EIC grew, not only numbers of clerks and ships sailing to the Indian subcontinent but also in its position of influence within London. The largest multinational corporation of its time, the Company and its Directors set itself on a course to increase finances, amidst financial crisis and increasing Parliamentary control. Two artistic commissions for London, a ceiling by Spiridione Roma, *The East offering its riches to Britannia* (1812) and a marble mantle by Michael Rysbrack (1728) for the private offices of the Directors at the Old East India House on Leadenhall Street, London, where potential stockholders would meet to discuss holdings, were designed to audaciously display the potential wealth of the subcontinent. In each, the riches of the subcontinent pour forth from caskets and out of the hands of generic figures to Britannia, seated benignly on a rock. In the background, in low relief, are the docks along the Thames and the East Indiamen ready to be dispatched. In both, India is nothing more than a generality, tamed, its riches being given away freely. Similarly, the ease with which the British established themselves is seen in various pictures

shown at the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy including both Penny and Hyman's renditions of Lord Clive being appointed the chief financial manager or diwani of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa in 1765. The event was one of the most important in early Company history and it is recognized today as the turning point in the rise of British power in India.

One of the most popular occasions of British India history was the handing over of the two sons of Tipu Sultan, Abdul Khaliq (aged 10) and Muiz-ud-din (aged 8) to Governor-General Charles Cornwallis at Seringapatam on 25 February 1792. It was propaganda *par excellence* immortalized on canvas, on stone and in coinage. The images are nothing short of pure theatre, the Indian court willingly turning over its two sons, representing the future of India, to the grandfatherly figure of Cornwallis, not a shot being heard in the capitulation of the British enemy of South India. Indeed, for the British to maintain control of the south of India and to demonstrate their might, they had to overcome both the legend and influence of the ruler of Mysore with his French and American allies. Ironically, today Tipu Sultan is a very popular figure while Cornwallis and Wellesley are largely forgotten.

The changing role of the landscape as it relates to British identity and imperial aspirations is chronicled by the work of Thomas and William Daniell. Over a period of approximately forty years, evidenced in folio after folio, the uncle and nephew sketched the sterile and happy environments in which the natives, bound to live in Black Town, willingly undertook gruelling physical work in order to bring the riches into the forts of the Company. The British residents willingly purchased these views, which helped solidify their own belief that the once barbaric India was now a land of interracial harmony. In later landscapes, the authors reveal how the Daniells created scenes of Indian grandeur while, at the same time, paying careful attention to anything that had appeared in the British press that might make for a good sales opportunity. As views of the Taj Mal or tombs of other Mughul emperors, such as Akbar, became popular, and vistas containing Hindu temples, so they appeared in the work of the Daniells. The Daniells, in common with other amateur artists such as Captain Charles Gold, focused not only on the picturesque landscape but also on the oddities of the country that promoted curiosity amongst their clients and promoted continued British imperialism.

For other British artists, such as William Blake and John Flaxman, the singular images and folios of the earlier artists created a romantic vision of a faraway country that piqued their interest as young art students and which reached its peak at the height of the British India Renaissance in the 1790s. Neither of them actually managed to visit India. Instead, their vision of this British possession was evoked by the many paintings and etchings shown at the Royal Academy. Later artists such as J.M.W. Turner again used allegories, symbols, and myths to create images such as *Snowstorm: Hannibal and his Army crossing the Alps* (1812, Tate Britain, London) that spoke directly to the British experience and plunder of India. Here the

authors point out that the elephant, considered exotic, was the standard representation for India after Tipu Sultan had been popularised in the British press as the 'Indian' Hannibal due to his staunch opposition to British rule. So here, in what seems an image of the Second Punic War, is, thus, on another level, a statement of Turner's vision of the disastrous impact of the British presence in India.

The authors close their well-researched and detailed text with a discussion of the individuals and artists who dreamed of returning to India, those who romanticised a past full of silks and finery, servants, exotic imagery and animals – the Orient. Of these daydreamers, Johann Zoffany almost succeeded only to have his aspirations thwarted at the last minute. George Chinnery did return and is described by the authors as the last of the great British Romantic artists. He arrived in India in 1802, leaving the stiff social mores of Britain behind, only to find them introduced by Evangelical missionaries plying their trade. How disappointed he must have been! India was demystified and no longer held the romantic passion in thrall. With the introduction of evermore efforts by the occupying British to make it, indeed, a home away from home, the hopes of such romantics faded.

The text is a must for anyone interested in British Romanticism. It stands apart from previous publications on British artists working on the subcontinent in that it avoids the cliché biographical or descriptive approach. Instead de Almedia and Gilpin focus on analysis shedding light on significant questions such as how the desire to dominate another culture influenced the subjects of art works. Through the well-researched discussion of various themes, the writers demonstrate the evolution of an imperial art form that supported British identity and was the foundation for British Romantic art at home. This will additionally appeal to readers interested in colonialism, post colonialism, eighteenth and early nineteenth century British studies and its theories of ideology.

Reviewed by MARY ANN STEGGLES
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Zhou Yongming, *Historicising Online Politics: The Telegraph, the Internet and Political Participation in China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, 290 pp., ISBN: 0-8047-5127-7 (pbk.).

Zhou's book is an engaging and important addition to the literature of Chinese media studies. It aims to deepen our understanding of ongoing developments in political communications in China and, specifically, to provide a more nuanced account of the impact of internet-based political and activist communities. It does so in part by case studies organised around individual net-leaders, and in part by a larger historical perspective on the

interplay of political, trade and national interests in the communications field. This is achieved through a detailed account of the advent of telegraphic communications in China at the end of the nineteenth century, set against an ethnographic account of contemporary internet communities. In his work on the telegraph in the Qing, Zhou uses archival communications, including telegraph messages, to unearth the import and impact of that technology in a febrile period of Chinese political relations. His organising question is, however, firmly located in the present: Zhou asks at the outset if the internet 'will change China', if it will act as *the* great modernising, civilising democratising agent, replacing hierarchies with networks, control with freedom. 'One can only get answers', he suggests, 'by looking into the complex historical forces in those two periods' (10).

The telegraphic system proves a fascinating topic in its own right and offers a particularly illustrative means of placing the internet in its larger historical context. Media Studies scholars have long pointed out the folly of the media fetish, whereby each new technology is attributed with effecting discontinuous changes in society and culture. From the perspective of historical comparison, it is apparent that new media produce both unexpected changes in the world but are also embedded in the discursive and technical paradigms of preceding and synchronic technologies. Zhou's story of the telegraph makes this point extremely well. The effects of the telegraph on the communications within and across provincial borders were technologically founded, but dependent on the contingencies of local and national interests, divergent relationships with colonising entities, and the competing needs of trade and military players.

By setting his complex narrative against a backdrop of a simplistic, technologically-deterministic and politically optimistic views of the internet as a tool of liberation and democracy, Zhou does somewhat use a straw man to make his argument. That said, there is a tendency in China Studies – and particularly in general discussions about China – to accord more weight to media impacts than would be accepted in other domains. However one judges the strength of Zhou's putative theoretical opponents, the case for the internet as crucial – even sole – modern emancipating innovation, leading to a breakdown in the structures of control, is rendered inadequate in his critique. In its place, we are offered a view of emerging communities that have used the available technology to put forth a range of views that are variously critical or supportive of the Chinese government, that admire or admonish the international press, and that make, break and re-make rules of online political and scholarly discourse. Moreover, we are presented with an online political community that is less concerned with democratic reform (or, at least, western-style democratic reform) and more concerned with the place of China in the world, its relationships with its international partners and rivals, particularly the United States, and the role of the state in serving the 'national interest'.

The historical account of the introduction of the telegraph in the last quarter of the nineteenth century starts by outlining and rejecting three

rationales elsewhere provided for the delays in embracing the new communications system, namely a distrust of western technology, a conservatism borne of Confucian traditions and a concern that telegraph lines upset traditional feng shui aesthetics. This bundle of convenient, but unsubstantiated, reasons for stagnation is, Zhou contends, insufficient explanation for the slow take up of telegraphic technology. In its place he uses official historical documents to point to the Qing dynasty's chief concern – the control of the *usage* ('*liquan'*) of the telegraph. With foreign steamboats navigating the waterways, both the railway and the telegraph were seen as means through which outside influences could infiltrate and destabilise by disturbing public opinion. The value of the telegraph was initially underestimated by the Qing in their preoccupation with control of political communication and their relationships with foreign powers. After military defeat by Japanese forces in Taiwan, China's significant strategic disadvantage was made clear and telegraphy was embraced with purpose if not enthusiasm. Subsequently, inevitably, the telegraph became a tool for the propagation of dissent, especially through the use of public (circular) telegrams, critical and calling for reform, which were published in newspapers.

The use of the internet by discrete online communities – intellectuals, 'unofficial' (*minjian*) commentators, and military chat sites – and their relationships with the State, mainstream media, scholarly society and others via web-based and email communications is explored in the second half of Zhou's book through content analysis of the websites and interviews with the web-based authors, editors and publishers. Zhou gained access to a number of influential online commentators. The insights they provide into the lived experience of online political activism in China are revealing. These commentators and public intellectuals are required to negotiate their autonomy and viability in the face of both state and market forces, as well as position themselves in relation to whether they constitute a recognised academic community or part of a marginal yet influential sphere of – now familiar – bloggers, online forum moderators and so on.

Also, the content analysis of the military websites provides a rich material for discussion about the role of nationalist discourse in emerging groups within society. We wonder to what extent this virtual (un)civil society is a response to other similar groups publishing online in communities perceived to be a threat to ideas of Chinese patriotism as China. That remains to be explored in this work and would be a fruitful topic for further work. In the current book, claims about the membership of these online nationalistic political communities tend to be overplayed. For example, the conclusion that the 'the majority of V-War members are thus well educated and well-informed' (220) is not sufficiently supported by the demographic statistics, even if we accept this limited and unconfirmed sample. Of course, for those familiar with the club instinct of the Chinese intelligentsia, it is likely to be as Zhou asserts, but for a book that is challenging vaguely understood mainstream propositions about China's

media, it would be well to be more specific.

This assumption exposes some limitations in the research methodology. Zhou could have considered other, more objective, ways to assess how well informed online discussants are: compare the information they proffer and the knowledge they share and the insights they have with other sources of information and analytic insight. Official governmental, intergovernmental and non-government sources could provide a range of views that might support or differ from those on this site, and may be expressed differently, providing a comparative set from which conclusions might be drawn. Some of these sources may be more or less reliable – interests, errors, inadequacies all play a part making sources of knowledge imperfect. Nevertheless, to ignore, as has been done here, the sum total of available knowledge about the topics discussed by the participants makes it hard to accept the claims that they are (necessarily) 'informed'. Informed in what sense, and according to what set of news values and sources might be a valuable detour? Another interesting and worthwhile detour would have been to probe the notion of the participants' online identities as performances, for, if the pubic intellectuals mentioned earlier are exposed to greater scrutiny and may suffer for their views (one, Lu Jiaping, had his son arrested), then the use of performance, whilst not sufficient to hide user identity to authorities, would at least provide some sense of a mediated public space in which to explore ideas and opinion.

The V-War website participants are unknown to one another, other than through their online atavars. Their motivations, intentions, values and backgrounds can only be speculatively supposed, and there may be reasons to suspect that a certain degree of creative license has been employed. These people have been invited – required – to assume identities of a specific, militaristic sort, and are required to perform within the disciplinary constraints, and assume some of rhetorical trappings, of a military community. We may ask what do these kind of requirements lead to? Do they attract or dissuade certain people from joining? Do they promote or prohibit certain kinds of behaviours? What does this tell us about not just the online users themselves but about perceptions of the military as a social actor?

More productive is the discussion of how these V-War participants are framing their analyses of and positions on matters, especially related to the China-United States relations, through a new 'interpretative framework' and the subsequent discussion of the framework as the 'National Interest'. The *national interest* is understood as being accepted and relatively unproblematic as a concept, although it is used with negative connotations (as in the United States' regusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol in their *national interest* in seemingly selfish willingness to put global interests at risk).

Zhou's research is revealing in both of its key areas of interest but, while the relevance of the historical context for a more nuanced appreciation of the current situation in China is very useful, the links between the two periods and technologies could be further developed. The comparative case

study approach is often a very productive way of drawing out the subtleties of inference. Perhaps the author could have engaged in a somewhat more developed analysis of the connections and contrasts between the telegraph and the internet, and the uses of each. Similarly, the structure and political actions model of the Qing dynasty and of contemporary China could have been drawn into closer comparison. As it stands it is read at times as two (excellent) volumes of a series.

Occasional use is made of Habermas-inspired concepts of the public sphere to explain how and to what extent the internet and (to a lesser extent) the telegraph has been used to facilitate the development of a community of politically active individuals and groups. The theoretical analysis is underdone, at times to a frustrating extent. It is mostly descriptive – highly valuable in terms of gathering new primary data, less successful in drawing conclusion or even posing critical questions about the subject. At times, when theory is introduced to frame an understanding of the communicative practices described, it is usually an unproblematised and rather straightforward reading of Habermas.

The reliance on this reading of Habermas leaves a range of productive frameworks for further study that might be usefully employed, including those associated with well-known and widely read theorists such as Chomsky, Foucault and Anderson. Chomsky-inspired critiques of communications-based political economies (although usually associated with capitalist and democratic societies) might provide a means by which the production, dissemination and legitimating of knowledge in a mediated political public sphere is structured. Foucault notions of the productive relationships, based upon strategic discourses of coercion, and contestation, formed in networks of power/knowledge might inform discussion of surveillance and control in online communities. Where Zhou has claimed that the internet does not automatically deliver the liberation its proponents have promised, he may also ask what new forms of surveillance, and discipline, and therefore control, the internet makes possible for authorities. Indeed, how these forces of control are contested, undermined, resisted or amplified by the actors in online communities.

So finally, the book is a provocation. It opens up areas of study that had been otherwise left unexplored, yet – by design or otherwise – leaves much to the imagination. In this way it should serve as an inspiration to other interested scholars to further studies in the area, to reinterpret the areas touched on here, to place them in different contexts, to view them through different critical frameworks.

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Han ten Brummelhuis, *King of the Waters: Homan van der Heide and the Origin of Modern Irrigation in Siam*, Leiden, KITLV Press, 2005, xvi + 409 pp. ISBN 90-6718-237-0 (pbk.).

This important work of scholarship breaks new ground in the history of Siam's political economy and the transfer of technology that took place in Southeast Asia during the colonial period. The new ways of managing natural and human resources introduced in late nineteenth-century Siam altered the natural environment, which in any case had not been 'natural' for centuries. Work on the book began in the early 1980s when Brummelhuis collected archival material in Thailand and the Netherlands for his doctoral thesis. He has exploited the scholarship of Thai and Western economic historians – Ammar, Chatthip, Sompop, Suntharee, Suthy, Feeny and Johnston – as well as the work of Japanese environmental historians such as Ishii, Takaya, Tanabe, Tomosugi, and Yano to produce an exhaustive study of irrigation at a critical juncture in Siam's modern history.

The human subject of the book is Homan van der Heide, the Dutch engineer hired by the Siamese government between 1902 and 1909 to advise it on irrigation. Heide created the Department of Irrigation, becoming its first head in 1903. From 1892, and again after he left Siam, Heide pursued a career in the Dutch East Indies as a hydraulic engineer until his final departure for Europe in 1914. Following his tours of duty in the East, he returned to the Netherlands where he became involved in one of the first private engineering firms. A man of decidedly anti-British sentiments which arose after skirmishes with British advisers in Siam, Heide was sympathetic to National Socialism in the 1930s and died in an internment camp in Kampen on 4 November 1945. The preface and the introduction, where much of this information is unobtrusively located, should not be missed.

It is to Brummelhuis's credit as a historian that he gives us a sketch of Heide's character as well as an analysis of what he tried to achieve. King Chulalongkorn once introduced Heide as 'King of the Waters,' a wry comment on the fact that in seventeenth-century Siam Hollanders were thought of as landless buccaneers who ruled over waters only. Brummelhuis is basically sympathetic to Heide but identifies a certain rigidity in his personality. After dismissing the monomaniacal reputation that the Dutch engineer has been saddled with, the author thinks the epithet is expressive of Heide's 'absolute character'. Heide's immense self-assurance in approaching the problems of tropical hydraulic engineering did not always sit well with his Siamese employers. He saw his role in scientific terms, and while he had a peerless understanding of the water economy of the southern part of the Chao Phraya plain, he had little patience with the humdrum routine practices of the bureaucracy. His relationships with other foreign advisers and Siamese bureaucrats were often prickly.

From the outset it is clear that the book is more than an analysis of Heide's irrigation projects and the entanglements with King Chulalongkorn's government that ensued as a consequence. The first three chapters are devoted to a polite but fearless revision of almost everything that has been written on Thai social organisation, irrigation technology and political economy, especially as it relates to agriculture earlier in Ayutthaya and through the reform period of Heide's time. Brummelhuis punctures a hole in the orthodoxy about labour scarcity being an absolute given in the premodern political economy, arguing that it is only a scarcity within particular socio-economic formations.

In chapter three, Brummelhuis treats the reader to a sophisticated interpretation of the sakdina social formation in premodern times as well as to some enlightening discussions of labour power and the transformation 'the revenue state' into the modern Siamese state during the reign of the fifth Bangkok king, Chulalongkorn. Brummelhuis often refers to 'development' as the main economic objective of the king and his ministers, glossing the term with several Thai phrases which mean something like 'fructifying the land'. Chulalongkorn, as well as many of his ministers, saw jungle and uncultivated land as waste land. The roots of contemporary Thailand's mania for making the land productive, by no means exclusive to that nation-state, are to be found in this earlier period.

Arriving in Bangkok in 13 June 1902, Heide did not waste time getting to work. After travelling upcountry to collect information and data, by the end of December of that year he had prepared a lengthy report arguing for the feasibility, desirability and necessity of an irrigation scheme for Siam. He had concluded that rainfall in the lower part of the Menam valley was inadequate for rice cultivation. In only a few areas did fields remain inundated for the three months needed to guarantee a good crop of rice in a normal year. Water needed to be distributed more consistently and over a wider area to enhance an individual peasant family's productivity, and good drainage was as important as an adequate supply of water.

The polemics of Heide's case are as interesting as the technical aspects, and Brummelhuis gives us a full account of the General Report on Irrigation and Drainage in the Lower Menam Valley, known as the Great Scheme.3 In deciding on the scale of what was required, Heide anticipated population growth over the next ten to fifteen years. His most dramatic recommendation was to build a dam with a movable gate downstream of the confluence of the tributaries at Paknampho. Chainat was deemed the most desirable location for the dam, which would be the basis for irrigating the entire Lower Menam region. Locks would be needed in some parts of the system, and tertiary supply canals would be dug. The plan included

[3] Brief extracts from the report as well as other documentary material on irrigation were published in the pioneering volume of Chatthip Nartsupha and Suthy Prasartset, *The Political economy of Siam, 1851-1910* (Bangkok: The Social Science Association of Thailand, 1978, 1981).

provision of drinking water for Bangkok. The entire scheme would take ten years to complete and would irrigate 1,369,339 hectares, more than half of all rice land that was under cultivation at the time.

The Great Scheme was not implemented, for many reasons, and the dam at Chainat was never built. Multiple demands on the available funds made it difficult to commit a budget on such a scale. Plans for a southern railway line from the west coast of Malaya to Phetburi were a case in point, for the railway competed directly with the investment required for the irrigation plan. To steer the decision in his direction, Heide argued that the trans-peninsular railway would be a danger to Siam's independence from the French. This was a shrewd tactic on his part, because he knew about Siamese wariness of foreign interference, which extended to the large foreign loans required for a huge infrastructure project that would put the country in debt to colonial powers, especially the British. Anxiety about risks to 'the freedom of Siam' continued into the reign of Chulaongkorn's son and successor, Vajiravudh.

Brummelhuis's account always places in focus the interpersonal relations in Heide's career as a hydraulic engineer in Siam. Foreign advisers working in sanitation, surveying, and finance did not always support Heide's ideas, for example, offering plans for the water supply that differed from Heide's. The Minister of Agriculture under whom Heide worked for much of the time, Chaophraya Thewet, was slow to respond to correspondence, leaving Heide to wonder if papers had been passed to the king or to the committee overseeing irrigation. Thewet's personal and political weakness as well as his lack of technical knowledge on many occasions obstructed Heide's efforts to implement his recommendations.

One of the most important protagonists in the irrigation story was the Siam Land, Canals and Irrigation Company, known as the Borisat, or 'the Company'. This was a private company, founded by an Austrian, Erwin Müller, and Siamese officials with close Thais to the court who held shares in the company. The powerful and influential Borisat had developed the Rangsit area north of Bangkok on the eastern side of the Chaophraya River and asked for a large concession on the western side. The shareholders had conflicts of interest if they owned land affected by irrigation works built by the Borisat, and indeed, members of the aristocracy and others reaped profits from land speculation in Rangsit. One of Heide's tasks as head of the Royal Irrigation Department was to supervise the Borisat, which the king and his ministers understandably regarded with suspicion, even if it did possess technical expertise in water management. In a sense, the Borisat and the Royal Irrigation Department were in competition with each other. Brummelhuis devotes an entire chapter to the Borisat, but its role in the history of irrigation runs like a subplot through the entire book.

Even if the Great Scheme was put aside in favour of other infrastructure projects, the debate about the wisdom of large-scale irrigation and the piecemeal measures that were actually undertaken produced some interesting results. People's councils, or farmer's meetings, emerged around

1908-1910 to reach consensus on local water management in the face of flooding and problems with the irrigation networks. Furthermore, Heide is credited with repairing and dredging canals; he also constructed locks.

Criticisms seem captious for such a fine study, but a few are in order. The book is very long and could have been pruned for greater readability. Introductions to chapters belabour points that are already clear in an attentive reader's mind; in this respect, the book's earlier life as a doctoral thesis is evident. Brummelhuis does not have much new to say about the overall impact of Chulalongkorn's reforms and reiterates the conventional wisdom about the enlightened king and his ministers, although it has to be admitted that some discussion of the reforms is necessary to put the story about irrigation into context. The history of the vicissitudes of the Ministry of Agriculture in the 1890s is a case in point. Comparisons with colonial economies elsewhere in Southeast Asia, which have been made by other scholars, would have heightened the comparative usefulness of the book. Perhaps this is a separate task that awaits another scholar's attention. The photographs are plentiful and capture the scale of what was achieved, but many lack adequate captions giving dates and locations. It is possible that the information simply does not exist. The index is first-rate and enhances the volume's utility.

Wisely, I think, Brummelhuis leaves to others the work of positioning Heide in postcolonial theory. The first three chapters, which give the historical overview and establish the framework of analysis, are suitably theoretical. It is fitting that a Dutch scholar, whose native country has been engaged in hydraulic engineering for centuries, has undertaken this excellent, very readable study of his countryman's heretofore unrecognised contribution to Siam's political economy.

Reviewed by CRAIG J. REYNOLDS
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Gregory Barton, *Empire Forestry and the Origins of Environmentalism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, xii + 192 pp. ISBN: 0-521-81417-0 (hbk.).

This is a frustrating book. I found myself excited, and in agreement, with the author's contention that Indian forestry had a significant impact upon forestry services the world over, particularly those in the British Empire. Colleagues working on forestry have also discerned this influence in Australia, the Pacific Islands and Africa, while my own research has revealed this connection in New Zealand. A study of this nature is clearly relevant, as are works of comparative history. Often the most difficult to write, comparative histories require detailed knowledge about the particular areas studied. They

also necessitate broad-brush strokes and the ability to summarise in regional or global terms complex historiography that is often national in scope. In certain areas, Barton's book succeeds, notably the first three chapters' discussion of both the origins of Western ideas about land and concepts of how nature should be used, and the emergence of forest conservation in India. Overall, however, the book fails to adequately deal with the relevant historiography of national forest histories – a difficult task admittedly – or to critically assess the impact of Indian forestry. Instead, all too often the author accepts at face value what primary sources say about Indian forestry. Also, he downplays non-Indian influences on forestry. Moreover, the book is riddled with typographical errors: more the fault of the editor's than the writer's I suspect but certainly not what one would expect from a publisher of Cambridge's reputation.

Let me begin by summarising the book's structure and argument before offering a more detailed critique of its sources and interpretation. What is 'empire forestry'? According to Barton, this developed in India in 1855 and spread throughout the British Empire and elsewhere, culminating in the first British Empire Forestry Conference in 1920. Barton argues that modern environmentalism, in terms of practice and policies, owed its development to empire forestry and, by extension, to British imperialism. Barton observes that, although romanticism had a profound intellectual impact upon modern environmental thought, in terms of actual policy effects, it was forestry which made the greatest impact. Contrary to the views of Richard Grove, Barton demonstrates that environmentalism was not a subversive counter-current of imperialism but, rather, a crucial component of it. This is an important point, and dovetails neatly with the work of others on botany and botanical exchange pioneered as long ago as the late 1970s with the work of Lucile H. Brockway (*Science and Colonial Expansion: The role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens*, London, 1979) and, more recently and most impressively, by Richard Drayton (*Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World*, New Haven and London, 2000).

Chapter two, 'The Great Interference', provides an excellent summary of the development of state control over resources in Europe and its accompanying legislative and philosophical ideas. Beginning with medieval customary law, it follows through to the emergence of scientific forestry in Germany, and onto climatic ideas and nineteenth century debates on the nature of nature, Darwinism and imperialism. Included in the nineteenth century discussion is criticism of the distinctions made by environmental historian Donald Worster between an Imperial and Arcadian view of nature. As Barton observes, Worster's model is too simplistic, conflating 'Christianity, imperialism and science into one nature-slaying ogre' (23).

Chapter three specifically focuses on 'Empire Forestry and British India', presenting, and I feel very accurately, the extension of control over forests as an example of environmental innovation in British India. In this chapter, Barton expertly summarises the development of state control over

forests in India, a summary that is particularly useful since the literature on this subject is vast and can be quite daunting to wade through. Barton highlights the 1855 'Charter of Indian Forestry' as key legislature which ushered in a 'new legal definition of the forest as state property' (58). He shows how, gradually, this policy was codified, through the 1865 Forest Act and the 1878 Hazara Rules, wherein the latter, amended in 1878 and again in 1893, made forest 'absolute state property under the Land Revenue Settlement' (59). Importantly, in contradistinction to scholars such as Ramachandra Guha, Barton demonstrates that, although the Indian Forest Department (IFS) emphasised revenue collection, it still tolerated a remarkably high level of non-profitability from its forests. This, explains the author, was due to the emphasis given to forestry as maintaining the 'household of nature', in which forestry was seen to prevent adverse climatic and hydrological changes and thereby contribute to the maintenance of agriculture and avoidance of famine.

Chapter four extends the arguments presented in the previous one by charting the movement from laissez-faire to interventionist policies, and the impact of this on the IFS. In particular, Barton emphasizes the importance of the so-called Indian mutiny and the disastrous Orissa famine of 1865, which resulted in more than 1 million deaths, in highlighting to the British the folly of leaving the market to deal with such events. In this chapter, Barton provides an excellent institutional history of the IFS, discussing the origins of forest policies, the philosophies each of its directors brought to the department and the development of forestry education, and its emergence of forestry as a discipline in its own right. Dehra Dun was used to train non-forestry officers; in contrast, until 1926, Forestry Department officers were required to hold a degree from one of Oxford, Cambridge or Edinburgh. By the 1930s, notes Barton, European forestry officers were working to integrate Indians into the upper echelons of the department. This chapter also provides useful discussions of the mapping methods and motives (including climate, timber supply, fire protection, etc.) of forestry protection, including that the IFS initial acceptance of grazing rights and minor forest extraction in certain cases.

Chapter five discusses the spread of 'empire forestry' from India to Africa, Australasia and Canada. This, notes Barton, was a gradual process that culminated, he argues, in the first British Empire Forestry Conference (1920), during which 'foresters spoke of empire forestry as an accomplished fact. After 1920 Indian forestry practice was empire forestry' (98). This chapter, I felt, was a hotchpotch of brief discussions about forestry in Africa, sometimes involving titbits of information gleaned and accepted uncritically from primary sources. I shall discuss the section on New Zealand below, using it to highlight the methodological problems of Barton's approach.

Chapter six argues that three leading United States foresters, F.B. Hough, Charles Sargent and Gifford Pinchot, 'credited empire forestry, particularly as practised in India, with the political compromise that led to massive forest reservations by Congress' (130-1). Barton further shows the

influence played by Indian foresters on the establishment of the Forestry Service in the United States. Chapter seven attempts to summarise twentieth century developments in forest management in North America, Africa and Australasia, noting, in particular, the emergence of scenery preservation and the divergence between conservation and preservation.

While I am impressed by Barton's wide reading and his masterly overview of the development of Western ideas about nature and that of forestry in India, I do have major reservations about some of his methodology and reading. I was troubled to find that Barton appeared to accept on face value what many foresters at the time wrote. This certainly is a problem that challenges scholars who look at the conservation movement: how do we measure sentiment with action, ideas with policy? Often this is very difficult task to undertake and, while I am certainly not discounting the significance of ideas, I think Barton is too eager to accept writing at the time that accords significance to Indian colonial sources. Indeed, he appears to give primacy to Indian sources to the extent of ignoring all others, perhaps a reflection of the challenge of coping with many diverse, and often national, literatures. With reference to New Zealand, Barton looks for Indian forestry influences – which there undoubtedly were – but to the extent of ignoring the importance of French, German and, later, North American models of forestry. The problem perhaps is that Barton relies almost solely on parliamentary published and unpublished records, and does not take into account regional and scientific papers on the subject. Moreover, inadequate understanding of the secondary material, leads to a number of gaffs, most notably in the assertion that 'Very little scholarship is available on forestry in Australia and New Zealand in the nineteenth century' (footnote 82, page 116). This is most certainly not the case. In addition, Barton makes a number of very basic errors, for instance, referring to A. Lecoy as Minister of Lands in 1880 when, in fact, Lecoy was actually a French forester employed by the New Zealand Government to report on forestry in that colony and certainly not Minister of Lands. Many other minor mistakes litter the text and, while relatively unimportant in themselves, add up to quite a long list. These, and the problems with New Zealand, make one question the adequacy of Barton's handle on the writing of forestry outside India and Europe. Certainly, I was very surprised not to see mentioned more Richard Grove's work (most notably in Barton's discussion on Africa) and the absence of the work of Stephen Pyne (for instance, *Vestal Fire: An Environmental History, Told through Fire, of Europe and Europe's Encounter with the World*, Seattle and London, 1997).

It is with some reservations, then, that I have penned this review. Indeed, *Empire Forestry* has many qualities, notably its breadth and challenging interpretation of environmentalism, but along with these come many qualms about its methodology and interpretation.

Reviewed by JAMES BEATTIE
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Craig J. Reynolds, *Seditious Histories: Contesting Thai and Southeast Asian Pasts*, Seattle and London, University of Washington Press in association with Singapore University Press, 2006, xix + 367 pp., ISBN: 9971693356 (pbk.).

This book brings together eleven essays on aspects of Thai history that are perhaps better described by the sub-title of the book than by the main title, seductive though 'sedition' may be. All but two have been previously published in earlier versions in learned journals or books or conference proceedings. They are organised into four groups, 'Studying Southeast Asia', 'Seditious Histories of Siam', 'Cultural Studies', and 'The Dialectics of Globalization'. That enhances accessibility only to a limited extent, and the book is certainly not for beginners in Thai history. Those with the advantage of some previous knowledge will, however, find it deeply rewarding.

Some topics turn up unsignalled in more than one essay, but, while one might have hoped an authority of Reynolds' quality might have produced a new monograph rather than a collection, the book does have an overall coherence. That is to be found not merely in the focus of the essays but also – perhaps even more – in the expertise of the author. The reader may not always find the essays easy to follow, but is likely to revel in the insights provided on the way.

In one of the new essays, for example – on Thai manual knowledge, by which is meant knowledge to be found in manuals – Reynolds writes: 'In premodern times, "school" was not a particular site of learning so much as a relationship between teacher and pupil, a relationship that lingers today as one of the key relationships that inflects contemporary Thai society, for example, in the networking that goes on in the civil service, in politics, in business, and in the Buddhist monkhood' (221). Nor are such apercus confined to Thai history. The author's remarks on 'identity' are widely relevant to much contemporary discussion: 'an amorphous concept, confused with self, essence, and uniqueness' (247).

'The high-modernist state is a global phenomenon' (31) When did the 'state' first appear in Southeast Asia? Opening with this question, the other new essay, 'Paradigms of the Premodern State', discusses the ways in which pre-modern states in Southeast Asia have been defined, sometimes by metaphor: mandala, theatre, for example. Would the essay have been advantaged if the question had been contextualised, rather, perhaps, as Vic Lieberman has attempted, by reference to the earlier history of the state in Europe? Certainly I was struck on a recent reading of Norman Davies' *God's Playground: A History of Poland* by comments on early Poland that evoked Wolters and others on Southeast Asia. Davies produced another metaphor. 'Political power radiated from a few centres of authority, whose sphere of influence constantly waxed and waned, and very frequently

overlapped. These centres can best be likened to magnets, and the people living between them, to iron filings pulled hither and thither by fluctuating and conflicting magnetic fields' (Oxford University Press, 2005, vol. 1, 30).

Subjects covered in other essays include lese-majeste and the vexed question of Thai 'feudalism'. A paper on gender is less subtle, more perhaps a call to action. Papers on cosmography and on polygamy offer insights into the impact of the West in the nineteenth century, while the closing paper on 'globalisation' in the late twentieth century suggests that, amid all the differences, there are some continuities. 'The tensions inherent in the dialectical relationship between globalization and local identity today, or between *siwilai* and Thai sovereignty in the late nineteenth century, are uncannily similar' (302).

Reynolds writes in a stylish way, never overwhelming us by the jargon he occasionally deploys. His essays are sometimes discursive (in the old sense). But, a close reader, he repays close reading.

Reviewed by NICHOLAS TARLING
New Zealand Asia Institute
The University of Auckland

Pei-chia Lan, *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestics and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2006, pp. xiii + 250 + Appendices, ISBN: 0-8223-3742-8 (pbk.).

Domestic employment— the subject of this study— presents an answer to the age-old problem of the gendered household burden. This type of labour is not new in human history; on the contrary, it traces to the dark and often grim histories of slavery and colonialism. The migrant domestic worker, on the other hand, is a relatively new phenomenon that has emerged with the integration of the world economy and the transnational labour flows of globalization. The increasing demand worldwide for migrant labour is a further factor that has brought a significant expansion in the number of these workers. The expansion of these workers, in turn, impacts on social trends and brings new nuances to the definition of labour.

The migrant domestic worker and her integration abroad is the subject of Pei-chia Lan's ethnographic study that combines theory with quantitative analysis about workers and employers. The data about the workers is interesting in light of the fact that, in some cases, education levels and previous occupations are not significantly lower than that of employers. In a further interesting twist, Lan has positioned her study in the 'Newly Industrialized Country' (NIC) of Taiwan that has enjoyed relative prosperity in the wake of industrialization. The higher earning power of Taiwanese

women is a factor in the local demand for domestic workers, in this case, from countries in Southeast Asia. The demand and the response to it reflect a significant shift away from the core countries of the North to the oil-rich countries of the Middle East and regions of East Asia. In the latter, increasing levels of wealth coupled with the phenomenon of migrant domestic help has meant that labour flows now circulate within countries of Asia and that the South has reached or superseded North America as a destination of employment. Since the 1980s, Taiwan has engaged in recruiting domestics as contract and 'guest' workers. Such practices provide evidence that this small country has become a desirable destination for domestic employment.

The international division of reproductive labour, also referred to as 'the global nanny chain,' poses an international solution to the 'double burden,' in particular, of privileged women. The points of origin for this labour are the Philippines and Indonesia, countries that have either not experienced the same prosperity (the former) or have been affected by the recent economic downturn (the latter). Many of the workers are well educated; had professional occupations in their home country; and, in the case of the Philippines, possess good English-language skills. Nonetheless, they are compelled to work overseas because of poverty and, if married, are often obliged to leave their own children behind. Many of these women invest a substantial part of their income on mobile phones with which they negotiate trans-nationally their roles as mother and wife.

Further reasons for going abroad include a desire to expand life horizons or experience modernity. In Taiwan, however, the workers find themselves confined within the four walls of middle-class households, working long hours, and treated as disdained aliens and disposable labour. Discriminatory immigration laws prohibit them from seeking permanent residence or transferring to new employers once their contracts have expired. For the workers, mobile phones represent an important means to relieve the isolation, to communicate with family and friends, and to network with other members of the migrant community. On days off, these women congregate in 'weekend enclaves,' including churches and the central railway station, where a carnival atmosphere allows them to temporarily escape the oppressive relations at their places of work (169). There, they dress up, share jokes and poke fun at the inability of their employers to communicate effectively in English.

Pei-chia Lan terms these workers 'global cinderellas' due to the complexity and paradoxes in their migratory trajectories. The trajectories, which represent a downward spiral, comprise an uneasy juxtaposition of emancipation and oppression. These patterns are made more complex through racialization and the class division of the traditionally demeaned domestic work. Lan has discovered that employers regard both Filipinas and Indonesians as savages who represent the racialized and/or sexualized 'other' that can subvert the intimate dynamics of the home space. Among them, there is a slight preference for Indonesians because of assigned attributes of

obedience and 'simple-mindedness' (76). Framed by boundary-making, including those of race and citizenship, *Global Cinderellas* demonstrates how workers negotiate the spaces that are physically intimate yet fraught by the anxieties and distancing strategies of the non-white madams. The book proceeds on the basis of close contact and interviews with dozens of domestics who work in and around Taipei. Many of the employers, on the other hand, are first-generation career women who struggle with the conflicting demands of careers, wifely and maternal roles, and filial piety and depend on domestic assistance to achieve gender parity. The study demonstrates the ways in which economic disparity, immigration policies, race, ethnicity and gender intersect in the "madam-maid" relationship and generate unease. Finally, it explores the ways in which workers negotiate their roles and find self-definition within the context of their employment, education and English-language proficiency.

Global Cinderellas includes discussions about the institutional mechanisms that enable the migration links and are the source for the bondage, debt burdens and territorialized regulations. Other discussions include the racialization practices of the recruitment agencies, the supply and demand for the domestic services, and the practices of motherhood by migrants living abroad. The book draws to a close with the use of mobile phones as a means of empowerment, the identity politics at work in the migrants' daily lives and the socio-economic landscape of social inequality. Finally, the study concludes with policy implications for the enhancement of equality across social divisions. Within our increasingly globalized yet ever more divided world, the latter is a vital aspect in the preservation of trans-national harmony, especially within the region of East Asia. The inclusion of policy recommendations is one way among many in which this ground-breaking study enhances our understanding of the feminization of migration and the change in domestic practices that accompany globalization.

Reviewed by ROSEMARY HADDON
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Adeel Khan, *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan*, New Delhi and London, Sage Publications, 2005, 211 pp., ISBN: 0761933034 (pbk.).

Adeel Khan started his career as a journalist in Pakistan but is now an academic in Australia. He has lived in Pakistan, observed the country's politics at first hand, and interviewed a number of Pakistanis to write this book.

The book has nine chapters in addition to two appendices (including one on the Mohajir Quomi Movement's (MQM) demands while the other is

the list of the interviewees). The first chapter surveys the relevant literature, that of political science and history, and examines its inadequacies. He makes the important point that Pakistani writers often overstate the contribution of individuals to historical events whereas they should be 'seen in the context of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds' (17). In this context Adeel Khan has found fault with Ayesha Jalal's work which, according to him, emphasizes the role of individual actors in Pakistan's early politics. Similarly, he finds fault with the binary analysis (modern versus the traditional) of Shahid Javed Burki. White both these writers have written on ethnicity, it is not the focus of their work. It is, however, the focus of Feroz Ahmed's work which, according to the author, suffers from excessive Marxist jargon and dated theories.

The author's dismissal of these established scholars may seem uncharitable to some but, in all cases except that of Ayesha Jalal, his arguments are insightful. Ayesha Jalal's work, in my opinion, covers such a great period of time and area that critiques of some of its lapses or mistakes do not do justice to it. But apart from that, Adeel Khan has a point when he claims that the phenomenon of ethnicity is not adequately theorized by these authors.

Unfortunately, the author has missed out Tahir Amin's pioneering study of ethnicity (*Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan: Domestic and International Factors*, Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1988). Similarly, while he gives Hamza Alavi credit for having given a good 'analysis of the structure of the state and class in Pakistan' (77), he has not praised, or faulted, Alavi's work on ethnicity. Ishtiaq Ahmed's book (*State, Nation, and Ethnicity in Contemporary South Asia*, London: Pinter, 1996), though mentioned, has also been ignored as far as the analysis of ethnicity is concerned. Moreover, works in languages other than English on the ethnic question, though mostly polemical, as well as scholarly articles in English (for instance, S. Akbar Zaidi, ed, *Regional Imbalances and the National Question in Pakistan*, Lahore: Vanguard, 1992), have not even been mentioned. Because of these omissions, the author's claim that ethnicity has not been adequately analyzed in Pakistan appears doubtful. He is right, however, when he claims that in ordinary discourse people use very crude, stereotypical, conspiracy-theory ideas about ethnicity. In my view this is not so much because of lack of scholarship on the subject as because of the fact that this scholarship is not disseminated adequately.

Adeel Khan's next three chapters lay down the theoretical foundations of his own work. His method is basically historical, although his analysis of historical events is analyzed with the tools of the political scientist. He argues that the modern state in South Asia created nationalism which belongs to the realm of 'kinship' and 'religion' — that is, something which evokes emotion; which enters the realm of the extra-rational. This is an important insight and leads to the idea that if one has to understand this phenomenon, one should study its concrete manifestations which is what the book, essentially, does. The author then goes on to provide insights into the

colonial state in India and then its reproduction in Pakistan. The Pakistani state, he claims, began as a continuation of the authoritarian, bureaucratic, colonial state. He observes that (62):

> By himself holding the three most important positions of governor general, president of the Constituent Assembly and president of the Muslim League at the same time, Jinnah set a tradition by which a powerful individual came to be more important than the institutionalized distribution of state power.

He then goes on to argue how the Mohajirs (immigrants from India) and later the military usurped state power pushing the politicians aside except the ones who did not object to bureaucratic-civil lobby.

These theoretical concerns take four chapters. Chapter 5 focuses on Pakhtun nationalism; chapter 6 on Baloch nationalism; chapter 7 on Sindhi nationalism and chapter 8 on Mohajir nationalism. Chapter 9 is the conclusion and ends on the sombre note that Pakistan is standing at the crossroads. According to Khan, one 'path leads to despair and hopelessness, and the other to more poverty, repression, corruption and ethnic and sectarian violence' (190).

Adeel Khan's analysis of Pakhtun, Sindhi, Baloch and Mohajir nationalism is insightful. He uses conflict theory to argue that ethnic nationalism is constructed under modern conditions when a group feels deprived. This happens when the interventionist state appears to deny certain goods and services as well as political power to the aggrieved group. Pakhtun nationalism rose when the centralized bureaucratic state system tried 'to replace the decentralized agro-illiterate semi-tribal system of control' (91). The movement did not remain separatist, or even seriously confrontationist, when the Pakhutns became integrated in Pakistan's economy and state structure.

The Baloch case, he argues, is a response to the imposition of the modern state. Baloch grievances focus upon its denial of a share in state power and resources — above all to share in the provinces' own income. The militant form of Baloch nationalism is mentioned, even the present-day militancy touched upon. However, the Baloch objections to Gawadar port as well as the establishment of cantonments are not mentioned.

Sindhi and Mohajir nationalisms have been analyzed at length. Sindhis felt colonized before the advent of the Mohajirs but after it they felt betrayed and even more embittered than before. They feel that their resources go to finance the Centre (which means the Punjabi ruling elite) and their lands are distributed to outsiders (Mohajirs, Punjabis and especially, the military). The Mohajirs, who remained dominant during the initial years of Pakistan independence because of their large numbers in the bureaucracy, later became alienated from the state as their privileges came under threat. Their ethnic political party, the MQM, reacted against their 'Pakistani' identity and adopted an ethnic (Mohajir) identity in Sindh. They came in

conflict with the other ethnic groups in Sindh but have now entered into an uneasy alliance with them so as to confront the Centre more effectively.

While Adeel Khan's analysis is informed and accurate, the book suffers from certain omissions. For instance, Bengali nationalism receives no attention whatsoever. Being the first case of ethnic assertion (1948 and then 1951), it deserved some analysis. Less serious, but still worth mentioning, is the birth of Siraiki ethnicity — again a product of perceived domination by the Punjab. Indeed, if the author had pushed back the politics of identity formation into British India he could have found interesting parallels in the construction of the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh identities during the colonial period.

Anyhow, despite its omissions in the literature review section as well as the number of cases of nationalism dealt with in the book, the book is a valuable addition to the literature of ethnicity in Pakistan. Adeel Khan writes with clarity, insight and courage — courage because his iconoclastic deconstruction of official myths is not easy in a society where such myths have become sacrosanct. I recommend the book to all scholars of political science, history, South Asian Studies and the educated lay person in South Asia in particular and the world in general.

Reviewed by TARIQ RAHMAN
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Hotze Lont, *Juggling Money: Financial self-help organisations and social security in Yogyakarta*, Leiden, KITLV Press, 2005, xiii + 292 pp. ISBN: 90 6718 240 0 (pbk.).

Yogyakarta is, at the time of writing, suffering the second wave which follows any natural disaster: the invasion of the international aid and reconstruction industry, which in the process of doing necessary good works, brings a host of side effects in the form of distortions of existing economic and political arrangements. One of the concerns of many of the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) involved, international as well as local, is whether and how it engages with the existing fabric of civil society. This book is about part of that fabric – the small-scale, local self-help systems and organisations which provide for the less affluent strata of society (in many parts of Southeast Asia) a measure of financial and social security, by means of a range of shared savings and credit arrangements.

It is based on over a year of intensive ethnographic fieldwork in an urban *kampung* (neighbourhood) in the late 1990s, just as the economic crisis took its full effect. The author was thus able to see how these long-standing arrangements worked in some detail over a period of time and how they handled as severe a financial test as can be expected. His project was framed

by larger comparative and theoretical concerns about the role of financial self-help organisations (FSHOs) in the provision of social security in developing countries.

The book begins with a detailed description of the *kampung* and its people and the financial challenges they face, followed by a general overview of its astonishing range of FSHOs. This includes a detailed study of one of the FSHOs, then a discussion of their role in social security, and finally the effects of the economic crisis and of the failure of a new kind of organisation. The author's conclusions are not pessimistic but they emphasise the diversity, complexity and social embeddedness of FSHOs and their limitations as instruments of social security. These conclusions, along with his theoretical framing seem to me to contain a critique, implied but never quite explicit, of the recent enthusiasm amongst NGOs and the development industry for "micro-credit" as something of a panacea for bottom-up development.

Despite its framing in larger development and policy issues, the strength of this book lies in its ethnographic depth and detail. The chapter on *krismon*, for example, provides a series of household portraits that told me more than anything I'd previously read about the subtle and complex ways in which the crisis affected ordinary people and of their money-juggling management of it. Likewise, the final chapter on the failed "linkage" reveals much about the ways in which mismatches of agendas between local people, development agencies and financial institutions lead to unexpected and farcical results which can be as comical as they are tragic.

This kind of empirically-grounded, fine-grained economic anthropology provides real insight into the real worlds of the real people who are the innocent targets of development programmes. No doubt because of this depth of analysis, it does not provide black-and-white answers, let alone magic bullets. But this kind of measured commonsense is exactly what is needed to provide a counter-balance to top-down, macro-economic policy makers, the ideologically-driven agendas of major development agencies, and the well-intentioned naiveté of many smaller NGOs. It should be compulsory reading for all of them and the author, the Dutch research funding system and the publisher are to be commended for making it available.

Reviewed by GRAEME MACRAE
Massey University Auckland

Christopher P. Hood, *Shinkansen: From Bullet Train to Symbol of Modern Japan*, Oxford, Routledge, 2006, xvii + 288 pp, ISBN 0415320526 (hbk.).

This book comprehensively covers just about every conceivable aspect of the *shinkansen*, linking its development to social and economic changes in Japan. The book is constructed to the same high specifications as the phenomenally

efficient transportation system it describes and its pages radiate an amazing spectrum of data, much of it appearing in English for the first time. The work represents about five years of formal research, 'many more years of informal study,' (7) and benefits from the 'incredible access to all of the shinkansen-operating companies' (8) which the author analyzed during his lengthy research. As a result it offers some first class insights into the inner workings of the system.

According to Christopher Hood, the bullet train is not just an international symbol of modern Japan but the image of its sleek form hurtling passed Mt. Fuji has become a national icon. Despite this elevated status, the outside world knows relatively little about how the network actually functions or its wider impact on Japanese society. These are the gray areas the author is determined to illuminate.

While the author insists he is purely a researcher and not a train enthusiast, reading this energetic book one cannot help but feel that perhaps somewhere deep inside him there might be a repressed train-spotter bursting to get out. Equally, it could be his genuine zeal for the subject just translates into a passionate dynamism on the page. I mention this not as a criticism, on the contrary, at times his writing style is so engaging that it gives the book a far wider appeal than its academic confines allow and hopefully it will one day appear in a form that can be appreciated by a much wider readership.

Dr. Hood definitely appears to have enjoyed his research, confessing to 'some very unforgettable moments' (9) and 'thrills' (11) while on his extensive *shinkansen*-related treks around Japan armed with a notebook and camera. After an introductory chapter, the journey proper commences with a detailed history of the *shinkansen* from its genesis during the Pacific War to its birth in 1964. We are treated to a wealth of facts about the various train types and line development, which smoothly propels one on to chapter 3. Here the train's astonishing success is analyzed from a number of perspectives, and the author argues that the *shinkansen* has evolved from merely a means of transportation into a potent symbol of Japanese modernity and a significant national icon. He observes: 'the shinkansen can and has played an important role in the development of Japan's image domestically and internationally' (70). Elaborating on this theory, he adds: 'it is important to stress that the shinkansen is not only involved in the creation of new culture, but is also reflecting the evolution of Japan's society and culture' (68).

The fourth chapter comprehensively analyzes the *shinkansen's* vital role in national and regional economic development, exploring the fascinating interface between money and politics. The train's powerful supporters are profiled, but for once its largely impotent detractors are also examined and their environmental concerns explained. *Shinkansen* funding and the crucial question of the network's actual financial viability dominate the landscape of the next chapter. It is densely populated with charts, statistics and figures to backup the analysis, but it also contains a number of great *shinkansen* shots, which brightens up the monotony of the monetary

data.

Chapter six examines how the system functions, looking at the human element of the equation. The men and women who run the system are the *shinkansen's* indispensable human 'software' without which it could not function. The system's national unity myth takes somewhat of a battering as the different regional and corporate cultures which make up the *shinkansen* universe are carefully placed under the microscope, revealing clear regional variations in everything from management to marketing.

The penultimate chapter, entitled 'Mirror of Japan,' attempts to demonstrate how the *shinkansen* reflects and influences Japanese society. Hood argues that in many respects the relationship between society and the bullet train 'is not one-way and that the shinkansen may have a role to play in promoting further changes in society or even maintaining the status-quo and traditions of old' (166). Armed with an intimidating arsenal of facts along with some fascinating examples, he constructs a convincing case. In the process the author covers a very broad range of topics, spanning suicide to bamboo window covers on the 800-series shinkansen. He concludes: 'one can see that many different aspects of Japanese society are reflected in the operations of the shinkansen and the passengers who use it. However, the relationship does not appear to be one-way, as the shinkansen also appears to have a role in shaping the society around it' (195).

Just when you thought it was journey's end, the reader is whisked off to Taiwan for a look at the train in other terrain. The jaunt across the East China Sea is to ponder the *shinkansen's* exportability and global potential. In this final chapter, Hood replicates his research framework on a smaller scale with impressive results. While it seemed like an unorthodox way to conclude a book, the well-researched Taiwan comparisons prove highly enlightening.

As the book glides to a precision halt, the author sums up his case: 'The shinkansen is clearly much more than a means of transportation. It is a symbol that has captured the imagination of the Japanese people' (209). Even if one does not agree with every aspect of his analysis or the premise that the *shinkansen* is a national icon, taken as a whole it is extremely difficult to fault this excellently researched and well-argued book. Indeed, this study masterfully illuminates a host of interconnected gray zones that have impeded proper understanding of the *shinkansen* system and its socio-economic impact. It is a highly readable book and makes a significant contribution not just to Japanese studies but also to the field of transport studies.

Reviewed by SEAN CURTIN
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Sympathy for Lady Vengeance, directed by Chan-wook Park, South Korea, 112 mins; *The Host*, directed by Joon-ho Bong, Japan/South Korea, 119 mins; *Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter… and Spring*, directed Kim Ki-duk, South Korea/Germany, 103 mins.

South Korean cinema's profile here has never been higher. New Zealand held its first ever Korean Film Festival in October 2004. More and more South Korean film-makers are choosing our country as a film location. Korea's second-most popular film of all time *Silmido* was partly filmed here, as was Cannes-winner *Old Boy*. A significant part of the most expensive Korean movie ever, *Christmas Cargo*, is also scheduled to be shot in New Zealand, while Korean investors, the Daesung Group have poured money into Kiwi horror-film *Black Sheep*.

It's all part of a domestic renaissance of Korean cinema. Since the late 1990s it has been one of the few countries where Hollywood productions have not enjoyed a dominant share of the market. While *Return of the King's* global appeal resulted in six million admissions in Korea, the 2005 box-office was dominated by *Silmido's* nine million ticket sales. However, Hollywood and the United States government have cut a deal with the Korean politicians to ensure that does not happen again.

But while Korean films are reaching an international audience like never before, what is getting into theatres is presenting a distorted view of the country and its cinema. Park Chan-wook's *Old Boy* might have won acclaim in Europe but its extreme violence did not impress American critics. *New York Observer* (28 March 2005, 20) film critic Rex Reid responded to it by launching an attack on the Korean nation: "What else can you expect from a nation weaned on *kimchi*, a mixture of raw garlic and cabbage buried underground until it rots, dug up from the grave and then served in earthenware pots sold at the Seoul airport as souvenirs?"

British Film journal *Sight & Sound's* Grady Hendrix (<http://www.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound/feature/49260>, accessed 26 September 2006) blame western distributors for the perception of Korean cinema: "The Korean box office is regularly dominated by comedies, romances and melodramas, yet what western distributors buy are boundary-pushing genre films. In 2005 the Korean movie with the biggest international profile was Park Chan-wook's *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance*, while in Korea the number-one title was *Welcome to Dongmakgol*, a goofy culture-clash flick about the Korean War, and at number two was *Marathon*, a feel good film about an autistic marathon runner." A few years earlier romantic comedy *My Sassy Girl* outsold even international phenomenon *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*, but was only marketed to Asian-American audiences in the U.S.

It is true that Korean cinema is known for its class-consciousness, anti-authoritarian impulses and melodrama and its new wave of directors, jaundiced and jaded by the country's twentieth century traumas appear to

view anyone with power with immense suspicion. However, thanks to New Zealand's Telecom International Film Festivals Kiwi audiences have had a chance to view a wide variety of South Korean films and discover that violence is just one way of reflecting the country's history and the social issues it faces.

Screening at the recent Wellington and Auckland festivals, *Sympathy for Lady Vengence* is a prime example of Korea's bloody but internationally popular cinema of unease. Chan-Wook's film focuses on the twisted life of 30-something Lee Geum-Ja. Sent to prison at the age of 19 for the murder and abduction of a child, Geum-Ja has spent the last 13 years reforming her character, her kindness winning the hearts of her fellow inmates. Taking a job as a chef, Geum-Ja appears happy to settle for a quiet life of cooking and contemplation, but appearances can be deceiving.

Winner of the Little Golden Lion at last year's Venice Film Festival, *Lady Vengeance* asks the question: When is violence justified? Many of the film's characters are seeking retribution, restitution and justice and when the authorities fail them they decide to take matters into their own hands. A memorable scene involves the parents of kidnapped children lining up, as if at a theme park, to take out their revenge on the children's captor.

A student of philosophy and the first Korean in space, Chan-Wook says he wants to reach audiences on a mental and physical level. "I don't feel enjoyment watching films that evoke passivity", he is quoted as saying in. "If you need that kind of comfort," he continues, "I don't understand why you wouldn't go to a spa" (*Old Boy* DVD Q&A session extra).

Bloody-spattered but balletic and beautiful, *Lady Vengeance* contains plenty of visual flourishes (stark whites, vivid reds) amongst the mayhem. Chan-Wook's camera is constantly in motion, while the narrative moves back and forth in time gradually revealing more about our anti-heroine. Vivaldi and original music by Cho Young-Wuk combine to create an evocative and emotional score, while Chan-Wook's use of sound (particularly interior sounds heard from the outside) adds another dimension.

Also screening at this year's festival, was comedy-horror *The Host*. Already a smash-hit in South Korea (grossing more than $US70m), director Joon –ho Bong's (2003's *Memories of Murder*) riotous invasion movie was actually inspired by an real event. In February 2000, a U.S. military civilian employee ordered the disposal of formaldehyde into the sewer system leading to the Han River. It took five years before he was found guilty in a Korean court, and he never served the actual prison sentence. In *The Host* the formaldehyde spill leads to the creation of a mutant creature which proceeds to stalk and eat Seoul's inhabitants.

A gleefully subversive combination of Hollywood sci-fi horrors like *Predator*, *Alien* and *War of the Worlds*, *Host* also appears inspired by B-movies like *Toxic Avenger*, *Alligator* and Japan's beloved *Godzilla* series. But as well as providing an inordinate number of thrills and spills, gasps and giggles, it also pokes fun at American imperialism, environmental management and of course Korean authorities (whose response to the threat

is the equally toxic Agent Yellow).

Fellow South Korean director Kim Ki-duk also subverts expectations with his entrancing 2004 drama *Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter…and Spring*, which first screened here at the 2004 festival before enjoying a reasonably lengthy theatrical run the following summer. Previously best-known for horrifically violent movies like 2000's *The Isle*, here Ki-duk uses his Parisian fine arts studies for a more meditative purpose.

Spring is almost entirely set in and around a tiny Buddhist monastery floating in the middle of a tree-lined lake. The monastery's only human inhabitants are an Old Monk (Oh Yeong-su) and his protégé (Kim Jong-ho). After teaching the boy some early lessons about spiritual restraint, the monk is dismayed to find his charge, now a teenager (Kim Yeong-min) giving into his lust with a visiting, spiritually ill, young woman (Ha Yeo-jin). He immediately sends her back to her mother but the infatuated boy decides to forsake his monastic home to follow her. However, he soon finds that the outside world is not all it's cracked up to be.

A triumph of style over substance, *Spring* boasts breathtaking cinematography by Baek Dong-hyeon, superb costumes by Kim Min-hee and a fine score that helps cement the film's contemplative and serene mood. Divided into five "chapters", each representing a stage in a man's life, Ki-duk's compelling drama again touches on those social themes (anti-authoritarianism, class consciousness) so often at the heart of Korean cinema. Driven by lust, the young monk finds his life collapsing around him and his response, rather than violence, is to seek refuge and spiritual enlightenment.

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