

manque les vrais ouvrages de recherche sur cette campagne, dont le plus connu est celui d'Henri Cordier².

Tout en tenant compte des réserves énoncées ci-dessus, ce catalogue constitue une référence iconographique intéressante. Comme le soulignent les caricatures d'époque reproduites en page 34, ces photographies démontrent l'impossibilité de reproduire l'action avec les techniques de l'époque. Si leur aspect figé exige quelque indulgence, elles n'en sont pas moins la preuve que dès les années 1850, les photographies sont déjà des sources d'information de tout premier ordre.

¹ Régine Thiriez, *Barbarian Lens. Western Photographers of the Qianlong Emperor's European Palaces*, New York : Gordon & Breach, 1998, p. 6-8.

² Henri Cordier, *L'expédition de Chine de 1860. Histoire diplomatique, notes et documents*, Paris : Félix Alcan, 1906.

Régine Thiriez

Paris

Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature. The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895-1937*, Stanford : Stanford University Press, 2005. xii-329 pages

While not figuring in the title, the question of "race" – the word never appears in quotation marks in the monograph under review – is central to the argument of the book. The notion of "race", once a scientific category, and one still operative in the imaginaries of most of the world's peoples, was inherited by the Chinese towards the end of the nineteenth century when, in the West, scientific racism was in its halcyon days and served as an ideological justification for colonialist and supremacist policies.

Jing Tsu sets out to study "the formation of modern Chinese identity in its national, racial, and cultural configurations" (p. 7). For the author, what envelops and infuses this construction of national identity is "failure". She alludes not to the failure constituted by China's incapacity to fight off foreign invaders or to reform its institutions, but rather to "a different order

of failure” that emerged in the late nineteenth century: “The rhetoric of failure [that] incorporated defeat into a narrative of resilience” (p. 7).

C.T. Hsia, the renowned, albeit sometime maligned, historian of modern Chinese literature once identified the “obsession” with China, as one of the characteristics of those engaged in twentieth-century China’s literary project. Tsu claims that this obsession with the national “finds its most convincing expressions in negativity [...] By keeping alive China’s humiliation as a nation, one can properly keep intact one’s passion for survival” (p. 11). As Paul Ricoeur noted in his *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago, 2004), the humiliation of the vanquished will always form a part of its national memory, and thus such strategies for survival are not necessarily specific to twentieth-century China. Another question needs posing: During the first half of the twentieth century, when China was uninterruptedly occupied, splintered and dominated by territorial, economic, and cultural colonialisms, why would the humiliation need to be “kept alive?” It was a constant.

And yet, the author’s observation that an aura of self-criticism seems to have been omnipresent throughout the early decades of the twentieth century is undeniable. National self-analysis – or rather the analysis of the national Self performed on behalf of “the people” or of “China” by the young elite intellectual class as a prerequisite in the quest for national salvation – is famously enshrined in the stories of modern China’s hero-writer, Lu Xun, whom Jing Tsu poignantly holds responsible for having “corroborated a view of ‘characteristics’ that somehow defined the Chinese racially, culturally, and psychologically” (p. 129).

There are other canonical texts that would have supported Tsu’s thesis. The poet and patriot Wen Yiduo’s poem (mentioned here in a footnote) “Dead Water” postulates the possibility of regeneration out of decay, stagnation and ugliness. Tsu could also have mentioned Wen Yiduo’s poem “The Laundry Song,” which constitutes a pertinent and notorious illustration of the sentiment of shame felt by the Chinese intellectual studying in an America where Chinese were denied the right to emigrate, whose citizenship was closed to them from 1883 until towards the end of World War Two, and where the descendants of mid-nineteenth century emigrants were left with the menial toil of the laundryman as sole means of survival. The

poem registers the sense of powerlessness of the intellectual, who alone knows the grandeur that *was* China. It is indeed humiliation that is the operative sentiment, not a sense of social injustice or empathy for the laundry worker. It is at the same time an indictment of the “failure” that appears in the title of Jing Tsu’s book and yet also a reaction to the way in which Americans imagined China and Chinese, an imaginary dominated by the spectre of the “Yellow Peril” to which Tsu alludes, and which looms across the whole modern history of the representation of China by the West.

Jing Tsu’s book consists of 226 pages of text and 51 pages of end-notes, a glossary of Chinese terms an index, and a bibliography of works in Chinese, English and (occasionally) German; a bibliography that while wide-ranging reveals some surprising lacunae. Todorov’s seminal work *Nous et les autres* (translated into English as *On Human Diversity. Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought*, Cambridge, Mass., 1993) does not figure. Ricoeur’s *Memory, History, Forgetting* would similarly have been a useful source of theoretical and historical support on the problems of narrative representation of national identity, as would the discussion of the metaphor of the body as nation by Pierre Birnbaum, whose work is not unknown in the United States. This unfamiliarity with certain European authors may also account for a somewhat displaced call for a new interdisciplinary approach to the conceptualisation of nationalism and cultural studies. In fact, such a transdisciplinary framework for the study of national identity and its imbrication with cultural production has existed for some time already in the work initiated by Raymond Williams and continued by Stuart Hall and others.

The first chapter of this book is an introductory one. The second chapter discusses narratives of the “yellow race,” which internalized and transformed Western scientific racial discourse at the end of the nineteenth century. The third chapter, “The Menace of Race,” examines the interest of China’s late-nineteenth century intellectuals for doomed and vanquished peoples (for instance, Yan Fu’s ethnological translations) and how the discourse of “Yellow Peril” was “embraced by the Chinese as a way of empowerment” (p. 68). There follows a chapter, “Loving the Nation, Preserving the Race,” on the appeal of eugenics to early Republican-period intellectuals, a “dilemma of seeking self-assertion from the very racial ideology

that bolstered European imperialism” (p. 99). Familiar metaphors of decay, decrepitude, and illness circulated and were underpinned by “scientific” notions of evolution and progress. “Translations of Western introductory texts to eugenics proliferated [...] and correspondances between collective and individual bodily health multiplied” (p. 100). But then, this correlation was not specific to China, as Western obsessions with hygiene and the health of the individual and national body demonstrate; see Georges Vigarello, *Le propre et le sale* (Paris, 1985) and *Histoire des pratiques de santé* (Paris, 1993). Chapter five, “The Quest for Beauty and Notions of Femininity”, continues in a similar vein with an analysis of the reinvention of women as New Women. Tsu here examines the literary discourse of several women writers, including Ding Ling and Xiao Hong. The subsequent chapter, “Community of Expiation: Confessions, Masochism, and Masculinity,” shifts from women’s writing to the representation of sex and masculinity by male writers. As Tsu notes, the 1920s and 1930s saw an intense Chinese intellectual interest in Freudian analysis, a phenomenon often ignored by more recent cultural historians, who fix the 1980s as the decade when Freud appeared in Chinese cultural debates. Tsu also mentions the New Sensationalists (*Xin ganjue pai* 新感覺派) but chooses to focus on the “masochism” expressed in Yu Dafu’s writings. And yet the writer who above all exploited “the fusion of psychoanalysis and fiction” was Shi Zhecun 施蛰存, a leading Shanghai New Sensationalist, or Shanghai modernist, mentioned in another context later in the book.

The final chapter analyses the phenomenon of *kumen* 苦悶 (bitterness-melancholy) – variously translated as “suffering,” “agony,” “mental anguish,” or “depression,” that was prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s, Jing Tsu explores this through an examination of the work of the writers Yu Dafu, Mao Dun, and Ye Shengtao (p. 196).

In the conclusion, Tsu claims to have analysed “failure” as “the specificity of defeated national culture and literary modernity in China” (p. 225). Nevertheless, much of what Tsu determines as specific to China could be applied to other peoples and their narratives of suffering and sovereignty. This is an interesting and, in many ways, a bold and useful, book. It is written by an evidently capable and intelligent scholar whose analyses

are often perspicacious. If there is a fault, it is a fault common to many sinologists, a sinocentrism that ignores the totality that is the world and the intellectual benefits that would be engendered by a more global approach. In conclusion, is modern China's "failure" so specific that general lessons about nation-building and national imaginaries cannot be drawn from China's modern cultural history?

Gregory Lee

Université Jean Moulin-Lyon 3

Lucien Bianco (avec la collaboration de **Hua Chang-ming**), *Jacqueries et révolution dans la Chine du XX^e siècle*, Paris : Éditions de La Martinière, 2005. 627 pages

Cet ouvrage de 627 pages est en quelque sorte l'aboutissement de quarante ans de recherches sur les mouvements populaires de la paysannerie chinoise. Ces paysans pauvres ont été des centaines de millions, mais ont laissé peu de témoignages directs. Au cours de la première moitié du XX^e siècle, il n'existe guère de recensements officiels, de statistiques ou d'archives policières, notamment dans les années 1920-1930, marquées par un éclatement politique des plus grave. L'étude de ces révoltes paysannes sporadiques et disséminées constituait une entreprise éprouvante pour l'historien, qui a dû, devant la rareté des archives officielles, s'investir dans l'exploitation d'innombrables documents épars : monographies locales, « documents culturels et historiques » (*wenshi ziliao* 文史資料), périodiques, etc. Une bonne partie de ces matériaux ne sont devenus accessibles aux chercheurs que très progressivement, depuis les vingt ou trente dernières années. Le travail harassant de l'auteur aboutit pour finir à un dossier de 3 579 émeutes – de petite ou grande dimension – survenues entre 1900 et 1949. Historien chevronné, L. Bianco consacre, tout au long de l'ouvrage, de larges pages à la critique des sources ainsi rassemblées. Cette précaution confère à son matériau la plus grande solidité, lui permet de décrire les comportements de la paysannerie chinoise sous tous leurs aspects, de les comparer avec les mouvements similaires en France ou en Europe à