

prerogative and practice as a Muslim one, with middle-class women playing the balancing role in between, is demonstrated with elegance and persuasion.

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Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895–1937*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005. 344 pp. \$55.00.

Failure, Nationalism, and Literature explores the discourse of failure as a key element in modern Chinese identity formation, especially in literature and the mass media. Jing Tsu argues that we have to look beyond the assumption that nationalist discourse should arise only from positivist assertions of sovereignty, to see how the elaboration of various kinds of deficiency and lack actually became the means by which collective (national) identity was negotiated in China. In doing this, Tsu appeals primarily to Freudian psychoanalysis as it has been adapted to cultural studies, with particular emphasis on the tropes of melancholia and masochism, which seem to be among the most attractive paradigms to many of the writers and commentators of the era under discussion.

After an overview and detailed exposition of the book's theoretical framework in Chapter 1, Jing Tsu's primary subject matter ranges from late Qing discussions of China's historical predicament in Chapter 2; popular fantasies of the might of the 'yellow peril' in Chapter 3; the discourse on eugenics in Chapter 4; nonliterary prescriptions for womanhood and literary constructions of woman in Chapter 5; Creation Society writers' deployment of psychology in Chapter 6; and Kuriyagawa Hakuson's *Symbol of Angst*, and several writers' takes on the term *kumen*, in Chapter 7. All of these texts are aligned with a cultural self-perception of failure or deficiency and various strategies Jing Tsu links to masochism for responding to this self-perception.

The study is well researched in terms of the non-literary texts, most of which are newspaper and magazine articles scholars might not otherwise encounter. The literary texts are, on the other hand, well-known and relatively widely discussed works, such as Lu Xun's *Official Record of Ah Q*, Ding Ling's 'Miss Sophie's Diary', Yu Dafu's 'Sinking', Mao Dun's 'Creation' and Xiao Hong's *Market Street*, although several interesting and sometimes important works by these and other authors are also discussed. Jing Tsu's findings are compelling. She argues that in the wake of repeated military humiliations and the Western discourse on Chinese racial deficiency or inferiority, the formation of modern Chinese national identity was fuelled by a self-perception as humiliated and deficient in a way the typically assumed patriotic pride and desire for sovereignty could never have done. The paradigm of masochism as a cultural posture, in Tsu's reading, is not simply willing submission to domination, but is characterised as the dominated subject's psychic mastery of the terms of domination. This explanation not only resonates strongly throughout the broad variety of late Qing and Republican period texts, but further has clear relevance to recent developments and trends as diverse as the radical cultural self-criticism of *River Elegy* and *The Ugly Chinese* in the 1980s to the popular and official reactions to the US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade and the Hainan surveillance plane incident.

That being said, one issue that puzzles me in this book is its relationship to psychoanalysis, which forms the backbone of Jing Tsu's theoretical framework. Tsu's readings of several different writers and texts indicate a tacit acceptance of the universal validity of psychoanalytic categories and methods. The author deploys and revises neuroses and complexes as matters of fact in her analysis with little clinical or scholarly apparatus, even as she applies them to culturally distant cultural expressions. At the same time, Tsu is extremely cautious in dealing with psychoanalysis as a historical phenomenon within modern China, giving a detailed historical overview of the introduction and circulation of psychological theories in the beginning of Chapter 6. I can understand why Tsu would want to avoid the presumption that modern Chinese understood psychology the way it is in Europe or America, but the cultural agency she attributes to, for example, Lu Xun's rejection of the primacy of the sexual drive, and Guo Moruo's common-sense take on the significance of dreams, seems to undermine the legitimacy of her own, more universalising application of the theory of masochism, even if it too is inflected in other ways by cultural difference.

Another question is, if it is meant to define the character of modern Chinese culture, how does the mastery of victimhood relate to the modern Chinese revolutionary project, and the agency of the Chinese Communist Party, both as an emergent social movement and then, ultimately, as the regime of authority in mainland China? I think there is much to be explored in the study of the culture of Chinese revolution and socialism, using an approach that emphasises negotiations with shame, sexuality, and desire in the formation of collective identities. The specious distinctions made between 'personal' and 'revolutionary' voices in the women writers discussed in Chapter 5, and between 'private suffering' and 'national distress' in connection with the Creation Society writers in Chapter 6, in apparently missing the dialectical relationship between these poles, give some indication of why Jing Tsu's theoretical framework is not easily able to accommodate a discussion of revolutionary culture.

Despite these reservations, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature* is a significant contribution to the study of modern Chinese culture, both because of the impressive reach and relevance of the strangely empowering discourse of failure Jing Tsu identifies, and because of the fascinating readings provided of discussions on race, gender, and eugenics in late Qing and Republican period print media.

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Naoko Shimazu (ed.), *Nationalisms in Japan*. London: Routledge, 2006. 196 pp. + xi, £65.00 (hbk).

Editing a successful collection of essays is never easy as many of the readers – including the current reviewer – know all too well. As we all know, it is not so much a question of the quality of individual contributions but is more about whether the volume can bring about a kind of magic – be it coherence, originality or a sense of excitement. From this point of view, the volume under review, which is a result of a workshop held at Keio University in September 2003 on 'Nationalism in modern and contemporary Japan', is a disappointment despite the heroic efforts by the editor who contributes not only a chapter but also the Introduction and Conclusion to the volume. Moreover, this volume presents more frustration than enjoyment to the scholars of nationalism for the