

Shanghainese and impetus to its rapid decline. After a short overview of Shanghai's complex modern history in chapter one, the second chapter explores the role of national language policies on the decline of Shanghainese, a chapter that undoubtedly has relevance to stories of language loss well beyond Shanghai's boundaries. Chapter three focuses on geographic displacement in modern Shanghai, showing how rapid changes to Shanghai's neighbourhood structure and urban layout have created "loss and alienation" among many of the city's residents. Chapters four and five explore the significance of intranational migration, both of which emphasize deeply how much language use intersects with class in determining the boundaries of Shanghainese identity. Thoughtfully, Xu shows how money and education can often expand a person's flexibility and agency in determining and expressing their own identity; this flexibility, however, has the effect of "further diminishing" the importance of already minoritized languages that are less tethered to power and economic opportunity than hegemonic languages such as Mandarin or even English (p. 27). Xu concludes by hinting at a "dim future" (p. 27): a global city that increasingly privileges a national or even global identity at the expense of its local one.

Perhaps my one critique of Xu's work is that, throughout the book, the decline of Shanghainese feels as much like an empirical reality as an inevitability. This sense of the inevitable is, in some ways, surprising. Xu does not shy away from recognizing the direct effect between central government "promote Mandarin" policies, policies whose ubiquity and reach she likens to a "panopticon" (p. 67). Xu also includes in her narrative instances of activism and resistance. Both these policies and the resistance against them, however, push back against the notion that linguistic loss is inevitable – both are human choices. What might Xu's thoughtful narrative look like if she had sought to observe empirical realities while still maintaining a more imaginative vision of possible futures? What kinds of suppressed presents might float to the surface when we question what we presume to be inevitable? Perhaps this might be the work of future scholars. If so, Xu's book will certainly be an important work to consult.

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Going to the Countryside: The Rural in the Modern Chinese Cultural Imagination, 1915–1965

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Both theoretically and empirically well-informed, Yu Zhang's *Going to the Countryside* develops a thought-provoking, innovative and interdisciplinary approach to better understand spatial movements from the city to the countryside through cultural imaginaries of the rural in China produced between 1915 and 1965. The corpus of material selected for the study is distributed, embodied and embedded across different forms of representation, including social-survey essays, modern fiction, theatrical plays, feature films and official news essays. The observations and analysis in this book, by reflecting on issues pertaining to modern Chinese literature, film and culture, can be of added value for the broad field of China studies. Most importantly,

Zhang's book brings the rural back to the central concern of Chinese cultural studies, after the "urban turn" witnessed across the past few decades. This is made even more valuable against the background of the increasing invisibility or marginalization of the countryside in Chinese cultural productions today. In my view, the contribution of the book is threefold.

To begin with, Zhang puts forward a convincing argument for scholars to think more explicitly about China's modern transformation. It has been well established that China's modernization progressed in response to Westernization, semi-colonialism and the development of popular nationalism. The resultant pre-existing ways of conceptualizing modernity in the global landscape might fall short of capturing its inherent complexity and particularity. One of the virtues of the flourishing and often multidisciplinary study of Chinese modernity has been to open up previously overlooked terrains and periods; elements of continuity as well as historical contingency. Zhang's study can be seen as a genuine effort in this regard. Instead of viewing the countryside as a peripheral place excluded from Chinese modernity, or challenging the intense symbiosis between the modern and the urban through a distinctive model of "rural modernity" among the discourse of "alternative modernities," Zhang instead proposes that the historical, social, cultural and political construction of the countryside serves as an experiential and aesthetic realm, participating in the making of modern China. The plausible claims seem to be supported by a well-developed argument.

Another interesting feature of the book is the focus placed on the act of "going." It offers more than just a thorough examination of the rural imagination, but also an understanding of the spatial and temporal crossing between the rural and the urban. We see the young generation from local gentry families who went to the city but remained connected with their rural roots and eventually chose to return to their rural home – prominent in the 1910s and 1920s. We also see the urban young generation who were steered to the countryside with a commitment to develop "attachments" to localities – the movement known as "down to the villages" during the 1960s and 1970s. As such, the book is structured along these two strands. First, "going to the countryside" as returning to the familiar, and the homecoming; and second, "going to the countryside" as new adventures, investigation, enlightenment and hybridization among the localities. In this way, the rural is no longer seen as a mere geographic site and statically unchanging, but a series of relationships that can be examined as spatial crossing, such as between the national and the local, the rural and the urban, the social engineering in which movement takes place, and more importantly, between motion and emotion. As the humanities and social science have witnessed an emergent trend of the "affective turn," Zhang's study can be seen as a recent contribution to such endeavours. After all, to understand the act of "going" to the countryside, we should consider various emotions, such as the nostalgic, the sentimental, the escapist or even the sceptical. Consequently, the village or local community sometimes can form "a space of attraction and empathy" (p. 47). Indeed, the author successfully demonstrates how cultural productions have helped shape new human subjectivities and created affective communities through influencing people's understanding and feeling of the world and the society they have been living in.

Last but not least, the study presents a complex picture of interconnections between representation, narrative, discourse and social reality. Zhang draws on a vast array of primary sources – fictional and non-fictional – to examine the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence, highlighting a complicated and open system of representation, and more particularly, its relationship to reality. Perhaps it might be conceded that some of the materials chosen for analysis are slightly underexploited, including imported Western media – lantern slides, illustrated

literacy primers for peasants, and spoken drama. Nevertheless, in framing the book in such a way, Zhang takes an opportunity to blur the distinction between the literary, cinematic or artistic representations and the empirical reality portrayed by historians, anthropologists and sociologists, which are often seen as being at odds. The juxtapositions of various generic texts, containing both canonical and noncanonical materials, can generate new interpretations of the rural imaginations, reveal new connections between representation and reality, as well as display the intersection of “going to the countryside” and larger social, historical and political changes.

All scholars in Chinese studies, including film, literature and cultural studies, should take a look at this book, not least for the fine method that draws upon a wide and diverse range of readings of novel texts to ask significant questions about Chinese modernization and urbanization. It sheds light on urgent current issues and events related to China’s urban–rural integration and disparity. The ongoing mass migration of Chinese peasants from the countryside to the city, voluntarily or involuntarily, suggests an inevitable trend of the transformation of agrarian society to industrial society. Will the ambitious governmental goal of achieving “strong agriculture, beautiful countryside, and rich peasants” by 2050 stimulate an entirely new trend or understanding of “going to the countryside”?

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Memories of Tiananmen: Politics and Processes of Collective Remembering in Hong Kong, 1989–2019

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Francis Lee and Joseph Chan have been scrutinizing the intersection between media and social movements in Hong Kong for the past two decades. Based on a wealth of surveys, interviews and sampling of media reports, the present volume represents the summation of many years of research on the commemoration of June Fourth in Hong Kong, and it is undoubtedly set to become the scholarly work of reference on the topic.

The introduction establishes the transformative value of the events of 1989 for Hong Kong, which “ignited local public support for democratization” (p. 17). Rather than as a “counter-memory” like on the mainland, the commemoration in Hong Kong is characterized as a “socially dominant collective memory challenging state power” (p. 21). Not unlike a social movement, Hongkongers’ “collective memory” of June Fourth is envisaged as a series of processes: memory formation, memory mobilization, intergenerational transmission, institutionalization, memory challenge and repair, and memory balkanization (under the effect of social media fragmentation). These processes are to some extent coterminous with five chronological stages that have unfolded consecutively over the 30-year period studied by the authors (pp. 35–36).

Memory formation (chapter two) is closely connected to the original emotional involvement of the Hong Kong public in the events of 1989. Subsequently, the view of Hong Kong as “China’s conscience” came to be valued as a moral imperative