during the War of Resistance, the Civil War, and the PRC is laudable, and there might well have been no ideal solution to increasing pressure from publishers to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of a scholarly study. Nevertheless, given how successful the book has been in unpacking the term "semi-colonialism," the conclusion runs the risk of oversimplifying the process of decolonization. I would like to see more about how Reinhardt's analysis opens up new ways to reconsider the war and the early PRC period. Concluding the narrative at a point in the past should not be seen as a shortcoming for a historical study, especially one which has already accomplished so much.

Fact in Fiction: 1920s China and Ba Jin's Family. By Kristin Stapleton. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016. ix + 280 pp. $25.95 (paper).

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I would wager that most historians of modern China have taught their basic course on the subject at some point with Ba Jin's novel *Family* as an assigned text. The novel offers not only a vivid, cinematic picture of post-imperial China but, as importantly, it documents the inner lives of Chinese caught up in the strange mix of change and continuity that marked the era.

With Stapleton's *Fact in Fiction* we have an opportunity to enter into the social and political landscape of 1920s Chengdu with the kind of completeness and grasp of nuance difficult to achieve unaided by most readers of Ba Jin's *Turbulent Stream* (the trilogy *Family* opens). From a literary studies point of view, we can more readily appreciate the novelist's art in altering and transforming facts on the ground to suit his purposes as a writer.

As Stapleton points out, the imaginative power of *Family*, which makes the work so important and useful for teaching, also may tempt a reader or instructor to take shortcuts past other interesting people, places, and events that define the 1920s. Stapleton adds the eye and the voice of the social historian to Ba Jin's in order to provide a clearer and more complete view of what is fact and what is fiction, or, as Stapleton succinctly puts it, the "facts in the fiction." As Stapleton points out, Ba Jin succeeds as a novelist in part because of his empathetic understanding of people and events. Stapleton helps us appreciate the deeper truths in Ba Jin's fiction by showing us more clearly and up-close the raw materials and raw feelings the novelist chose to work with.

Her reading of the period and the novels at times strikes a critical tone. She provocatively suggests that offering Ba Jin's writings as a complete statement of historical fact would be rather like taking *Gone with the Wind* as the true and complete story of the American Civil War. Progress in the social history of modern China, an effort Stapleton has helped lead, makes a more balanced presentation possible, in which not all Confucian scholars were reactionary, not all women were either "feudal" or "new" and not all educated young people sought to break free of family ties. Stapleton notes that other writers,

like another Chengdu author, Li Jieren, offered more realistic and socially grounded fiction. However, Li's gritty stories lacked the "emotional punch" Ba Jin provides.

What to do then with a novel so compelling that it attracted and still attracts readers who may mistake fiction for fact? Stapleton's method is not so much to debunk characters that may be more allegorical than real as to complete, complicate, and animate the setting Ba Jin offers with real-life characters drawn with the historian's craft.

The book is therefore organized around key characters in the novel, young and old, male and female, progressively minded and set in their ways. Each chapter provides a natural jumping off point for a discussion of Ba Jin's intentions as a writer and how the circumstances of the author's life contributed to these characterizations.

For example, the patriarch of the Gao family is famously a reactionary who softens a bit at the end of his life. This portrayal fits with one of the novel's themes: the dead weight of a tradition that needs to be thrown off if a new China is to rise. Ba Jin's hint of grudging change in an elite culture destined for the dustbin opens in Stapleton's hands to a more nuanced and multivalent account of continuity as well as change. That is, China's urban elite not only tried to hold its ground against rebellious young people in the set-piece public and private dramas Ba Jin offers, but also did what past generations had done in dynastic transitions: invest shrewdly in the next generation's development as a hedge against changes beyond any individual family's control. Stapleton shows how part of the elite "gentry" tradition involved a range of strategies of personal and family advancement aimed at defending family traditions by novel means.

At the same time, the rise of new elite professions in areas like business, politics, medicine, and the military did not mean that classical learning and Confucian philosophy lost all relevance, an impression one might gain from reading Ba Jin's *Family* without the perspective offered by Stapleton's *Fact in Fiction*. Stapleton offers examples that demonstrate that even in a modernizing city like Chengdu the old ways of doing things continued to have practical as well as ethical value. As a result, the reader is able to hold two important lines of thought and history in mind at the same time: Ba Jin's powerful and influential brief against the evils of tradition in most if not all guises and a more complete history in which a concubine might ride a bicycle, a warlord might fancy himself a gentleman and a Communist might rate friendship and family higher than party loyalty.

The result retains the emotional power of Ba Jin's novel in part by allowing his fictional characters to speak and act as the author intended and in part by giving the reader a much more realistic picture of contending forces and points of view that formed the context for fictional words and deeds. Stapleton, for example, suggests that Ba Jin's moralizing approach to the challenges of his day relies more than a little on certain lines of Confucian thought that take aim at empty rituals in favor of genuine feeling and a social conscience valorized in China's twentieth century, crystallizing in Ba Jin's own devotion to anarchism. Such questions of change and continuity, and moral responsibility and material necessity, cannot be settled by one novel or a social history of one city. However, with her close reading and contextualization of Ba Jin's *Family* Stapleton provides a key for decoding an impressive range of literary and historical puzzles.

We see this method at work in *Fact in Fiction*'s discussions of economic life, the struggles of the city's poor, political activism of all ideological stripes, and gender. The book takes us on journeys out from the Gao family's traditional walled compound into newer

commercial spaces like purpose-built avenues lined with shops and into rural areas seemingly far removed from city-based modernization but in fact integrated into China's developing economy through markets and patterns of land ownership and tenancy. The precarious condition of the urban poor reminds the reader of the moral issues raised by Ba Jin—"What can be done to alleviate their misery"—and also helps us understand why seemingly intractable problems like prostitution, underemployment, drug addiction, and economic insecurity would eventually make the concentration of new state power in the hands of first the Nationalists and then the Communists so appealing to many.

New patterns of mobility, especially on the part of rural and urban men, on display in Stapleton's Chengdu, would eventually take political development beyond a piecemeal accretion of new and old forms of charity and social action into more aggressively statist visions. In the meantime, politically charged military competition and conflict, cycling through the decade covered by Ba Jin's *Turbulent Stream*, created a growing demand for victories that brought peace rather than yet another round of violence and terror. Whereas Ba Jin's novel vividly evokes moments of terror and violence, Stapleton, an authority on the subject of warlord politics and predations, provides a more complete, systematic, and equally disturbing picture of the human cost of such violent events carried out by gun, knife, artillery, and in one instance a coffin crammed with dynamite. Whereas Ba Jin views this endemic, organized—but also chaotic—violence from the important point of view of civilians and town folk, Stapleton adds the perspective of soldiers themselves, individuals often driven to become men of violence as a result of the precarious social and positions in which they found themselves.

In her chapter on Ba Jin's popular modern female heroine, Qin, Stapleton explains the reasons Qin became a role model for many young women in the 1920s and 1930s while at the same suggesting ways in which the status of women varied widely socially and geographically in China. Chengdu was generally more conservative insofar as women's issues were concerned while at the same time typical of national trends in the decline of foot binding and the rise of educational opportunities for girls and young women. Stapleton's interweaving of literary analysis and social history helps us better understand how modern Chinese "scripted" out their lives in their imaginations even as they made practical decisions about everything from how short they dared cut their hair to how free they were to choose a mate.

The final chapter of Stapleton's book profiles Ba Jin's main character and autobiographical stand-in Gao Juehui. She takes the opportunity to remind the reader not only of the importance in Chinese history of regional variations and local realities but also the number of ideas and trends once on the rise that did not make the final cuts dictated by Nationalism or Communism. She highlights Ba Jin's youthful devotion to the Kropotkin variant of anarchism, with its sharp rejection of injustice and roving eye for where and when and against what and whom action might be taken. Working with this broad social canvas seems to have made anarchists like Ba Jin formidable fiction writers. Ba Jin was only fourteen when the May Fourth Movement broke out in 1919. He saw and heard enough to gain an early picture in Chengdu of what the new politics of individual and national emancipation might look and feel like. Stapleton makes the subtle point that movement politics appealed to Ba Jin not only because of the arguments it carried against traditional ideas and institutions but also because the friendships and emergent

comradeship characteristic of political clubs and groups that provided the concrete experience of another kind of life. Utopia flickered in and out of everyday experience as well as in the bonfires and blazes of grand sloganeering and stirring rhetoric.

Fact in Fiction, in the course of identifying this wide array of cycles and trends, adds a complex of historical narratives to the novel's plotlines. For Ba Jin the corrupt state of Confucian tradition led inexorably toward a progressive future. For Stapleton, the hybrid, plural nature of contemporary values insured that secular change carried along with it the continued importance of family ties, folk ideas of moral economy, limits on female emancipation, and the certainty that a youth culture of rebellion will grow into something middle-aged that mixed sacrifice with selfishness and national vision with local perspectives and prejudices. Stapleton uses Ba Jin's work as a springboard to a broader consideration of social and cultural forces in play in China in the 1920s. Although she is keen to correct impressions readers might take from the novels that the old ways of family, community and national life were doomed to fail ("Gone with the East Wind" so to speak), her theme of a more complex and resilient social order actually helps us understand Ba Jin's urgency in writing *The Turbulent Stream* set of novels that begins with *Family*. *Fact in Fiction* is a deeply researched, well-written and bold book that contributes enormously to our understanding of modern Chinese history and culture.

On the Trail of the Yellow Tiger: War, Trauma, and Social Dislocation in Southwest China during the Ming–Qing Transition. By Kenneth M. Swope. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 456 pp. $55.00 (cloth)

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Kenneth Swope presents his readers with a powerful epic narrative of the great ordeal of Southwest China during the Ming–Qing transition. The protagonist of this epic is Zhang Xianzhong, the infamous rebel leader of the late Ming, who "like other great villains in history … continues to fascinate" (2, 310). Zhang perishes halfway through the narrative, and the story continues with his adopted sons and is brought to an end by the Qing conquerors.

The book is divided into nine chapters. Chapter One serves as the introduction, presenting the theme and outlining the structure of the book. Swope wants to offer "an extended examination of the military dimensions of the Qing conquest of the southwest … from the perspective of Zhang Xianzhong and his four adopted sons" (13–14). In the three chapters that follow, Swope reconstructs the life of Zhang Xianzhong amid the seventeenth-century crisis that was to lead to the decline and fall of the Ming. At the end of Chapter Four, almost in the middle of the book, Zhang Xianzhong dies, leaving a legacy of insane mass-murder. The Southwestern epic of the Southern Ming was to unfold