

This sense of dialogue is aided by a fairly extensive set of cross-references among the chapters, as well as to an earlier volume with many of the same contributors also edited by Cai, *A Chinese Literary Mind: Culture, Creativity, and Rhetoric in Wenxin diaolong* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), to which the present work serves in effect as a companion volume. Cai's introductory essay does an admirable job of laying out a chronological and conceptual overview that is clear yet neither reductive nor limiting. The ten main chapters are loosely grouped into a set of four on visual and plastic arts (calligraphy, painting, and theory of the garden); three on literary writing; and a concluding set of three, which, though in markedly divergent ways, address more general issues.

Space will not allow anything like a full account of these essays here. The contributors seem generally to aim for a balance between proposing new arguments and providing "coverage" that draws on major scholarship of recent decades. This means that almost every essay can be read as a "freestanding" introduction to its topic—a feature that will make the volume as a whole a very useful resource for teaching. Wai-ye Li's essay on the *Shishuo xinyu* provides a helpful complement to the historical overview given in the introduction: her lucid and incisive account of the "aestheticization" of this culture of conversation, and particularly of the brief and often suggestively imagistic evaluative statements known as *mu* or *timu*, provides a useful point of entry both for reading the *Shishuo xinyu* itself and for the concerns of many of the volume's other chapters. Some contributors have used the category of the aesthetic to cut across conventional disciplinary boundaries, inviting us to reconsider the basic presuppositions of those disciplines, as in Rania Huntington's essay about how to understand generic distinctions between "religious" and "literary" poems on transcendents or in Robert Harrist's reference to the transcription of Daoist spirit writing to complicate art-historical questions relating to copying and forgery. There are also examples of the fruitful revisiting of well-known sources, as in the case of Ron Egan's patient and sensitive use of Wang Bi's dicta on the image in the *Yijing* to "theorize" the aesthetic autonomy of calligraphy during the Jin period.

In a compact volume addressing such a wide range of compelling issues, it is inevitable that readers will be left wishing for fuller treatments of certain topics. I, for one, feel it would help to have included an essay or two giving more sustained attention to the aesthetic dimensions of scholarly thought and philosophical debate during the period, and I found the treatment of Xie Lingyun—seemingly an inescapable figure in a discussion of the convergences among literature, landscape, religion, and literati behavior during the period—surprisingly scant. Yet in the end, such regrets serve more than anything to simply indicate the success of this relatively compact volume in raising compelling questions about a pivotal era. This is a timely and valuable contribution to the field, and it is sure to find a lasting and important place in the English-language literature on its many subjects.

ROBERT ASHMORE

University of California, Berkeley

Literary Culture in Taiwan: Martial Law to Market Law. By SUNG-SHENG YVONNE CHANG. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. x, 271 pp. \$34.50 (cloth).

This book provides information on Taiwan's post-1949 literary genres, institutions, texts, and authors; explains the ideology and aesthetic of the Mainstream, Mod-

ernist, Nativist, and Localist groups (respectively, pro-Kuomintang [KMT] and middlebrow groups, liberal and highbrow groups, socialist and realist groups, and Taiwan nationalist groups and those with no aesthetic mode in particular); follows the fortunes of each group, as all negotiated authoritarianism and capitalism; and explains how Taiwan's literary culture functions. This culture functions, author Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang suggests, through the actions of people whose worldviews are determined by family, class, and educational and political backgrounds and who are constrained and empowered by institutions that are, in turn, constrained and empowered by the government and the market. The interaction of agents, institutions, politics, and economics produces conceptual categories by which literature is perceived, appreciated, and evaluated (p. 37). Chang's conceptual framework comes from Raymond Williams (who provides the notion of dominant, alternative, and oppositional cultural formations), Peter Hohendahl (literature as an institution), and Pierre Bourdieu (artistic position, literary field, and habitus).

Chang uses theory so as to "refrain from Sinocentric culturalist assumptions, and instead strive for perspectives based on more systematic analyses of cultural developments in the early phase of capitalist modernization" (p. 28). Theory provides Chang with terminology for quick reference to complicated but entirely comprehensible processes and gives her project gravitas. Beyond this, the contributions of Bourdieu and others are minimal. For example, Chang argues that "opposition between the Mainstream and Localist positions in the literary field corresponded to opposition between mainlanders and native Taiwanese in the society as a whole" and that in Taiwan "artistic practices and perceptions" are rooted not only in economic and social class but also in "politically constructed and ethnically based hybrid 'political' classes" (p. 39). Both arguments are sensible, but while they can be articulated using the terms "structural homology" and "habitus" they do not have to be. Other distractions are the book's fragmentation (three parts, each with two or three chapters, each with six to twelve sections) and digressiveness (sections on Hou Xiaoxian and Zhong Acheng might have been dispensed with). Still, this is an excellent, important work.

Chang makes the following arguments: because Taiwan's modern history is different from that of mainland China, its literary culture is different; Mainstream (dominant), Modernist (alternative), Nativist (oppositional), and Localist (oppositional) groups are distinct but influence and overlap with one another; all groups compete for commercial viability and cultural legitimacy; the demands of the market and the markers of legitimacy change over time, and cultural agents adjust to changes; the Mainstream has been dominant for most of the post-1949 period; between 1949 and 1999, the "basic conditions for literary production and consumption in Taiwan gradually changed . . . from state-engineered cultural hegemony to market-oriented media domination" (p. 33); and, finally, Taiwan's literary culture is disintegrating because commercialization has fragmented the cultural marketplace into niches and emptied literature of its prestige value (p. 211).

Chang writes that "rigorous historical work on contemporary Taiwanese literature has been scanty" (p. 28), and her book begins to set this right by discussing many moments, movements, institutions, and people. Three examples follow.

In the 1950s, Mainstream cultural agents promoted a conformist, moralist, and Sinocentric literature that was allowable during the period of the KMT's "manipulation of the public memory," which emphasized ties to traditional China and prohibited discussion of Taiwan's particularity, including its colonial past (p. 80). "Pure literature," or *chunwenxue* (traditional prose, familiar essays, lyric and expressive writ-

ing, and romances), found a middle ground between what the government wanted and what writers and readers wanted and “remained the cornerstone of the Mainstream position” through the late 1980s, *mutatis mutandis* (p. 83).

Chang argues that Localists gained political legitimacy just when the rules of the game changed: after the end of martial law, “a new *cultural* principle of legitimacy was increasingly asserted over the old political principle” (p. 129; emphasis in original). The Mainstream adopted aesthetic strategies of the Modernists to achieve cultural legitimacy and remain mainstream; the Localists, having “spent all their energy winning the old race, . . . collapsed across the finish line only to find that it had just been moved” (p. 129).

In chapters 3 and 6, Chang argues that as editors of the newspaper literary supplement (*fukan*) of the *United Daily News*, Lin Haiyin and Yaxian (pen name of Wang Qinglin) “guarded and promoted . . . the Mainstream aesthetic position,” made it popular among the growing middle class, and preserved the function of the literary supplement as the disseminator of state ideology. From the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s, *fukan* played the main role in shaping “a golden age of sorts for the literary field” (p. 143) and mediated between the Nationalist regime and the public and between Sinocentric nationalist visions and “incipient Localist nationalism” (pp. 146–47). Chang concludes that the “real importance of *fukan* culture was its role in the trend toward a more complete commercialization of the cultural sphere in the ten to fifteen years preceding the lifting of martial law” (p. 148).

Whether or not Chang is correct in assuming that the history of literature in Taiwan is widely misunderstood as a conflict between Modernists and Nativists, the more nuanced story that she tells in *Literary Culture in Taiwan: Martial Law to Market Law* is likely to become paradigmatic. Her division of Taiwan’s “literary field” into four groups of “literary agents” that respond to political and economic pressures has explanatory power. Her attention to the resiliency and importance of the evolving Mainstream, her discussion of the emergence of the Localist group (*bentu pai*) from within the Nativist movement (*xiangtu pai*), her consideration of the importance of the institution of *fukan*, and her analysis of developments in the 1990s contribute to a more complete history of the literature of Taiwan than was previously available in English. Subsequent discussions will have to either work within Chang’s model or argue with it.

THOMAS MORAN
Middlebury College

Collecting the Self: Body and Identity in Strange Tale Collections of Late Imperial China. By SING-CHEN LYDIA CHIANG. Sinica Leidensia, no. 67. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005. x, 284 pp. \$128.00 (cloth).

Collecting the Self: Body and Identity in Strange Tale Collections of Late Imperial China is the latest in a number of recent books in English about late imperial strange-tale collections. Whereas previous works have focused on a specific writer or topic, Sing-chen Lydia Chiang examines the cultural significance of strange tales more generally through a discussion of three collections from the Qing period: Pu Songling’s *Liaozhai zhiyi*, Yuan Mei’s *Zi buyu*, and Ji Yun’s *Yuewei caotang biji*. Her study is centered on tales about anomalous bodies, including corpses, grotesquely deformed humans, and