

castes, it is wrong to conclude that *this world* [that of Sanskrit aesthetics] *has space only for what is beautiful.*" (177. Emphasis added)

Despite these difficulties, it is, however, fair to say that overall, the book presents itself as a valuable introduction to the vast and interesting domain of Sanskrit literary criticism, thus encouraging the reader to engage more intensively with this fascinating subject.

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ECOCRITICISM AND CHINESE LITERATURE: IMAGINED LANDSCAPES AND REAL LIVED SPACES. By Riccardo Moratto, Nicoletta Pesaro and Di-Kai Chao. London and New York: Routledge, 2022. 209 pp.

As a literary and cultural criticism tendency, ecocriticism was formed in the United States in the mid-1990s, and then appeared in many countries around the world. Although the definition of ecocriticism varies, it is generally accepted that ecocriticism is a literary and artistic criticism approach that addresses ecological issues from the perspective of literary criticism. On the one hand, it addresses the deep relationship between literature and natural environment, and on the other hand, it concerns the internal relationship between literature and art and social ecology, cultural ecology, and spiritual ecology.

It is an important trend of today's ecocriticism to discover and introduce the resources of Eastern civilizations. Schopenhauer, Huxley, Toynbee, Ralston and many other thinkers and ecophilosophers have emphasized the importance of Eastern ecological wisdom. In recent years, Harvard University Press has successively published a number of books, such as *Daoism and Ecology* (2001), *Confucianism and Ecology* (1998), *Buddhism and Ecology* (1997), carrying out in-depth exploration into the great value of ancient Eastern ecological thought. An increasing number of ecological thought and ecological culture researchers realize that the exploration and introduction of Eastern ecological wisdom will probably provide new ideas for ecological philosophy, ecological ethics, ecological literature and ecological criticism.

This book *Ecocriticism and Chinese Literature: Imagined Landscapes and Real Lived Spaces* is just an effort in this regard. As a compilation of eco-criticism about oriental writings, it focuses on modern and contemporary Chinese literature. As emphasized by Wang Fuzhi, a master of Chinese classical poetry theory, a very important goal of literature and art is *qing* (情) and *jing* (境).

Combining these two classical literary concepts, this volume, taking a new ecological perspective, examines their contexts and different ecological dimensions based on dozens of works in different genres. It points out that there is an inseparable connection between nature, human beings and literary writing, and analyzes how this connection is manifested in traditional, modern and contemporary Chinese literature. This collection of essays reinterprets the concept of Chinese classical literature from contemporary and eco-criticism lens, hoping to provide new materials and perspectives for eco-criticism and expand the depth and breadth of eco-criticism.

This volume consists mainly of two parts: (1) Ecocriticism and Chinese Literature, and (2) Imagined Landscapes and Real Lived Spaces. Each part is further made up of seven chapters.

Chapter 1 "Trees Keep Time: An Ecocritical Approach to Literary Temporality" analyses the emotional topography of human-tree relationships and their effect on narrative temporality with a focus on the works by Chu T'ien-hsin's (朱天心), Dung Kai-cheung's (董启章) and Alai (阿来). The author argues that plants, trees for example, have always been powerful symbols of place and core images for defining and representing time.

Chapter 2 “Transcultural Landscape and Modernity in a Feng Zhi Sonnet” examines the sonnet of Feng Zhi, a modern and contemporary Chinese poet who reinterprets the poetic classical tradition of poetic scenes in the modern era when man is disconnected from nature. It explores the relationship between the transformation of language, prosody, and landscape conception in modern Chinese poetry.

According to Chapter 3 “Nonhuman Poetics (By Way of Wang Guowei)”, although there are quantities of descriptions of landscape and nature in Chinese classical poetry, nonhuman entities, however, are seldom touched in traditional Chinese literary criticism as beings in their own right. In light of this, Christopher, focusing on *Remarks on Lyrics in the Human World* (*Renjian cihua* 人间词话) by the late Qing aesthetician Wang Guowei, tries to subvert the conventional understanding of Wang’s concept of *wuwo zhi jing* (无我之境) as an anthropocentric idea, and to raise our awareness of the presence of nonhumans.

Aiming to explore *qing-jing* in contemporary Chinese poetry, Chapter 4 “Shared Sensibilities: Human-Environment Relationship in Contemporary Chinese Poetry” first examines *qing* and *jing* respectively and then looks at them again as a pair with a focus on Yu Jian’s verses and the poems that express ecological concern via a strong sense of dissonance, deformity, and disgust for the contemporary environment. In so doing, it tries to explore the types of relationship established between poetic characters and the environment, and analyzes whether contemporary conditions not only destroy the basic connection with nature, but also change the aesthetic consciousness accordingly.

Chapter 5 “The Writing of Inner/Outer World and Eco-poetics in Contemporary Chinese Poetry” focuses on the relationship between human, nature and the environment in post-1990 Chinese poetry scene. It takes Zang Di’s (臧棣) poetic creation for a case study to analyze how his poetic writing moves toward the object-self integration, and how it contributes to and reveals the eco-poetics of contemporary Chinese poetry from three aspects: the general structure of poetic composition, the combination of imagery, and the rhetoric of discourse.

Chapter 6 “Rethinking the Urban Form: Overpopulation, Resource Depletion, and Chinese Cities in Science Fiction” aims to analyze how various urban forms have been envisaged and problematized in recent Chinese science fictions. Based on close readings of Hao Jingfang’s *Folding Beijing* and Liu Cixin’s *Moonlight*, this chapter analyzes the way in which reflexive modernity and liquid modernity can be adopted to examine their reflections on the intricacy of the present ecological and social challenges in their imaginations of the future of Chinese cities.

Chapter 7 “Representing Environmental Issues in Post-1990s Chinese Science Fiction: Technological Imaginary and Ecological Concerns” first combs the technical imaginations that deal with ecological issues, and then examines how these narratives reimagine and reproduce the relationship between nature, humans, and non-humans in these works. It also tries to work out, from an ecocriticism perspective, how humanist and post-humanist ideas can be expressed in these works, and how the corresponding human/non-human conditions, images and identities can be creatively built up. By answering these questions, this chapter sheds light on the agenda and politics of these Chinese literary representations of environmental issues, and highlights the emerging posthumanism in Chinese science fiction in the 1990s.

The second part of this volume revolves around imagined landscapes and real lived spaces.

Chapter 8 “Bridging *Qing* (Emotions) and *Jing* (Natural Realm): Fei Ming’s Eco-Poetics in *Bridge*” studies Fei Ming’s masterpiece *Bridge* (桥), an almost plotless novel characteristic of the interchangeability between landscape and emotions. It focuses on the concept of *jing* as a natural realm and discusses how Fei Ming “bridges” past and present natural landscapes and natural and artificial realms. The love triangle between Xiaolin, Qinzi and Xizhu enables the author to describe the “bridge” between natural and mental landscapes as well as the feelings of these protagonists in a nonanthropocentric way.

Chapter 9 “(Un)natural Landscapes and Can Xue’s Reinterpretation of Tianrenheyi” focuses on the works by Can Xue who has been exploring the interweaved realm of human feelings against the backdrop of a natural yet surreal dreamscape. It maintains that Can Xue, by falling back on both Western and Chinese traditions, develops a new and fascinating pattern of interpreting human relationships with nature, and that *jing* is narrated as the multiple spaces (both real and unreal) which enable the experience of the communion between *qing* and the external world.

Taking Liu Cixin’s science fiction works and A Que’s zombie stories for case study, Chapter 10 “Autopoiesis and Sympoiesis: Imagining Post-Anthropocene in Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction” draws on the notion of Chthulucene to discuss the reflections on the Anthropocene and its imagining of the post-Anthropocene in Chinese science fictions. This chapter points out that both Liu Cixin’s and A Que’s works reflect on anthropocentrism from the lens of the non-human others, and that two different directions of imagining a post-Anthropocene era can be identified, namely, autopoiesis and sympoiesis.

Chapter 11 “Feeling the Catastrophe: Affective Ecocriticism in Liu Cixin’s *The Wandering Earth*” conducts a case study of Liu Cixin’s popular novella “The Wandering Earth”, a milestone Chinese Climate Fiction, and discusses, by employing the ecocriticism and the affect theory, how nature and emotions are entangled in this work with emphasis on the part that feelings play in shaping human beings’ reaction to the threat of extinction.

Chapter 12 “Environmental Nostalgia from Idyll to Disillusionment: Zhang Chengzhi’s Inner Mongolia from Short Stories to Essays” concentrates on a contemporary Muslim writer Zhang Chengzhi and his writings. It relies on three of the four “environmental dimensions” identified by Buell, namely, the “physical landscape” represented in the text, the “implicit landscape” of the author, and the presence of intertextual and cultural references underneath the text, to analyze Zhang’s descriptions of the environments. It argues that although Inner Mongolia remains an everlasting *fil rouge* in his works, Zhang’s attitude has changed from appreciation of an idyllic land in his earlier works to, due to the contamination and destruction of the grassland, bitter denunciation after the 1990s, hence a desperate feeling of everlasting abandonment.

Chapter 13 “History, Landscape, and Living Beings in the Work of Wu Ming-yi”, attending to the works by Wu Ming-yi, pays special attention to how landscape and nonhumans, instead of simple metaphors of the human condition, are full-fledged characters and victims just like the humans of the wars and the processes of colonization. It notes that the landscapes under the pen of terroir writers are cultural prior to being imaginary, and that the historical writing of Wu Ming-yi focuses more on the historical and socio-economic evolution of the place than the history of a people.

Chapter 14 “Situationality in Tropical Malaysia: A Literary Sense of Place in Ng Kim-chew’s Fiction” attempts to interweave disparate philosophical systems to analyze Ng Kim-chew’s Sino-ophone short story “Allah’s Will”, and as a thought experiment, it intentionally entangles the configurations of *qing* and *jing* with those of Heideggerian “dwelling” (*buan/bauen*), aiming to site not only the placelessness of Ng’s fiction but also the ecological possibilities of thinking Malaysia’s tropical environment otherwise.

The essays collected in this book are preliminary explorations into the topic of *qing* and *jing* in contemporary Chinese literature. The list of contributors would show that this volume witnesses the joint efforts of international scholars. This book provides one more opportunity for Chinese literary thought to go to the world academic forum, and proves an instructive book for scholars interested in Chinese literature and ecocriticism. In addition, in the context of increasingly prominent environmental problems and the uncertain impact of climate change on human survival in today’s world, the in-depth and extensive discussions in this book will help stimulate people’s exploration into the relationship between man and nature, between man and environment, and between humans and non-humans in literary works, and reflect on the

relationship between humans. However, there are still some points in this volume not accurate enough<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, considering the obstacles in cross-language research, it does not affect the rigorousness academic attitude and style of this book.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For example, the expression “tell the good China story” (see pp.95-96). This expression and some following ones in this essay are cited from *Why Fiction Matters in Contemporary China* by David Der-wei Wang. The original Chinese version is “讲好中国故事” (tell the China story well) rather than “讲中国好故事” (tell the good China story). Although David Der-wei Wang points out that “the Chinese title for the campaign 讲好中国故事 has also been translated as ‘tell the China story well’” (see notes for Chapter 1, p. 178. David Der-wei Wang. *Why Fiction Matters in Contemporary China*. New Hampshire, Brandeis University Press, 2020.), he insists on translating it into “tell the good China story”. These two translations, however, are endowed with quite different implications. The translation of “讲好中国故事” into “tell the China story well” or “tell the China story” has already been widely accepted and can be further confirmed by official media and authorities.

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TRACING THE PATH OF YOGA: THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF INDIAN MIND-BODY DISCIPLINE. By Stuart Ray Sarbacker. NY: State University of New York (SUNY) Press, 2021. 451 pp.

In recent times the popularity of Yoga has taken the world by storm, and there has been a rising interest in studying Yoga as a discipline. Stuart Ray Sarbacker, with his book *Tracing the Path of Yoga: The History and Philosophy of Indian Mind-Body Discipline* strives to present a chronological account “on the origin and development of Yoga in its Indian contexts” (3).

Sarbacker acknowledges all the scholars on Yoga and their works which inspired him to write this book. We get a rich oeuvre of literature on Yoga in the acknowledgement section. The book is divided into eight chapters, preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion. In the introduction, Sarbacker gives an insight into the medieval and modern representations of Yoga.

In the first chapter, ‘Defining Yoga’, Sarbacker addresses the complexity which arises in defining the term because “Yoga . . . has a wide range of meanings, due to its use in a variety of religious and secular contexts” (9). Sarbacker has tried to define “yoga” in relation to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Both the householder and renouncer traditions of Yoga have been analysed. The significance of the *Guru-Śiṣya* (teacher-student) relationship in both *brāhmaṇa* and *śramaṇa* traditions has been emphasised. Sarbacker critiques the power imbalance in this teacher-student relationship which can make the disciples susceptible to abuse. Women's ascetic roles, which were earlier bound to the domestic sphere, “have been adapted to accommodate changing gender roles” (26) in the modern yoga traditions. The concepts of “Yogī, Yoginī, Sādhaka, and Siddha” have been explained. Yoga has been discussed in relation to class, gender and sexuality.

In chapter two, ‘The Indus Civilization and the Vedic Tradition’, the Vedic roots of Yoga is explored. The posture of the figures found in the relics of the Indus Valley Civilization seems to predate yoga posture. The “proto-yoga” Vedic practices of “incantation (*mantra*), asceticism (*tapas*), breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), celibacy (*brahmacarya*), vow (*vrata*), station (*āśrama*), extract (*soma*), agent (*viṣa*), and herb (*auśadhi*),” (50) is elucidated. The primary focus is on the “proto-yoga” practices and “proto-yogi” figures in the Vedic age.