

continuities from the past. These legacies include the propensity to rely on technical solutions and official regulations, which, in his view, have been far less effective than "the adaptive strategies that people in China have developed to deal with ongoing environmental change" (p. 194). This wistful view of the past is a brief lapse on the last page in Muscolino's otherwise dispassionate, balanced, and energetically researched study.

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ANDREW DAVID FIELD. *Shanghai's Dancing World: Cabaret Culture and Urban Politics, 1919–1954*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press. 2010. Pp. xv, 364. \$45.00.

The social life—nightlife in particular—in early twentieth-century Shanghai was well known and often alluded to in contemporary popular culture (news media, movies, novels) and subsequent scholarly literature on modern China, but it escaped critical analysis beyond anecdotal and impressionistic references until this book. The scattered and illusive nature of relevant primary sources precluded earlier scholars from conducting research on the topic. Andrew David Field has done a fine job in assembling a large body of Chinese and Western sources (including novels, news media reports, magazine articles, memoirs, police records, interviews) and deploying such sources effectively within an engaging analytical framework.

The book focuses on Chinese cabarets (dance halls of all varieties—hotel ballrooms, independent dance halls, dance floors in restaurants, and cafés—and "dance academies") that grew in number and popularity from the 1920s through the 1940s. Field successfully contextualizes the growing "dream world" of the cabaret industry in China—particularly in Shanghai—after World War I. He describes the conjunction of the post-war rise of jazz in the United States and its introduction to Shanghai; the social life of Westerners in semi-colonial and cosmopolitan Shanghai that invited foreign musicians to seek careers there; the emergence of a hierarchy of Chinese cabarets, at the top of which were situated those with modern architecture, flashy decor, and foreign musicians; the spread of a dance craze, with sensual and sexual associations, from upper and middle-class Chinese to the larger urban population; and the attempts at regulation and control of the cabaret industry by the Japanese, Nationalist, and Communist regimes for political, ideological, and fiscal reasons.

While describing how the Chinese cabarets were an element of Shanghai's entertainment industry and popular culture, Field explores the connection and differences between the new cabaret hostesses and traditional brothel courtesans. He shows that hostesses, many of whom were former courtesans, had an even larger impact on the city's nightlife and social mores than their predecessors. Field describes where cabaret hostesses came from, how they worked and lived, how they interacted with their patrons, and how they fared

in their careers. As might be expected, the tabloid press and the cabaret industry fed each other, which was especially evident in the "dance empress" contests and the ranking of cabaret hostesses. Field relates both the advantages and disadvantages of life as a cabaret hostess relative to the lives of female factory workers. Relationships with men—either those who controlled them and/or those with whom they were emotionally and sexually involved—represented the major source of danger for the hostesses. The possibility of earning much more income and working in a less restrictive environment than factory women, however, counterbalanced potential pitfalls.

Field also pays attention to consumers of the cabaret industry, the Chinese men and women who frequented cabarets. In the 1930s they included "film folks" (actors, actresses, producers, and directors), journalists, officials, and gangsters. In the 1940s, however, a typical patron was an employed man in his late twenties or early thirties, alone or with a small group of friends or co-workers. In regard to this new archetypal patron, Field speculates, "While loneliness and alienation, or the quest for casual contact with the opposite sex, may have brought him to the cabaret, just as likely he went there for communal purposes, in order to develop networks with other men like him" (p. 206). As the author shows, the sexual dimension of the cabaret culture was unmistakable. Contemporaries commented upon this aspect of the cabaret industry and critics cited it as proof that cabarets were worse than brothels in causing or contributing to moral decay in society. According to the author, however, sexual contact within the confines of the cabaret did not go beyond groping; further sexual activities would have taken place elsewhere if a relationship developed between patron and performer.

The remaining chapters nicely cover all angles of the topic. Fields discusses the formation of the Shanghai Cabaret Guild under the Japanese occupation and its subsequent cooperation with the Nationalist government; the uprising of cabaret workers and hostesses against the ban on the industry imposed by the government in 1948; and finally the phasing out of the industry completely by 1954 under the Communist government. Chapter six, about cabarets and the politics of collaboration and resistance during the Japanese occupation, is less analytically successful than other portions of the book. Field characterizes cloak-and-dagger activities in this period as particular to the cabaret world, but such encounters also occurred in brothels, theaters, tea houses, and restaurants. This point is minor and does not detract from the value of the surrounding chapters.

In sum, this book adds fine-grained social, cultural, and material texture to the history of modern Shanghai and helps broaden our inquiry into what constituted modernity and what it meant in early twentieth-century China.

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