making a desperate situation worse. Third, the history of famines generally tells us that as conditions worsen, too often "the ability of famished villagers to cooperate even in the worst of times" degenerates into opportunism, intra-peasant conflict, and ultimately lethargy and fatalism.

How did the famine end? How come there was no famine in 1962 or 1963 when, if official data are to be believed, agricultural output was no higher than in 1959–61? Doubts about official harvest data in these years must be part of the answer. So must grain imports; in 1961/62 they represented one-quarter of total wheat supplies. Shifting food entitlements and economic pragmatism mattered too. Thaxton marginalizes the role of the policy reforms introduced by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping but his claim that class struggle in the form of peasant resistance was the determining factor needs further elaboration to be convincing.

Finally, the book does not advance our understanding of the demographic toll. The editors are content with the claim that "some 15 million to 43 million peasants starved to death" (p. 1), while Ralph Thaxton opts for a toll of "*at least* 30 to 55 million" (p. 260, emphasis added). This is just one sign of how much we still don't know about the Great Leap famine, despite such an excellent collection of essays.

CORMAC Ó GRÁDA

The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History
PAUL CLARK
Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008
xii + 352 pp. £17.99
ISBN 978-0-521-69786-6

Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966–1976
Edited by RICHARD KING
Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010
xii + 282 pp. $32.95
ISBN 978-0-77481543-7 doi:10.1017/S0305741011001305

The reality of what happened during China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (*wenhua dageming*) still invokes a frisson of sheer horror from those in the know, particularly the deaths by suicide or torture of many of China's most eminent cultural figures, including famously the artist Pan Tianshou and the writer Lao She. Two recent books focusing on culture during the Cultural Revolution (*wenge*) provide valuable contributions to research on this period, which has largely been insubstantial and infrequent in Anglophone literature and remains a problematic area of research despite continual interest in the subject in the academic and wider community. Despite numerous accounts in literature and also some detailed historical analyses, there has been a gap in the serious study of culture itself during that time, despite its centrality in the title of the movement.

Paul Clark's full and detailed account of various aspects of cultural production and reception in China from 1964 through to the end of the Cultural Revolution (taken as the usual main dating 1966–1976) is largely biased towards opera as a central, reformed cultural form but his book also includes sections on dance, art and architecture, music, film and literature. Clark displays an in-depth level of research on the central role of

model operas and the complex mechanics of adaption that entailed many years of rewriting and reconfiguring traditional forms of opera and other cultural forms into acceptable narratives/performances towards narrow and specific political ends. Clark's study draws out the hierarchical political relationships between key individuals and also the way in which opera troupes were affected by the continual call for further improvement and correction to the point of exhaustion for all concerned.

The obsessive attempt over many years to "perfect" the model operas to meet exact requirements of the leaders of the Cultural Revolution led to a drawn-out and exhaustive process that effectively came to fruition only by the early 1970s, by which time the operas had been transferred to film for dissemination to larger audiences. Viewers became quickly fed up with the repetitious diet of over-familiar and laboured performances that everyone knew by heart. Clark's section on literature reinforces this point in his description of the underground "salons" formed by sent-down youth in the late 1960s and early 1970s when alternative literature was produced and reproduced and circulated rapidly amongst youth stuck in rural areas keen to get their hands on works outside the proscriptive cultural canon. This provides a useful link into the later 1970s when experimental literature, art and poetry finally emerged more fully. That many of the sent-down youth became members of the new culture movements in the 1980s, such as the fifth generation film-makers is central to an understanding that the Cultural Revolution is a key source of much of the cultural production of the 1950s generation up to the 1990s. Indeed one of the strengths of Clark's book is his emphasis on themes across different cultural media, which balance out in the later chapters the first three chapters' focus on opera. In his words, "A model Peking opera had a life beyond the opera theatre, in posters, newly created folk dance, storytelling, comic books, and even on everyday utensils. This repetitive presence illustrates the ambition of the cultural authorities to invent a new mass culture" (pp. 2–3).

Clark's account of the adaptation of opera from traditional forms prevalent since the 1950s and earlier is particularly strong on the relationship and co-option of regional opera styles into the new "revolutionary modern Peking opera." Certain aspects of this deserve further mention: the long process of scrutiny the operas underwent to be approved to meet the requirements of the political criteria, from 1964 to 1974, Mao's own growing weariness of the narrow range of opera and plays available to watch as well as the general audiences' growing dissatisfaction with the operas, and internal struggles within acting troupes at the mercy of constant manipulation by the authorities.

Clark's study is greatly enhanced by his use of extensive Chinese sources such as the prolific research by the scholar Yang Jian who has written many articles since the mid-1990s, adding a new depth and range of scholarship on the subject across drama, music, song, opera and literature. Despite acknowledging the ultimate failure of much of the cultural production due to the excessive attention paid to concepts of correction, Clark also displays the multiple influences that brought about the new cultural forms, such as Western music, ethnic non-Han elements and regional features taken from localized traditions. He describes in detail the decision-making involved in the visualization of operas, plays and ballets in relation to costume, set design and styling, which are proved to be integral to the construction of an innovative kind of Chinese revolutionary "modernity."

Richard King's edited volume is a set of nine essays focusing on different aspects of art during the period across a range of themes, including a fascinating chapter on the mental torture suffered by the 20th-century master Shi Lu, two poignant memoirs, and analyses of art movements and art works into the contemporary period. Zheng Shengtian's essay is a damning account of the Zhejiang Academy's dark fate during

those years, including descriptions of violence and persecution which Clark's book largely avoids. For example, Zheng describes the labelling of the prominent artist Pan Tianshou (then president of the academy in Hangzhou) as a "Guomindang cultural spy" at the hands of Jiang Qing and Yao Wenyuan and his subsequent lonely death in a Hangzhou hospital in 1971 after five years of continuous persecution and torture. That these terrible tragedies are brought out in King's volume is of enormous importance given the on-going suppression of documentation on the Cultural Revolution in the past 30 years.

Whilst Clark's impressively researched book makes a very important contribution to knowledge on visual culture and the operation of culture in this radically politicized period of China's recent history, King's volume is bolder on the human cost of the time within cultural life. This subject will probably take decades to emerge in full, with thousands of accounts still unspoken and a complete lack of political responsibility or accountability by those (still living) who effectively carried out torture and murder on a scale yet to be revealed. Although this deeply problematic period is a long way from any kind of meaningful exposure, efforts have been made continuously to draw out information in and outside of China. Highly critical works produced in recent years act as extraordinarily courageous (and often lonely) efforts to unearth detailed personal accounts, such as the filmmaker Hu Jie's documentary *Though I am Gone* (2005), which documents the first female teacher to be murdered in an elite school in Beijing by her own students, told through the words of her 85-year-old widower. In the current climate the reality of the Cultural Revolution is still effectively taboo. These two volumes are important additions to the history and cultural significance of the period and hopefully will tempt students and scholars to take up the challenge of carrying out further much-needed research in the field.

The recent treatment of human rights campaigners, lawyers, writers and artists in China is a sobering reminder of some of the tactics used to maintain the party line in the face of opposition used before, during and after the Cultural Revolution right up to the present. Rather than relegating the Cultural Revolution as an irrelevant aberration in the modern era, it is vital to understand the significance of the period as an on-going problematic of Chinese politics and society up to today. In the words of Julia Andrews from King's volume, "it is on the human wreckage left by the Cultural Revolution that China is building its twenty-first century" (p. 29). These two important volumes pave the way for further research and probing into the Cultural Revolution, often dismissed as "the ten dark years of chaos," that has profoundly affected China up to the present day.

KATIE HILL

Mapping Modernity in Shanghai: Space, Gender and Visual Culture in the Sojourners' City, 1853–98
SAMUEL Y. LIANG
London and New York: Routledge, 2010
xviii + 218 pp. £75.00
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"Another word for 'modern,' or 'new' in early twentieth century China was 'Shanghai'," wrote David Strand ("New Chinese cities," in Esherick (ed.), *Remaking the Chinese City*, 2001, p. 213). Shanghai and Chinese modernity were inextricably linked, but what did this mean in practice and what was Shanghai