example, various contributors refer to 1979 as the beginning of the post-Mao, post-Cultural Revolution or reform period. Also, in spite of the absence of a single voice across the entries, there is certainly an obvious editorial emphasis on subjects that have grabbed the headlines in the international media. For example, the entry on Falun Gong is by far the longest, spanning nearly nine pages. This is to be contrasted with entries on important subjects such as Islam in China, and HIV/AIDS and STIs, which occupy little over a page.

The volume itself is beautifully bound and printed by Routledge. The print is clear, and the text is well edited, there being no obvious misprints, although the use of Chinese characters in addition to pinyin would be a welcome augmentation to future editions. An expansive index, as well as excellent suggestions for further reading at the end of most entries, makes this volume an excellent reference work for anyone with an interest in contemporary Chinese culture. The price tag of US$210, which may prove prohibitive for the average reader, suggests that the volume is probably intended for library reference collections.

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Consuming Literature is a critical examination of the commercialization of literary production in China from the 1980s until the present, with an emphasis on the 1990s. Although literature in China was long considered an ideological tool, literary practices over the past two decades have been driven increasingly by market forces. This transition has drawn much academic attention. In his book dealing with a broad picture of contemporary Chinese culture, Geremie Barmé (In the Red: On Contemporary Chinese Culture [New York: Columbia University Press, 1999], p. 286) shows that literary and cultural debates among highbrow intellectuals in the early 1990s were exploited by print media for commercial purposes. However, there was no comprehensive and systematic investigation of the emergence of a commercialized mechanism of literary publishing until Shuyu Kong’s Consuming Literature. Emphasizing that Chinese publishing was struggling between the market and the constraints of the socialist system, Kong argues that, in the Chinese context, the market mechanism has “served as a catalyst for reform, quietly but steadily undermining the foundations of the socialist publishing system” (p. 94). Therefore, “the positive results of commercialization have outweighed the negative ones” (p. 8).

Kong’s book consists of two parts. In the first part, Chapters 1, 2 and 3 explore the emergence of literary best-sellers in China by scrutinizing different
stages of the publishing process, namely writing, production and distribution, including the growth of unofficial book publishing and distribution. Kong’s research demonstrates convincingly that since the 1990s most Chinese writers have become aware of the commercialization of literary culture; most progressive Chinese publishers and distributors have adopted modern business practices; and unofficial book publishing and distribution has exerted a great influence on the world of Chinese publishing.

In the second part, to assess the influences of the market in the literary field, Kong pays attention to the tensions between the state and the market through an analysis of three distinct fields of literary production: women’s writing, foreign literature translation and literary journals, discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 respectively. The book ends with a brief exploration of how the literary industry exploited the commercial power of new media—television and the Internet—and generated multidimensional literary products (Chapter 7).

The book’s strength lies in the richly detailed analyses based on comprehensive interviews and field research conducted between 1999 and 2002. It is thus impressive for its up-to-date and informed understanding of the state of Chinese publishing. For instance, Kong’s account of the “Xue Mili” literary phenomenon (in Chapter 1) is interesting in the way it reveals how Chinese writers first broke away from the socialist system and transformed themselves into cultural entrepreneurs, a subject that has received little attention in the published literature. Her discussions in Chapter 3 of how unofficial book distribution and publishing changed from the 1980s to the 1990s are also valuable. Until the present, unofficial (also known as “second-channel”) publishing is still officially prohibited and is associated with the sensitive issue of piracy. Kong deals with this “grey zone” intelligently and her analyses are concrete and useful.

Kong demonstrates a keen understanding of the intricacy and complexity which characterize the nascent Chinese publishing industry. For example, her analyses of two literary works, Lin Bai’s *A War with Oneself* and Wei Hui’s *Shanghai Baby* (including their literary aspects, the process of production and social circulation) illustrate the dual effects of increasing commercialization on Chinese female writers. While many women writers have been exploited by the market, some others have “exploited their own sexuality to gain notoriety and huge financial rewards” (p. 96). These two cases, together with many others, enlighten readers about the double meanings of “-consuming literature”—the opportunities brought about by the commoditization of literature, as well as the “consumed” identity of literature.

Another example of Kong’s perceptiveness is her special attention to the contradictory reality of Chinese publishing that results from its dual-track system: the co-existence of government ownership and the transformation of literary institutions into cultural enterprises. This theme resonates in Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6. Throughout the book, the boundaries between official regulations and unofficial practices are shown to be in a state of constant confrontation, contestation and compromise. Dilemmas facing a literary journal such as *Beijing Literature* (Chapter 6) illustrate that, despite the fact that the state pushed literary
journals to commercialize themselves, its ideological control had never been loosened. The book is fascinating in disclosing these contradictory processes, but Kong adopts a somewhat one-sided approach to them as she focuses on the influence of market mechanisms on the existing socialist literary establishment. In this sense, readers may find it useful to read this book in conjunction with Barmé’s “CCP™ & ADCULT PRC” (*The China Journal*, No. 41 (January 1999), pp. 1-23), which highlights the mutual appropriation between the Party and the commercial market for the realms of advertising and popular culture.

Overall, this is a substantial book and a rich source for students and researchers interested in contemporary Chinese literature and especially literary production. People interested in the effects of economic reform on Chinese society at large will also find it worth reading.

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2005 is the centenary year of the Chinese cinema, which began with the 1905 screening of a very short opera excerpt in a Beijing theatre built in traditional teahouse style. The film, *Dingjun Mountain*, was shown alongside opera, magic shows, slapstick, acrobatics and foreign film shows. A century later, Chinese film has developed from these humble beginnings into a vital and varied part of world cinema.

The three very different books reviewed here attest to this vitality and diversity. In film terms, *Chinese National Cinema* is a “long shot”. It traces a century of Chinese cinema in three “Chinas”: mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. *Hitchcock with a Chinese Face*, on the other hand, cuts to extreme close-ups, of one film from each of the same three “Chinas” in the late twentieth century. Finally, *Postsocialist Cinema in Post-Mao China* gives a deep-focus view of a neglected corner of mainland film history, the immediate post-Mao years between 1976 and 1981. The authors are all major scholars in the field, so these books together provide an informed, multi-dimensional picture of the Chinese cinematic landscape at the end of its first century.
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