Ellen Widmer explains in the epilogue, "The Inner Quarters and Beyond: Women Writers from Ming through Qing and Its Deliberations on a 'Minor Literature,'" that the authors did not engage Robertson's theoretical intervention because her chapter was written well after their own essays were conceived. She concludes that while requiring further reflection, the theory of a minor literature is both illuminating and limited in its applicability to the Chinese case. It does not, for example, account for women's engagement in non-literary artistic pursuits such as embroidery and painting.

Coda: The Late Imperial Period and Beyond

In challenging received notions of history, literature, culture and society in the late imperial period, the volume also raises critical questions about what followed. What is the arc of this "minor literature," if we so name it, once we enter the twentieth century? How was women's writing affected by the new genre and print forms it assumed with the rise of the periodical press, such as editorials (shelan 社論) and women's journals? Several of the authors in the volume have already observed qualitative changes in women's textual production as we reach the turn of the twentieth century: writing on illness became more detailed in the later period according to Fong, and accounts of war more realistic according to Hu. Has our focus on women who not only wrote but acted like the revolutionary martyr Qiu Jin caused us to overlook other modes of historical witnessing of the 1911 Revolution or the chaos of the early Republic that may be akin to Wang Caipin's poems on the Taiping Rebellion or Xue Shaohui's reflections on the 1898 reforms? Could the countless poems "buried" in literary columns to women's magazines that few to date have studied provide us with a new level of insight into early Republican consciousness? Can Wai-ye Li's linking of political engagement and gender dissatisfaction in the late Ming productively complicate ongoing discussions of the tensions between nationalism and feminism in twenty-century China? What happens to the collective value and political nature of a minor literature as it becomes increasingly fragmented and politicized?

The richness of this volume thus ultimately lies not only in the texts it has carefully interpreted, the lives it has meticulously retraced, and the arguments it has forcefully made, but in the plethora of historical questions with which it leaves us.

JOAN JUDGE
York University


Yi-Li Wu's new book is a major addition to the growing literature on the history of gender and medicine in Imperial China pioneered by such talented scholars as Charlotte Furth, Lee Jen-der 李真德, and Francesca Bray. This book shows how the complexity of Chinese medicine as practised in the late imperial period could be effectively explained to the modern reader by analysing childbirth as an essential component of juk 娩科 (medicine for women). Yi-Li Wu shows with great clarity and finesse the female body as imagined in major Ming-Qing medical texts, and how such imagination was intrinsic in the social and intellectual trends of the time. Based on Charlotte Furth's groundbreaking A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960-1665, 1 Wu goes further and deeper in the analysis of juk texts and makes a significant contribution to the understanding of late imperial medicine by shedding new light on several important aspects of childbirth: the subtle relations between literate and popular medical publications producing layered understanding of the proper practice of childbirth and conceptualization of the female body, the uncertainty of pregnancy and its implications, and the controversy surrounding postpartum health. With this book, we now have a solid and comprehensive understanding of how, in medical, social, and intellectual terms, Ming-Qing birthing mothers were observed, managed, and explained. This book will be indispensable for anyone interested in the history of medicine, society, or culture of Late Imperial China.

The book begins with a chapter on the general background of late imperial medicine. The author explains here the development of the literate medical tradition that had been dominated by male authors since medieval times, and had become part of Confucian scholarly culture since the Song, when medicine for women matured as a specialized subfield. The scholar-physicians, moreover, considered themselves superior to female midwives in matters concerning women's illnesses and childbirth. Wu reconfirms Furth's findings, that while Song juk specialists highlighted the distinctiveness of the female body and its illnesses, late imperial doctors emphasized its similarities with the male body. Claiming that the physical constitution of men and women was basically similar, late imperial doctors increasingly attributed the particularities of female illnesses to social causes, "thereby muting the idea that women's bodies were inherently sickly" (p. 45). However Wu disagrees with Furth on the explanation of this important change (see below).

In the second chapter, Wu introduces the reader to the social reality of childbirth in the late imperial period by going through popular juk manuals such as Treatise on Easy Childbirth (Dasheng bian 逹生編) and formulas of the Bamboo Grove Monastery 竹
hand, under such uncertainty, the doctors placed the responsibility of preventing difficult birth on the mother. The scholar-physician would argue that delivering a child should be as natural as the falling of a ripe fruit and that only improper behavior and ill health of the mother would jeopardize the outcome.

The next two chapters are essentially examinations of important late imperial texts and formulas related to childbirth and postpartum healthcare. In Chapter 5, the above-mentioned early eighteenth-century text, Treatise on Easy Childbirth, is given in-depth bibliographical and textual analysis. Wu justifies the importance given to this text by saying that it "essentially crystallized a set of optimistic perspectives that had become increasingly salient in late imperial doctors' views of childbirth" (p. 150). Drawing from medieval texts stressing easy birth, Ye Feng 葛風, author of the popular text, formulated the central theme that birth was innately easy and was made difficult only by the unnecessary and aggressive intervention of ignorant midwives. Central ideas in this text could also be found in Ming-Qing medical books authored by scholar-physicians, clearly suggesting the established division of labor between female midwives, experienced but often illiterate women of the community, called upon to assist in common childbirth, and male literate doctors, authors of childbirth texts, who were summoned only when there was an emergency. The "discourse of cosmologically resonant childbirth" embodied by the Treatise, according to Wu, "provided an important intellectual resource that male doctors could use to legitimate themselves as superior overseers of women's gestational bodies" (p.187).

The last chapter on postpartum health is a meticulous study and fine analysis of the history of several concoctions or remedies for postpartum health, and a detailed account of the technique of "doing the month" after childbirth, when the mother was considered to be most vulnerable. Such remedies and techniques are still used and practised today. The controversies over the efficacy of the various concoctions developed around thecontingent currents of medical practice in the Ming-Qing period with the rise of the wenbu温補 (translated here as "supplementing through warmth") approach to maintaining health, inspired by the great Yuan scholar-physician Zhu Zhendeng 朱震亨. The relative popularity of the various concoctions depended on whether cooling or warming foods and drugs were in fashion or whether depletion or stagnation of Blood was considered the cause of the vulnerability of the postpartum body. Wu here explains with clarity and depth the rise and fall, and the change in content, of variouspostpartum formulas during the Ming-Qing period. The chapter ends with a discussion of a nineteenth-century text by a cholera specialist, Wang Shixiong 王士雄, who maintained that the greatest threat to postpartum health was heat, not cold. Criticizing the practice of stifling mothers under heavy blankets even in the summer for a month to keep off the cold, Wang demonstrates the popularity of such a practice in the Jiangnan 江南 region.

Wu's book, the fullest account in English on the history of childbirth in Late Imperial China, is a rich mine of information on the traditional understanding and management of the reproductive female body. It also provides insightful links to the study of childbirth
in modern China. As described in the epilogue, traditional medicine for women was still valued by doctors in China as a better alternative to Western obstetrics in the early twentieth century. The postpartum care meticulously analysed in the last chapter is still practised today and some of the concoctions are even globally commercialized.

In theoretical terms, Wu brilliantly revises Furth’s notion of the androgynous body and proposes another way of imagining the body as “infinitive,” “one that serves as the basis for all human bodies, to be conjugated into male and female, young and old, robust and delicate, Southern and Northern, depending on circumstances” (p. 232). The invention of fuke in the Song was thus not a production of gender difference, but a new way of explaining gender differences. Such differences were minimized in literate Ming-Qing medicine except for illnesses pertaining to childbirth. For Furth, late imperial doctors were “stepping back” from the Song distinctive female body. For Wu, these doctors simply saw this female body as just a variation of the infinitive body. In other words, it was no longer a question of the androgynous or the gendered body, but that of a distinct individualized body that late imperial doctors came to be interested in. This notion of the infinitive body further liberates our imagination of the body from all possible boundaries.

ANGELA KI CHE LEUNG
University of Hong Kong


Sound and Sight is the latest contribution to the growing body of interpretive scholarship by means of which we have been reassessing the cultural heritage of the Six Dynasties over the last twenty years. In this book, Meow Hui Goh constructs a picture of the life of the courtier-poet in the Southern Qi 南齊 (479–502) through a close reading of selected poems by Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513), Xie Tiao 謝朓 (464–499), and Wang Rong 王融 (467–493), commonly recognized as the three foremost poets active in the decade-long reign of Emperor Wu 武帝, when Qi court culture reached its zenith.

Looking back over Six Dynasties literary scholarship of the past decade, one feels that a book-length treatment of these three major poets was simply waiting to be written. Richard Mather’s magisterial compendium of annotated translations of the poetic corpora of all three furnished a basis for comparison in making new interpretations; Cynthia

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