

and the Hanoi-Beijing-Moscow axis were both built upon an atheistic, totalitarian, and aggressive ideology of communism. He was thus blind to the nationalist force, which drove both the CCP movement and Ho's Vietminh at the time. He was also blind to the social force, or the widespread suffering of poor peasants, that was the foundation of land-reform programs in the CCP's and the Vietminh's movements. Therefore, he ignored the rise of a unique form of nationalism in East Asia in the post-World War II era, which was based upon the political coalition between the urban elite and poor peasants and was determined to achieve national independence through land or social revolutions. Thus, as Herzstein emphasizes:

Moscow, Luce insisted for too long, ran Beijing and Hanoi. His miscalculation badly affected domestic politics, as leaders scrambled to outdo each other in isolating China, even when the PRC moved away from its Soviet ally after 1957. Largely because of his China fixation, Luce then justified American involvement in a hopeless conflict against a different variety of Asian nationalism in Southeast Asia. His analytical framework made it impossible for Luce to understand post-colonialist peasant nationalism in China, much less in Vietnam.

(p. 252)

The significance of this book goes far beyond the life and work of Henry Luce and *Time* magazine in the Cold War. It sheds important new light on current debates in the study of Cold War history. It underscores the danger of studying Cold War history, particularly that of U.S.–East Asian relations, from an ideological framework of the Cold War, which Henry Luce and many policy makers took for granted at that time. If for Luce the bipolarity of the Cold War was an ideological divide between U.S. liberal democracy/Christian values and Soviet collective communism/atheism, which dictated whatever happened in China and Asia, then for scholars in the post-Cold War world, such a framework must be, first of all, reexamined, subject to much more serious scrutiny. If for Luce all the available information must be selected and cut neatly into his preexisting framework, then for scholars in the post-Cold War era, those newly declassified Chinese, Russian, and U.S. archival documents must be examined in different frameworks, rather than being selected or filtered through the same framework as that of the Cold War. No matter how many newly declassified documents one seems to use, as long as the framework is similar to that of the Cold War period, one's research conclusion about the relationship between Beijing and Moscow could be amazingly similar to that of Henry Luce and *Time* magazine in the Cold War.

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Rhetoric and the Discourses of Power in Court Culture: China, Europe, and Japan.
 Edited by DAVID KNECHTGES and EUGENE VANCE. Seattle: University of
 Washington Press, 2005. xiv, 351 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

At a time when there is renewed interest in questions of sovereignty and problems of comparison, a volume that deals with power and court culture in a comparative framework promises an important contribution to current scholarly debates. Given that individual essays, especially those on China and Japan, tend to focus fairly strictly on a nation and a period—hence Han, Tang, and Song dynasty China; Heian and

Muromachi Japan; and medieval and Renaissance Europe—it is perhaps not surprising that the essays in *Rhetoric and the Discourses of Power in Court Culture* are mostly indifferent to scholarship in recent decades on power, discourse, rhetoric, sovereignty, and culture. A sense of opposition between area studies and theory is endemic to the contemporary intellectual scene, to the point that some imagine and acerbate a divide between theoretical work and empirical research, which verges on a divide between metaphysical thinking and physical accumulation of data. Yet this is surely a false opposition, a bad abstraction. Surely, a volume that deals with power and court culture, however historically or geopolitically limited the scope of its individual contributions, has something to say about sovereign power and culture more generally. If not, why bring these essays together?

In fact, the emphasis on court culture and discourse/rhetoric rather than on sovereignty per se seems poised to follow Michel Foucault's recommendation and "cut off the King's head" in analyses of power (*Power/Knowledge*, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980, p. 121, also p. 105). In the realm of court culture, one expects a more complex field of power than that of monarchs and emperors lording it over their subjects, Leviathan-like. One might expect an account of power in terms of so-called subject formation rather than an insistence on domination and exploitation that merely repeats the sovereign's power. One would expect such micropolitical power formations to enable more macropolitical class or caste distinctions without being reducible to them.

Sometimes the essays do seem to move in this direction, albeit hesitantly and uncertainly. The first two essays, for instance, grouped under the heading "Rhetoric of Persuasion," explore problems of succession in relation to court ritual. David Knechtges looks at the "political ritual" of refusal, which began with Cao Pi issuing written refusals in response to edicts by the Han emperor offering him the throne (ca. 220), only to accept in the end. Knechtges contrasts this relatively peaceful transition to the Wei dynasty with the violence that Scott Waugh examines during two of the most turbulent decades (1310–30) of English history (p. 26). Various accounts of the rampant violence surrounding political succession at this time indicate for Waugh "the shallow nature of courtliness and court culture in England and Europe as well as the ambiguity of the terms" (p. 57). Implicit to the two essays is a sense that court culture may indeed stabilize succession and maybe diminish brutal struggles for dominance. Culture, even court culture, is apparently in opposition to violence, and body count—blood spilled, people tortured and executed—provides an inverse measure of a period's culture. Such a stance raises questions, however, not simply about the violence of culture but also about culture's power. What kind of power does court culture have that it can affect violence?

The title of the next section, "Rhetoric of Taste," seems calculated to address questions of culture and power. Pauline Yu provides an overview of imperial anthologies of poetry with an emphasis on an early ninth-century collection, *Yulan shi (Poems for Imperial Reading)*, concluding that "its graceful, balanced decorum is precisely the image of the world that the emperor wanted to see" (p. 87). Ronald Egan looks at the indebtedness of the imperial court to literati values in the last four decades of the Northern Song dynasty, showing how "amateur" literati art production served as a model for excellence that could not be acknowledged as such among its imperial admirers. Although Egan's account has the merit of introducing some sense of conflict into the world of art production and signaling the importance of "noncourt intellectuals" in the formation of courtly taste (pp. 141–42), one never knows what is at stake in such open yet disavowed appropriation of the work of noncourt intellectuals. What

kind of power is this? Egan ventures that it is unlike that described in Yu's essay (p. 142).

Stephen Carter's essay goes the farthest to pose basic questions about power and court culture. Carter considers how Ichijō Kaneyoshi's writing from the fourteenth century on earlier court literature (especially *Tales of Ise*) "restricts itself specifically to courtly knowledge" such that the only legitimate understanding of this literature "is as a document in court history and courtly poetry and poetics" (p. 104), thus discrediting other forms of knowledge and other interests. Insofar as Carter also shows that modern scholars have built their histories of Japan upon these courtly narratives, he implies that the construction of court culture is not without interests and values. He thus directs our attention to the relation between courtly and modern national formations of knowledge and power.

The first essay in the section, "Rhetoric of Communication," by Robert Joe Cutter, explores Cao Zhi's insistence on his literary skills in the wake of his removal from imperial succession (in favor of his brother Cao Pi mentioned previously). His conclusion—that courtiers removed from political power compensated with literary skills (p. 161)—is striking because it implies different spheres of power (roughly analogous to modern separation of politics and art, literature or culture) without explaining what kind of power is operative in courtly knowledge or cultural pursuits. When such arguments are pushed, the impression is that a public sphere is in the offing: a realm of interests and values autonomous of political activities that can then comment critically on them. But one would have to ask if such an interpretation does not simply impose on court culture, by default and anachronistically, a modern conception of power, naturalizing modern conceptions of the social. Paul Edward Dutton's essay poses a distinct challenge on this head. After a compelling analysis of the effects of keeping and transmitting secrets in the early Middle Ages, he asks, "If secretiveness is one of the characteristics of court cultures in general, how confident can we be that we understand those worlds?" (p. 187). In effect, the rebuslike operations that Dutton reveals undermine the separation of aesthetic and political spheres of activity, suggesting other kinds of power coursing through them. They also pose a challenge to a strict opposition between violence and culture.

The history of women and the study of gender have done a great deal to reintroduce questions about power in context of court culture, especially in Sinology and Japanology. Because such approaches do not begin with the socioeconomic, institutional, and political frameworks that once defined discussions of power but look primarily at sex and gender asymmetries, such approaches would seem ideally suited to the analysis of cultural power or subject formation or the micropolitical inflections of institutional formations. In the first essay under the rubric of "Rhetoric of Gender," both concern Chinese dynastic culture, and Stephen Owen shows how Ban Gu's biography of Lady Li deftly manipulates appearances in order to present the emperor's favorite as a manipulator of appearances. Kuo-ying Wang attends to something analogous, to how disfavored, demoted, or exiled Chinese poets idealized and universalized the experience of neglected imperial consorts and concubines to express their relation to the emperor. Wang and Owen thus suggest that it is men's power over women in the realm of expression that allows them to recast the negativity of their experience in the affirmative. Their problem is, in effect, the double erasure or abjection of court women. This would seem to demand a fuller account of subject formation, precisely because their accounts presume the modern subject and universalize patriarchal power. What specifically is the relation between the power of men over women and courtly power? Is there a patriarchal formation at the heart of imperial sovereignty? Does it

differ from the patriarchy of modern formations that has received so much attention from feminist scholars?

Like Carter's discussion, the two analyses in the final section, "Rhetoric of Natural Nobility," raise important basic questions about court culture and sovereignty. Eugene Vance's account of Dante's courtly poetic idiom offers profound insights into different traditions of metaphysical conceptualization of the courtly. The final matrix of Dante's idiom, the Dionysian theology of positive difference, stands into contrast to a more dominant Augustinian lineage, which potentially opens a genealogical angle on sovereignty and poses questions about the imagination of sovereignty in this volume. Arjo Vanderjagt's essay aptly poses his discussion of the remaking of chivalry into nobility as a microhistory of ideology, roughly from 1430 to 1475. In the fashioning of a court ideology, he discovers "sense of identity that could have been a precursor of national identity" (p. 330) in a manner that might well bear comparison to the problems of identity, loyalty, and public that crop up in the emergence of the Tokugawa *bakufu* in Japan.

Yet if it proves difficult to make analogies, to broach questions about comparison, or to think genealogically, it is because the essays in this volume do not speak to one another. I have evoked the occasional glancing cross-references, yet for the most part, contributors address their materials so narrowly that they tend to repeat the key abstractions of their field in its narrowest definition. Behind the unwillingness to address their abstractions (court, culture, discourse, rhetoric, sovereignty) is, on the one hand, a laudable desire to present different worlds in all their differences. Yet there is, on the other hand, enough commonality to their abstractions that one suspects their mutual deafness to be a strategy to avoid thinking about the processes of abstraction implicit in any discussion of court culture. In any event, the reader is left to wonder why these essays appear together. Especially diligent readers might put in the effort to locate those crucial moments in which the essays speak to one another, yet because the contributors have not made the same effort, the project of the volume will ultimately elude them. Oddly, although its emphasis on court culture and discourses of power should pose a challenge to sovereignty as the beginning and end of an analysis of power, the volume as a whole presents an image of sovereignty akin to Jean Baudrillard's evocation of the monarch who turns to his aide to choose for him which view he prefers. Perhaps this is because modern formations reprise court culture as a model for bourgeois patronage, and without a careful analysis of the relation between power and culture, one winds up with a seemingly apolitical yet inexplicably powerful culturalism: "Tell me what I like."

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CHINA

The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856–1873. By DAVID G. ATWILL. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006. xiv, 264 pp. \$60.00 (cloth).