

*Anna May Wong: Performing the Modern.* By Shirley Jennifer Lim  
(Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2019. 262 pp.)

Shirley Jennifer Lim's *Anna May Wong: Performing the Modern* examines the life and cultural work of the most successful Asian American film actress of the mid-twentieth century. Unlike earlier biographies of Anna May Wong, Lim's work is not a narrative retelling of major events in Wong's life or an analysis of the Los Angeles-born actress's most famous Hollywood roles. Instead, Lim utilizes what she calls a "nontraditional imaginative archive" (p. 6) to de-center Wong's time in Hollywood. In six chapters, the book examines Wong's work for film studios in Berlin and London, her off-stage uses of fashion and accent while in Europe, her vaudeville performances in Paris, glamour photographs taken of Wong in New York, news coverage of her 1939 visit to Australia, and most interestingly, film footage from Wong's 1936 visit to China. Through a critical analysis of selected "vignettes," (p. 9) Lim demonstrates Wong's deliberate "self-fashioning" (p. 9) of her star image.

Lim asserts that Wong's sojourn in Berlin, "marked Wong's emergence as a truly cosmopolitan and global actress" (p. 27). Wong's German films were produced in multiple languages and circulated around the world. As a result, Lim contends that Wong became a "significant figure in the production of an interwar cosmopolitan culture" (p. 30). Lim continues her examination of Wong's cosmopolitanism in subsequent chapters that juxtapose Wong's career in Europe with Josephine Baker's and that compare Wong's photos with those of the actresses Lupe Vélez and Dolores del Río.

The book's most fascinating chapter focuses on an untitled film that Wong produced in 1936. Passed over for a leading role in MGM's *The Good Earth*, Wong visited China for the first and only time that year, bringing with her a cinematographer. Lim argues that Wong utilized the film of her visit to mediate her star persona (p. 155) and that the resulting work "stands as a counterpoint to Hollywood cinema's construction of China and Chinese Americans" (p. 156). Twenty-one years later, the ABC television's *Bold Journey* aired an edited version of the film with a new voiceover by Wong.

Delving into topics overlooked or understudied in other works, Lim's *Anna May Wong* provides a nuanced picture of a film star whose ability to shape her global image reached far beyond her work in Hollywood. As a result of Lim's focus on overlooked aspects of the actress's career, this book is most suitable for those already familiar with Wong's life and artistic work.

Academics seeking an introduction would do better to start with sections on Wong from Karen Leong's *China Mystique* and Celine Shimizu's *Hypersexuality of Race*, while lay audiences might begin with more traditional biographies by Anthony Chan and Graham Russell Hodges. At the same time, specialists in Asian American history and film history will find Lim's creative approach to archival materials and her rigorous theoretical framework to be a welcome addition to the growing literature on this early Asian American star.

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S. Heijin Lee, Christina H. Moon, and Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, eds.  
*Fashion and Beauty in the Time of Asia*. (New York, New York University Press, 2019.)

This timely anthology creatively entitled: *Fashion and Beauty in the Time of Asia* is a very welcome contribution to the fields of fashion studies, Asian studies, and Asian American studies. Currently the interdisciplinary field of fashion studies is dominated by the studies focusing on Western Europe which is imagined to be the fashion hub of the world. This new anthology marks the way “recent encounter[s] between fashion and ‘the East’ [present] an occasion to think about how the geographies of fashion and beauty have shifted, particularly in the ways that Asia has emerged as a cultural and economic force in this story” (p. 1). Although the book's title locates itself in “Asia”; it really focuses on East Asia (China, Korea, Japan, as well as Nepalese nail salon workers in New York City), and Southeast Asia (represented by the chapters on Vietnam and the one chapter on Filipino couture in Canada). The book's main themes consider how “people narrate their own personal and national histories through these goods,” and how “centering Asia in the study of fashion and beauty sheds light on three critical thematics: time, creativity and labor” (p. 7).

Most books on dress and fashion focus on the semiotics of clothing, accoutrement, and beauty. This anthology adds another dimension to existing ethnographies by discussing both the meanings of fashion and beauty, as well as the business side of “fast fashion” and the intimate labor involved in beauty treatments such as the workers at nail salons, and the challenges of producing ethical fashion—all analysed in a transnational context. Almost all the authors make a supreme effort to tackle these complex themes in their