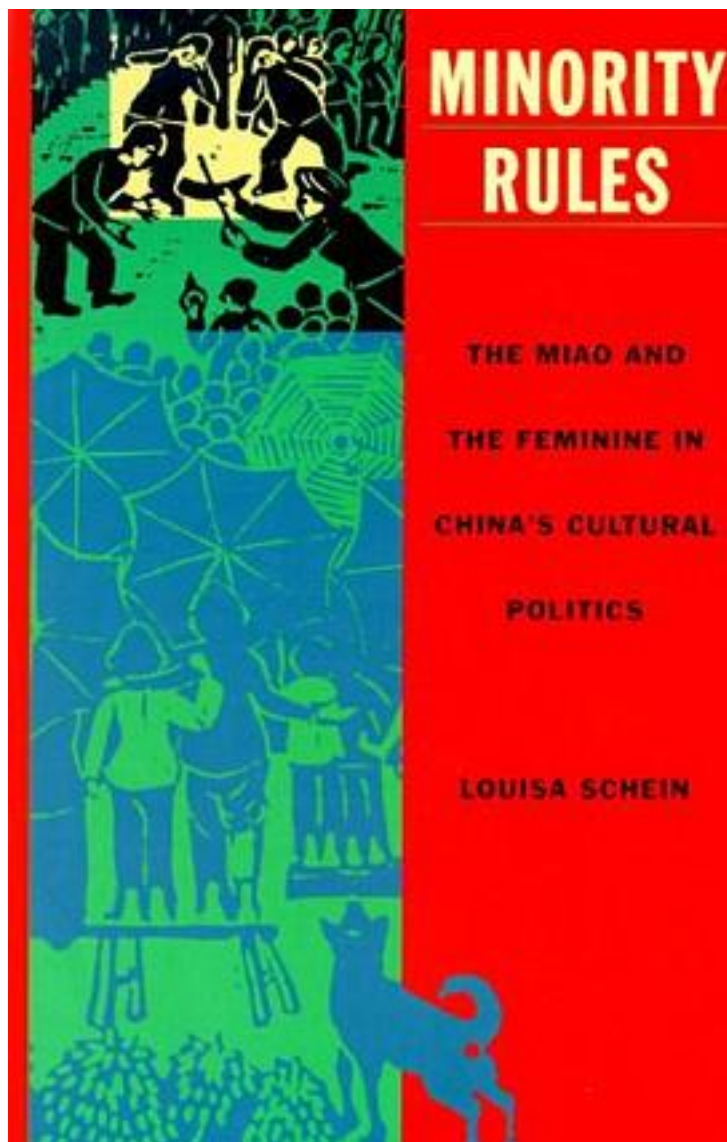


Minority Rules



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著者:Louisa Schein

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Louisa Schein's study of cultural production in post-Mao China begins and ends with the Miao, one of China's 56 officially designated minority nationalities. As she points out in her introduction, however, "this book is about China as much as it is about the Miao" (p. 2). Indeed, this book is very much about the complementary and indispensable relation that each bears to the other.

Schein's focus is on cultural production, and much of the text consists of a close examination of representation practices through which "Miao" has emerged as a historical and ethnic identity. The Miao live scattered across seven provinces in southwestern China and four southeast Asian nations, speak dozens of mutually unintelligible dialects and refer to themselves with a variety of names, although "Miao" is not among them. Nevertheless, Miao, originally a derogative imposed by outsiders, has become an official standard and an accepted self-description.

Schein begins by sketching the continuous but unequal relationship between Miao and Han from the late imperial period through the 1990s. Over this period, the Miao have been brought under increasingly tight political, economic, and cultural control by the Chinese state. This trajectory of political and cultural power is reflected in a series of discourses and practices through which the Miao have been constructed as Other. In the 19th century, the Miao were depicted as exotic, dangerous, and promiscuous in popular picture albums. During the Republican period, the Miao were pressured to assimilate, often enduring humiliation and physical coercion. After 1949, a sincere effort to account for ethnic diversity within the new nation-state was first interrupted by the Great Leap Forward and then effectively negated by the conformist pressures of the Cultural Revolution. In the post-Mao era, as markets have overtaken mass movements and top-down policy declarations, new opportunities as well as challenges to Miao cultural agency have emerged.

After the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, China's new leaders sought to realize the state as "a social order of national multiethnicity" (p. 73). Transforming newly fixed ethnic categories into functioning social and political units relied, in part, on the work of young minority men and women who were recruited into training schools called "Nationalities Institutes." Some were groomed as political cadres and sent back to their communities; those with appropriate talents were trained as artists and performers. Schein's poignant profiles of aging members of this cohort provide valuable insight into the personal and collective struggle entailed in interpreting and accommodating unpredictable shifts in state policy and economic conditions. Once in great demand for their value in promulgating the message of ethnic unity and socialist development, these now-faded stars were highly skilled and well-trained performers. As state-sponsored cultural professionals, they developed highly stylized, sanitized repertoires that combined such elements of traditional Miao culture as courtship songs and shamanic dances with the techniques and aesthetics of ballet and other Western art forms.

With the advent of the post-Mao economic reforms, however, these stylized representations were rejected as artificial and inauthentic by both Chinese consumers and global markets. Although the most successful performers still enjoyed the prestige and privilege of an elite status in their adopted urban milieu, most found themselves eclipsed by rough-hewn rural troupes who were better able to satisfy the fantasies of urban Chinese consumers and foreign tourists.

The marketization of ethnic images entailed the emergence of new forms of

exploitation as well as new opportunities for cultural agency. Schein's descriptions make it clear that neither trend dominates the current process. For instance, the commodification of authentic, ethnic, female Miao bodies certainly serves to reify ethnic and gender relationships, reproducing the asymmetries of power among Han and Miao, male and female. Many Miao women are distressed by the indignity of being subject to the yearning, idealizing, and sometimes sexualizing gaze of the consumer. Yet in the interactions between some Miao women and male Han tourists, officials, and other expectant consumers of exotic, Miao femininity, Schein discerns creative attempts to reclaim individual and collective agency. In one of the most insightful passages in the book, she describes how some young Miao women respond to these potentially exploitative situations. When recruited by Han photographers to appear in traditional festival garb, some opt out entirely, whereas others have become habituated to the point that they are able to manipulate the procedure and dictate the terms of remuneration (p. 211). In one case, young women made their own arrangement to sing privately for an amateur Han folklorist, defying (and ultimately drawing a reprimand from) their elders. Here, Schein shows that Miao women have been able to subvert both the expectations of their own communities and the “urban gaze” of Han tourists. By taking control of the commodification process, their actions transcend mere resistance to domination.

In *Minority Rules*, Louisa Schein skillfully combines theoretical debate with detailed and engaging description in a work that is as intellectually insightful as it is ethnographically informative. As a study of the Miao and of the dialectics of gender, power, and representation in the post-Mao era, Schein's book is an important addition to the ethnography of the minority peoples of southwestern China and should interest all anthropologists of contemporary China. Yet this work ultimately deserves a broader audience; this is a significant contribution to the theory of cultural production.

作者介绍:

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标签

人类学

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评论

當年王明珂老師讀書會讀物

关于建国后汉苗关系史的故事。主要理论是“内部东方主义”和性别理论，以文化史为主。说汉族与苗族的文化交往类似殖民，有明显的“权力-服从”关系，这一点通过汉族的男性形象和苗族的女性形象得到强化。这些我都觉得有问题——用西方的“征服-被征服”逻辑描述有中国特色的民族关系。

Culture的题还是用Ethnography好，不过Schein的理论用得有些过，选材可能掺杂了不应该的主观因素。

http://books.google.com.hk/books?id=GomyOthrHjUC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Minority+Rules&hl=zh-CN&ei=ZIJ0TLeRG86ecay7pJ8G&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result#v=onepage&q&f=false 不仅是representation，还是producer internal colonial / internal orientalist / internal colony / internal orientalism / internal colonialism

文笔很好。见解很imposing。当然引发的争论也很多。

因为上课不得不又重读一遍，理论过于驳杂，民族志部分不满意，一度怀疑她所谓的itinerant ethnography和大量对于民族节日表演的描述只是因为没有更in-depth的材料。少数民族身份的构建对于不了解中国国情的学者或许新鲜，可惜也只限于此。

culture is a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world.

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书评

以前写过英文版的book review作业，不过不怎么记得书的内容了，刚好重温一下。关于Hmong/Miao，掐架太多了，到底谁是Hmong，谁是Miao等等，每一期的Hmong Studies上面都有论战，持原生论，持建构论的大有人在。关于苗族起源的问题，我曾经和一个美国苗族青年聊过，他说起他们的...

2004年秋季某天，邢老师给过我一篇“中国的社会性别与内部东方主义”，我第一次看到沙因这个名字，也第一次见到“内部东方主义”这种说法。05年搬家的时候，我把复印的文章搞丢了，08年我找到了原文刊载的《社会性别与发展文集》，自己又印了这篇文章。10上半年邢老师去世，下...

我对书的印象是作者怎么老是跑来跑去的，用这里一张照片，那里一幅油画，到旅游点去碰到几个汉族游客说了几句，参加了几个短暂的活动/仪式，然后就拿来做实证素材了。我不反对这些可以作为材料，但除了一些零碎的仪式过程，在这本书里基本看不到更细致的任何一个苗寨村子或人家...

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