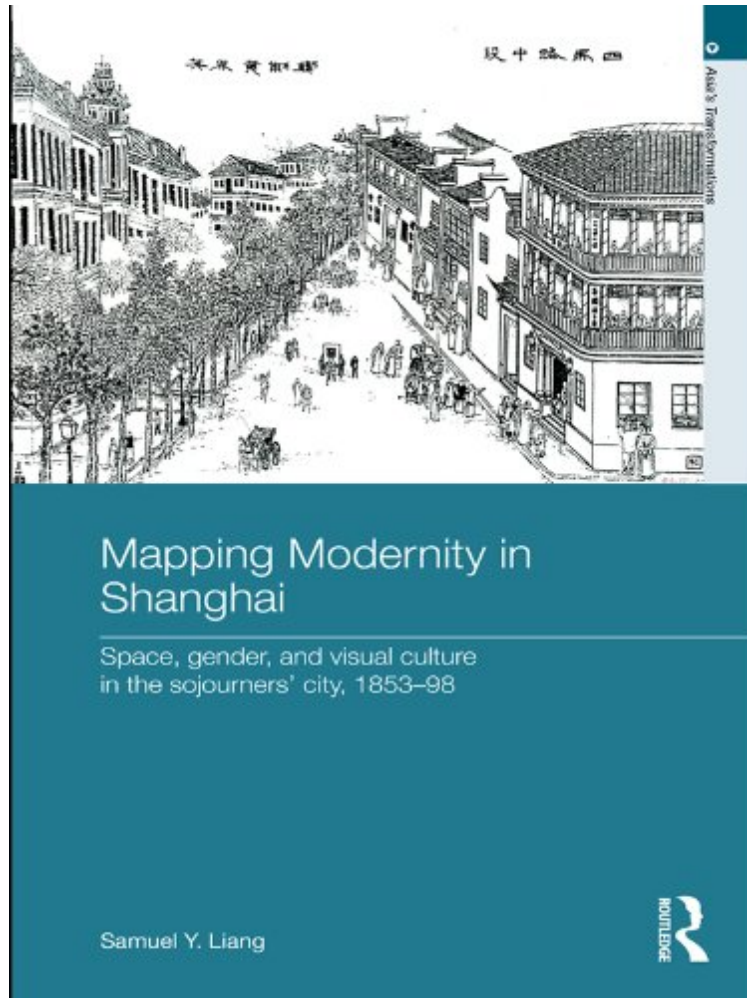


[PDF] Mapping Modernity in Shanghai: Space, Gender, and Visual Culture in the Sojourners' City, 1853-98 (Asia's Transformations)

Mapping Modernity in Shanghai: Space, Gender, and Visual Culture in the Sojourners' City, 1853-98 (Asia's Transformations)

Samuel Y. Liang

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Samuel Y. Liang : Mapping Modernity in Shanghai: Space, Gender, and Visual Culture in the Sojourners' City, 1853-98 (Asia's Transformations) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mapping Modernity in Shanghai: Space, Gender, and Visual Culture in the Sojourners' City, 1853-98 (Asia's Transformations):

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A sketchy impression, but useful update of the fieldBy mimiWhen I awaited a contriubtion to the writings about space in late 19th-century Shanghai, my expectations were maybe set too high. Each of the chapters of Samuel Y. Liangs book considers an aspect of this city, of which some have already appeared as articles in journals. In addition, he takes into account all major studies on fin-de-siècle Shanghai, be it on

courtesan culture or the new print industry. It is thus a nice overview of the major changes in late 19th-century Shanghai and one of the latest publications in this field. However, the book leaves a sketchy impression. First of all, I often missed detailed references in the text itself, which gave the whole an essay-like flair. Still, the content is detailed and insightful: each chapter discusses a certain aspect of late 19th-century Shanghai, i.e. chapter 4 is a very interesting and new account on the rules and organisation of a courtesan house, whereas in chapter 5 the author shows his provenance from the architectural field by giving a detailed account of the history of the "li". In addition, the book announces to show how modernity arrived to Shanghai with new spatial configurations. By focusing on social and urban spaces, i.e. spatiality, the reader actually expects certain connections to the spatial turn and an account of its related theories. The latter are lacking, except for some shorter passages that are not further discussed. A more detailed account of social urban theory in relation to the spatial turn and applied to Shanghai's modernity would have been fruitful. Instead, to supply the theoretical base, he draws on neo-Confucian worldviews on spatiality and contrasts it with changing cultural practices in Shanghai that were instigated by the city's sojourners.

This book argues that modernity first arrived in late nineteenth-century Shanghai via a new spatial configuration. This city's colonial capitalist development ruptured the traditional configuration of self-contained households, towns, and natural landscapes in a continuous spread, producing a new set of fragmented as well as fluid spaces. In this process, Chinese sojourners actively appropriated new concepts and technology rather than passively responding to Western influences. Liang maps the spatial and material existence of these transient people and reconstructs a cultural geography that spreads from the interior to the neighbourhood and public spaces. In this book the author discusses the courtesan house as a surrogate home and analyzes its business, gender, and material configurations; examines a new type of residential neighbourhood and shows how its innovative spatial arrangements transformed the traditional social order and hierarchy; surveys a range of public spaces and highlights the mythic perceptions of industrial marvels, the adaptations of colonial spatial types, the emergence of an urban public, and the spatial fluidity between elites and masses. Through reading contemporaneous literary and visual sources, the book charts a hybrid modern development that stands in contrast to the positivist conception of modern progress. As such it will be a provocative read for scholars of Chinese cultural and architectural history.

"The great strength of this book is its focus on the spatial rather than the temporal; Shanghai's urban spaces are brought vividly to life. The book contributes greatly to our understanding of what modernity really meant to the Chinese residents of Shanghai." - Jonathan Howlett: *The China Quarterly*, December 2011 "Studies of modern Shanghai have disproportionately focused on the city in the early twentieth century, particularly in the Republican era. Liang's work is a welcome remedy to this obvious imbalance in the field. For its glimpse of life in late nineteenth-century Shanghai and for its rethinking of issues related to city, gender, and modernity, it will be a useful handbook for historians and students of cultural studies." - HANCHAO LU, Georgia Institute of Technology; *The Journal of Asian Studies* About the Author Samuel Y. Liang is Assistant Professor of the Humanities at Utah Valley University, USA