

desire to organize their own outdoor play.

The book closes with a section on taking action to increase play opportunities for children. The eleven actions include mapping playgrounds in the neighborhood, organizing a playground watch, writing to the local newspaper, building a playground, and organizing a play day. Each idea includes a web link. Finally, a list of sixteen organizations supporting play is listed along with their websites. Included are the American Association for the Child's Right to Play, The Association for the Study of Play, Playworks, and the National Museum of Play at The Strong.

This helpful book is not only a resource for anyone wanting to encourage the children in their lives to play outdoors. It also provides resources for anyone wishing to enhance play opportunities in the neighborhood and community.

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**Developmental Fairy Tales:  
Evolutionary Thinking and  
Modern Chinese Culture**

*Andrew F. Jones*

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011. Contents, notes, appendix, glossary of terms, index, images. 259 pp. \$49.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780674047952

Andrew F. Jones's fascinating and beautifully written book should be read by all those interested in childhood, toys, fairy tales, and the discourse of development and its vernacularization in specific cul-

tural contexts. A specialist in modern Chinese culture, Jones's earlier book, *Yellow Music: Media Culture and Colonial Modernity in the Chinese Jazz Age*, was a study of popular music and media culture in Shanghai during the first decades of the twentieth century (Jones 2001). In *Developmental Fairy Tales*, Jones again weaves together a study of Chinese modernity—this time using one of its most important intellectuals, Lu Xun. This book is as much a monograph on Lu Xun as it is a dynamic examination of his generation's evolutionary thinking. An emphasis on the pedagogical function of culture in its vernacular forms—newspaper article, popular magazine, children's premier, film, and fairy tale—supplies the intellectual link between Jones's earlier work and the current book.

The author's effort to restore the child and the beast to a central place in the narration of Chinese modernity is not without precedents. For Lu Xun and his generation, writing about the child and the beast was writing about the endangered nation. Chinese intellectuals and educators used the child and the beast as instruments to think through the issue of development. Jones joins a long tradition of intellectual inquiry into the underprivileged and the disadvantaged, a move that simultaneously confirms and challenges the evolutionary thinking prevalent in the history and historiography of modern Chinese culture. Jones's consistent attention to "the folk" is another manifestation of such interest, as he points out in a recent interview which appeared in a November 30, 2011, issue of *New Books in East Asian Studies* about his next project, a return to popular music and media culture in Main-

land China and Taiwan in the 1960s.

In defining “development” as “a way of knowing, narrating, and attempting to manage processes of radical historical change” (p. 3) and situating the child and the beast at the center of such processes, Jones radically revises our understanding of modern Chinese cultural development by highlighting vernacular materials (such as children’s literature) and their complex engagement with the dilemmas of colonial modernity in China. The crisis of agency, as Jones points out, runs through Lu Xun and his generation’s grappling with developmentalist thought (p. 12). By positing the nation as a form of historical agency, they attempted to provide a way out of this evolutionary impasse but ended up being caught between “the rock of an imperialist order and the hard place of their own ‘underdevelopment’” (p. 21). Hence, Jones argues, “this contest between trustees and their nominal beneficiaries, state and subjects, liberators and those they would liberate, educators and those they would educate, is endemic to narratives of national development in modern China” (p. 22).

Lu Xun’s generation in early twentieth-century China attempted to link literary form with natural and national developments and to connect human history with natural and national histories. For them, the cyclical nature of history and the power of premodern and protodemocratic forms of literary and social practices always affected for good or ill the logic of developmental thinking. Jones’s analysis of Wu Jianren’s now iconic 1908 novel *New Story of the Stone* acutely reminds the readers how the past in this

evolutionary narrative constantly haunted the present (p. 62).

The fairy tales in the title’s “developmental fairy tales” refers to Vasilii Eroshenko’s fairy tale “A Narrow Cage” and its defining influence on Lu Xun, who translated the tale from Eroshenko’s original Japanese. More importantly, it points to Jones’s and his protagonist’s critique of developmental thinking as a sort of national fairy tale. In this context, Walter Benjamin’s “angel of history,” which Jones alludes to but does not directly discuss here, becomes a particularly poignant image for those engaging in “an immanent critique of the concept of progress” (p. 103).

I applaud Jones’s effort to link the contemporary developmental state in China with its early twentieth-century precedents. It would have been fruitful, had Jones also explored how childhood development again became an emblem of national development during the Maoist Era of the second half of the twentieth century. There is a larger story to be told—a story linking Lu Xun, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping through the long twentieth century. The developmental fairy tales, hence, can stitch together capitalist development, socialist enterprise, and neoliberal transformation during the twentieth century in China. It has the potential to serve not only as a critique of colonial and capitalist developmentalism, but also as a critique of socialist modernity and its discontents.

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—Liang Luo, *University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY*