prey to the colonialist trope. Much before the onset of colonial rule, the link between caste and occupation had been weakened (though never fully broken), but relations of power mediated through caste norms remained. Gill seems worried that an acknowledgment of this fact implies an acceptance of the Orientalist trope of caste as a millennia-old "religious" institution. But if caste is understood in terms of differential access to property and power—instantiated in practice as differential access to land and markets—then a history of caste can be written that refuses the binary of either millennia-old religious institution or merely a product of colonial governance.

Gill's own narrative in chapter 4 points toward the need for such a history. Here, Gill reminds us that caste is not just a function of religious affiliation. From the fifteenth century onward, poet-saints associated with the *bhakti* (devotion) movement questioned caste hierarchies and preached equality in the eyes of God. Such ideas strongly influenced Panjabi society through the Sikh and Ad-Dharm religions, but that was not enough to transcend caste in practice. As Gill puts it succinctly, "within the sphere of the agrarian economy, lower castes [had] little choice other than to continue in the debilitating labors that structured their daily existence" (215–16). The practices and norms that determined the distribution of "entitlements" to land were of older provenance (213); they were affected by colonial policy but not created from scratch by British rule.

This reviewer would have liked more clarity from Gill on this issue, because the narrative of chapter 4 undercuts the argument about "novelty." Instead, chapter 5 takes a theoretical turn and delves into the works of Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and Karl Kautsky. It seeks to draw a parallel between the way these authors invested the global "peasant" with "qualities of inadequacy, backwardness, and the need for transformation" (259), and the way colonial officials in the Panjab emphasized the inadequacies of the "native peasant." Many quibbles are possible here, not least with Gill's implicit suggestion that none of the four authors had critiques of empire worthy of the name. Any such judgment, however, depends on how one views the changing relationship between capitalism and politics on a global scale, which Gill does not directly discuss.

Despite these limitations, *Labors of Division* is a bold attempt to rethink the relationship between capitalism, colonialism, and social hierarchies in the subcontinent, and it should inspire further debates about exactly how this relationship should be understood.

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https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhaf128

Xuelei Huang. *Scents of China: A Modern History of Smell*. Cambridge University Press, 2023. Pp. 309. Cloth $39.99.

Xuelei Huang's *Scents of China: A Modern History of Smell* is a cultural history of smell in modern China. It delineates an "olfactory revolution" that links key moments of sociohistorical transformation in Chinese history, including China's semicolonial encounters with the West, the May Fourth movement, and the Communist Revolution (4). The book intertwines historical and literary analyses with elegance, leading the reader on a journey carried by the evocative lens of scent.

Scents of China consists of six chapters organized into three parts. Part 1 explores the smell-scapes of late imperial China from two distinct perspectives. Chapter 1 examines the perfume culture depicted in the literary world of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng* 紅樓夢, 1700s), focusing on the role of smell in shaping spatial, social, and moral orders. This chapter serves as a prelude, presenting the traditional episode of olfaction, with the choice of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* aptly fulfilling this purpose. Chapter 2 moves forward to the moment when China met European imperialism in the nineteenth century. During this period, Western travelers framed a discourse of "China Stinks" through commenting on the smells of the environment, people, food, and opium (63).

Part 2 examines the efforts and initiatives to deodorize and re-perfume China in the long twentieth century. Chapter 3 introduces three campaigns to deodorize the city of Shanghai, initiated respectively by Western colonial authorities, local Chinese gentry, and the socialist regime. While their ideological agendas varied, all three endorsed the reasoning of hygienic modernity and emphasized a technological approach to combatting stagnant water. Yet none succeeded, and may have exacerbated the "uneven distribution of smell-scapes" driven by capital (102). Chapter 4 explores a new topic from the same period, focusing on how imported Western beauty products and the nascent Chinese beauty industry promoted synthetic scents to Chinese customers.

Part 3 illuminates discursive spaces where scents resisted the dominance of hygienic modernity and underscored revolutionary alterity. Chapter 5 explores the valorization of sexual odors by May Fourth intellectuals, including authors of the Creation Society (*Chuangzao she* 創造社, est. 1921), Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936), and Mao Dun 茅盾 (1896–1981), who celebrated the biological body and the self-awakening of an individual. Chapter 6 examines Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976), who employed a profuse and blasphemous olfactory vocabulary in his political language, evoking the foul and the fragrant to manipulate and monopolize.

The author's diligent and resourceful integration of theoretical insights brings depth and resonance to the book's critical narrative. For example, Huang's employment of the metaphor "stranger" effectively illustrates the ambivalence of smell and helps the reader engage with its rich and shifting connotations. Drawing on the insights of Zygmunt Bauman, Huang argues that the stranger goes beyond the simple dichotomy of friend and foe, simultaneously embodying nearness and remoteness. This perspective offers a fresh reading of Western travelers' denigration of China's odor, revealing it as more than an imperial judgment of alterity. Instead, it reflects a deep anxiety about their inability to dissociate themselves from the ownership of malodor. Huang adroitly dismantles another binary between contamination and purity by exposing the structural inequality in the allocation of smell-spaces. The deodorizing of one region consistently came at the cost of contaminating another, creating a cycle that remains unbroken through any revolution.

Huang's treatment of modernity is equally nuanced. It is noteworthy for a modern book to dedicate a hefty chapter to the premodern period, and, more important, to compare the modern and premodern in thoughtful ways that eschew progressive teleology. She observes that the author of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* celebrated the individuality of his female characters with the invocation of aromas. In contrast, the commercial perfume culture subjected women to objectifying scrutiny, reversing premodern and modern associations with progress. She is equally compelling in pointing out that synthetic scents were essentially contamination. It was rebranded into a "developmental fairy tale" due to the dominating influence of modern science (175).

Scents of China pioneers as the first book-length study on the history of olfaction in China and will undoubtedly become an indispensable reference for scholars seeking to advance sensory history in China and beyond. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are particularly robust in their historical sensitivity, identifying key events and figures, establishing a timeline, and illuminating relevant archives. Historians will also appreciate Huang's innovative discoveries driven by her textual sensibility as a literary scholar. Huang's analysis of Mao's abundant use of olfactory vocabulary, for example, brings to light an important phenomenon that has been hidden in plain sight. This chapter, along with numerous sections throughout the book, underscores the importance of a sensory perspective in historical writing. It generates transformative insights that enrich the field, addressing the limitations of an impoverishing fixation on the hard, the rational, and the certain.

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https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhaf138

Peter Jackson. *From Genghis Khan to Tamerlane: The Reawakening of Mongol Asia*. Yale University Press, 2024. Pp. 752. Cloth $45.00.

Traveling through northern Syria in 1909, Gertrude Bell heard a folktale that epitomizes the fearsome reputation of the conqueror Amir Timur (c. 1136–1405)—better known to English audiences as Tamerlane. At Manbij, eighty kilometers east of Aleppo, a Circassian shepherd told Bell how the townspeople, warned by a local holy man, had escaped annihilation at the hands of Timur's army: They burned their own possessions. When Timur's forces saw the smoldering ruins, they bypassed the town, thereby sparing its people. In Syrian folk memory, the best one could hope for when Timur's army rolled into the town was survival; material destruction was inevitable.

In this mammoth study, *From Genghis Khan to Tamerlane: The Reawakening of Mongol Asia*, British historian Peter Jackson offers a broad, perceptive, and deeply learned account of Amir Timur's career and the developments underpinning it. A speaker of Turkish from a mid-level Mongol tribe, Timur was not part of the "Golden Kin" (*altan urugh*), descended from Chinggis Khan, which had ruled the united Mongol Empire and its successor khanates since the early thirteenth century. Rather, his father, who served in the royal bodyguard of the Chaghatayid Khanate in Central Asia, was descended from one of Chinggis Khan's most trusted lieutenants (229). Lacking imperial blood, Timur clawed his way to power as the effective ruler of the Chaghatayid Khanate through a succession of "short-lived alliances, each discarded once it had become a liability or no longer served his purpose" (256). Legitimacy thus remained a concern throughout his reign, and Jackson deftly explores each of the strategies that Timur employed to consolidate and maintain his authority. Foremost among these was relentless campaigning in search of plunder and prestige. From the late 1360s to his death in 1405, Timur's forces crisscrossed Central Asia and the Middle East, indiscriminately battling Christian, Muslim, and "pagan" opponents and pushing deep into Anatolia, Russia, and northern India. Organized around a core of Turkic and Mongol horsemen, his army deployed technical units, incendiary devices, elephants, and (most effective) trebuchets for sieges (329). His wrath fell heavily on those who resisted. Towers of their skulls were erected outside Isfahan in 1387, Delhi in 1398, Aleppo in 1400, and Smyrna in 1402 (332–34, with additional examples of Timur's "macabre ingenuity"). Those who escaped death could still suffer deportation, with many being resettled in the empire's core zone of Transoxiana, where their labor and skills contributed to the construction of Timur's twin capitals at Samarkand and Kish.