

Refereed article

Jiang Qing, between Fact and Fiction: The Many Lives of a Revolutionary Icon

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Summary

Jiang Qing was the fourth wife of Mao Zedong and one of the leading politicians of the twentieth century. This paper explores the ways in which her life is narrated in four different biographies: Ross Terrill's *The White-Boned Demon: A Biography of Madame Mao* (1984), Ye Yonglie's *Jiang Qing zhuan (Biography of Jiang Qing)*; 1993), Sha Yexin's *Jiang Qing and Her Husbands* (1991), and Anchee Min's *Becoming Madame Mao* (2000). Drawing on the concept of "metabiography," the author shows how each examined biographer employs specific narrative strategies to construct a certain image of Jiang, arguing that the way in which her life is told depends on the sociopolitical context in which the biography is rooted, each work ultimately serving a specific political purpose. At the same time, the strata of discourse that have settled around the figure of Jiang highlight the malleability of the biographical genre.*

Keywords: China, Jiang Qing, Nora, Cultural Revolution, documentary biography, fictional biography, metabiography

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* This is an expanded version of an earlier paper entitled "What do we Learn about Mao from Jiang Qing Biographies? Looking at Jiang Qing Biographies from a Meta-biographical and Mythobiographical Perspective," presented at the international symposium "Mao Zedong: Exploring Multi-dimensional Approaches to Biography," Vienna, Austria, July 1–3, 2016.