humanities

MDPI

Article

Chinggis Khan, Women, and the West: Literary and Cinematic Remakes of the *Secret History of the Mongols*

Benedetta De Bonis

UMR Théorie et Histoire des Arts et des Littératures de la Modernité, Sorbonne Nouvelle University, 75005 Paris, France; bendetta.de-bonis@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr

Abstract: The name of Chinggis Khan and the women who contributed to the rise of his empire have long been associated with barbarism in the West. However, the rediscovery of the *Secret History of the Mongols*, a medieval Mongolian epic chronicle, in 1866, and its numerous translations circulating since the mid-20th century has led Western scholars to a total revaluation of these figures. This paper analyses the representation of Chinggis Khan and his queens in the literary and cinematic adaptations of the *Secret History of the Mongols* produced in Europe and the United States, specifically in English, French, and Italian. It critically engages with E. W. Said's works, and with postcolonial and gender studies. The article argues that the portrayal of the Mongols has become increasingly positive in 20th and 21st century remakes of the epic chronicle, highlighting how the West reconsiders its relationship with cultural and gender otherness in an era marked by decolonisation and feminist claims.

Keywords: Chinggis Khan; Mongol queens; gender studies; Orientalism; *Secret History of the Mongols*; remake; comparative literature; literature and cinema; Western culture

1. Introduction

The name of Chinggis Khan and his descendants have long been associated in the West with the ideas of barbarism and Apocalypse (cf. De Bonis 2020, pp. 23–47). Through the deformation of the ethnonym *Tatar*, the Mongols came to be called 'Tartars', and linked to demons from Hell—*Tartaros* (cf. Paris 1964, p. 76). They were identified with Gog and Magog, which Alexander the Great locked behind the iron gates of the Caucasus (cf. Graf 1923, pp. 754–800). The praise bestowed as an ideal ruler by Marco Polo (1982) in his *Travels* on Qubilai was of no avail in diminishing this fear of the Tartars. Indeed, as late as 1867, Down called subjects suffering from the eponymous syndrome, which he attributed to the genetic impact of Chinggisid warriors on raped women, 'Mongoloids' (Weatherford 2004, p. XXVI).

Interestingly, however, just a year earlier, the *Secret History of the Mongols*[1] (*Monggol-un ni'uca tobciyan*) had been rediscovered by the Russian monk Palladius (1866). This Mongolian epic chronicle, written in the 13th century by an anonymous author[2], related the heroic deeds of Temujin, who, thanks to his charisma and his meritocratic philosophy, had risen from an impoverished and fatherless childhood to the rank of emperor with the name of Chinggis Khan. Between the 14th and 15th centuries, two major editions of the work that have survived to the present day emerged: the 'printed edition of the early Ming dynasty' and the 'edition of the Yong Le Encyclopaedia'. Both consist of the phonetic transcription in Chinese characters of the supposed original text written in Mongolian, along with a gloss or interlinear translation into Chinese of each term, and the Chinese translation of the whole. In the 19th century, the version from the Yong Le Encyclopaedia was copied by Zhang Mu and Han Taihua, eventually falling into the hands of Palladius. In 1908, Ye Dehui (Ye [1908] (1936) published the first complete edition of the *Secret History* for large-scale dissemination, which included the Chinese transcription of the original Mongolian text, the gloss of each word, and the Chinese translation. This publication significantly

check for updates

Citation: De Bonis, Benedetta. 2024. Chinggis Khan, Women, and the West: Literary and Cinematic Remakes of the *Secret History of the Mongols*. *Humanities* 13: 96. https://doi.org/10.3390/h13040096

Received: 10 June 2024
Revised: 15 July 2024
Accepted: 16 July 2024
Published: 18 July 2024

Copyright: © 2024 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

advanced the reconstruction and translation of the Mongolian text in Europe and the United States (cf. Ramírez Bellerín 2000, pp. 12–20)[3]. Since the mid-20th century, following the Russian (Kozin 1941) and German (Haenisch 1941) editions, the *Secret History* has undergone numerous translations into French (Pelliot 1949; Even and Pop 1994), English (Waley 1963; Pao 1965; de Rachewiltz 1971–1985; Cleaves 1982; Kahn 1984; de Rachewiltz 2004; Onon 1990; Atwood 2023), and Italian (Kozin and Olsufieva 1973)[4]. Western scholars reassessed Chinggis Khan in light of these developments (Weatherford 2004)[5].

This change was also favoured by the opening of Mongolia to the West, beginning with its transition from the Chinese into the Russian orbit in 1911, and then from 1990 onward, with the end of Soviet control over the country. In present-day Mongolia, Chinggis Khan is regarded as a national hero (Thevenet 1999, pp. 83–109; Charleux 2009). In Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region of China since 1947, his figure embodies dual significance: a cultural hero for the Mongols, defining their identity, and a revered symbol for the Han Chinese aiming for national integration (Charleux 2011). By 1995, the leader's fame had spread far beyond the walls of the academy; indeed, the *Washington Post* proclaimed him the 'man of the millennium', as the father of the modern globalised world (Achenbach 1995).

In recent years, this revaluation has also affected our view of female Chinggisid royalty, which had previously been influenced by the negative representations conveyed by medieval missionaries' travel reports. The women were portrayed as sinister witches and warriors, indistinguishable from the men of their horde (cf. da Pian del Carpine 1913, p. 56; di Rubruk 2011, p. 276). However, they enjoyed a freedom and a consideration unknown to their sedentary neighbours. They took part, like men, in war, politics, and trade, and they sometimes could choose whether and with whom to marry (Weatherford 2010, pp. XIV–XV; cf. Broadbridge 2018; Ratchenevsky 1976; Veit 2007).

This paper analyses the representation of Chinggis Khan and the women who contributed to the rise of his empire in 20th and 21st century Western culture. In particular, it focuses on their portrayal in European and American literary and cinematic rewritings and adaptations of the *Secret History* (English, French, and Italian language)[6].

Since the publication of *Orientalism*, academic criticism has emphasised three theses argued by Said (1979, pp. 1–28): the idea of the 'East' as a mythical horizon that the West creates in order to forge its own identity, and on which it projects its fears and desires; the interdependence, in the construction of the Oriental discourse, of academic, imaginative, and institutional Orientalism; the need to consider, in light of the imperial role played by the United States, both the European and the American contexts.

This article starts from the theoretical foundations of *Orientalism*, a seminal work that, despite its Manichean view of the East/West pair, continues to be a cornerstone of postcolonial studies (Mellino 2009, p. 22)[7]. However, it wishes to go over its essentialist approach, acknowledging that any transfer of a cultural object from a context to another one results in a transformation of its meaning. This process of resemanticization defies simplistic reductionism (Espagne 2013). If the history of cultural transfers relativises the notion of centre, that of reception points to literature as a process of exchange between author, work, and audience, between past and present. Every text presupposes and gives rise to an experience that calls into question the active participation of the reader (cf. Jauss 1988). Therefore, the aim of this paper is to understand how the West—in an era which has witnessed decolonisation, feminist claims, and the circulation of new knowledge about Mongolia—rethinks its relationship with otherness through reinterpretations of the *Secret History*.

2. Early Remakes

The first attempts to adapt the *Secret History* date back to the period between the 1940s and 1960s. In 1940, the British-born American writer Taylor Caldwell published the novel *The Earth is the Lord's*. In the following decade, Chinggis Khan landed both in Hollywood and Belgium. In 1956, the film *The Conqueror* by Dick Powell was released. The main roles of Temujin and his wife, Börte, were played by the American stars John Wayne and Susan

Hayward. Between 1954 and 1955, the Belgian Henry Bauchau wrote the play *Gengis Khan* in Switzerland, the country where he chose to self-exile following his disappointment at being unjustly accused of collaborating with the Nazis during the Occupation. At a later time, the French novel *Le Faucon rouge* (1963) by Robert Lugné and the Euro-American film *Genghis Khan* (1965) by Henry Levin—starring Omar Sharif and Françoise Dorléac and distributed by Columbia Pictures—were released.

A first glance at the posters and covers of these works reveals the intentions underlying their composition. The story of Chinggis Khan is tailored to the aesthetic and cultural standards of European and American audiences. The backdrop is a Westernized Orient, inhabited by beautiful blonde women (Caldwell 1965; Powell 1956)[8] or adorned with gleaming Chinese pagodas (Levin 1965)[9]. Even the least attentive observer will not miss the iconographic emphasis on the dominant role of Chinggis Khan, whether it is played against his enemies (Levin 1965) or at the expense of the opposite sex (Caldwell 1965; Lugné 1963; Powell 1956). From the height of his horse and imposing stature, Chinggis Khan triumphs, with his sword, over the women around him. He «fights! [. . .] loves! [. . .] conquers. . . like a Barbarian!» (Powell 1956) and «rules so vast an empire!» (Levin 1965), the captions of the film posters read. The naked bodies of the female figures evoke the Saidian *topos* of a passive, sensual, and feminine East offering itself to the material and symbolic domination of the Western male (Caldwell 1965; Lugné 1963; Powell 1956). Within this Orientalist framework, the portrayal of Chinggis Khan harkens back to the traditional Western iconography of the leather-clad, moustachioed barbarian (Caldwell 1965; Levin 1965; Lugné 1963)[10]. The only exception in this panorama is the cover of the first edition of *Gengis Khan* (Bauchau 1960). The sober vase of withered flowers painted by Matisse reveals a more abstract relationship with the figure of the Mongol leader. Bauchau and his publisher prefer to emphasise the symbolic significance of Chinggis Khan's actions, both destructive and (re)constructive, rather than the physicality of the conqueror.

As for the sources, Bauchau's library[11] contains a copy of Pelliot's translation of the *Secret History*, whose pages have never been opened. He knows this text through the books written by Grousset (1944, [1939] 1965). Here, the nomads are compared to modern proletarians fighting against capitalism (Grousset [1939] 1965, p. 11). In this framework, Chinggis Khan presents himself as a revolutionary, capable of turning the Mongols' struggle into a revolution against hunger and oppression. On this idea, the Belgian author grafts the comparison between Chinggis Khan and Mao Zedong, to whom he will dedicate a biography (Bauchau 1982), at a time when enthusiasm for Maoism had already died down in France (cf. Xu 2011)[12]. Chinggis Khan's and Mao's enterprises began with noble ideals but resulted in mass extermination. Through his writing, Bauchau explores the ambivalence of his relationship with the charismatic leader, whom he both admired and despised. Chinggis Khan also allows him to recall, through the veil of myth, the painful experience of Nazism[13].

Grousset serves as the primary source for Lugné as well. In a tone fraught with anguish, the French writer highlights how Mao's immense following, fanaticism, propaganda, suppression of dissent, and expansionist ambitions bear striking resemblance to the methods employed by Chinggis Khan. He emphasises the concepts of race, colour, and danger[14]. Among the sources listed by the author are the works by the Russian researcher who emigrated to Germany Prawdin (1938), admired in Nazi circles, and the German Barckhausen (1935). The latter reinterprets the story of Chinggis Khan in the light of the yellow and red dangers. These express concern about the threat posed by Asian people, compared to the ancient Mongol hordes, and their possible support for communism. With this interpretation, Barckhausen hopes to arouse, by contrast, the adherence of his readers to Nazism (Poulet 2000, pp. 55–9).

Conversely, American artists may have drawn inspiration from Lamb's (1927) works. The researcher relied mainly on European, Chinese, and Persian sources. He lacked direct access to the *Secret History*, although extracts from this epic chronicle were incorporated into the writings of Asian historians, such as Rashid al-Din (cf. Even and Pop 1994, pp. 20–1).

While Caldwell ironically dismisses any notion of comparison with contemporary history[15], Powell presents Hollywood with an 'Oriental Western' (Weiler 1956). This film was remembered less for the critical scrutiny it faced and more for the curse that befell its crew, struck down by cancerous illnesses stemming from radiation exposure on the Utah film set (von Tunzelmann 2013). Only, Levin probably had direct access to the *Secret History*, thanks to its recent translation into English by Waley.

The Western authors take over the names and functions of the main characters from the *Secret History*. Thus, the protagonist, Temujin, is flanked by his wife, Börte. His antagonists are his former steppe allies To'oril and Jamuqa. In the literary texts, the conqueror acquires greater psychological complexity in the confrontation with other female figures. His heart is also shared with To'oril's daughter Azara (Caldwell) and Choulane (Bauchau and Lugné), mentioned in the *Secret History* as Qulan, Chinggis Khan's Merkit bride.

The focus is Temujin's childhood and rise to power, as narrated in the Mongolian epic chronicle. However, only Lugné dwells on some key episodes of the hypotext: the disgrace of Temujin's family following the murder of his father by the Tatars; Temujin's captivity at Tarġutai; the fratricide; and Börte's kidnapping by the Merkit and her liberation by Temujin. The others loosely take up a few short passages. Thus, the film scripts are built on an imaginative alternation of abductions, aimed at arousing the audience's suspense rather than accurately reconstructing the historical framework of the tale.

Temujin, the civilising hero of the Mongolian epic chronicle, becomes a modern-day decolonising leader. He dreams of giving an identity to his people, divided by fratricidal struggles and exploited by sedentary civilisations:

> I am called a barbarian. [. . .] We are animals, without civilization [. . .]. But [. . .] a new civilization shall come out of the barrens, [. . .] fiercer [. . .] than was ever begotten by the weak loins of the cities in the bed of decadence; (Caldwell 2018, p. 423)

> Depuis des siècles, la Chine nous achète comme mercenaires, [. . .] nous repousse comme barbares [. . .]. Que devient le barbare? Il périt de faim dans ses glaces, de soif dans ses déserts; (Bauchau 2001, p. 89)

> il concevait un grand mépris pour ces seigneurs [. . .] qui payaient, pour être défendus, des gens souvent d'une autre race. [. . .] Pourquoi alors [. . .] ne pas réunir sous la même bannière tous les nomades de la steppe [. . .]?. (Lugné 1963, pp. 28–9)

The implementation of this ideal is not problematic for the filmmakers. In fact, it is realised through a series of epic deeds. The Mongolian leader roams the battlefields with the bearing of a cowboy or a victorious World War II general (Powell; cf. Williams 1996). He faces the arrogance of sedentary people who think they are the sole holders of civilisation (Levin). By contrast, in the literary texts, a rift opens up between Temujin's dream and its realisation, as the experience of totalitarianism echoes in black and white:

> above liberty, men loved a whip, [. . .] above an elected leader, [. . .] a tyrant, who discounted their ability to think; (Caldwell 2018, p. 654)

> Pour faire triompher l'empire [. . .] de l'affamé, le devoir du Mongol est de [. . .] tuer qui j'indique. Et moi, je serai votre maître; (Bauchau 2001, p. 81)

> [Il] appuyait sa dictature sur une assemblée consultative mais dirigée [. . .]. Il s'assurait ainsi l'accord de la nation. (Lugné 1963, p. 80)

The hero embodies the traits of the *Übermensch* (cf. Nietzsche 2011) in his symbolic and material attempt to kill the Christian God, aiming to dismantle the mechanisms of fear that enable the weak to dominate the strong: «Dieu commence après la crainte. Qui a peur de lui ne peut pas s'affranchir des hommes» (Bauchau 2001, p. 74). He turns into a dictator embodying the duality of mass leaders. He is both the heroic son rebelling against his father's tyrannical authority and the father reincarnated in one of his assassins (cf. Moscovici 1981, pp. 15–6, 403–7).

Distancing themselves from the *Secret History*, Caldwell and Bauchau portray numerous characters opposing Chinggis Khan. In *The Earth is the Lord's*, To'oril and Jamuqa call Christianity back to its original evangelical principles. At the end of the novel, the reader, who witnesses the triumph of violence and injustice, is left in doubt as to whether the Lord to whom the earth belongs is the Christian God of mercy or the bloodthirsty Mongol tyrant. In *Genghis Khan*, the Chinese minister Tchelou t'saï embodies the values of Resistance shared by the author. Like Lugné and Caldwell, Baucahu looks at the experience of dictatorship with an ambivalent mixture of fascination and disapproval. He turns the conflict between Chinggis Khan and China into a journey of inner repentance wherein acceptance of diversity emerges as a pivotal theme.

In the literary texts, Chinggis Khan's brutality is mitigated by his mother, Ö'elun. As in the *Secret History*, she wields her authority to rebuke Temujin every time his thirst for power causes conflicts with his brothers:

> Thou didst murder thy brother [...]! Thou art a foul beast!; (Caldwell 2018, p. 604)

> dans sa famille, c'est la vieille Oloune qui commande. Délie Kassar, je te l'ordonne; (Bauchau 2001, pp. 78–9)

> Kassar n'hésita pas, lors d'un violent conflit, à abattre Bektar [...]. Oélun Ekée se déchaîna en imprécations contre ses fils, qu'elle assimila à des loups [...] dont la division les rendrait plus tard incapables de vaincre. (Lugné 1963, pp. 32–3)

When she is kidnapped like an object by Yisukei, she displays resilience in adjusting to her new circumstances. Moreover, she is endowed with agency (cf. Montenach 2012). She works to ensure the unity and survival of the family abandoned by the clan:

> that intrepid woman [...] had pursued the deserting tribesmen, and [...] had harangued [...] some of them into [...] renewing their allegiance to her son; (Caldwell 2018, p. 169)

> plusieurs vassales taïchoutes reprenaient leur indépendance, [...] ne voulant pas [...] dépendre d'une femme [...], Oléun Ekée allant de groupe en groupe ne put les retenir. (Lugné 1963, p. 31)

In the *Secret History*, Ö'elun's role is then taken over by Börte, who resembles her in terms of physical aspect and personality. However, Western authors privilege the aesthetic dimension of the character over the ethical one. Börte is represented as seductive. In *The Earth is the Lord's*, beauty has negative overtones, as the woman uses it in order to satisfy her thirst for power and instigate war: «She knew that here was one she would rule by the very power of her body and her arms and lips» (Caldwell 2018, p. 152). Conversely, she is imagined by Lugné and Powell as a femme fatale (cf. Praz 1986, pp. 31–53, 165–246). In the novel, she descends from a Circassian dancer and displays some «poses alanguies étudiées pour troubler» (Lugné 1963, p. 24). In the film, she performs a belly dance with veils and swords and lies languidly on a Roman triclinium. This anachronistic portrayal echoes the Orientalist archetype of Kuchuk Hanem, the Flaubertian dancer offering herself silently to the Western spectator (cf. Said 1979, pp. 186–8).

Börte is an object for the dominant male to take possession of. «This Tartar woman is for me and my blood says *take her!*», declares one of Powell's film posters, albeit with considerable historical inaccuracy[16]. Furthermore, in Bauchau's manuscripts (Bauchau 1954, ML 8599/8), her rescue emphasises Temujin's heroic qualities. Finally, in *Le Faucon rouge*, the Khan's «race dominera dans un enfant celle de son épouse» (Lugné 1963, p. 22).

Occasionally, Börte also embodies more positive attributes. She frees Temujin (Powell) and actively works to build alliances (Levin). In Bauchau's unpublished versions of the play, she is associated with peace and reconstruction: «Tu t'occuperas de relever Samarkand. [...] Moi Gengis Khan à Börté [...]. Bientôt je reviendrai dans les prairies natales» (Bauchau 1954, ML 8599/16). The removal of this figure from the final text contributes to emphasising Chinggis Khan's barbarian qualities, which is consistent with the author's gradual departure from the ideal of the strong man.

Other literary female figures emerge as the object of Temujin's desire. The Orientalist tradition makes the East a virgin territory to be penetrated, militarily and sexually, by the Western man. Thus, at the height of his political success, the Westernized conqueror wishes to assert his erotic power as well. In *The Earth is the Lord's*, Temujin conquers not only To'oril's lands, but also his daughter Azara, betrothed to an old man: «her body [. . .] seemed to have a sweet and virginal smell. She seemed overcome with terror. But her eyes implored him to continue» (Caldwell 2018, p. 251). The author imagines that the girl kills herself out of social shame caused by the loss of her honour, and to avoid war between her beloved and her family: «She sacrificed herself for me» (Caldwell 2018, p. 444). A similar tragic fate befell Bauchau's Choulane. The Belgian writer, more interested in the dark facets of the conqueror's personality than in historical accuracy, pictures this Persian woman dying at the hands of Chinggis Khan for opposing his ruinous ambitions: «Ne peux-tu faire la paix? [. . .] Puisque l'amour ne peut vaincre la Loi, applique ta Loi à ton amour» (Bauchau 2001, p. 127).

When Börte's beauty fades, Chinggis Khan is attracted by other women. The sexist message conveyed by *Le Faucon rouge* is that the moment she ceases to be young and seductive, the woman loses all usefulness: «Choulane était jeune et belle, et il aimait passionnément cette deuxième épouse, qui [. . .] en profitait pour narguer [. . .] Bürté qu'un embonpoint pénible empêchait de suivre son époux» (Lugné 1963, pp. 63–4). While sometimes taking pleasure in describing Chinggis Khan's sadism towards Choulane, the author of the novel also assigns an active role to this charismatic Merkit woman standing at the head of the Mongol armies: «Reconnaissant [. . .] leur princesse, les contingents merkites [. . .] combattirent aux côtés des Mongols» (Lugné 1963, p. 79). Thus, he paves the way for a redefinition of the representation of female characters in more recent texts.

3. Later Remakes

Since the decline of the Soviet regimes, Mongolia has experienced a resurgence in the cult of Chinggis Khan. The life of the nation's founder has inspired numerous films based on the *Secret History*, such as *Mönkh tengeriin khüchin dor* (Begziin 1992) by Begziin Baljinnyam and *Ükhej ül bolno, Chingis Khaan* (Lkhagwîn 2008) by Lkhagwîn Erdenebulgan.

In the 20th century, Russia itself, situated at the crossroads of East and West, embarked on an identity quest to rediscover its Mongol heritage, which Soviet historiography had disregarded (cf. Trubetzkoy 1991). In 2007, *Mongol* (Bodrov 2007), the monumental film directed by the Buryat–Russian Sergei Bodrov, significantly contributed to Chinggis Khan's rehabilitation in popular imagination. Bodrov drew inspiration from Gumilev's (1994) positive view of the Mongols, influenced by the *Secret History* and Eurasianism. The original film in Mongolian was later dubbed into numerous Western languages and showcased in cinemas across Europe and the United States.

Promotional materials targeted at Asian audiences[17] emphasise male characters. On the contrary, the English poster for Bodrov's film[18] features Japanese actor Tadanobu Asano—a wink at the legend overlapping the samurai Minamoto no Yoshitsune with Chinggis Khan—alongside Mongolian actress Chuluunî Khulan, who plays Börte. The deliberate inclusion of a prominent female figure from Mongol history reflects a strategic effort to appeal to Western audiences' interest in Chinggisid women.

Novels about Temujin have proliferated also in the West: *Le Loup mongol* (1998) by the French Homeric; the diptych *Gengis Khan* (2000) by the Italian Franco Forte; the *Conqueror* series (2007–2011) by the British Conn Iggulden; the *Tiger Queens* (2014) by the American Stephanie Thornton; and the two-volume *Gengis Khan* (2015–2016) by the French José Frèches.

It is worth noting that the cover of *The Tiger Queens* (Thornton 2014) shows a woman with distinctive Asian features. However, this princess wears a Bhutanese dress, and the tiger that symbolises the strength of the female characters is alien to steppe culture. Despite growing knowledge of Mongolia, the East is still considered, in some respects, an exotic horizon, where elements from various Asian cultures confusedly converge.

The events and characters of American and European bestsellers are directly drawn from the *Secret History*, which has gained considerable recognition through its numerous translations. The range of female figures surrounding Chinggis Khan is broadened. For instance, in Forte's diptych, alongside Börte and Ö'elun, the reader encounters the Tatar sisters Yisuken and Yisui, mentioned in the Mongolian source. In Iggulden's series, Qubilai's mother, Sorġoqtani, a historical figure, and Chakahai, a fictional character, appear. Thornton's book takes a unique approach, narrating the history of the Mongol Empire through the voices of four women: Börte; Alaqai, a favoured daughter of Chinggis Khan; Fatima, a servant of Queen Töregene; and Sorġoqtani. In a choral prologue, they lament their marginalization in a history led by men: «The deeds of our husbands, our brothers, and our sons have eclipsed our own [. . .]. Yet without us, there would have been no empire for our men to claim» (Thornton 2014, p. 1)[19].

In recent bestsellers, any ambivalence in the characterisation of Temujin disappears. The hero unifies his people through a series of adventures, highlighting his courage and magnanimity:

> Les accents de cent tribus s'entremêlaient [. . .]. Une nation naissait!; (Homeric 1998, p. 363)
>
> Per la prima volta [. . .] un guerriero le cui imprese avevano cavalcato il vento [. . .] era riuscito a radunare sotto il Cielo Eterno tutte le genie della stirpe Manghol; (Forte 2000b, p. 133)
>
> there are no tribes under the sky father. There is only one Mongol nation and it begins this night; (Iggulden 2008a, p. 46)
>
> Il avait surtout un rêve: unifier son peuple. (Frèches 2015, p. 16)

Ö'elun is a positive character as well. She ensures unity within the family even in the hardest circumstances:

> They looked into her face in awe, seeing only fierce determination. It was strong enough to banish some of their own despair; (Iggulden 2007, p. 115)
>
> c'était une femme d'exception. [. . .] La louve est beaucoup plus courageuse que le loup. La louve n'abandonne jamais ses petits. (Frèches 2015, p. 36)

In line with Broadbridge's (2018, pp. 9–55) academic thesis, Thornton emphasises the harshness of the female condition in the steppe world and the influence that some resilient and talented women managed to exert despite the dangers inherent in their society. Thus, she gives a bitter reading of the lyrical passage about the abduction of the bride in the *Secret History*. The relationship between Ö'elun, married to a handsome and wealthy warrior who loved her, and Temujin's future father begins with an animalistic woman-hunt, whose details exclude any form of romance: «a desperate Borijin hunter had been tracking a rabbit when he came across a splash of fresh urine in the snow, left by a woman. The man ignored the rabbit and hunted the woman instead» (Thornton 2014, p. 9). As in the *Secret History*, in this misadventure, it is paradoxically the woman who experiences the violence who urges her husband to save his own skin, making the man disfigured in terms of courage.

The emphasis on Börte's sensuality, a prevalent theme in mid-century works, is notably absent in these texts. While her abduction by the Merkit remains a pivotal plot point, it serves primarily to underscore Temujin's deep affection for her. The hero accepts the child born of this ordeal as his own and provides support to his wife throughout the trauma. Through the lens of contemporary Western sensibilities, he emerges as a defender of women's rights, fighting against their suppression in a male-dominated society:

> Guardò Börte negli occhi e quello che vide bastò a fargli prendere una decisione. "[. . .] Da me e dal mio cuore sarai accettato come un figlio del mio sangue"; (Forte 2000a, p. 380)
>
> Whatever happened, he knew he could not let her be hurt again; (Iggulden 2007, p. 96)

> I shall greet the babe as my own; (Thornton 2014, p. 92)
>
> Il la prit par les épaules, qu'il serra doucement de ses doigts en lui murmurant qu'elle ne devait pas avoir peur de lui dire la vérité. (Frèches 2015, p. 263)

Contemporary authors take up the challenge of adapting foreign elements of the *Secret History* to their cultural context. One example is Temujin's polygamy. The man's 'emotional monogamy' with Börte makes this practice, alien to Western culture, acceptable:

> Borte è la sola sposa reale, e mai nessuna potrà prendere il suo posto; (Forte 2000a, p. 416)
>
> Avec son épouse principale, ce n'était pas la même chose qu'avec les autres femmes... [...] il retrouvait ses marques comme le soldat lorsqu'il revient au bercail à l'issue d'une éprouvante campagne. (Frèches 2016, p. 135)

This theme carries significant suffering only in Thornton's book. It sparks inquiries into the extent to which a woman's dignity can be forfeited for the sake of marriage and nation:

> My ruined body had brought this upon me, proclaiming my uselessness to the world. [...] I touched my scarred lip, thinking of all I'd endured for this man. [...] "You are the only wife of my heart". [...] "Keep your wives, [...] But you'll swear now [...] that only the children of my womb shall be your heirs. I am your khatun, not some old crone to be pushed aside by these Tatar princesses". [...] And then my husband bowed to me, a gesture of such reverence and respect that tears sprang to my eyes. (Thornton 2014, p. 136)

In recent bestsellers, Börte's role takes on newfound significance, symbolizing rebellion against patriarchal authority:

> non era facile oppormi alle strategie del padre. [...] l'affrontò con tanta veemenza che Dai Sescen per un attimo ne ebbe timore; (Forte 2000a, pp. 349–51)
>
> One day was enough to become tired of sewing and cooking [...]. She did not want big cow bosoms that would hang down for a man to milk her. She wanted to be fast like a deer and skinny like a wild dog. (Iggulden 2007, p. 65)

In Bodrov's film, young Temujin's choice of bride takes place within a patriarchal society where women are placed side by side and examined as if they were commodities to be bought. However, only the hero and his bride-to-be, Börte, know that they have already met and that it was her wisdom that convinced him to choose her as his wife. In Western novels, Börte exerts the same influence on her husband, both in the marital and political spheres:

> "[...] Sono pronta a prendere marito. [...] E voglio te". Lui scoppiò a ridere. "Credevo di dover essere io a rapirti"; (Forte 2000a, p. 245)
>
> Le donne non erano ammesse al kurultai, ma a lui sarebbe piaciuto avere al suo fianco Borte [...]. "Non è detto che le regole non possano essere cambiate" aveva affermato [...] Gengis; (Forte 2000b, p. 152)
>
> women had advised Genghis [...] and [...] he had listened. (Iggulden 2008b, p. 331)

Weatherford (2010, pp. 37–8) states that the kinship system among the Mongols was known as the *uruġ*, linking this term with the womb[20]. He argues that, in Chinggisid genealogy, paternity was often in doubt, but all that mattered was the parent's success in raising the baby. Thornton picks up these concepts from the American scholar. She stresses the importance of Börte in the line of succession: «It's not important whose colt grows in your belly. Only the womb that houses him matters» (Thornton 2014, p. 81).

Chinggis Khan's interactions with other women rekindle traditional tropes of eroticization and feminization of the East, ultimately fuelling the success of artistic creations that appeal to a wide audience:

> "[. . .] adesso conoscerai qualcosa che non potevi immaginare neppure nei tuoi sogni più arditi". Le due sorelle trascinarono Temugin a terra e si mossero su di lui come se fossero una persona sola. Sommerso dalla marea ardente del piacere, Temugin [. . .] si abbandonò all'incantesimo; (Forte 2000b, p. 66)

> Il consommait le sexe faible comme d'autres buvaient du thé ou croquaient dans une datte. (Frèches 2016, p. 137)

Nevertheless, the female characters break free from the *cliché* of victimhood and emerge as true revolutionaries. Thus, in the *Conqueror* series, it is a woman, Chakahai, who kills Chinggis Khan, blinded by his thirst for power. This act sets the stage for the establishment of a matriarchy led by Sorġoqtani. According to scholars, it is impossible to speak of matriarchy as far as Mongol society is concerned (Hache 2024), although some postulate the existence of matrilineal systems among some Eurasian nomadic civilisations (Lebedynsky 2009, pp. 105–10). As matriarchy is a feminist cornerstone myth (Braun 1987), Western writers do not hesitate to project their own desires onto texts of the past. Thus, in the *Tiger Queens*, formidable mother-regents take centre stage: Alaqai, the steppe warrior; Töregene, who assumes leadership upon the death of her alcoholic husband Ökodei; and Sorġoqtani, the selfless mother who sacrifices her personal happiness to raise her children. This woman bides her time in the shadows until circumstances align to elevate the fortunes of the Mongol Empire:

> I [. . .] had been content to spend my life in the shadows cast by those around me. Until now. My entire world had been consumed with pulling my sons up to the height of great men. I was the daughter, wife, and mother [. . .], my *buree* [. . .] kept me from going mad all these years, watching my husband drink himself to death while first Ogodei, and now Güyük, corroded the majesty [. . .] of the Mongol Empire. (Thornton 2014, p. 421)

The sanctification of women goes hand in hand with the demonisation of their male counterparts and the full assumption of their femininity as daughters, wives, mothers, and, ultimately, political agents.

4. Conclusions

The perception of Chinggis Khan experienced a significant evolution throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. He progressively transforms from a bloodthirsty barbarian into a civilising hero, aided by wise women. Central to this transformation is the *Secret History*, a pivotal text that was unearthed in the late 19th century, translated into Western languages in the mid-20th century, rewritten and adapted in recent years by novelists, playwrights, and filmmakers.

The remakes dating from the 1940s to the 1960s diverge considerably from those produced after 1990, probably due to the initial minor circulation of the *Secret History* and Mongolia's gravitation under the Soviet sphere. The earliest remakes take names and short episodes from the epic chronicle, often giving it a free interpretation, while the later ones follow it to a tee.

The former present various Orientalist stereotypes. The scene takes place in an eroticised and feminised East with Western features. This offers itself to the gaze and domination of the Western spectator. The others reconstruct the Mongolian setting with greater philological precision. They try to avoid proposing an essentialising vision of the East. However, they do not refrain from taming those aspects that are furthest removed from Western culture and take up some erotic clichés for commercial purposes.

As rewritings and adaptations unfold, the role of women evolves from peripheral to pivotal. Concurrently, their agency undergoes a notable amplification. By the turn of the millennium, Chinggisid queens cease to be mere victims, femmes fatales, or objects; they shape the decisions of male characters and reshape their world.

In works dating back to the era of the Second World War, Chinggis Khan reminds people of, beneath the shadow of myth, the figure of the charismatic leader and contem-

porary dictator. Women mostly act as mediators, steering him down paths of conflict or peace. American filmmakers are quick to convey a reverential depiction of Chinggis Khan. His adventures entertain the audience members, who identify with the hero and eagerly await the film's happy ending. The fact that the United States emerged from the Second World War as winners, without experiencing its horrors on home soil, may have impacted this non-controversial perspective of the Mongol conqueror. By contrast, in literary texts, particularly those published in Europe, this veneration takes longer to solidify. In these works, the reflection on totalitarianism is often accompanied by a redefinition of the vision of otherness. Who are the barbarians (cf. Droit 2007; Todorov 2009), the violent Mongols or the sedentary empires exploiting and dehumanising them? In the era of decolonisation, the claims of the subjects of Western colonies seeking independence and self-determination are projected onto the ancient struggles of the nomads against the sedentary civilisations.

A fully positive view of Chinggis Khan can only emerge in literary texts of recent publication in the West, when the haunting memories of World Wars and Nazi–fascist totalitarianism have, at least in part, faded into the past. Chinggis Khan takes on the guise of the founding hero of a nation. This portrait is more similar to that of the *Secret History*. At the same time, femininity undergoes a redefinition. Recent bestsellers tie it to the concepts of strength, power, and resilience. The favourable reception of historical works and myths related to Mongol queens by contemporary artists and their audiences is due to the current cultural climate, influenced by feminist movements (cf. Cavarero and Restaino 2002).

One might wonder if the categories introduced by Said are applicable to the cinematic and literary phenomenon under analysis. Throughout the 20th century, the figure of Chinggis Khan has been subject to a general scholarly reassessment. Some essays present an idealised view of the Mongol Empire, in line with what Said calls 'academic Orientalism'. This is evident in the books written by the American scholar Weatherford. They extensively cite the *Secret History* and have a popularising approach. They are particularly appreciated by novelists of the last decades, who offer a hagiographic vision of Temujin's enterprise. In general, it can be said that American and European writers and filmmakers, while seeking to better understand Mongolia through travel and reading texts, still use the East as a literary myth (cf. Sellier 1984). They are more interested in addressing, through its symbols and images, the issues of contemporary society than in assessing the historical significance of Chinggisid enterprise. Unlike Russia, for historical and political reasons, Western Europe and the United States have not developed an 'institutional Orientalism' with regard to Mongolia. However, the country's post-Soviet opening to a market economy has sparked Western interest. Due to Mongolia's strategic location between China and Russia, its resources, and its cultural ties to Central Asian nations like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the United States is primarily drawn to the country from a geopolitical standpoint (cf. Brzezinski 1997). For this reason, it becomes important for the West to emphasize Mongolia's compatibility with crucial modern principles like gender equality.

Nevertheless, the archetype of femininity associated with female Chinggisid royalty does not simply echo Western feminist ideals. Quite the opposite, it introduces distinct nuances, intertwining motherhood, wifehood, freedom, and political agency. The American archaeologist Davis-Kimball (2002, p. 240) says that the steppe women warriors are «our heritage, our model», and have left a «powerful legacy [...] in today's society». Thus, European and American authors aim at exploring, through the example of Mongol queens, a new paradigm of femininity. This rejects the traditional scheme of the hyper-feminisation of women as beings capable of softening up men. At the same time, it refutes the opposing model of the hyper-virilisation of women as figures who replace and do the functions of men without any cognitive revolution. It is perhaps at this juncture that one can discern a nascent awareness within Western culture and an attempt to overcome the Manichean and essentialised view of the East/West relationship offered by Orientalism. The road of female freedom has not been unidirectional, from West to East; rather, it has been formed by numerous and diverse cultural exchanges and transfers.

Funding: This research is part of the project *WISE* (*Western Images of the Steppe Empresses. Literary and Film Portraits of Genghisid Women between Fascination and Fear, 20th–21st centuries*). It received funding from the European Commission under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (Grant Agreement n. 101061720).

Data Availability Statement: Data are contained within the article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Notes

1 From now on, this text is referred to under the shortened title *Secret History*.

2 The colophon of the *Secret History* states that «at the moment when the great *quriltai* was assembling, in the Roebuck Moon of the Year of the Mouse, and the hordes had been pitched at the Seven Hills of Köde'e Isle on the Kherlen, [. . .] the writing was finished (Atwood 2023, p. 161). Scholars have debated whether this Year of the Mouse corresponds to 1228, 1240 (the most credited hypothesis), 1252, or 1264, and whether there were any textual additions made after these dates (for an overview, cf. Even and Pop 1994, pp. 21–4; Atwood 2023, pp. LV–LVIII). Various suppositions have also been made on the identity of the author(s) of the *Secret History*. Among the most suggestive are those attributing the work to Śiki Qutuġu, Ö'elun's adopted Tatar son, or to a woman close to a widowed lady of Qasar, Chinggis Khan's brother (for an overview, cf. Even and Pop 1994, p. 23; Atwood 2023, pp. LIX–LXIV).

3 Ye Dehui's work was used not only by European mongolists such as Haenisch and Pelliot to present their romanisations of the Chinese transcription of the original Mongolian text, but also by Mongolian scholars who aimed to recreate the original text of the *Secret History* in Uyghur–Mongolian script (cf. Damdinsüren 1947).

4 An important role in the transmission of the text was also played by the Hungarian (Ligeti 1962), Japanese (Naka 1907; Kobayashi 1940; Murakami 1970–1976), Spanish (Ramírez Bellerín 2000), and Turkish (Temir 1948) editions of the *Secret History*.

5 Chinggis Khan had already aroused a degree of admiration even from some 17th- and 18th-century French orientalists (cf. Chochoy 2021).

6 This article considers all adaptations of the *Secret History* in English, French, and Italian, except those related to children's literature (on this subject, cf. De Bonis 2023).

7 Said himself (Said 1993) has attempted to overcome his Manichaean view of the East/West relationship by introducing the notion of 'resistance'.

8 Cf. the English poster in The Movie Database: https://image.tmdb.org/t/p/original/xOZiU6btm27ng6772Cp9EEgxdw8.jpg (accessed on 9 June 2024).

9 Cf. the English poster in the Internet Movie Database: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0059219/?ref_=tt_urv (accessed on 9 June 2024).

10 Cf. the illustrations of Voltaire's *L'Orphelin de la Chine* by M. Geffroy (Voltaire 1874, p. 275).

11 The writer's library is now located at the University of Louvain, Belgium: https://uclouvain.be/fr/instituts-recherche/isp/alpha/fonds-henry-bauchau.html (accessed on 9 June 2024).

12 «*L'Arbre de Gengis Khan* [. . .] est introduit par [. . .] un poème de Mao Zedong [. . .]. Citation qui indique bien mon ambivalence à l'égard du Mongol» (Bauchau 1988, p. 11).

13 «Ce n'est pas dans les pages d'un livre ou sur la pierre des tombeaux que j'ai rencontré Gengis Khan, mais là où, quittant l'histoire pour le mythe, certaines grandes figures pénètrent dans nos rêves [. . .]. L'homme présent [. . .] porte une ombre très forte [. . .]. Les guerres, les camps de la mort, la bombe atomique m'avaient forcé à en prendre conscience dans le monde extérieur, mais je n'avais pas appris à la reconnaître en moi» (Bauchau 2001, p. 67: preface to *Gengis Khan*).

14 «L'énorme potentiel humain dont cet homme dispose, [. . .] son fanatisme intransigeant qu'une souplesse de race et de calcul [. . .] feront de lui [. . .] le Chef écouté des peuples de couleur travaillés par ses propagandistes. Ce personnage qui va bientôt poser au monde blanc un angoissant problème est [. . .] Mao [. . .]. Peut-on le comparer à Gengis Khan? [. . .] OUI» (Lugné 1963, p. 255: postface to *Le Faucon rouge*).

15 «Any resemblance between the characters of this novel and personages living today is indignantly denied by the author! Ghost of Genghis Khan should notify author if such libelous rumor begins to circulate» (Caldwell 2018, p. 6).

16 Cf. the English poster in The Movie Database: https://image.tmdb.org/t/p/original/koxoFVsNZg7BfGgN3n1ARD5P7t.jpg (accessed on 9 June 2024).

17 Cf. the Mongolian posters of *Mönkh tengeriin khüchin dor* and *Ükhej ül bolno, Chingis Khaan*, as well as the Russian poster of *Mongol*: https://kinosan.mn/search/M%D3%A9%D0%BDx%20%D1%82%D1%8D%D0%BD%D0%B3%D1%8Dp%D0%B8%D0%B9%D0%BD%20x%D2%AF%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BD%20%D0%B4op; http://koha.pl.ub.gov.mn/cgi-bin/koha/opac-imageviewer.pl?biblionumber=35705; https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0416044/mediaviewer/rm330378752/ (accessed on 9 June 2024).

18 Cf. the English poster of *Mongol*: https://www.pastposters.com/details.php?prodId=28882 (accessed on 9 June 2024).

[19] Cf. «Most Western knowledge of ancient Mongolia focuses on Genghis' brutal conquest of Asia and Europe [...], but few people have heard about the women who safeguarded Genghis' empire. This novel, of course, is their story» (Thornton 2014, p. 459: author's note).

[20] Precisely, this word means 'relatives by marriage', 'foetus'. Cf. the entries *urug* in Kuribayashi's project and *urag* in Bolor Dictionary: http://hkuri.cneas.tohoku.ac.jp/project1/kdic/list?groupId=20; https://bolor-toli.com/result?word=ypar&direction=1 (accessed on 9 June 2024).

References

Achenbach, Joel. 1995. The Era of his Ways. The Washington Post. Available online: https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1995/12/31/the-era-of-his-ways/58a4ef4c-052f-4cd3-b6ee-5e68b4159161/ (accessed on 10 June 2024).

Atwood, Christopher P., ed. 2023. *The Secret History of the Mongols*. London: Penguin.

Barckhausen, Joachim. 1935. *Das gelbe Weltreich: Lebensgeschichte einer Macht*. Berlin: Buchu, Tiefdr. Ges.

Bauchau, Henry. 1954. *Gengis Khan*. Manuscript. Bruxelles: Archives & Musée de la Littérature, ML 8599/1–17.

Bauchau, Henry. 1960. *Gengis Khan*. Lausanne: Mermod.

Bauchau, Henry. 1982. *Essai sur la vie de Mao Zedong*. Paris: Flammarion.

Bauchau, Henry. 1988. *L'Écriture et la Circonstance*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain.

Bauchau, Henry. 2001. *Théâtre Complet*. Arles: Actes Sud-Papiers.

Begziin, Baljinnyam. 1992. *Mönkh tengeriin khüchin dor*, Film.

Bodrov, Sergei. 2007. *Mongol*, Film.

Braun, Françoise. 1987. Matriarcat, maternité et pouvoir des femmes. *Anthropologie et Sociétés* 11: 45–55. [CrossRef]

Broadbridge, Anne F. 2018. *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. 1997. *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York: Basic Books.

Caldwell, Taylor. 1965. *The Earth Is the Lord's*. New York: Jove.

Caldwell, Taylor. 2018. *The Earth Is the Lord's*. New York: Open Road Integrated Media.

Cavarero, Adriana, and Franco Restaino. 2002. *Le filosofie femministe*. Milano: Mondadori.

Charleux, Isabelle. 2009. Chinggis Khan: Ancestor, Buddha or Shaman? On the uses and abuses of the portrait of Chinggis Khan. *Mongolian Studies* 31: 207–58.

Charleux, Isabelle. 2011. Critères changeants d'authenticité. In *Misceallanea Internae Asiae, volume en hommage à Françoise Aubin*. Edited by Denise Aigle, Isabelle Charleux, Vincent Gossaert and Roberte Hamayon. Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica, pp. 409–69.

Chochoy, Matthieu. 2021. *De Tamerlan à Gengis Khan. Construction et déconstruction de l'idée d'empire tartare en France du XVI^{e} siècle à la fin du XVIII^{e} siècle*. Leiden: Brill.

Cleaves, Francis W., ed. 1982. *The Secret History of the Mongols*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Damdinsüren, Tsendiin. 1947. *Mongġol-un ni'uca tobciyan*. Ulaanbaatar: Ulsîn khevleliin gazar.

da Pian del Carpine, Giovanni. 1913. *Historia Mongalorum*. Firenze: Tipografia Carnesecchi e figli.

Davis-Kimball, Jeannine. 2002. *Warrior Women. An Archaeologist's Search for History's Hidden Heroines*. New York: Warner Books.

De Bonis, Benedetta. 2020. *Métamorphoses de l'image des Tartares dans la littérature européenne du XX^{e} siècle*. Bruxelles: Peter Lang.

De Bonis, Benedetta. 2023. L'épopée de Gengis-khan au prisme des femmes. Une enquête sur la littérature pour la jeunesse contemporaine en langue anglaise, française et italienne. *RILUNE. Revue des Littératures Européennes* 17: 193–214. Available online: http://www.rilune.org/images/Numero_diciassette/11_de_bonis.pdf (accessed on 10 June 2024).

de Rachewiltz, Igor, ed. 1971–1985. The Secret History of the Mongols. *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 4 (1971), pp. 115–63; 5 (1972), pp. 149–75; 10 (1974), pp. 55–82; 13 (1976), pp. 41–75; 16 (1977), pp. 27–65; 18 (1978), pp. 43–80; 21 (1980), pp. 17–57; 23 (1981), pp. 111–46; 26 (1982), pp. 39–84; 30 (1984), pp. 81–160; 31 (1985), pp. 21–93.

de Rachewiltz, Igor, ed. 2004. *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*. Leiden: Brill.

di Rubruk, Guglielmo. 2011. *Viaggio in Mongolia*. Milano: Mondadori.

Droit, Roger-Pol. 2007. *Généalogie des barbares*. Paris: Odile Jacob.

Espagne, Michel. 2013. La notion de transfert culturel. *Revue Sciences/Lettres* 1: 1–9. Available online: https://journals.openedition.org/rsl/219 (accessed on 10 June 2024). [CrossRef]

Even, Marie-Dominique, and Rodica Pop, eds. 1994. *Histoire Secrète des Mongols: Chronique mongole du XIII^{e} siècle*. Paris: Gallimard.

Forte, Franco. 2000a. *Gengis Khan: Il figlio del cielo*. Milano: Mondadori.

Forte, Franco. 2000b. *Gengis Khan: L'orda d'oro*. Milano: Mondadori.

Frèches, José. 2015. *Gengis Khan: L'homme qui aimait le vent*. Paris: XO.

Frèches, José. 2016. *Gengis Khan: Le conquérant*. Paris: XO.

Graf, Arturo. 1923. *Roma nella memoria e nelle immaginazioni del Medioevo: Con un'appendice sulla leggenda di Gog e Magog*. Torino: Giovanni Chiantore.

Grousset, René. 1944. *Le Conquérant du monde: Vie de Gengis-Khan*. Paris: Albin Michel.

Grousset, René. 1965. *L'Empire des steppes: Attila, Gengis-Khan, Tamerlan*. Paris: Payot. First published 1939.

Gumilev, Lev N. 1994. *Černaja legenda. Druz'ja I nedrugi Velikoi Stepi*. Moskva: Ekopros.

Hache, Émilie. 2024. *De la génération: Enquête sur sa disparition et son remplacement par la production*. Paris: La Découverte.

Haenisch, Erich, ed. 1941. *Die geheime Geschichte der Mongolen. Aus einer mongolischen Niederschrift des Jahres 1240 von der Insel Kode'e im Keluren-Fluss*. Leipzig: Harrassowitz.
Homeric. 1998. *Le Loup mongol*. Paris: Grasset.
Iggulden, Conn. 2007. *Birth of an Empire*. New York: Bantam Books.
Iggulden, Conn. 2008a. *Lords of the Bow*. New York: Random House.
Iggulden, Conn. 2008b. *Bones of the Hills*. London: HarperCollins.
Jauss, Hans R. 1988. *Estetica della ricezione*. Napoli: Guida.
Kahn, Paul, ed. 1984. *The Secret History of the Mongols. The Origin of Chingis Khan*. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company.
Kobayashi, Takashirō, ed. 1940. *Mōko no hishi*. Tokyo: Seikatsusha.
Kozin, Sergei, and Maria Olsufieva, eds. 1973. *Storia segreta dei Mongoli*. Milano: Longanesi.
Kozin, Sergei, ed. 1941. *Sokrovennoe skazanie, mongol'skaya khronika 1240 g. pod nazvaniem Mongγol-un niγuča tobčiyan, Yuan'čao bi ši, mongol'skij obydennyj izbornik*. Moskva and Leningrad: Akad. Nauk SSSR, vol. 1.
Lamb, Harold. 1927. *Genghis Khan, the Emperor of All Men*. New York: Doubleday.
Lebedynsky, Iaroslav. 2009. *Les Amazones. Mythe et réalité des femmes guerrières chez les anciens nomades de la steppe*. Paris: Errance.
Levin, Henry. 1965. *Genghis Khan*, Film.
Ligeti, Lajos, ed. 1962. *A mongolok tiktos története*. Budapest: Gondolat.
Lkhagwîn, Erdenebulgan. 2008. *Ükhej ül bolno, Chingis Khaan*, Film.
Lugné, Robert. 1963. *Le Faucon rouge*. Paris: Galic.
Mellino, Miguel, ed. 2009. *Post-orientalismo. Said e gli studi postcoloniali*. Roma: Meltemi.
Montenach, Anne. 2012. Introduction. Agency: Un concept opératoire dans les études de genre? *Rives Méditerranéennes* 41: 7–10. Available online: https://journals.openedition.org/rives/4104 (accessed on 10 June 2024). [CrossRef]
Moscovici, Serge. 1981. *L'Âge des foules: Un traité historique de psychologie des masses*. Paris: Fayard.
Murakami, Masatsugu, ed. 1970–1976. *Mongoru hishi: Jingisu Kan monogatari*. Tokyo: Heibumsha, vol. 1 (1970); vol. 2 (1972); vol. 3 (1976).
Naka, Michiyo, ed. 1907. *Chingisu Kan jitsuroku*. Tokyo: Dainippon Tosho Kabushiki Gaisha.
Nietzsche, Friedrich. 2011. *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Hamburg: Nikol Verlag.
Onon, Urunge, ed. 1990. *The History and the Life of Chinggis Khan (The Secret History of the Mongols)*. Leiden: Brill.
Palladius, ed. 1866. Starinnoe mongol'skoe skazanie o Čingis-khane. In *Trudy členov Rossijskoj duhovnoj missii v Pekine*. Sankt-Peterburg: Tip. V. Bezobrazova, vol. 4.
Pao, Kuo-Yi, ed. 1965. *Studies on the Secret History of the Mongols*. Bloomington: Indiana University, chap. 9.
Paris, Matthiew. 1964. *Chronica Majora*. Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, vol. 4.
Pelliot, Paul, ed. 1949. *Histoire Secrète des Mongols*. Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, chp. 1–6.
Polo, Marco. 1982. *Le divisament dou monde*. Milano: Mondadori.
Poulet, Régis. 2000. *L'Orient: Généalogie d'une illusion*. Lille: Atelier National de reproduction des thèses.
Powell, Dick. 1956. *The Conqueror*, Film.
Prawdin, Michael. 1938. *Tschingis-Chan und sein Erbe*. Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verl. Anst.
Praz, Mario. 1986. *La carne, la morte e il diavolo nella letteratura romantica*. Firenze: Sansoni.
Ramírez Bellerín, Laureano, ed. 2000. *Historia segreta de los Mongoles*. Madrid: Miraguano.
Ratchenevsky, Paul. 1976. La condition de la femme mongole au XIIe-XIIIe siècle. In *Tractata Altaica: Denis Sinor, sexagenario optime de rebus Altaicis merito dedicata*. Edited by Walther Heissig. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 509–30.
Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
Said, Edward W. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto & Windus.
Sellier, Philippe. 1984. Qu'est-ce qu'un mythe littéraire? *Littérature* 55: 112–26. [CrossRef]
Temir, Ahmet, ed. 1948. *Mogŏlların gizli tarihi*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.
Thevenet, Jacqueline. 1999. *La Mongolie*. Paris: Karthala.
Thornton, Stephanie. 2014. *The Tiger Queens*. New York: New American Library.
Todorov, Tzvetan. 2009. *La paura dei barbari*. Milano: Garzanti.
Trubetzkoy, Nikolai S. 1991. *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and Other Essays on Russia's Identity*. Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications.
Veit, Veronika, ed. 2007. *The Role of Women in the Altaic World*. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz.
Voltaire. 1874. *Théâtre Complet de Voltaire*. Paris: Laplace, Sanchez et Cie.
von Tunzelmann, Alex. 2013. The Conqueror: Hollywood Gives Genghis Khan a Kicking He Won't Forget. Available online: https://amp.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2013/may/03/the-conqueror-hollywood-genghis-khan (accessed on 10 June 2024).
Waley, Arthur, ed. 1963. *The Secret History of the Mongols and Other Pieces*. London: Allen & Unwin.
Weatherford, Jack. 2004. *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
Weatherford, Jack. 2010. *The Secret History of the Mongol Queens: How the Daughters of Genghis Khan Rescued His Empire*. New York: Crown.

Weiler, Abraham H. 1956. Screen: The Conqueror; John Wayne Stars in Oriental 'Western'. *The New York Times*. Available online: https://www.nytimes.com/1956/03/31/archives/screen-the-conqueror-john-wayne-stars-in-oriental-western.html (accessed on 10 June 2024).
Williams, John W. 1996. The Conqueror. A Barbaric Film. Available online: http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~corff/im/Film/Conqueror.html (accessed on 10 June 2024).
Xu, Kefei. 2011. Le maoïsme de Tel Quel autour de Mai 68. *Transtext(e)s Transcultures* 6. Available online: https://journals.openedition.org/transtexts/436?lang=en (accessed on 10 June 2024). [CrossRef]
Ye, Dehui, ed. 1936. *Menggu Bi Shi*. Shanghai: Shangwu, First published 1908.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.