Writing Taiwan: A Study of Taiwan’s Nativist Literature

by

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Abstract

Taiwan’s nativist literature, known as Taiwan hsiang-t’u literature, originated in the Japanese occupation when Taiwanese native authors strived to establish a “national” literature distinct from Japanese and Chinese literatures. Drawing on recent colonial/postcolonial theory, this project aims to investigate the process of writing in which the native tongue profoundly undermined the privileged status of the colonizer’s language and through which natives could articulate their colonial existence. It argues that the new conception of Taiwanese writing produced a new literature where the cultural “otherness” was traversed by the language and literature of the colonized. Concurrently, the practice of Taiwanese writing as a means of resistance to the writing of the colonizer constructed a new paradigm for Taiwanese “national” identity. The analysis is organized in three parts. The first part (chapters 1, 2, 3) raises central questions about the postcolonial studies of Taiwan in the context of colonialism. It provides a historical review of Taiwan’s colonized experiences. This historical review not only serves as an account of the rise of nativism in modern Taiwan, but it also constructs a different historical discourse from that rendered by the colonizers. The second part (chapters 4, 5, 6) presents the debates on nativist literature in modern Taiwan’s literary history in order to demonstrate how the nativist discourse was formatted and manipulated in a particular sociopolitical climate. The debates, based on the historical context, can be divided into three phases: 1) the Japanese occupation when natives were striving to legitimatize nativist literature; 2) the KMT rule when nativist discourse was primarily articulated as opposed to colonialism; and 3) the post-colonial period when nativist writing has tended to be recognized as a “national” literature. The third part (chapters 7, 8, 9) undertakes detailed analyses of many literary texts, focusing on such issues as colonial subjectivity, the use of dialect, and exile in Taiwan’s nativist writing. This study attempts to demonstrate the productive and ambivalent force of nativist discourse; it also seeks to shift the understanding of nativism from a nationalistic model of cultural authenticity toward a more radical postcolonial or postmodern perspective that emphasizes difference, plurality, and hybridity.

Index Words: Taiwan literature, hsiang-t’u literature, nativism, minor literature, postcolonial studies.
WRITING TAIWAN: A STUDY OF TAIWAN’S NATIVIST LITERATURE

by

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INTRODUCTION

This project is a study of Taiwan’s nativist literature, a literature that announced a new mode of Taiwanese writing and fostered the concept of a history of “Taiwan literature” (台灣文學). Taiwan’s nativist literature, known as Taiwan hsiang-t’u 鄉土 literature, originated in the Japanese occupation when Taiwanese native authors strived to establish a “national” literature distinct from Japanese and Chinese literatures. Taiwanese native authors during the time found a striking divergence between the spoken and written languages and therefore advocated the reform of Taiwanese written language. As expressed by the endlessly repeated phase yen-wen yi-chih 言文一致, which literally meant “the unification of the spoken and written language,” native authors attempted to create a new Taiwanese written system in order to transcribe colloquial Taiwanese accurately. Yen-wen yi-chih thus became above all a new ideology of writing that consequently involved a profound appropriation of the privileged language. More significantly, yen-wen yi-chih was not simply a language reform movement; it in fact raised questions germane to the production of a “national” literature in which the native tongue is comprehended as an immediate representation of the national spirit. Historical

1 “Taiwan literature,” a English rendition of “T’ai-wan wen-hsueh 台灣文學,” is the conventional term to indicate the body of literature from Taiwan. Such terms as “literature from Taiwan” and “Taiwanese literature” are also available for the same body of literature. Sometimes these terms are interchangeable. Since different terms may denote different notions and significations, the concept of “Taiwan literature” has been an issue that arouses sprawling debates. The use of “Taiwan literature” here suggests a “national” literature of Taiwan. For a detailed discussion of the subject, see, for example, Tang Xiaobing, “On the Concept of Taiwan Literature” 379-422.
evidence has suggested that the *yen-wen yi-chih* movement was the product of a specific historical order in which Taiwan was exposed by force to foreign languages and cultures. Therefore, the formation of *yen-wen yi-chih* could be read as a system that made possible the expression of the *colonized self* as opposed to the *colonizing other*. In light of current discourse on colonial and post-colonial literature, this project aims to investigate the process of writing in which the native tongue profoundly undermined the privileged status of the colonizer’s language and through which natives could articulate their colonial existence. I will argue that the new conception of Taiwanese writing produced a new literature where the cultural “otherness” was traversed by the language and literature of the colonized. Concurrently, the practice of Taiwanese writing as a means of resistance to the writing of the colonizer constructed a new paradigm for Taiwanese “national” identity.

Taiwanese natives often conceived of the *yen-wen yi-chih* movement as an effort toward modernization and considered nativist writing essential to the construction of a modern nation. Frequently, nativist literature advocates found themselves captivated by the economic and precise nature of such a writing style and viewed it as a necessary means to bring about cultural enlightenment and, ultimately, modernization. Moreover, their tendency to view the emphatically anti-colonial rhetoric as the best cultural repository of a colonized nation reinforced the idea that nativist writing presented a “national” literature. In such a case, Taiwan’s nativist discourse has not only committed itself to liberation from colonial oppression but also contributed significantly to the formation of a modern nation. Chiu Kuei-fen 邱貴芬, for example, in her study of postcolonial historiography in Taiwan, has noted the close relationship between the
natvist tradition and nation building: “The current reconstruction of Taiwan literary history…as part of counter-hegemonic project… seeks to undermine the legitimacy of the Chinese national narrative”; this reconstruction also aims to build a “nation” by narrating the cultural practices in the past (“Writing Women Writers into Taiwan Literary History” 1-2). What interests me, then, in the case of a marginalized literature, is the process whereby the act of writing in this developing conception of Taiwanese literature functions as a means of resistance to the writing of the colonizer; concurrently, this practice constructs a new paradigm for Taiwanese “national” identity.

Such viewpoints also bring about the realization that the rhetoric of natvism as opposed to colonialism is not absent from the narratives of de-colonization. To gain cultural and national freedom, nativism has fought with colonialism. As Frantz Fanon has elaborated, nativist writing as a “national” literature will finally enter the phase of “fighting” (The Wretched of the Earth 222-3). Recent postmodern and postcolonial criticism, however, has questioned such a discourse. More specifically, in their postcolonial studies of Taiwan, many critics have denied the linguistic conception of yen-wen yi-chih by questioning its phonocentric ideology that suggests speech be the immediate expression of consciousness. They have also rejected the native tongue as the means for creative writings and further suspected its potential power of hegemonic exercise.Apparently, such viewpoints, caught in the tension of the colonizers and the colonized, tend to perceive nativist discourse as rhetoric of “essentialism” or “anti-racist racism.” The question remains for the postcolonial studies in Taiwan: Does the rhetoric of nativism as a “reverse-discourse” have the power to overthrow the hierarchy of colonizer/colonized, or does it ultimately duplicate the nightmare of imperial colonialism?
Taiwan’s nativist literature has drawn heavily on “localism” and placed an emphasis on local landscape, affairs, and dialects. In its emphatically anti-colonial rhetoric, Taiwan’s nativist discourse has recognized the local as a site of resistance against colonial oppression. Yet, in the course of development in the twentieth century, the concern with the local has also emerged as a source of national identity. Localism thus has played a paradoxical role in the narratives of de-colonization. On the one hand, the local is a site of resistance to the cosmopolitanism and universalist claims of modernity; and on the other hand, it is also a site of “promise” and a narrative that has contributed significantly to the formation of modernity (Dirlik 85-7). Not surprisingly, like other third world countries, the process of de-colonization in Taiwan has also been caught in the tension of the opposing powers of the nativist movements on the one side and global postmodern forces on the other. The debates surrounding Taiwan’s nativist literature clearly embody such a conflict. By connecting nativist writing with such issues as identity, cultural subjectivity, political legitimacy, and hegemonic practices, many nativist critics have promoted native language and memory retrieval projects. Postcolonial critics, however, drawing from such postmodernist notions as “decentering” and “transculturalism” in discussion, have suggested a mode of “cultural syncretism” for interpreting Taiwan’s cultural practice in history and its future development (“Discovering Taiwan” 169-91). Apparently, the criticism on Taiwan’s nativist literature has become a site of discursive struggles intersected by different discourses and endorsed by various powers including both those of localization and of globalization.

My focus on the Taiwanese appropriation of Chinese and Japanese writings is necessary
because previous critics have often neglected its importance in shaping a new writing style and creating a new literature. In the atmosphere that sought a distinct Taiwanese cultural and national identity prevailing in the 1980’s and 1990’s, nativist literature was further tainted with political associations. My concerns are hence twofold: first, theoretically, I will examine the process of subjectification on the part of the colonized through writing, and second, more pragmatically, I will disentangle some of the cultural, political, and racial conflicts involved in the interpretations of those theories. Further, the rhetoric of nativist discourse as both a liberation from oppression and a rejection of universal modernity has to be reviewed in its contingency not only on the narratives of de-colonization but also on the politics of globalization. In this project, I will also question whether the rhetoric of Taiwan’s nativist discourse has repeated the canonical terms of imperialism’s conceptual framework, and whether the insistence on native language, history, and culture has always conflicted with the trend of globalization. By addressing these issues, this study will bring this Asian island—whose historical experiences of political and economic colonization are often overlooked—into the arena of colonial/postcolonial discourse. It will also shed light on the politics of de-colonization and globalization, since Taiwan has shared multiple layers of colonial and neo-colonial cultures with many former colonies.

In the hope of interpreting Taiwan’s nativist literature in these contexts, I have organized my analysis in three parts. In the first part (chapters 1, 2, 3), I will raise central questions about the postcolonial studies of Taiwan in the context of colonialism, in particular, in the structure of the colonizer/colonized. From the perspective of the colonized, the first part
will provide a historical review of Taiwan’s colonized experiences, which include the period of European colonization as well as those of Chinese imperial rule, the Japanese occupation, and the Kuomintang’s 国民黨 (KMT) control over the island. All these colonized experiences still have a considerable effect in post-colonial Taiwan. With highlights on sociopolitical factors that underlie the emergence of nativist movements, this historical review will also serve as an account of the rise of nativism in modern Taiwan. Such a review of the island’s unique colonial history and sociopolitical circumstances not only lays the foundation for further discussions; it in fact constructs a different historical narrative configuration from that rendered by the colonizers. The second part (chapters 4, 5, 6) will present the debates on nativist literature in modern Taiwan’s literary history in order to demonstrate how the nativist discourse was formatted and manipulated in a particular sociopolitical climate. This presentation of the debates in history will also help explain the origins of Taiwan’s nativist literature. The debates, based on the historical context, can be divided into three phases: 1) the Japanese occupation when natives were striving to legitimatize nativist literature; 2) the KMT rule when nativist discourse was primarily articulated as opposed to colonialism; and 3) the post-colonial period when nativist writing has tended to be recognized as a “national” literature. The third part (chapters 7, 8, 9) will undertake detailed analyses of many literary texts including Wang Ch’ang-hsiung’s 王昶雄 A Raging Current 奔流 (1942), Wu Chou-liu’s 吳濁流 Asia’s Orphan 亞細亞的孤兒 (1947), and Chuwas Lawa’s 綢仔絲萊渥 So Remote the Romance 山深情遙 (1997). The discussion will focus on specific issues raised by postcolonial and postmodern theories: for example, the inscription of colonial subjectivity, displacement in colonial writing, and rewriting of colonial history.
By tracing the debates on nativist writing in modern Taiwan’s literary history, this study attempts to demonstrate the productive and ambivalent force of nativist discourse. It also seeks to shift the understanding of nativism from a nationalistic model of cultural authenticity toward a more radical postcolonial or postmodern perspective that emphasizes difference, plurality, and hybridity. Although Taiwan’s literary production has been intricately intertwined with the experience of colonization and deeply implicated in the national struggle for identity, the discussion of Taiwan “national” literature should avoid being drawn into the hierarchy of colonizer/colonized. Likewise, movements of nativization and localization, as efforts toward de-colonization, should attempt to liberate their rhetoric from the hegemonic practice that was so instrumental in the colonial history of Taiwan.
PART I:

NARRATING HISTORY
CHAPTER 1

A FRONTIER TRADITION:

TAIWAN’S COLONIAL HISTORY AND SOCIETY

*Ilha Formosa* 福爾摩沙—The Beautiful Island

With a tiny area of 14,400 square miles, Taiwan Island is a little larger than the Netherlands, a trifle smaller than Maryland and Delaware combined. Geographically, Taiwan comprises the main island of Taiwan (Formosa) and its adjacent islands, mainly the Pescadores (P’eng-hu 彭湖). Shaped like a sweet potato, the island of Taiwan hangs against the vast backdrop of continental Asia, lying a hundred miles off the southeast flank of China, seven hundred miles south of Japan, and two hundred miles north of the Philippine Islands.  

Taiwan is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and is somewhat isolated from the neighboring imperial Chinese as well as from the Hindu and Buddhist civilizations of East and Southeast Asia. Lying on the Western Pacific rim against the vast backdrop of continental Asia, Taiwan has a frontier tradition. George H. Kerr, an American strategist during World War II, sees the island as a spot where the continental and maritime frontiers meet and overlap. Kerr writes, “from a continental point of view

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2 Simon Long tells a Chinese version of Taiwan’s creation myth: Once upon a time, fierce dragons, which guarded the seaboard entrance of southeastern China, frolicked in the sea and arrived on the island of Taiwan. There, they began to cavort and plow through the earth itself. Where their heads surfaced at the north of the island, they threw up the bluff in the north. They then went writhing down the spine of the island, heaving up a jagged range of mountains. In a parting gesture, they gave a massive flap of their formidable tails, creating the sheer cliffs which make the imposing south of the island (*Taiwan: China’s Last Frontier*)
Formosa represents easternmost thrust of a vast complex of continental interests, of
Chinese interests pressing out the maritime world. From an oceanic point of view the
island presents the westernmost point on the Western Pacific rim, a maritime frontier
which embraces Japan, the Ryu-kyus and the Philippines, a world of sea borne trade and
international politics” (Formosa Betrayed 1). For centuries Taiwan has been a site of
crossings by various powers and cultures; the Dutch, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and
American had all participated in shaping the colonial history of Taiwan.

The origins of Taiwan’s residents can be traced back to thousands of years ago.
Beginning in the centuries before Christ, two different groups settled on the island—who
are now referred to as the island’s “aborigines.” People known as Taiyals and Vonums
lived in the north; the Malayo-Polynesian ethnic group who had drifted northward from
the South Seas through Southeast Asia settled in the south of the island.\(^3\) Captured by the
island’s remarkable natural beauty, the Portuguese merchants who arrived in the
sixteenth-century dubbed it *Ilha Formosa*—the beautiful Island. Although they gave
Taiwan its name, the Portuguese did not settle there for long, for their dominance was
soon to be supplanted by the Spanish and later by the British.

In the early seventeenth century, Formosa entered its “European half-century” (Kerr,
*Formosa Betrayed* 3). In 1624 the Dutch, under the Dutch East India Company, opened
the island to settlement. They instituted basic government, introduced new forms of
agriculture, recruited Chinese laborers from southeastern China, and built maritime trade
with Japan and Europe. The Dutch missionaries also established schools, teaching

\(^3\) As Long notes, since the origins of the island’s earliest inhabitants are not clear, the study of their
origins has been a political issue. For example, the Japanese, who had colonized Taiwan from 1895 to
1945, linked the “Lonkius” tribes (Taiyals and Vonums) to the Ainu people of the northern Japanese island
of Hokkaido. However, for the Chinese, the Lonkius are of mainland Chinese origin (3).
Formosan children to write with Roman letters. It was also during the period of Dutch control that the island came to be known by its current name, “Tai-wan 台灣” (Kerr, *Formosa* 3). The Dutch government in Taiwan was threatened by the Spanish when they established settlements in the north of the island in 1626. In 1642 the Spanish were driven out, and by 1650 Formosa experienced a short-lived prosperous heyday under Dutch control (Long 10).

The Dutch were forced to abandon their flourishing island colony in 1662, when a Japanese-born sea baron of mixed ancestry, Cheng Chen-kung 鄭成功—better known as “Koxinga the Pirate”⁴—invaded Taiwan where he ruled as an independent principality until 1683. The “Koxingan period” (1661-83) was brief but important. Taking with him hundreds of former Ming 明 courtiers and scholars, clerks, craftsman, and farmers with their gears, Koxinga entered the Dutch settlement and imposed a Chinese-style regime for the first time on the island. These newcomers dispossessed earlier inhabitants, including the Europeans, the earlier pioneer Chinese émigrés, the “tamed” aborigines, and the children and grandchildren of mixed blood. The Dutch villages were soon enlarged into proper Chinese towns. Trading with the Japanese—mainly rice and sugar—continued. Taiwan was forced to develop a new level of economic advancement and self-sufficiency due to the Ch’ing’s isolation policy during that time. As a result, under Koxinga and his son’s rule, Formosa became in effect an independent principality,

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⁴ “Koxinga” is, in fact, a Dutch corruption of “Kuo-hsing-yeh 國姓爺”—“Lord of the Imperial Surname”—a title bestowed on Cheng Cheng-kung. He was the son of Cheng Chih-lung, a famous Fukienese pirate, who had surrendered in 1628 and helped the Ming empire against Japanese pirates. Koxinga’s mother was a Japanese noble. He became a great favorite of the Ming court in the 1640s, as it retreated south in the face of Manchu incursions. Unlike his father, who defected to the Ch’ing 滅 empire, Koxinga resisted their blandishments and established an army in Fukien and later in Taiwan (Long 11-12).
The “Wild East”—Between the Mainland and the Island

Although the Chinese had known of the island’s existence centuries before the arrival of European explorers, they never took it seriously and made no attempt to make it “part of China.” Even when the newly-established Ch’ing empire conquered the Koxingan regime and succeeded in bringing all the Chinese continental province under its control, the Chinese empire paid little attention to the small island of Taiwan. Many historians have argued that the mainland Chinese government attempted to assert its control over the island in 1683 simply because it grew tired of the annoying buccaneering raids on the Fukien coast launched by Koxinga’s people (Kerr, Formosa 6). During that time, the island—along with the neighboring Pescadores—was not a Chinese province, but a prefecture and military district of Fukien province.

For the Chinese, Taiwan was a remote island, a “barbarous, lawless, and rebellious” land (Long 13). The late seventeenth century saw the first significant wave of Chinese immigrants—mostly bandits, pirates, itinerant seaman, and those who were fleeing discrimination and prosecution on the mainland. Their crossings of the Strait to Taiwan in fact violated the ban on crossing the channel imposed by the Ch’ing empire (Kerr, Formosa 6). In other words, those early Chinese settlers in Taiwan had no intentions to return to the mainland they left behind. Also, they tended to ignore the mainland.

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5 It is said that the Sui Emperor Yang-ti sent his expedition teams to the island in 605 and 611, attempting to bring Taiwan into its fold. That was the last “official” Chinese contact with Taiwan before the collapse of the Ming dynasty in 1662 (Long 4-5).
authority, which disturbed the Chinese empire and the mainlanders as well. During that time, besides the importation of rice, sugar, and other products from the island, the Ch’ing empire’s great concerns about Taiwan was to keep down insurrection (Long 15).

Riots and abortive independence movements took place so often that Taiwan was said by the Chinese to be a place where there was “every three years an uprising; every five years a rebellion” (Kerr, Formosa Betrayed 4). In fact, between 1714 and 1833, the island’s people launched three “Great Rebellions” and innumerable smaller revolts against the Ch’ing imperial rule—all of which were brutally crushed. Consequently, the Chinese violent suppression further reinforced the islander’s resentment against mainland authority (Long 13). The Chinese, for their part, viewed the island as a hopelessly remote and uncivilized outpost. The criminals, pirates, and savages who made up the inhabitants of this “barbaric” land, in the eyes of the Chinese, were not “true Chinese.” (Kerr, Formosa 7). The never-ending conflicts between the continental authority and the island people were intensified when Taiwan was brought into international politics after the early nineteenth century.

With the advent of the maritime powers, Taiwan was engaged in a game of international politics played among these powers, including Britain, France, Prussia, Russia, the United States, and Japan—all at some point contemplated annexation, colonization, or purchase of the island (Long 16-20). Facing increasing coastal challenges, China’s traditional “inward-looking” foreign policy was forced to reorient itself. Taiwan at last gained importance in the Ch’ing empire’s eyes for the first time. For primarily military and economic reasons, the Chinese empire sent its officials to the island and campaigned a “self-strengthening” movement—which led Taiwan to a
moment of modernization (Long 21-22). These campaigns, however, did not make Taiwan an integral part of China; the Chinese attitude toward Taiwan remained ambiguous. China’s non-committal attitude toward Taiwan was evidenced by its refusal to take any official responsibility for this island and its inhabitants. For example, in 1871 Japan complained to the Chinese about the murder of a few Japanese sailors by Formosans. The Ch’ing empire rejected any responsibility by claiming that its sovereignty over Taiwan only extended to the “civilized” western lowlands—which in effect denied its sovereignty over two-thirds of the island and led to Japan’s occupation of the “uncivilized” land (Long 19-20). Under the pressure of the Japanese, English, and French threats to occupy the island, China finally declared Taiwan to be a full-fledged province in 1887. After all, the maritime powers had the same military and economic interests in Taiwan as the Ch’ing empire. In 1894 the Sino-Japanese war broke out over Korea and Manchuria, and in 1895 Japan won the war and took Taiwan as a dubious prize according to the Treaty of Shimonoseki. As Kerr argues, since the Ch’ing empire clearly viewed Taiwan as more of a troublesome liability than an asset, it is not surprising that the Ch’ing empire was quite willing to cede Taiwan to Japan in exchange for Japanese withdrawal from Manchuria. For many Formosans, China’s decision—in which they had no voice—“betrayed” them, and hence completely dissolved any remaining obligations of loyalty to China (Kerr, Formosa xiv). Since that time people living on both sides of the Strait have taken a jaundiced view of the other. The seeds of resistance to the forthcoming Japanese occupation, as Long argues, were deeply embedded, “not so

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6 It has been argued that the Chinese campaigns for modernizing Taiwan—decades earlier than the Japanese programs—had set the foundations for the modernization of Taiwan.
much in Chinese nationalism, but in an ethnic consciousness limited to the island itself” (23).

The Multi-ethnic and Multi-lingual Society

Under Dutch control, the aboriginal tribes either lived on the plains taking part in trade with the Chinese or retreated into the mountains where they maintained separate and distinct cultures. In addition to these aboriginal tribes, three major sub-ethnic groups of Chinese immigrants composed the majority of the island’s inhabitants. Emigrants from coastal Fukien villages formed the great majority of the three sub-ethnic groups. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they settled in lowland farming communities along Formosa’s western coast. They are known as the “Hok-lo 河洛” people, speaking related Fukien dialects and living according to traditional Fukien customs. The second groups embraced the “Hakka 客家” people—physically a larger, tougher type with more aggressive character. The origins of the Hakka people are unknown. It has been said that their ancestors had migrated from northern China into the uplands and mountains in Cantonese province where they preserved their own distinct dialects and many peculiar characteristics of dress and customs during the passing centuries. Then they drifted to the island of Taiwan and settled there from north to south in the high foothills, which marked the forest frontier and separated the lowland Hok-lo farmlands from the aboriginal tribes in interior jungles. As they were known as “Hakka”—which literally means “guests” or “strangers”7—the Hakka people kept their communities from others. Then, the Cantonese 廣東 immigrants, who settled principally in the port towns, were the third

7 As Kerr notes, the term “Hakka” always suggests a sense of separateness (Formosa 8).
group of Chinese immigrants and were always a distinct and not very consequential minority.

By the time Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895, Taiwan had been a “fragmented” society in both ethnic and linguistic senses. In addition to the island’s aborigines who had Malayo-Polynesian ethnic origins, different sub-ethnic groups from the mainland lived hitherto in separate communities. The ethnic division was further complicated by the strong clannishness of many of the Chinese. Formosans quarreled not only with the mainland authority who governed them but also endlessly among themselves, especially among the two dominant clans from the ports of Chang-chou 漳州 and Ch’uan-chou 泉州. As Long tells us, Chinese immigrants in Taiwan often banded together on the basis of a common surname for mutual protection against rival clans, aboriginal tribes, and the government extortion because of the inadequate Chinese rule and the “lawless” situation in Taiwan (14).

As a land composed by immigrants of various sub-ethnic origins, Taiwan is also a multilingual society. While the nine aboriginal tribes belong to the Malayo-Polynesian Austronesian linguistic family, the dominant Chinese immigrants belong to the Sinitic (or Sino-Tibetan) family. Although the Chinese immigrants—mainly Hok-lo, Hakka, and Cantonese—share the same Han ethnic origin, their various languages are not mutually intelligible. Nor are Hakka and Hok-lo (Southern Min) comprehensible to the different mainland dialects and Mandarin. The language problems in Taiwan have been complicated due to her long history of colonization. Japanese colonial education in Taiwan required every Taiwanese to learn the Japanese language; Japanese hence became a unifying tongue for all the inhabitants in Taiwan. The Nationalist regime in Taiwan,
however, instituted Mandarin as the official language and expunged others, including all the native tongues and Japanese. These problems also foretell that language choices always play a vital part in Taiwan’s nativist writings.
CHAPTER 2
THE COLONIAL DELIMMA:
BETWEEN ASSIMILATION AND IMPERIALISM

Doka 同化 and Kominka 皇民化: The Japanese Assimilation of Taiwan

The Japanese Concepts of Assimilation

A prevailing Japanese concept of colonialism during the colonial era itself states that Japan and all her colonies should integrate into one Japanese empire and therefore have a shared destiny. This concept has its Japanese expression, *doka* 同化, which is similar to the doctrine of assimilation in European colonial principles of the same time. Finding no affinity between the Japanese formation of assimilation and the European perspectives, Mark R. Peattie defines the Japanese ideas of assimilation in an Asian context. He finds four features of Japanese cultural heritage central to the ideas of assimilation. First, the *dobun doshu* 同文同種 (same script, same race) formula assumes cultural and racial affinity between Japan and her colonies, except for the islanders of the South Pacific. Accordingly, such a perspective suggests a possible fusion of the motherland and all the

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colonial territories. Second, the endlessly-repeated phrase, *isshi dojin* 一視同仁 (impartiality and equal favor), promises absolute equality among all subjects. This expression is derived from the Chinese Confucian tradition and conveys the idea that all who come under the sway of the sovereign share equally in his benevolence. Its implication in colonial administration is that all subjects under the empire, including the Japanese and native populations, are to be treated equally, with the same obligations and rights. Third, the Japanese emperor as head of the Japanese race links the subjects with the state. With this mystical link, new populations brought under Japanese domination become “imperial peoples” (*komin* 皇民) and constitute an “imperial family” along with the Japanese race. Lastly, Japan has always had a unique talent for assimilating foreign peoples and cultures. Japanese historical experiences—such as the emergence of the Yamato people, Japan’s assimilation of Chinese culture in ancient times, and her adaptation of Western forms in the modern period—have provided the race with this talent for assimilation (97-98).

During the age of Japanese expansion, the ideas of assimilation were combined with imperialist aggression. Ever since Japan acquired her first colonial territory, Taiwan, in 1895, Japanese leaders believed that the colony would enhance Japan’s economic and political power in a world of intense international rivalry. This concern was derived from the notion of “survival and self-protection” (Chang and Myers 433). Consequently, assimilation had been the central issue in Japanese colonial affairs since the governor general Kodama Gentaro 児玉源太郎 (1898-1906) and his Civil Administrator Goto Shimpei 後藤新平 arrived in Taiwan. Goto saw a broader purpose in colonial development and put efforts into both material improvement and cultural development.
By establishing institutions such as technical and medical schools, Goto was actually promoting the emergence of a higher civilization. Goto’s idea was based on his particular view of “progress,” a view that maintains that material foundations engender the possibility of a higher civilization. More importantly, beneath Goto’s view and policies lay the conception of Japan as a civilizing force in East Asia. It has been argued that Goto had been strongly influenced by the writings of Darwin, Spencer, and Bentham and accordingly shared their views on the development of civilization (Chang and Myers 437). Indeed, assimilation at its most idealized level was central to the idea of a “civilizing mission.” In addition, assimilation in any colonial system has always implied one-directional change—that is, from the “inferior” culture of the colonized to the “superior” culture of the colonizer (Peattie 98-99). In the same sense, Harry Lamley argues that Japanese assimilation as in the *isshi dojin* sentiments reflected a certain humanitarianism coupled with feelings of superiority (498-99). When Japan took over Taiwan, the colonial administration was determined to assimilate the colonial people, enlighten them, and lift them up to the superior culture of Japan.

For the Japanese colonial thinkers who adopted a gradualist attitude toward colonial affairs, assimilation was a “distant objective” of colonial policy. Goto Shimpei was one of those thinkers. He viewed colonial development as progress toward higher civilization. In addition, his program of Japanese language training at the mass level in Taiwan also worked toward the goal of assimilation for the long term. Nitobe Inazo 新渡戸稲造, one of Japan’s leading colonial thinkers at that time, viewed the progress toward assimilation in any particular colony as necessarily determined by the extent to which cultural difference already existed between colonizer and colonized. They both agreed
that assimilation required a great span of time (Peattie 99-100). In contrast, most
Japanese colonial administrators viewed assimilation as an “immediately useful
administrative concept” (Peattie 100). For the pragmatic colonial administrators, to
assimilate the colonial people was to “Japanize” them, to indoctrinate them as obedient
and loyal subjects to the Japanese emperor by molding their language, appearance, and
lifestyles. Apparently, assimilation was seized upon by the colonial bureaucracy as a
pragmatic means; their concern was primarily for the security of the colonial rule.

The governor-general of Taiwan, Akashi Motojiro 明石元次郎, pursued with vigor
an assimilation policy. Unlike his predecessors who had adopted assimilation as a
“distant” policy, he insisted that assimilation be an immediate means to ensure Japan’s
permanent hold upon Taiwan. Alert to the appeal of the Wilson doctrine of self-
determination and the ongoing Taiwanese Home Rule (Local Autonomy) movement,
Akashi viewed assimilation as an immediate effort to cement Japan’s political and
ideological grip on the island colony (Peattie 104). Choosing education as the vehicle for
integration, his school reform placed emphasis on vocational training, attempting to
integrate Taiwan into sectors of the empire’s economy. Akashi’s programs aimed at the
development of the colony and ultimately bound together the interests of the colonized
and their rulers (Tsurumi 88). For Akashi, assimilation was a meaningful administrative
means whose primary concern was the economic benefit of the empire and Japan’s
colonial control over the island. From this perspective, the assimilation policies were
definitely in the service of colonialism.

Assimilation programs entered another phase when the first civilian governor-
general, Den Kenjiro 田健治郎, was appointed to Taiwan. Upon his arrival on the island,
he declared “Japanization of Taiwan and assimilation of the Taiwanese” as the goals of his colonial administration (Tsurumi 93). In order to accomplish these goals, Den designed the program of “acculturation (kyoka 教化),” a program that extended the assimilation of the native islander beyond the boundaries of regular schooling, in addition to his campaign for regular education (kyoiku 教育). The terms of kyoka, as Patricia Tsurumi points out, in a broad sense includes the connotations of “enlightening, civilizing, and evangelizing” the native islanders (146). Assimilation now took place not only in the classroom but also in politics and social life. Den was dedicated to inculcating in the Taiwanese loyalty to the Japanese emperor; moreover, he put stress on “appropriate social status” (mibun soo 身分相應), which he viewed as the basis for assimilation between the two races (Peattie 108). Once again, assimilation in the guise of cultural amalgamation or social conformity was carried out by Den’s administration as an aggressive means to cement Japan’s political and ideological grip on the island colony.

In his study of Japanese colonialism, Peattie has made an interesting comparison between Japanese and French attitudes toward the policy of assimilation applied to their colonies. Despite its dedication to the ideal of assimilation in the nineteenth century, the French empire in fact had adjusted its colonial policy toward the principle of association by the century’s end, for pragmatic purposes (Peattie 97). However, Japan maintained its assimilation policy during the first half of the twentieth century, especially during its occupation of Taiwan. The political consolidation of the empire and the integration of its colonial economies had been the central concerns of Japanese colonial policy for decades; assimilation had become the primary issue in Japan’s colonial affairs. As the dawn of
World War II approached, Japanese colonial policy moved in a direction that opposed that of the French empire. Yet it underwent necessary adjustments. Assimilation remained the guideline for Japan’s colonial policy at the start of the war; however, as Peattie has observed, under such semi-wartime conditions, efforts for assimilation were directed toward “the inculcation of Japanese patriotism among the colonized peoples” rather than toward considerations of accommodation or equal opportunity for colonizer and colonized (121).

By 1937 assimilation had been pushed to its final stage by a movement called kominka 皇民化—the “imperialization” of the colonial peoples. Kominka means, in effect, complete assimilation, “union with the emperor’s people,” and “changing into imperial subjects” by adopting Japanese ways and becoming acceptable as “true Japanese” (Kerr, Fromosa 162). As George Kerr notes, kominka, which aimed at the full assimilation of the alien races within the empire, was actually a Japanese version of the ancient Chinese formula for civilizing barbarians (162). Peattie argues that the origin of the term is not clear, despite the fact Goto Shimpei had spoken in 1903 of the “imperialization” of the Taiwanese and that the word itself had been fashioned by Japanese journalists about 1937 (121). However, a similar ideology in Confucian phraseology, “sinicization,” which means to assimilate alien peoples by the power of culture, is commonly seen in ancient Confucian political thought. This Confucian phraseology was then adapted to Japanese use, with an emphasis on inculcation of a sense of obligation to the Japanese Emperor. The kominka movement therefore frenetically involved efforts on two fronts, seen by Japanese authorities as mutually supportive: the further Japanization of the colonial peoples and the mobilization of their
energies for the Japanese war efforts. Consequently, kominka involved programs of “spiritual mobilization”—mass campaigns to provoke public commitment to the most stringent wartime duties, to diffuse the Japanese language throughout the colonies, to eradicate native culture in the colonies, to push the indoctrination beyond schools to inculcate loyalty to the Japanese Emperor, and to instill a spirit of public service (Peattie 121).9

In order to meet military needs and wartime exigencies, the kominka movement aligned itself with the mystical rhetoric of Japanese ultra-nationalism and the ideology of Pan-Asianism. The rhetoric of Japanese ultra-nationalism preached the divine origins and unique attributes of the race, a rhetoric that could be extended outward to include all the races brought under the Japanese imperial “family.” For the same reason, the ideology of Pan-Asianism was incorporated into this rhetoric. Japanese Pan-Asianism, associated with the designs of the Greater East Co-Prosperity Sphere, announced a “new order” in East Asia under Japan’s leadership. The new perspective, of course, had its particular political and military concerns. In sum, the idea of kominka, which implied Japanese superiority based on the supposedly divine origins of the race, was linked perfectly to the ideologies of Japanese ultra-nationalism and Pan-Asianism, whose rhetoric professed the racial brotherhood and union of all Asian peoples (Peattie 122-23).

### The Ambivalent Nature of Japanese Assimilation

Racial and cultural affinities between the Japanese and the Taiwanese suggested the possibility of a fusion of the two peoples. In fact, assimilation as a theory had a powerful

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9 For more details of the “spiritual mobilization” program, see also Kerr, *Formosa* 161-4 and Tsurumi 132.
appeal for a wide spectrum of Japanese liberal intellectuals and politicians who supported Taiwanese demands for full equality within the empire, while preserving a Taiwanese cultural identity (Kerr, *Formosa* 132-3). Not only did the idea of assimilation, with its implication of Japanese superiority, find wide favor among the Japanese, but it also was adopted by the Japanese colonial administrators in Taiwan, who based their position on the goals of enlightening, civilizing, and evangelizing the native islanders. In addition, the success of the Okinawans assimilated to Japan after 1878 encouraged the Japanese colonial bureaucracy to continue their efforts to assimilate Taiwan (Kerr, *Formosa* 162).

As mentioned earlier, Goto conducted various gradual programs for assimilation in Taiwan. Proclaiming assimilation of the Taiwanese as one of their administrative goals, Akashi and Den also accelerated the assimilation process by putting effort into a variety of programs, including school systematization, economic integration, and cultural amalgamation.

Despite their different attitudes toward colonial affairs and their various conceptions of assimilation policy, the Japanese colonial administrations viewed assimilation primarily as a means pertinent to colonial control, which had little to do with the radical equality that characterized the Japanese ideas of assimilation. Ultimately, Goto’s project of the gradual assimilation of Taiwan was an attempt to incorporate the island into the Japanese empire; he determined that this would augment Japan’s power and secure Japan’s position in East Asia. Akashi’s aim of the political and economic integration of Taiwan was a step to cement the Japanese grip on the island; likewise, Den’s particular approach to assimilation by “acculturation” (*kyoka*) and his commitment to the inculcation of Taiwanese loyalty to the Japanese Emperor was a further step to secure
Japan’s colonial control over Taiwan. Therefore, it is a mistake to view the Japanese colonial administrators as liberal innovators committed to advancing the radical equalization of Japanese and Taiwanese opportunities in the colony; it is also a mistake to consider their efforts at assimilation as a program of racial and cultural amalgamation. The Japanese colonial administrators were, in fact, hostile to any true merger of the two races on the basis of equality; they denounced the Taiwanese social and political movements that pled for equal opportunities and demanded a share of Japanese civil and political liberties.¹⁰

In addition to the controversy over the theories of assimilation, assimilation policies actually caused certain confusions when practiced in real settings. The Japanese ideas of assimilation, coupled with the rhetoric of isshi dojin, demanded full equality between the Taiwanese and the Japanese. However, the actual environment suggested a struggle between the ideals of assimilation and the compulsion to maintain Japanese primacy. For instance, the Meiji Constitution did not apply to the people of the island. This was the most controversial aspect of assimilation theory, for it presumed that the provisions of the Constitution applied to all territory under formal Japanese jurisdiction and that all Japan’s colonial peoples were to be treated equally with the Japanese—a true political assimilation of colonizers and colonized. In fact, the Taiwanese were treated under separate colonial law, in particular, Law 63 of 1896, which had granted the governor general of Taiwan the authority to pass legislation for the colony (Peattie 101). Not surprisingly, the Taiwanese population had no representation in the Japanese Diet, nor did

¹⁰ See, for example, Tsurumi, 183 and 189. As Tsurumi mentions, even the mentality embodied in Goto Shimpei’s theory of gradual assimilation was viewed by Taiwanese activists as an excuse to deny equal treatment of the Taiwanese.
they have any effective legislative bodies of their own.

Above all, Japanese feelings of superiority were the primary barrier to the policy of assimilation. The ideal of assimilation had been attacked by those Japanese chauvinists who saw no possibility of making the Taiwanese into “true Japanese”; for them, the colonized should be kept “inarticulate, regimented, and dependent, a great reservoir of cheap labor” (Kerr, *Formosa* 133). Furthermore, the attitudes of resident Japanese in the colony island undercut the possibilities of real assimilation. Their feelings of superiority blocked mutual communication between the colonizers and the colonized. In addition, their jealous grip on privilege and position and their fear of being swamped culturally and politically by the native majority made such barriers to assimilation insurmountable (Peatti 98). As a result, assimilation gradually lost its appeal with the Taiwanese, although it had received heavy support from Japan’s foreign and domestic policies by the early 1930s (Tsurumi 109).

The vigorous efforts of the *kominka* movement pushed assimilation to its final stage. Although *kominka* was criticized by its opponents as a program put forward by “impractical and dangerous liberals,” advocates of the *kominka* movement believed that it could efface the differences between the two islands in due course (Kerr, *Formosa* 163). Ironically enough, *kominka* was first of all a political compromise. Since the adoption of both suppressive policies and full Taiwanese Home Rule (local autonomy) was not possible, *kominka*, with its promise of equality based on the concept of the nation-family united under the Japanese emperor, became a powerful appeal for the colonial administration (Kerr, *Formosa* 162). Furthermore, the *kominka* movement was carried out with military concerns. As mentioned earlier, in order to meet military needs and
wartime exigencies, *kominka* was combined with the mystical rhetoric of Japanese ultra-nationalism and linked to the appeals of Pan-Asianism. More significantly, *kominka* reflected Japan’s deep sensitivity to the issue of racial discrimination. With its connotation of an imperial “family,” *kominka* was designed to reduce the sense of racial discrimination in all her colonies. Yet the program never mandated a true merger of the Japanese and Japan’s colonial subjects, but rather, a measure derived from the formula of “Oriental versus Caucasian”—which promoted Japan’s Asian leadership among the colonial subjects under the domination of the Western powers such as England, Holland, France, and the United States. Apparently, *kominka* was stripped of all considerations of equal opportunity for the colonizers and the colonized; it became no more than a cliché for only military and political purposes. As a result, *kominka* was often misunderstood by its proponents, who vigorously enforced an exterior conformity of manners, customs, clothing, and language without realizing the “substance” of the movement (Kerr, *Formosa* 163).

These increasingly coercive efforts toward assimilation, especially during World War II, only made its conflictive nature more evident than before. Tsurumi tells us that as the war on the Chinese mainland raged on, the Japanese colonial administration was caught in a dilemma and therefore displayed a growing ambivalence toward the Taiwanese: they did not consider the Taiwanese reliable enough to be drafted into the regular armed forces or to be sent to the front in China, even as non-fighting personnel, while they officially viewed the Taiwanese as loyal subjects, as loyal as the Japanese (Tsurumi 131-32). To a certain extent, the Japanese policy of assimilation in Taiwan
reached a point where colonialism and assimilation became contradictory. Radical equality between the two races and the Japanese sentiments of superiority reached no final agreement; the Taiwanese plea for an equal share of political and civil rights meant permanent conflict with the Japanese primacy under the temporary conditions of colonization.

Not only did the Japanese feelings of superiority make real assimilation difficult, but Taiwan’s Chinese past—which would cause a certain amount of doubt and suspicion in the minds of proponents of the kominka movement—also played a part in the process of assimilation. Tsurumi has observed that the Japanization of the Taiwanese actually waged a war with Taiwanese memories of their Chinese past (132). The contradiction between Japanese colonialism and assimilation was now realized by the Taiwanese. These questions emerged: How could the Taiwanese possibly cross the racial and cultural boundaries between colonizers and colonized through the Japanese assimilation programs? How did the Taiwanese answer Japanese assimilation; to be assimilated or not to be assimilated? To put it more precisely, did the Taiwanese recognize themselves as “Japanese” or eventually discover a triple consciousness—being Japanese while being Taiwanese and Chinese. In order to investigate the questions properly, the following discussions will focus on the extent to which the Japanese assimilation efforts were practiced in the colony, particularly in the field of education, a primary vehicle the Japanese colonial administration chose for assimilation.
Becoming “Japanese”: The Crossing of Frontiers

Japanese Colonial Education in Taiwan

With carefully tailored objectives, education was the chosen vehicle for Japanese assimilation of Taiwan. As a rising power in East Asia, Meiji Japan relied greatly on education to civilize the Japanese masses, bringing Japan into the modern world and joining the ranks of the Western colonial powers. The rulers of Meiji Japan viewed education not only as “a means toward the acquisition of the Western industrial technology” but also as “an avenue to general acceptance of the new lifestyles and occupations.” More significantly, they also considered education, especially elementary schools, as having a particular function in the forging of a unified loyalty to the rulers. When Japan acquired its first colony, Taiwan, the new colonial administration followed the model of the educational system of Meiji Japan in formulating concepts and programs for Taiwan, hoping to bring this frontier territory into the new world (Tsurumi 10-11).

Not surprisingly, Japanese education in Taiwan took on a colonial character. Unlike Meiji Japan’s “dumbbell” educational configuration, with a small corps of highly educated scholars, technicians, and bureaucrats on one end and a basically trained population on the other, Japanese colonial education in Taiwan placed more emphasis on the lower track—elementary education—meaning to “enlighten, discipline, and indoctrinate” the Taiwanese masses (Tsurumi 11). Goto’s administration in Taiwan viewed education as the fundamental means for the gradual enlightenment of the native islanders. Likewise, the two avowed assimilationalists, Akashi and Den, used education as an efficient device to incorporate the Taiwanese, as obedient and subordinate subjects, into the Japanese empire. Consequently, Japanese education in Taiwan was characterized
by colonialism; it was essentially a system to produce Japanese-literate native islanders to loyally serve the administrative and clerical apparatus of the colonial government.11

In the course of assimilation, the Japanese administration desired to dismantle the cultural and educational heritage of Chinese imperial rule in order to replace it with a Japanese heritage. This task, as Tsurumi puts it, was to “transform a segment of traditional China into an integral part of modern Japan” (11). Japanese administrators of the time would have recognized such a task as difficult and arduous. The gradual process of assimilation envisioned restrictions imposed on the traditional Chinese schools run by classically trained scholars (Long 29). Yet the more aggressive assimilation plan was to establish a Japanese educational system for the youngsters in order to inculcate them with Japanese cultural tradition and cultivate in them a sense of loyalty to the Japanese Emperor.

Japanese administrators were aware that contemporary Japan shared with Taiwan a significant amount of an East Asian cultural tradition, a tradition that emphasized a range of Confucian values—in particular, benevolent rule, political loyalty, and hierarchical status relations. This common heritage, in the Japanese rulers’ eyes, was not a barrier but an aid to the administration and assimilation of the islanders. They believed that this common heritage, if properly manipulated, would help gain a certain amount of loyalty and cooperation from the island colony’s people. However, Chinese classical studies might imply some association with China and recall the Taiwanese memory of their

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11 As Tsurumi notes, in his development of a large and many-faceted education system in Taiwan, Goto Simpei set the educational goals—which included winning support for the new colonial territory, educating a stratum of Taiwanese to serve the administrative and clerical apparatus of the colonial government, produce Taiwanese teachers and medical personnel, and promote education for girls (18).
Chinese past. Therefore, for Japanese educators, the overall strategy is to lift Confucian morality from its historical context and to locate it within a Japanese one. Hence, content which urged loyalty and obedience to one’s superiors was to be strengthened; yet within this content, any relation to or identification with China was to be erased. Confucian principles were now taught through Japanese language studies; such essential values as benevolent rule and loyalty referred to Japan instead of China (Tsurumi 11-12).

School curriculum certainly became a drama of Japanese assimilation. Like any other colonial education program, school curriculum for the islanders put great emphasis on language instruction and moral education (Kelly and Altbach 12). For the Japanese colonial administration, language training was both a practical and a moral matter; the Civil Administration desperately needed interpreters to relay its instructions to the public. In addition, for Japanese advocates of assimilation, making the islanders speak the “national” language was the immediate and necessary means to transform them into “true Japanese” and to evoke their loyalty to the colonial government and the Emperor. That explains why language training was pushed vigorously at the schools and language institutes established by the Japanese colonial administration. When the Japanese educational system was established, every Taiwanese was obligated to learn Japanese (Kerr, Formosa 84-85).¹² Not surprisingly, language lessons occupied many school hours and played a particularly large role in the curriculum. Also, the curriculum placed

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¹² This policy had a significant impact on Taiwan. Different sub-ethnic groups from China, speaking separate dialects at home and living hitherto in separate community groups, now mingled in classrooms and received a common discipline through learning the Japanese language. Kerr has argued that common schooling and the use of a unified language gradually created a sense of Taiwanese identity and shared interest. In addition, since many parents also expected children to learn to speak and read Chinese, bilingual elite began to develop within the Taiwanese-Chinese population (Kerr, Formosa 85).
a great emphasis upon “ethics”; the goal was to make the pupils into filial children and, more importantly, into loyal and obedient Japanese subjects.

Japanese colonial education in Taiwan was based on separatism. Japanese primary schools were for the Japanese nationals and a few selected Taiwanese, whereas the rest of the Taiwanese attended common schools. A comparison of textbooks in Taiwanese common schools with those in Japanese primary schools evidences a configuration of assimilation. Although the curricula in the two school systems had much in common, textbooks for the islanders had a strong Taiwanese flavor. However, it is a mistake to view the content as a sign of the promotion of native cultural heritage. While picking out folk tales, children’s stories, and nature scenery with Taiwanese settings, the stories and their illustrations depicted a world where the Taiwanese lived as their Japanese rulers wished them to live. These particular designs, of course, carried a colonial motif. Japanese history and mythology were added to textbooks for the Taiwanese children, yet they appeared later with less frequency than in those books for the Japanese. As expected, historical tales and moral lessons were likely drawn from Chinese history or Chinese and Japanese combined (Tsurumi 140). In lessons dealing with Japan and foreign countries, the emphasis was placed on the power and prestige of Japan in relation to other countries (Kerr, Formosa 85). When the pace of assimilation quickened as World War II approached, details were changed in the school curriculum. Expected to meet military needs.

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13 For a thorough description of the Japanese educational system in Taiwan, see Tsurumi 12-44.

14 For a detailed discussion of language readers and ethics textbooks in Japanese primary schools and Taiwanese common schools, see Tsurumi 133-45.

15 Kerr has argued that even this slight content on internal affairs was enough to make young Taiwanese aware of a world beyond the island and beyond China and Japan; it also drew their attention and interests to international affairs outside the island (Fromosa 85).
needs and wartime exigencies, settings and heroes in the textbooks were made less Taiwanese or Chinese and more Japanese. Also, teaching materials included issues of Japanese ultra-nationalism and Pan-Asianism. Still, textbooks for the Taiwanese contained fewer nationalist materials than those in Japanese primary schools, which only Japanese nationals and a relative few Taiwanese attended (Tsurumi 145).

With the primary purpose to Japanize the Taiwanese and assimilate them into the Japanese empire, the language and ethics textbooks for Taiwanese readers were prepared to shape ideologies. The Taiwanese readers were taught to act as obedient, hard-working Japanese subjects, but they were not taught much about the privileges or opportunities that any Japanese enjoyed. Instead of encouraging individual achievement, these textbooks accentuated harmonious life within the family and the local community. Also, the schools promoted vocational training in traditional skills and encouraged sons to take up the same occupation as their fathers. Undoubtedly, these textbooks in the Taiwanese common schools aimed at making the Taiwanese readers into faithful Japanese followers, not decision makers or leaders, even in their own society. In other words, the colonial school curriculum, designed by the Japanese educators, was definitely meant to assimilate the Taiwanese, but only at the bottom of the social order within the Japanese empire (Tsurumi 144-45).

Clearly, colonial needs oriented the educational goals in Taiwan; the power of the colonizers dominated the design of curriculum. Thus, the language and ethics textbooks that the Japanese colonial administration provided the Taiwanese children were “adapted” ones; they taught a “modified” version of culture. To put it more precisely, the
school curriculum for the Taiwanese children was an “outgrowth” of neither Taiwanese nor Japanese society.\textsuperscript{16} As mentioned above, historical and moral instructions ignored the roots of Taiwanese culture and replaced them with a mixture of Taiwanese, Japanese, and Chinese cultural heritages. Moreover, the vocational training curriculum denied the Taiwanese skills for the modern world, except for what they had previously gained. In other words, Japanese colonial education not only denied the Taiwanese past but also withheld from the Taiwanese the tools for the future. Japanese colonial education molded the Taiwanese into interpreters, school teachers, lower rank clerks and laborers. Any potential for the Taiwanese to develop native culture on their own terms was deliberately avoided by the Japanese educators.

Hence, the colonial school was an “alien institution,” not only in the sense that “whatever it taught had little to do with the society and culture of the colonized” but also in the sense that it “served as a mechanism whereby the schooled would gain a new social place and a new culture rather than be prepared to work within the context of indigenous culture” (Kelly and Altbach 4). The Japanese language and social values that the Taiwanese learned from school detached them from their cultural tradition and their contemporary local community as well. Japanese assimilation never held out the prospects of integrating the colonizers into the indigenous culture; likewise, Japanese colonial education never aimed at preparing Taiwanese to be leaders in the local community. As a result, the Japanese-educated Taiwanese suffered by being removed from history and from their own community. They enjoyed “none of the attributes of

\textsuperscript{16} As Kelly and Altbach describe, the school curriculum for the colonized, “while not an outgrowth of the society from which the [colonized] child came, was not an outgrowth of the colonizer’s society either” (15).
Striking questions arise from this predicament: How were Japanese-educated Taiwanese forced to participate in the formation of Japanese assimilation programs? Ultimately, what liminal space or ambiguous zone would these alienated Taiwanese intellectuals occupy in terms of the location of culture?

Political Movements as Ethno-National Movements

Through education, among other areas, the Japanese colonial administration in Taiwan was dedicated to assimilating the Taiwanese. However, Japanese colonial education in Taiwan turned out in an ironical way. Rather than loyal, obedient Japanese subjects, the Japanese-educated Taiwanese became organizers of anti-colonial movements against the Japanese authorities. As a matter of fact, by late 1914 this island began to develop resistance under the leadership of younger and educated Taiwanese; instead of organizing armed resistance, they resorted to political and lawful tactics by creating socio-political organizations and publicizing legitimate goals. Most of these younger leaders were educated in Japanese universities and were strongly influenced by the liberal atmosphere of the Taisho period. Along with cultural and political movements, they introduced into the island many hitherto totally aliens concepts, such as racial equality, self-determination, and democracy.

17 Albert Memmi’s words in his discussion about the situation of the colonized subjects (The Colonizer and the Colonized, 91 and 96).

Interestingly enough, most of the anti-colonial movements occurred during the period when the island was governed by a civilian governor-general, with assimilation and economic development as the major objectives. A majority of Taiwanese student activists came from propertied and comparatively well-to-do families. They would have gained great profit and privileges thanks to their learning of Japanese and their conformity to Japanese ways, if they had remained silent. However, they chose a rougher course. They strived for a distinct Taiwanese identity and a native cultural tradition; the result was that they exposed themselves and their families to economic reprisals and physical danger (Kerr, *Formosa* 124-5). One may wonder whether a Japanese education perhaps helped Taiwanese intellectuals to recognize their radical differences from the rulers, to realize their Chinese past, and to question their origins. One may wonder as well whether the Japanese assimilation programs ultimately failed, creating a situation in which the differences between races could never be effaced and a radical equality between colonizers and colonized could never be achieved within the frame of colonial domination. A brief survey of the social, cultural, and political movements during the Japanese occupation will help explain how the Taiwanese participated in Japanese assimilation programs; it will also evidence how the young educated Taiwanese struggled for individual or cultural identity as colonial subjects under Japanese domination.

Among many organizations during the time, the Taiwan Assimilation Society (*Taiwan Dokakai* 台灣同化會), founded in 1914 with the assistance of Itagaki Taisuke 板垣退助, a prominent liberal politician in Japan, stands out. In 1914 Itagaki Taisuke paid two visits to Taiwan. During and after his first visit, he publicized the idea of creating a
Taiwan Assimilation Society (*Taiwan Dokakai*) in order to promote “harmonious relations between Japanese and Formosans based on the concept of racial equality” (Chen 479). During his second visit, with a packed audience, including many high-ranking Japanese colonial officials, he delivered the opening ceremony speech of the Society, in which he revealed his worldview and political philosophy. In the speech, he called for a joint defense between Japan and China as a counter to Western powers, and he assigned to the Taiwanese an “inherent duty” to bridge the two Asian nations. To prepare the Taiwanese for such a “duty,” Itagaki argued that assimilation of the Taiwanese into the Japanese identity was the essential and necessary means. Aware that Japanese officials tended to regard the Taiwanese as an inferior people, Itagaki emphasized the issue of racial equality. He also proposed strategies for achieving his goals—among others, economic opportunity, the legalization of mixed marriage, Japanese language education, and more migration from Japan (Chen 480).

It was evident that Itagaki had a larger political concern than the mere promotion of assimilation at the expense of racial equality. As Tsurumi has observed, his primary concern was Japan’s position in East Asia, which he thought the assimilation of the Taiwanese would advance (66). Furthermore, as has been noted, his proposal for equal treatment was made “contingent upon the total integration of Formosans” (Chen 480). At any rate, his speech was received with enthusiasm, and the Society won large support from Taiwanese intellectuals. However, as Chen Edward I-te 陳以德 argues, it was not an interest in assimilation itself that attracted the Taiwanese, but the Taiwanese desire to be treated equally with the Japanese that won such warm support (480).

The Japanese authority was caught in a dilemma due to the unexpected popularity of
the Society. First of all, Itagaki was much too famous to ignore. Second, the Society’s
goal of integration with equality did support the basic idea of Japanese colonial policy—
asassimilation. However, the idea of racial equality would challenge Japanese primacy.
The Japanese authority understood well that the Taiwanese demand for equal rights, if
allowed to flourish, could seriously jeopardize the privileged status of Japanese residents
on the island. The Society was therefore forced to disband soon after Itagaki left the
island. It was too short-lived to achieve any major goals, yet the Society was significant,
for it not only provoked an awareness of Taiwanese identity but also later kindled
Taiwanese interest in developing political movements (Chen 480-81).

Two significant historical events during the short period between 1918 and 1919 had
a great impact on Taiwan’s socio-political movements. First, the Japanese Government
embarked upon an experiment of political liberalism and introduced civilian rule into
Taiwan. As a result, Den Kenjiro was appointed the first civilian governor-general of
Taiwan in 1919. Upon taking up his duties in Taiwan, he proclaimed the goal of his
administration—“Japanization of Taiwan and assimilation of the Taiwanese” (Tsurumi
93). Second, Woodrow Wilson’s doctrine of “self-determination” and “equal
opportunity”19—which had been in large part responsible for the outbreak of the March
First Movement in Korea and the May Fourth Movement in China, now inspired many
Taiwanese students in Tokyo and kindled their hopes for the island colony. These two
historical events, with their conflicting conceptions, collided with each other. A sharp

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19 These ideas appeared in American President Woodrow Wilson’s address to the Congress on Feb. 11,
1918: “People are not to be handed about from one sovereignty to another by an international conference or
an understanding between rivals and antagonists…National aspirations must be respected; people may now
be dominated and governed only by their own consent. ‘Self-determination’ is not a mere phrase. It is an
imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril…” Woodrow Wilson,
President Wilson’s State Papers and Addresses (New York, 1918), 475, Address to the Congress, Feb. 11,
1918. Quoted in Kerr, Formosa 116.
line, then, could be drawn between the islanders who desired to pursue self-determination in order to preserve a Taiwanese identity and Japanese administrators who were determined to Japanize Taiwan. Since the efforts toward assimilation, along the lines of the Taiwan Assimilation Society had ended in defeat, the notion of “Formosans for Formosans”—a practice of Wilson’s idealism—now became an attractive solution for the future of this island colony (Chen 481). Therefore, for the years to come, Taiwanese political movements aimed at gaining Japanese recognition of a distinct Taiwanese identity within the empire; further, they pursued local autonomy and even representation of Taiwanese interests in the Japanese Diet.

The organization called the New People’s Society (Shinminkai 新民會), founded in 1920 by a group of Taiwanese students in Tokyo, reflected the political atmosphere and the particular goals of that time. From the very beginning the Society set out its ultimate aims: to reform the government-general’s administration, to enlighten the Taiwanese, to inform the Japanese public of the “true” condition of Taiwan, and to seek support from the Chinese people (Chen 481).20 To reform the colonial government was, in short, to establish a separate Taiwanese parliament instead of enforcing Japanese laws—for instance, to employ the Japanese Constitution on the island. Many Taiwanese leaders considered that a separate legislature in Taiwan could function as a balance against the colonial executive. However, not all the leaders of the Society agreed to this project as the only solution for Taiwan’s political struggles. The disagreement among the Society’s leaders echoed the conflict between political integration and the ideal of self-

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20 In order to achieve these goals, in July 1920 the Society issued a monthly magazine entitled Taiwan Youth (Taiwan Seinen 台灣青年) with Ts’ai Pei-ho as the editor. The magazine appeared in both the Japanese and Taiwanese-Chinese languages, and continued to be issued from Tokyo until 1932, when it was transferred to Taipei (Kerr, Formosa 123).
determination. Their arguments focused on whether to promote Itagaki’s idea of assimilation or to preserve the distinction between the Taiwanese and Japanese in their respective cultures, traditions, and customs (Chen 482-83). The proposal to create an elective island parliament or assembly within the Japanese empire was a significant move, for it not only suggested a compromised solution for the Taiwanese under Japanese colonial rule by the doctrine of “self-determination,” but it also laid out the possibility of preserving a distinctive Taiwanese cultural heritage against the all-out Japanese effort for assimilation. The Society’s dedication and efforts have been viewed by scholars and historians as an “ideological turning point,” for they moved the Taiwanese from assimilation toward the objective of Home Rule, toward the pursuit of local autonomy (Chen 483).

Another important organization was the Taiwan Cultural Association (*Taiwan Bunka Kyokai* 台灣文化協會) established in 1921 by Chiang Wei-shui 蔣渭水, a physician in Taipei. Again, the controversy over assimilation and the preservation of distinct Taiwanese cultural heritage arose in the Association; yet, it appeared in a different formation from the previous ones. In a newspaper statement, Chiang argued:

Taiwanese are charged with the responsibility to be the catalysts for Sino-Japanese friendship, a sine qua non for the harmony of Asian peoples… To fulfill this historic mission, we need talent. It is to the cultivation of such human talent that this Association is dedicated. However, Formosans are presently suffering from a

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disease. Without curing it the cultivation of talent is not possible… The cultural movement is the only therapy.\footnote{A statement by Chiang Wei-shui published originally in *Taiwan minpo* 台灣民報 67. Quoted in Chen Edward I-de, 489-90.}

In the above statement, Chiang projected a role for the Taiwanese similar to one Itagaki Taisuke had previously advanced—to constitute a bridge between Japan and China. Yet Chiang twisted Itagaki’s perspective of assimilation as the necessary means for the Taiwanese to perform their “duty.” No longer putting emphasis on the urgency of assimilation, Chiang instead proposed the development of a native culture as the way to fulfill Taiwan’s “historic mission.” In other words, the link of Taiwan to the Sino-Japanese alliance against Western imperialism was no longer the focal point; instead, cultural revolution occupied the central place. As Chen argues, Sino-Japanese friendship was, in Chiang’s eyes, no more than a “plausible excuse” for the Association to devote itself to the development of native culture at a time when the Japanese colonial authorities were making an all-out effort for the cultural assimilation of the Taiwanese (Chen 490). In the actual environment, the Association devoted itself to the establishment of a Taiwanese parliament and the organization of unions among local farmers. It not only gave lectures and seminars in summer and night schools in the subjects of Chinese language, literature, history, and Western studies, but it also sponsored many organizations among youths, women, athletes, and performing artists. With enthusiasm, the Association aimed at instilling a distinctive Taiwanese identification among the Taiwanese and developing a native culture that belonged to the islanders. The Association’s earnest devotion and significant efforts have made it
recognized as the one group most responsible for the development of Taiwanese nationalism (Chen 489).

Japanese assimilation programs, to a certain extent, had run an opposing course. Japanese colonial education, aimed at the assimilation of the Taiwanese, provoked the awareness of the difference between the colonizers and the colonized and consequently motivated the Taiwanese pursuit of a distinctive identity. After all, the young Japanese-educated Taiwanese had never been completely assimilated into the Japanese race, as those assimilation programs had wished to accomplish. Instead, they were encouraged to seek a Taiwanese individual or cultural identity distinctive from their rulers. These ongoing social, cultural and political movements only proved that the idea of assimilation had lost its appeal to most Taiwanese—political integration and cultural amalgamation seemed to the nativists no longer either possible or desirable. Of course, these socio-political and cultural movements in Taiwan also displayed a broad spectrum of Taiwanese responses to Japanese assimilation. Some argued that total equality could be obtained with the Japanese empire by full assimilation into the Japanese race; some struggled to pursue local autonomy by establishing a separate Taiwanese assembly within the Japanese empire; some held out against assimilation and insisted that a Taiwanese identity be preserved by cultivating a cultural tradition that belonged to themselves alone. Although different strategies were applied to various circumstances, these movements and organizations shared an underlying agreement—which was, as Kerr has put it, “the fundamental desire for recognition of Formosa and of the inherent rights and interests of the Island people” (Formosa 150). In fact, these movements showed a drastic shift of
interests and objectives among those organizations, from full assimilation into the 
Japanese empire toward recognition of a Taiwanese identity and a native cultural 
tradition. More significantly, in the course of the anti-colonial movements, a new culture 
was taking shape on the island, a culture that combined such Western ideas as freedom 
and democracy with local cultural tradition, a culture whose primary elements were the 
quest for identity and the interests of the colonial island. Paradoxically, these elements 
were gained mostly through Japanese colonial education, as it made most elaborate 
efforts for assimilation.

"Becoming ‘Japanese’"

Despite the ongoing socio-political and cultural movements, questions remain: To what 
extent had Japanese education succeeded in dismantling the cultural heritage of Chinese 
imperial rule and substituted the Japanese heritage for the Chinese heritage in Taiwan? 
To what extent had Japanese assimilation successfully transformed the Taiwanese into 
loyal Japanese subjects? In fact, as many scholars have observed, since the Japanese 
landed on this island in 1895, the Taiwanese elite had undertaken an evolution, a process 
that corresponded to Japanese effort to assimilate Taiwan.23 Upon Japan’s arrival on the 
island, the Taiwanese resisted Japanese authority—mainly through sporadic guerrilla 
resistance; this continued for many years. Local literati attempted to preserve their 
cultural heritage while at the same time receiving the new administration and new 
policies. Those literati who considered themselves tied to the Chinese political and

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23 For the transformation of Taiwanese resistance under Japanese occupation, see, for example, Lai 
Tse-han, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei Wou, A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1974 
cultural order moved their families to the mainland; yet the youth soon returned, finding
themselves with weaker emotional ties to the Chinese heritage than their parents and
being caught by nostalgia for their home island. As the new Japanese colonial
administration began a series of programs for co-option, many literati were gradually
integrated into the new administrative system, serving as school teachers, interpreters,
and clerks. Of course, many Taiwanese literati maintained a strong commitment to the
inherited Chinese cultural and intellectual order and dreamed of expelling the Japanese.
During the first period of Japanese occupation, as Lai et al tell us, most Taiwanese elites
“oscillated between co-optation and alienation” (15).

Significantly, Japanese education produced a new kind of Taiwanese elite in the
1910s and 1920s. Unlike the traditional literati, landowners, and merchants who had
already enjoyed wealth and position under the Chinese Ch’ing empire, the new elite were
relatively poor before they took up the opportunities created by the Japanese. Most of
them acquired a professional education—typically in medicine—which brought them
wealth and prestige in the colonial society. Although the new emerging elite had not
profoundly absorbed Japanese culture, they definitely had little nostalgia or sentiment for
the Chinese political and cultural order. More importantly, they preferred their children
to receive a completely Japanese education. Accordingly, the young Japanese-educated
Taiwanese had little or no sense of a debt to Chinese culture.24

As Kerr argues, the rising Taiwanese generation under Japanese domination crossed
“an ideological frontier as real and as important as the physical frontiers crossed by

24 As Lai Tse-han et al mention, the evolution of this new type of Taiwanese elites can be illustrated
by the history of P’eng Ming-min’s 彭明敏 family described in his autobiographical work, A Taste of
A summary of P’eng’s autobiography is included in Lai et al 18-23.
immigrant ancestors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (*Formosa* 180).

According to Kerr, when given a simple choice between “backward China” and “progressive Japan” in the late 1930s, an observant Taiwanese was strongly inclined to want to become recognized within the Japanese empire frame of reference (*Formosa* 182). The reason for this becomes evident when a comparison is made between two sides of the Strait, although the choice was never an easy one. During the decades of Chinese civil war, Japan carried on with the modernization and development of the island colony. One saw in Taiwan a solid infrastructure of a modern economy and a construction of modern life—railways, air service, telegraph and postal communication, telephones, power plants, etc. However, one found a society exhausted by the civil war in contemporary China. The Taiwanese young generation came in touch with the modern world through schools, journals, the press, radio and the cinema. Japanese colonial education not only advanced a high percentage of literacy in Taiwan but also drew Taiwanese students’ attention to international affairs. In contrast, contemporary China had no province with such a high level of development and such a high percentage of literate inhabitants acquainted with foreign affairs. Japanese propaganda furthered the comparison between the mainland and the island. The radio—the Japanese official voice—provided daily broadcasts loaded with “improving” information, which gave an impression of “progressive Taiwan.” As a result, Japan skillfully and successfully implanted in the Taiwanese minds the idea of a “modern and progressive Taiwan” which tended to replace the image of “backward China” in their grandparents’ tales of the later nineteenth century (*Formosa* 183-85).

Certainly, the new generation of Taiwan had little interest in ancient Chinese traditions, although the Chinese heritage still governed their everyday norms, customs,
and values. In addition, due to the Japanese effort to restrict the importation and
circulation of Chinese publications in any form, contemporary China remained little
understood by the Taiwanese. As Wu Chou-liu 吳濁流, a famous writer and journalist,
confessed in his autobiography, China to most Taiwanese was actually a remote and “an
intangible concept” (5). Nevertheless, it was an easy to mistakenly consider the young
Taiwanese as having no Chinese tradition and being ready to receive Japanese tradition.
The Japanese-educated Taiwanese preferred to be recognized within a Japanese reference;
however, they remained alien and indifferent to the “true Japanese spiritual tradition” that
they were tediously called on to admire. The Taiwanese did not find in themselves the
enthusiasm of the Japanese for the Japanese “imperial family” mysticism and the
emperor-worship cult; to the Taiwanese, all the imperial formalities were “no more than a
boring and empty show” (Kerr, Formosa 181).

Was “becoming Japanese” possible for colonized Taiwanese subjects? This question
tested the Japanese theory of assimilation. For the colonized to be assimilated, Albert
Memmi says, “it is not enough to leave one’s group, but one must enter another.”
Therefore, the process for the colonized to be assimilated involved two matters: to
“negate” one’s existence as a colonial subject and to make oneself recognized as the same
subject as the colonizer. According to Memmi, to be accepted by the colonizers would be
a more difficult task than negating their own existence (124). Despite the all-out
Japanese effort for assimilation as expressed by the phrase isshi dojin, the Taiwanese
were eventually denied by their Japanese masters. As schoolboys of the Empire, the
Taiwanese children learned the pious exhortation “Boys, be ambitious!” Yet they soon
converted this expression to “Boys, be not ambitious!” because they understood their condition as colonial subjects.\textsuperscript{25} Elsewhere, there was a low ceiling in all area’s employment; there were insurmountable barriers to assimilation. Having been assimilated only to the bottom of the Japanese empire, the Taiwanese were “second-class” subjects, regardless of their performance. After many enthusiastic socio-political movements that sought radical equalization failed, the Taiwanese ultimately discovered their efforts to emulate the Japanese were in vain. The Taiwanese concluded that they were in fact “inferior” subjects to their Japanese rulers.

All the struggles as colonial subjects were transformed into a strong desire to recover their origins. The Taiwanese desired to make themselves recognized; yet under contemporary conditions, this desire found no form of expression. The young generation of Japanese-educated Taiwanese had weaker emotional ties to the Chinese political and cultural order than their ancestors did to the Chinese imperial empire. Under Japanese domination, the Taiwanese intellectuals, as Lai et al put it, “exhibited a spectrum of orientations one pole of which included far more commitment to the inherited Chinese cultural and intellectual order than the other pole” (18). In addition to the conflict between the two former colonizers—the Chinese and the Japanese—the Taiwanese struggled for recognition against the Japanese colonizer. Ruled by their desire to be recognized, the Taiwanese discovered their ambiguous status; a triple consciousness came into play in the game of recognition. Before Taiwan’s history turned the next page, when the Nationalist Chinese took over the island, the Taiwanese elite were unable to rest in any position. They consequently stayed in an ambiguous space and wavered between

\textsuperscript{25} See, for example, Kerr, \textit{Formosa} 180. Kerr gives detailed descriptions of Taiwanese children in school and their situation as colonial subjects.
assimilation and alienation.
CHAPTER 3
RE-SINICIZING THE TAIWANESE:
THE MYTH OF A CHINESE NATION

Re-sincization of the Taiwanese—The Rhetoric of Chinese Nationhood

The February 28 Incident—A Tragic Beginning

When defeated Japan handed the island of Taiwan over to the Chinese authorities at the end of World War II, a clash occurred between the “mainlanders”\(^\text{26}\) and the islanders. The clash occurred because the Kuomintang’s (KMT, or the Nationalist Chinese) dictatorial rule and the Taiwanese optimistic expectations for Chinese rule conflicted.\(^\text{27}\)

Having experienced the stability and administrative efficiency of a remarkably skilled Japanese government, the Taiwanese expected a similarly efficient government from the Chinese. Furthermore, the Taiwanese assumed that the separate local government they had eagerly pursued under Japanese rule would materialize under the Nationalist government. However, by the time the island was restored to China, no Chinese political organization had yet acquired the political understanding and skills to meet the challenge of such a sophisticated situation as Taiwan. Not surprisingly, Taiwanese expectations

\(^{26}\) As Thomas B. Gold notes, the term “mainlanders” for the mainland emigrés on the island is actually “ironic.” Being “non-Taiwanese,” the term “mainlanders” as sort of identity—political, linguistic, and cultural—also took shape. See “Civil Society and Taiwan’s Quest for Identity” in *Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan*, ed. Steven Harrell and Huang Chun-chieh (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 60.

\(^{27}\) In their work, *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1974*, Lai et al give a detailed discussion of the clash between the mainlanders and the islanders after the KMT took over the island (169-80).
soon were disappointed when they realized that the KMT government was corrupt and even more autocratic than the Japanese colonial administration. By that time, the island’s war-damaged economic infrastructures needed immediate rebuilding. However, Taiwan was plunged into another civil war on the mainland by the KMT government, right after it withdrew from World War II. The island’s economy unavoidably fell into misery. The Taiwanese expected the government to place its priority on the island’s economy reform, but the KMT viewed the island as a vanquished territory and then a source of supply for the battles with the Communists on the mainland (Lai et al 169). Having been enervated by the ravages of the Japanese invasion and by the Communist rebellion, the KMT had a very limited ability to overcome these economic problems, especially in terms of modernizing reforms. As a result, high unemployment in Taiwan not only spawned crime in the society, but it also fostered in the Taiwanese populace a resentment of the KMT government.

The KMT’s failed policies and poor leadership aggravated the political and economic conditions in Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek’s 蔣介石 government had long had a reputation for brutality and corruption. The new appointed Administrator General of Taiwan, Chen Yi 陳儀, was also notorious for his harsh political control and tight economic grip maintained by a system of monopolies (Long 53). When taking over Taiwan, the KMT government quickly seized monopolistic control of the island’s natural and agricultural resources, as well as the bank, the courts, the schools, the media and other institutional structures abandoned by the Japanese colonial government. Perhaps stemming from both contempt for the Taiwanese and ignorance of the extent of Japanese
bureaucratic commitment to colonial rule, the KMT’s new polices threw Taiwanese officials and laborers out of jobs to make way for the incoming mainland Chinese.\textsuperscript{28}

Also, the Taiwanese populace expected “sympathy” from the mainland Chinese for their sufferings under Japanese occupation. Considering the mainlanders as backward for their adherence to an obsolete Confucian ideology, Taiwanese elites in particular expected respect for their “modern” ways. Yet the mainlanders had a vastly different conception of themselves and the Taiwanese people. Proudly regarding themselves as the liberators responsible for defeating the Japanese, the mainlanders often looked down on the native Taiwanese for having been “poisoned” by the “inferior” culture of a hated enemy, nor did they show them sympathy or give them respect.\textsuperscript{29} In addition, many Taiwanese under Japanese rule had forged a different worldview from that of the mainlanders who came to Taiwan after 1945. More significantly, cultural and linguistic barriers further exaggerated these conflicts. The majority of the native Taiwanese spoke a dialect distinct from Mandarin—the language of Chinese officialdom; the Taiwanese dialects and Mandarin are mutually unintelligible. Few mainlanders spoke Japanese or the Taiwanese dialects, and few native Taiwanese spoke Mandarin. Consequently, language difficulties aggravated the tensions already emerging between the mainlanders and the islanders.

\textsuperscript{28} As Lai et al note, some 36,000 Taiwanese officials were thrown out of work, and the ratio of Taiwanese was reduced from 56 percent to 22 percent, not even half as many Taiwanese as the Japanese staff still serving in early 1945 (170).

\textsuperscript{29} The word “inferior” here is of course viewed from a Chinese perspective. Throughout its long history, China has regarded itself as the middle kingdom of the world and its culture as the most supreme; other traditions and cultures are accordingly “barbaric.” As a rival to China in ancient and modern times, Japanese culture remains “inferior” in Chinese eyes, although it has been a more highly industrialized and more modernized country than China since the Meiji Restoration.
The tremendous gap between the little knowledge among Taiwanese about their 
Chinese rulers and their naïve expectations for the KMT regime caused extreme tensions. 
These tensions were exacerbated by political suppression, economic misery, and serious 
cultural-linguistic barriers. These conflicts finally led to a violent confrontation between 
the two groups of people. An uprising occurred on February 28, 1947—often known as 
the “Two-two-eight Incident” (二二八事件). Chen Yi’s government, reinforced by 
troops sent in clandestinely from the mainland by Chiang Kai-shek, succeeded in 
suppressing the Taiwanese uprising before long. This failed rebellion resulted in a 
retaliatory massacre by the KMT that left some 10,000 Taiwanese dead—these included 
an entire generation of the island’s social and political leaders (Long 54). In the 
aftermath of the bloody slaughter, martial law was declared and the KMT quickly 
established the dictatorship that was to last for nearly four decades.

This incident is vital to an understanding of the insurmountable gap between the 
native islanders and their mainland rulers in Taiwan. The KMT government did not 
welcome its “Taiwanese brethren” back into the “warm embrace of the Chinese 
motherland”; instead, it treated the island as vanquished territory and offered its people 
little respect. Many Taiwanese then ceased to view the Chinese mainlanders as brothers 
and began to resent their presence as imperialist invaders. The bloody February 28 
Incident resulted in a deep and bitter enmity between the two groups. The impact of this 
incident continued to affect Taiwanese politics and society for the following decades.

30 For an early eyewitness account in English of the February Incident and the violence that erupted 
in the weeks to follow, see Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 254-310. For a recent comprehensive analysis of the 
uprising, see Lai et al, A Tragic Beginning.

31 Martial law remained in effect until 1987, after the death of Chiang Ching-kuo 蔣經國, the son and 
successor of KMT leader Chiang Kai-shek.
Many critics have regarded the February 28 Incident as a symbol of the KMT’s “foreign domination” (外來政權) over Taiwan’s “native people” (本土族群). This understanding clearly was associated with the rise of Taiwanese cultural nationalism, which viewed China and Taiwan as separate and irreconcilable entities. This incident has been regarded by many critics as responsible for the disjunction between Taiwanese nationalism and Chinese nationalism.

Internal Colonialism

A question has been raised among Taiwanese historians and culture critics: Did the KMT’s control over Taiwan end Taiwan’s colonial history or did it actually introduce another form of colonization? In their investigation of the stages of colonialism, Kelly and Altbach suggest a type of domination called “internal colonialism” in which the population is dominated by foreign nations existing within the same national boundaries. They write: “Internal colonialism is the domination of a ‘nation’ (defined geographically, linguistically, or culturally) within the national borders of another nation-state by another group or groups” (20-21). Such a colonialism is not limited to nation-to-nation domination. Despite the disputable definition of “nation,” internal colonialism provides

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33 Chen Edward I-te writes: “It was only after the bloody suppression of the revolt by the Chinese troops that the Taiwanese began their demand for independence based on the principle of self-determination. Thus, Formosan nationalism became clearly distinguishable from Chinese nationalism” (496-97). Mark Mancall also writes: “the communal feeling that has developed since 1947 is, in many respects, a negation reaction. The result of discrimination and persecution has led to a deep-seated self-consciousness of ‘Taiwanese as Taiwanese’” (24).

34 In the same sense, Kelly and Altbach argue that Native American “nations” are “colonized.” Similar situations can be seen in the Indian nations within most Latin American countries, the aborigines of
a suggestive pattern of domination suitable to the understanding of Taiwan under the KMT’s rule. As Yip June Chun argues, the KMT’s monopolistic grip on the island and the Taiwanese response to its political and cultural integration marked the relationship between the mainlanders and the islanders with “the dynamics of colonizer/colonized relationship” (24). Douglas Mendel also concludes that Taiwan, after all, had never escaped from colonial domination; Taiwan’s “restoration” to China from the defeated Japan after World War II only changed its colonizer from one to another.35

Of course, many critics have argued that Taiwan’s return to China in 1945 ended the island’s long history of being colonized, since the reunion resulted in the reunification of a single people within the boundary of a nation—i.e., the Chinese people and China. Yip, for example, has criticized such a simplistic interpretation, for it not only ignores the complexity and peculiarities of Taiwan’s historical development under colonization but also overlooks the conflicts between the native Taiwanese and their mainland rulers since the end of World War II (Yip 17-18). Although the majority of the island’s residents are Chinese immigrants and their cultural inheritance is predominantly Chinese, the island also bears the heritage of various foreign colonizers through centuries of colonization. European blood runs in the veins of some of the island’s inhabitants; also, Japanese assimilation policies promoted mixed marriage between the Japanese and Taiwanese races. The influence of Dutch and Japanese architectural styles remains highly visible in many Taiwanese cities and towns. In addition, the Taiwanese dialects and Mandarin are

Australia, and the Basques of Spain (21).

35 Mendel writes: “Whether or not one believe that Formosan majority is under Chinese colonial domination today, the reaction of the native Formosans to their past Japanese and present Chinese overlords is relevant to any study of Asian colonialism” (The Politics of Formosan Nationalism 3).
mutually unintelligible. Over the centuries, the island’s language also absorbed words and phrases from both its European and Japanese colonizers (Yip 18). More importantly, the Japanese assimilation effort had made the Japanese language the unifying tongue for all the inhabitants on Taiwan. All these differences between the island and the mainland had made a real “reunification” extremely difficult.

Indeed, many Taiwanese literati maintained a strong commitment to the inherited Chinese cultural and intellectual order during the Japanese occupation. Resentment of the Japanese colonizers also evoked nostalgia for the Chinese imperial rule. When the KMT government took over Taiwan from the hand of Japan, the Taiwanese populace, in fact, celebrated the island’s return to the motherland with optimistic hope. Yet, their joy of reunion soon fell into great disappointment. The February 28 Incident made the Taiwanese realize that the mainland Chinese were actually another type of imperialist invaders. The Taiwanese began to recognize the island as a unique entity, a historically-rooted community that is in many ways separate and distinct from the mainland. Gradually, the Taiwanese gained a realistic understanding of the situation they would face in dealing with the new overlord.

*The Rhetoric of Chinese Nationhood*

Having recognized the tremendous gaps marked by the historical, cultural, and linguistic differences between the mainland and the island, the KMT government (the Nationalist regime in Taiwan) soon established its policies directed toward the re-Sinicization of Taiwan, which significantly characterized the Nationalist regime in Taiwan as colonizing. Under the Nationalist regime, the native Taiwanese once again became “second-class
citizens,” for every educational institution and socio-political organization was dominated by the mainlanders (Mendel 52). Like Japan’s attempt at integrating Taiwan into the Japanese empire, the Nationalist regime aimed at the absorption of the island into one Chinese “nation.” In order to investigate the internal colonialism of Taiwan under the mainland rulers, the following discussions will focus on the process of Taiwan’s re-Sinicization, which was also a process of subjectification.

Despite their tiny minority in number, the Nationalist Chinese quickly established a dictatorial authority over the island. In order to cement its rule on the island, the Nationalist regime confronted arduous tasks: to remove the Japanese heritage, to minimize the linguistic, cultural, and political significance of the native Taiwanese, and above all, to mold the native Taiwanese into “pure Chinese”—in particular, to teach them standard Mandarin and the Nationalist doctrine. In other words, the main objective for the Nationalist regime in Taiwan was “resinicizing” the Taiwanese.\footnote{See, for example, Douglas Mendel, \textit{The Politics of Formosan Nationalism} (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 47; Edwin A. Winckler, “Cultural Policy on Postwar Taiwan” in \textit{Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan}, ed. Stevan Harrell and Huang Chun-chieh (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1974), 30.} The refugee regime realized that it had to rely on the young Taiwanese generation to either re-conquer the mainland or defend the island. For both goals, it was vital to cultivate in the Taiwanese a loyalty to the Nationalist government. In addition, the Nationalists concluded that a failure of morale had led to the loss of the mainland. In order to retake the mainland, it was essential to accomplish an ideological reform of the state. Therefore, the indoctrination of the Taiwanese masses—at every level, from regular schooling to the mass media—assumed its political and ideological importance. Closely supervised
education was the major apparatus of the Nationalist regime to “sinicize” the native Taiwanese. Functioning as a tool to relay political ideologies, such an education was of course directed by the rulers and seldom concerned itself with the needs of the native people on the island.\textsuperscript{37}

Like the Japanese colonial administration in Taiwan, which had attempted to integrate Taiwan into the Japanese empire, the Nationalist regime aimed at the absorption of Taiwan into one “nation-state” controlled by the monopolistic government.\textsuperscript{38} In order to establish and reinforce the regime’s authority over the Taiwanese masses, the Nationalist regime deployed the rhetoric of Chinese “nationhood” and attempted to construct a coherent Chinese “nation” on the island of Taiwan.\textsuperscript{39} First of all, the Nationalist regime sought to unify the Taiwanese population with the Chinese masses by pronouncing a common goal, a “sacred mission”—the “re-conquest” of the mainland (\textit{反攻大陸}). The Nationalist officials repeatedly articulated the “sacred mission” as not merely “wishful thinking,” but rather, as “the consensus of aspiration burning in the hearts of 600 million compatriots.”\textsuperscript{40} Such an articulation not only assigned the mission a ritual and symbolic nature but also suggested a strong link between the Taiwanese and

\textsuperscript{37} For a detailed discussions of institutionalized education under the Nationalist regime in Taiwan, see Mendel 47-52.

\textsuperscript{38} Kelly and Altbach note that internal colonialism implies “the absorption of the colony into one nation-state, controlled by the colonizers” (23).

\textsuperscript{39} See Yip June Chun, “Colonialism and Its Counter-Discourses: On the Uses of ‘Nation’ in Modern Taiwanese Literature and Film” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1996), 24. Yip’s study analyzes how the rhetoric of nationhood had been deployed in modern Taiwanese literature and film.

\textsuperscript{40} Quoted in Mark Mancall, Introduction to \textit{Formosa Today} (New York and London: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 6-7. As Yip notes, the Chinese term translated as “compatriot” is “同胞,” which literally means “of the same placenta” (24, n. 22).
the Chinese people, as the same race with the same blood. By such propaganda, Chiang
Kai-shek and other Nationalist Chinese officials hoped to strengthen the bond among the
Taiwanese and Chinese people, and meanwhile to cultivate in the Taiwanese a sense of
loyalty to the Nationalist regime.

Japan had made coercive efforts to assimilate Taiwan for half a century and taught
the Taiwanese children a new version of history and cultural tradition. In order to
construct a coherent “Chinese” nation on the island, the Nationalist regime required an
“invented tradition” to replace the old one. “Invented tradition,” according to Eric
Hobsbawm, means “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted
rules and of a ritual and symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and
norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (1,
emphasis mine). The “invented tradition” created by the Nationalist regime aimed “to
construct spatial and temporal continuity between the island and the continent and to
consecrate Taiwan as the rightful heir to China’s Imperial tradition” (Yip 25). Benedict
Anderson also suggests that the “myth of nation” is constructed through a sense of
continuity with an “immemorial past” (11). Therefore, in addition to promoting the
sacred mission to re-conquer the mainland, the regime’s main cultural programs for civil
indoctrination placed great emphasis on the teaching of “Chinese history” and “Chinese
geography”\footnote{Marshall Johnson, “Making Time: Historic Preservation ad the Space of Nationality,” \textit{Position} 2. 2 (Fall 1994): 177-249; quoted in Yip 25.}—which gave the islanders the grandeur and glory of Chinese nation and
cultural tradition. Undoubtedly, with its implication of continuity with the Chinese
historical past, this Nationalist-invented tradition not only reinforced the sacred mission
to re-conquer the mainland, but it also helped implant a Chinese “nation” in Taiwanese minds.

This invented tradition also aimed at the construction of Chinese “nationhood.” In order to forge a Chinese national identity, time and space were “nationalized.” The Nationalist regime was officially dated from 1912, with the system of year designations parallel to dynastic periods; this suggested a continuation of China’s Imperial tradition. Space was nationalized, with maps showing the national territory including the whole of the Chinese mainland and Outer Mongolia. Streets in Taiwanese cities and towns were renamed after mainland places. Whatever signified Japanese imperial rule had to be removed and replaced with Chinese significance in order to become true successors to their mainland counterparts. With such concerns, the Nationalist regime changed the names of universities and higher educational institutions from “imperial” to “national”; it also built in Taipei a grand National Palace Museum exhibiting Chinese cultural heritage. The residents of Taiwan, even those born on the island and who had never been to the mainland, were categorized on their identification cards by the mainland provinces from which their ancestors originally came. Through Chinese heritage of the mainland, including national museums, the census and the map—which Anderson has called “political museumization”—the Nationalist regime in Taiwan imagined its domain extending to mainland China. The Nationalist regime also proved skilful at manipulating the icons of “nationhood.” For the indoctrination of the Taiwanese masses,

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42 For details, see, Christopher Hughes, Taiwan and Chinese nationalism: National identity and status in international society (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 29.

43 Anderson, chapter 10; quoted in Yip 25. Benedict Anderson suggests that the role of museums, along with two other institutions of power, the census and the map, profoundly shape the way in which a colonial state imagines its dominion. On the issue of chi-kuan 籍貫, see also in Johnson 189 and 240.
the environment was crowded with national symbols—the national flag (brought over from the mainland and displayed ubiquitously), the national anthem (also the KMT Party song, sung at schools and the start of all cultural events, including plays, concerts, movies, and sports competitions as well as television and radio broadcasts), and statues of Chiang Kai-shek which propagated the cult of the charismatic national leader.44

The colonizer’s invented tradition unavoidably obliterated the roots of the colonized. As the regime’s indoctrination programs continued, the absorbing became the “eradication” of the colonized. As Kelly and Altbach argue, for assimilation, the national and cultural past of the colonized had to be rewritten to “show similarities rather than difference,” to beckon the colonized to become assimilated as if it were in their own way rather than that of the colonizers (23-24). The Nationalist regime created a historical tradition—which was expressed in the endlessly-repeated phrase, five-thousand years of Chinese history (中國五千年歷史)—and sought to establish an unbroken continuity with the ancient Chinese past. Such a historical account initially attempted to “absorb” Taiwan into the Chinese tradition, yet it eventually erased the roots of the Taiwanese people. In fact, this account deliberately removed the past of Taiwan, which included the periods of European colonization and the Japanese occupation. It also elided some “interruptions” of the glorious Chinese history—for instance, the civil war with the Communists, the retreat of the Nationalist Chinese to Taiwan, and the KMT’s violent assertion of control on the island of Taiwan. Through the operation of an “organized forgetting” and “institutionalized remembrance,”45 the Nationalist regime in Taiwan

44 See also in Hughes 29 and Yip 26.

45 See Johnson 206 and Yip 26.
omitted whatever would make the island different from China and carefully preserved a “Chinese” tradition whereby the Nationalist regime skillfully united the Taiwanese with the Chinese within the frame of a “Chinese” nation. The Taiwanese henceforth became “compatriots” and were stripped of all indications related to people, nation, or culture.46

As a land composed of various immigrants, Taiwan is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society. In addition to the island’s aborigines, who originated from a Malayo-Polynesian ethnicity, different sub-ethnic groups from the mainland lived hitherto in separate community groups. By the time Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895, the linguistic groups had remained as fragmented as ethnic divisions. The majority of the native Taiwanese, including the “Hok-lo” and “Hakka” people, spoke separate dialects at home; the mountain tribes used a variety of dialects. Very few spoke Mandarin. Since Japanese colonial education required every Taiwanese to learn the Japanese language, Japanese became a unifying tongue for all the inhabitants in Taiwan. During the occupation, Japanese bridged the communication gap among the several linguistic groups in Taiwan. In addition, many immigrants of Chinese descent expected their children to learn Chinese, which fostered a bilingual elite in the colonial society.

As mentioned earlier, language difficulties provoked extreme tensions between the mainlanders and the islanders; it also aggravated serious misunderstanding between the Taiwanese populace and the Nationalist officials, for few mainland officials spoke Japanese or the various Taiwanese dialects, and few Taiwanese spoke Mandarin.47

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46 About the colonized being assimilated within the frame of internal colonialism, Kelly and Altabch write: “The peoples of internal colonies have become termed minorities, ethnics, or lower classes, rather than peoples, nations, or cultures” (23).
Among Taiwanese elites, Japanese had been an efficient tool for obtaining modern knowledge and technology; also, Japanese trade, investment, and tourism inspired the continued use of the Japanese language among the Taiwanese (Mendel 44).

The Nationalists were aware of the linguistic and cultural barriers to their administration. They encountered the persistence of not only the native Taiwanese tongues but also the Japanese heritage. To overcome the language barrier, the Nationalists instituted a “national language” (國語)—Mandarin—as the official medium of government, business, education, and all public discourse. Accordingly, the publishing and distribution of printed materials in Japanese were banned. Children were to be punished harshly for their use of languages other than Mandarin in schools. In addition to making communication more convenient, the enforcement of a “national language,” of course, served the colonial purposes both to inculcate the native Taiwanese with the Chinese heritage and to cultivate in the Taiwanese a loyalty to the Nationalist regime. Consequently, the varieties of dialects on the island were dismissed as “impure” languages as far as “pure” Chinese was concerned (Yip 26). Likewise, the use of

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47 Lai et al, for example, have vividly depicted the conflicts—in particular caused by language barriers—between the mainlanders and the islanders. During that time, the Taiwanese always referred to the Japanese as “dogs” (kou 狗); now they called the Mainlanders “pigs” (chu 畜)—a pejorative term used to describe their greed. The native resentment and contempt for the mainlanders were being translated into songs, for example, a Taiwanese poem about the mainlanders quickly became popular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ching-t’ien tung-ti</th>
<th>Both heaven and earth trembled.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huan-t’ien hsi-ti</td>
<td>Both heaven and earth then rejoiced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hua-t’ien chiu-ti</td>
<td>Women and wine they enjoyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hei-t’ien an-ti</td>
<td>Heaven and earth darkened; we suffered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hu-t’ien huan-ti</td>
<td>O heaven and earth please saved us. (93-94)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48 As a strategy, the provincial government allowed the distributing of printed materials in Japanese for yet another year, to be followed by the gradual phasing out of Japanese, although the Taiwanese had been seeking to extend the Japanese publications into the future (Lai et al 95).
Japanese—the language of former empire—would imply “disloyalty” to the Nationalist regime.

In order to consolidate its authority over the island, the Nationalists minimized the presence of the native Taiwanese and Japanese cultural heritages and their political significance. They constantly devalued the native language and culture and meanwhile attempted to substitute the Chinese heritage for the Japanese one. For the following decades, the mainland Chinese dominated all political, educational and cultural institutions on the island. As a result, the native Taiwanese were burdened with a sense of inferiority—racial, cultural, and political. Despite their majority in number, the native Taiwanese became a “minority,” a “lower class” in Taiwan’s society, which was dominated by the mainlanders. Clearly, under the domination of the Nationalist regime, the voice of the “minor” Taiwanese was once again silenced by the rulers.

Postwar Modernization and Neocolonialism

As argued earlier, the Nationalist regime’s takeover of the reins of power from the Japanese in 1945 did not mark the end of Taiwan’s colonial experience; it, in fact, replicated the nightmare of Japanese colonization.\(^\text{49}\) In addition to the Nationalist regime’s “internal colonialism,” Taiwan actually suffered from another form of colonialism—“neocolonialism”—a domination that indicated the inextricable network of relationships between the industrialized nations and the “Third World.”\(^\text{50}\) From a global

\(^{49}\) See also Chiu Kuei-fen, “Discovering Taiwan: Constructing A Theory of Taiwanese Post-Coloniality” [發現台灣: 建構台灣後殖民論述], 173.

\(^{50}\) In the post-colonial era, the relations between the West (European and North American
perspective, the end of World War II did not bring the colonial era to an end; the colonizing powers maintained domination over their former colonies in the postwar era, although these former colonies had achieved political independence and other accouterments of sovereignty. Neocolonialism does not necessarily entail direct political governance; it simply indicates a form of domination of one nation over another. Like other Third World countries, postwar Taiwan depended deeply on the industrialized nations for its modernization and was therefore intertwined with the colonizing powers—mainly the U.S. and Japan.

As one may argue, in a restricted sense neocolonialism cannot be properly applied to the situation of postwar Taiwan, due to its unique colonial experience. Taiwan in modern times had not been colonized by Western colonizers, but by Japan. In order to cement its control over the island, the Nationalist regime of Taiwan had made a rigorous effort to remove Japanese heritage and cut off any link of the island to its colonial past. Postwar Taiwan’s relationship with the industrialized nations—the U.S. and Japan—was different from that of other Third World nations with their former colonizers—particularly those in Africa. Therefore, the colonial heritage, a continuity with the colonial past that characterizes neocolonialism and qualifies the most important elements of neocolonialism in the Third World does not exist in such a case as Taiwan. However, the fact that postwar Taiwan’s industrialization depended profoundly on the industrialized nations was undeniable.

Industrialized nations) and non-West nations (those nations in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East that have been known collectively as the “Third World”) are often described in terms of colonialism. Fredric Jameson, for example, has defined the third world as “countries which have suffered the experience of colonialism and imperialism.” See Fredric Jameson, “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism,” Social Text 15 (1986): 65-88. Edward Said also notes that “the colonized” has become “synonymous with the Third World.” See Edward Said, “Representing the Colonized: Anthropology’s Interlocutors,” Critical Inquiry 15.2 (Winter 1989): 205-25.
Edwin A. Winckle has observed that postwar Taiwan “reoriented from Japan to China to America” (30). Indeed, by deploying the rhetoric of the Chinese nation, the Nationalist regime in Taiwan was able to cut off any link of Taiwan to Japan and broke the continuity of the island with its colonial past. For the defense and development of the island, the Nationalist regime relied largely on the new postwar power—the United States. Since the 1950s, the United States has played a major role in Taiwan’s military defense and economic growth. Through so-called military and economic “cooperation,” the United States helped the KMT government to modernize Taiwan’s agriculture and establish “economic plans” for the island’s industrialization.51 This support from the United States, the government’s economic policy and aggressive marketing strategies, and foreign investors from Japan and Hong Kong all contributed to rapid industrial growth on the island; this culminated in the economic miracle of the 1970s and earned Taiwan its reputation as one of Asia’s “Four Dragons.”

Kelly and Altbach have argued that for Third World countries, modernization became synonymous with “industrialization” and “westernization,” since a modernized nation was measured by the standards of the industrialized West of social, cultural, and economic terms (32). Accordingly, Taiwan attempted to emulate the West and “voluntarily” depended on the industrialized nations for its modernization.52 Critics have noticed that the use of a language is a key element of the neocolonial relationship (Kelly

51 For a discussion of the role of the U.S. in Taiwan’s early economic growth, see Simon Long, Taiwan: China’s Last Frontier, 80-95. In Long’s account, the U.S. played a key role in Taiwan’s early industrialization. Between 1951 and 1968, the U.S. provided Taiwan with US$1.5 billion of so-called “non-military aid.” In addition, the U.S. also set up co-operative bodies, in particular, the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction (JCRR), to help the KMT not only modernize Taiwan’s agriculture but also establish “economic plans” for industrialization.

52 Kelly and Altbach have also argued that in the network of neocolonialism, the dependence of the Third World nations on the industrialized nations seems for the most part “voluntary” (39).
Since the Nationalist regime attempted to erase the Japanese heritage, English replaced Japanese as the language for “modern” communication; Western cultures—primarily American culture—prevailed on the island and overshadowed the native cultural tradition. Chinese culture and the official language, Mandarin, continued to dominate Taiwan’s society due to the state’s cultural policy; yet, cultural remnants from the Japanese occupation still lingered. With its strong economic power, Japan re-entered the island and had a great impact on Taiwan—as did Japanese culture. As a result, by the 1970s Taiwan was exposed to multiple foreign powers—political, economic, social, and cultural—which appeared to overshadow the native culture.

Taiwan’s struggle for “modernization” was also the struggle for its “dependence” on the industrialized nations. Economic prosperity and industrialization brought drastic changes to Taiwan’s society and shook the traditional order. It actually caused a host of new problems that accompanied modernization: social inequality, conflicts between capitalists and laborers, cultural alienation, etc. In the network of neocolonialism, Taiwan was inevitably traumatized by the industrialized powers—economically, politically, and culturally. Taiwanese intellectuals soon realized that in a global environment Taiwan was caught in a dilemma: its military and economic dependence on the industrialized nations had to continue, while the multiple foreign powers penetrated further into the island’s society. Witnessing the social transformation of the island, many Taiwanese intellectuals

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53 Kelly and Altbach mention that the development and “modernization” of the Third World has been a “unidimensional process toward an industrialized society.” Therefore, neocolonialism and dependence on the industrialized nations are inevitably a part of the struggle for “modernization” (39-40).
gradually gained the knowledge that Taiwan was once again “becoming an economic and cultural colony of Japan and the West.”

The Politics of Identity Formation—The Rise of Taiwanese Cultural Nationalism

The construction of a “Chinese” nation in Taiwan by the Nationalists did not last long due to both domestic resistance and the international climate during the 1970s. The refugee regime in Taiwan presented itself as both the rightful heir to China’s imperial rule and the guardian of Taiwan against attack from the mainland; however, its legitimacy rested only on the myth of a “Chinese” nation. The legitimacy of the Nationalist regime was challenged when Beijing improved its relationship with the free world, including Japan and the U.S. Ultimately, the Chinese nationalism with which the Nationalist regime attempted to exercise hegemony over Taiwan’s society proved insufficient for state legitimation. People on the island became aware that Taiwan was actually an independent entity against mainland China. Alarmed by the domination of the industrialized powers and the cultural homogenization by the Nationalist regime,

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54 Many Taiwanese cultural critics had warned that Taiwan would become an economic and cultural colony of Japan and the West. This issue was often addressed by hsiang-t’u writers and theorists who eagerly promoted a Taiwanese literary and cultural tradition as opposed to foreign cultures. See, for example, Chen Ying-chen’s 陳映真 “Taiwan Under American Rule” [美國統制下的台灣], vol. 13 of his Collected Works, (Taipei: Jen-chien, 1988). See also two essays by Wang T’o 王拓, “Embrace the Healthy Earth” [擁抱健康大地] and “Colonialism Or Self-Determination” [殖民地意願還是自主意願], in A Collection of Essays on Hsiang-t’u Literature [鄉土文學討論集], ed. Wei T’ien-ts’ung (尉天聰) (Taipei: Yuan-liu, 1978), 348-62 and 578-86. In both essays, Wang argues that neo-imperialism is a global phenomenon. “Economic cooperation, technological cooperation and the structures of the “trans-national corporation” are merely disguises for the West’s relentless re-colonization of so-called “underdeveloped” and “developing” nations. In addition, see “On Nationalism and Economic Colonization” [談民族主義與殖民經濟], an interview with Hu Ch’iu-yuan 胡秋原 collected in A Collection of Essays on Hsiang-t’u Literature [鄉土文學討論集], 561-77.

55 For further discussions of the international political environment and the Taiwanese nativist movements in the 1970s, see Hughes 30-31.
Taiwanese youngsters showed their patriotic sentiments; this led to a series of student demonstrations to boycott Japanese-made products. More significantly, they also propagated the re-evaluation of early native Taiwanese literature and provoked a “native” tradition that opposed foreign cultures.

The Beijing-Washington rapprochement of the 1970s brought about a real external crisis for the legitimacy of the Nationalist regime in Taiwan. The Nationalist regime claimed to be the legitimate government of all China, yet the Kissinger and Nixon visits to Beijing in the early 1970s damaged the credibility of such a claim. Because of the improved relations between Beijing and Washington, the Nationalist regime in Taiwan was forced to relinquish its seat as the United Nations representative of China in 1972. Japan recognized the Beijing government as China. Also, United States troops were withdrawn from this area, and the United States arms sales to the region were scaled down (Hughes 31). The United States finally established diplomatic relations with the Beijing government in 1979; the Taiwan Relations Act that defined the relations between Taipei and Washington was issued. Such an international environment clearly showed that the Nationalist regime’s claim to be the rightful government of all China had become illegal and that the Nationalist retaking of the mainland had become militarily impossible. Consequently, Taiwan was increasingly isolated from international societies, and its survival relied entirely on the good will of the United States Congress. However, the illegal rule of the Nationalist regime over the island and the myth of a Chinese “nation” were erected and maintained through the imposition of martial law.

The international challenge to the legitimacy of the Nationalist regime in Taiwan was aggravated by Taiwan’s own developments. By the 1970s, Taiwan had developed an
increasingly wealthy and urbanized society, thanks to strong economic growth. The expansion of education led the society to a rise in the general level of knowledge and an exposure to international affairs and foreign values. More significantly, by the early 1970s, student magazines had begun to campaign openly for democratic participation in politics, the upholding of basic human rights, and the funding of social welfare. Through magazines, Taiwanese youngsters expressed their dissatisfaction with Nationalist domination—linguistic, cultural, and political—over the island. They questioned the legitimacy of Nationalist rule over Taiwan and intensified a burgeoning of political consciousness and native cultural awareness.56

Diplomatic setbacks further exaggerated the Taiwanese dissatisfaction with the Nationalist rule. The unilateral decision by the United States to hand over Okinawa and the Senkaku (Tiao-yu T’ai 釣魚台) islands to Japan in 1971—the so-called Tiao-yu T’ai Incident (釣魚台事件)—became one of the many political setbacks that affected Taiwan’s society profoundly. The Tiao-yu T’ai islands, an archipelago to the north of Taiwan, had been occupied by the United States since World War II, yet the Nationalist regime claimed the islands as its territory. The incident outraged the residents of Taiwan and provoked a passion for nationalism. Many Taiwanese considered their situation under the domination of the foreign powers similar to that of the Chinese in the beginning of the twentieth century. Therefore, Taiwanese students tended to compare this event to the patriotic demonstration by the Chinese students on May 4, 1919 to protest the Treaty

56 The most influential magazine was The Intellectual (大學雜誌) created by a younger generation of activists. This magazine not only expressed the native political dissatisfaction with the Nationalist government, but it also criticized political domination and economic aggression of foreign powers. Although their criticism was expressed in terms of Chinese patriotism, their activities were viewed by the state with great suspicion (Hughes 34).
of Versailles, which turned over German-held parts of northeastern China to Japan rather
than returning them to China. When the Tiao-yu T’ai islands were returned to Japan, the
Nationalist regime was criticized by the Taiwanese for its inconsistent attitudes toward
the incident and its inability to safeguard the territory. This incident significantly
destroyed the Nationalist myth of the Chinese nation and foreshadowed the crisis of
Chinese nationalism in the land of Taiwan.

The Rise of Taiwanese Cultural Nationalism

A series of embarrassing political setbacks and frustrations actually evoked Taiwanese
patriotism; however, such patriotism caused a certain degree of confusion for the
residents of Taiwan. Christopher Hughes argues that the United State’s recognition of
the Beijing government destroyed the myth of a Chinese nation preached by the
Nationalist regime in Taiwan; however, it did not decisively resolve Taiwan’s status
through unification with the mainland or by independence. With the Taiwan Relation
Act, Taiwan’s status was frozen in an “intermediate” state between these two possible
statehoods. Such a unique international status shook the foundations of Chinese
nationalism in Taiwan. It was also in this intermediate stage that the domestic challenge
to Nationalist legitimacy occurred (31-32). As the Nationalist myth of Chinese
nationhood collapsed, the passion for “nationalism” was no longer to be oriented toward
China, because China simply indicated the Beijing government. Confronted with the
delicate problem of “two Chinas,” any observant Taiwanese intellectual would have to
ask himself: which country should I love?57 As a result, the call for nationalism became a

57 The agony of Taiwan’s “intermediate” statehood continued to trouble the Taiwanese minds for
decades. See, for example, Chen Ying-chen, “A Tenth Anniversary Retrospective Look at the Hsiang-t’u

quest for a distinct Taiwanese identity, political and cultural. Troubled by the “betrayal” of many industrialized powers, Taiwanese critics began to warn of the growing complexities of Taiwan’s economic and cultural ties with Japan and the West. Also, agonized by the island’s “intermediate” status in the global order of nations, they were forced to ponder Taiwan’s relationship with mainland China. Therefore, the Taiwanese sought a national identity distinct from the Chinese and a cultural identity that opposed foreign cultures. The quest for identity awakened a distinctive Taiwanese consciousness, which subsequently led to anti-colonialist movements and native tradition retrieval programs. Taiwan, since then, has been undergoing a continuous process of identification. Many scholars have also argued that although the Taiwanese consciousness during the time was not so strong as to call for a Taiwanese state, it certainly stimulated a sense of loyalty to the island.58 Not surprisingly, with its great concerns about the native land and its emphatically anti-imperialist rhetoric, Taiwan’s nativist literature perfectly merged with this tide of blossoming socio-political awareness.

The awakening of Taiwanese consciousness was responsible for the rise of Taiwanese cultural “nationalism” that opposed both Chinese nationalism and Western imperialism. Many scholars have observed that the “colonial nationalisms” emerging due to the fall of European empires after World War II have developed largely in response to the nationalisms of imperial powers, as a way to resist European cultural and economic colonialism; such was the case in Taiwan.59 For example, in his Imagined Communities,
Benedict Anderson has identified two historically interdependent modes of nationalism: the “official nationalisms” of the imperial powers and the “colonial nationalisms” that arise in response.\(^\text{60}\) The Nationalist regime had preached Chinese nationalism on the island in order to justify its control over Taiwan, to consolidate its authority over the conquered territory, and to assimilate the native Taiwanese into the “national cultural” of the Chinese. Similarly, military and economic cooperation was actually another form of colonialism whereby the industrialized powers maintained their economic and cultural domination over Taiwan. Taiwanese critics tended to view Chinese nationalism and Western domination as forms of imperialism. Such imperialism and nationalism were now appropriated and transformed by the colonized as a way to resist the political, cultural, and economic domination of the colonizing powers.

Significantly, in the hands of the colonized, “nationalism” can become a powerful strategy for anti-colonial movements and a meaningful apparatus in the process of identification. As many culture critics have suggested, the idea of “nation” as a western concept introduced to the Third World through the process of colonialism can be appropriated and transformed by the colonized for purposes of resistance—for example, to define a “native” tradition in opposition to the colonizer’s culture.\(^\text{61}\) Of course, the concepts of “nation” and “nationalism” are never simple but instead depend on a complex

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\(^\text{60}\) Anderson, chapter 6. Anderson also cites Czarist Russification and Japanese Imperialism as examples. Japanese imperialism is particularly relevant for Taiwan’s modern colonial experience; moreover, as argued previously, Japanese ideas of colonialism are responsible for the rise of Taiwanese nationalism.

system of differentiation. Recent studies have pointed out that the history of the concepts of nation and nationalism are inseparable from the history of colonialism and imperialism. A “nation” can be recognized as a political entity, a geographical unity, or a linguistic, ethic, and religious community; “nationalism” then is essentially an emotional sense of identity or a state of mind.\(^{62}\) As the idea of nation becomes conceived of as “a system of cultural signification,” nationalism becomes a “cultural apparatus” desiring a national form.\(^{63}\) In response to Chinese nationalism and Western imperialism, Taiwanese cultural nationalism has aimed at the construction of a national and cultural identity which is involved in the contingent and discursive process of articulating difference from the colonizers.

\(^{62}\) Regarding the concepts of “nation” and “nationalism,” influential studies include Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?” translated and annotated by Martin Thom in Bhabha, ed. *Nation and Narration*, 8-22 and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. Taking Renan’s “spiritual” viewpoint of a nation, Anderson writes:

> nationality, or as one might prefer to put it in view of that word’s multiple significations, nationness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy (4).

Timothy Brennan, for example, pinpoints this discourse under the subject of “myths of the nation,” in which he cites Malinowski’s description of “myth”:

> myth acts as a character for the present-day social order; it supplies a retrospective pattern of moral values, sociological order, and magical belief, the function of which is to strengthen tradition and endow it with a greater value and prestige by tracing it back to a higher, better, more supernatural reality of initial events.

*(Brennan, “The National Longing for Form” in *Nation and Narration*, 44-45)*

\(^{63}\) See Brennan, “The National Longing for Form” 44-70.
PART II:
THE NATIVIST DISCOURSE
CHAPTER 4

LEGITIMATIZING NATIVIST LITERATURE:

THE YEN-WEN YI-CHIH 言文一致 MOVEMENT

Yen-wen yi-chih—The Discovery of the Colonial Self

Taiwan’s nativist literature, known as hsiang-t’u literature 鄉土文學, is thought to have originated with Cheng K’un-wu 鄭坤五 who published some essays, short stories, and folk songs written in vernacular Taiwanese. He coined the phrase “T’ai-wan kuo-feng” 台灣國風 (Tunes from Taiwan) to categorize those works and constantly emphasized the use of Taiwanese dialect, which gave a general idea of hsiang-t’u literature. Yet, not until a few years later when Huang Shi-hui 黃石輝 published an article entitled “Why Should One Not Advocate Hsiang-t’u Literature?” did the concept of hsiang-t’u literature become more comprehensive and call for much more attention. In the article, Huang defined hsiang-t’u literature in terms of its contents, its readers, and its choice of language. He claimed, “when writing literature, one shall consider the populace as the readers in order to advocate and to establish hsiang-t’u literature” (Liao 489). As for the language, Huang insisted on the native tongue as the vehicle for creative writing; he

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64 The term “hsiang-t’u,” which literally means “country and soil,” can be roughly translated into English as “native,” “local,” or “regional.” Since none of them perfectly conveys its primary character as a nativist tradition of an anti-colonial literature on the island, this chapter employs the original term to indicate such writing and its tradition as well.
argued that one should “use Taiwanese to write poems, novels, and folk songs and to
depict Taiwanese matters” (Liao 488).

Many features of *hsiang-t’u* literature are described in Huang’s article. According
to Huang’s theory, *hsiang-t’u* literature was first of all for the masses; the function of
literature thus was to educate the common people. As has often been argued, Taiwan’s
*hsiang-t’u* literature was inspired by the New Literary Revolution (*Hsin-wen-hsueh yun-
tung*) in China initiated by Hu shih 胡適 and Chen Tu-hsiu [Chen Duxiu] 陳獨秀 in 1917,
whose primary goal was to popularize vernacular Chinese. *Hsiang-t’u* literature
advocates certainly shared the same interest. Yet, to distinguish itself from Japanese and
Chinese literatures, Taiwan’s *hsiang-t’u* literature drew heavily on “localism” and placed
its focus on Taiwanese people, landscapes, and local affairs. Such a perspective raises
questions of discourse germane to the production of a “national” literature, where the
native tongue is comprehended as an immediate representation of the national spirit. This
belief also explains why the proposal of using the Taiwanese dialect occupies the focal
interest in Huang’s manifesto. Having designated *hsiang-t’u* literature as literature for
the masses, Huang accordingly postulated that the language for such a literature had to be
the populace’s language, i.e., the native Taiwanese tongue. The need of the native tongue
becomes clear when taking Taiwan’s contemporary situation into consideration. Given
that Taiwan had been cut off from China and ruled by Japan, both Chinese and Japanese
were “foreign” languages to the Taiwanese populace. As Huang repeatedly emphasized,
for political and ethnic reasons, neither Chinese nor Japanese was a suitable language for
*hsiang-t’u* literature (“An Apology” 153). Another primary reason for Huang’s
insistence on the native tongue for *hsiang-t’u* literature was, according to him, that
Chinese writing did not “correspond” to Taiwanese writing in two important ways: First, Chinese characters could not transcribe spoken Taiwanese accurately, especially in the case of pronunciation. Second, Chinese writing, in terms of form, style, and literary norm, could not express the particular Taiwanese spirit. To support his argument, Huang gave examples indicating striking divergences between the spoken and written languages: particular expressions in vernacular Mandarin had no correspondence in Taiwanese, and particular Taiwanese usages and pronunciations could not be expressed completely through Chinese characters. In short, Huang strived to prove that the borrowing of Chinese writing, a foreign vehicle of expression, for hsiang-t’u literature was impractical. To Huang a viable solution to the problem lay in the employment of Taiwanese writing, which he considered a more truthful and reliable method than Chinese writing for transcribing colloquial Taiwanese and Taiwanese spirit as well. Since a system of written Taiwanese had not been well developed by that time, the effort for advocating hsiang-t’u literature was therefore directed toward the reform of the Taiwanese written language.

The Yen-wen yi-chih Movement
The written and spoken versions of a particular language perhaps never “correspond” perfectly. What Huang proposed was actually an effort toward the “unification of the spoken and written languages.” The subject of “unification of the spoken and written languages,” which was often expressed in the endlessly repeated phrase, yen-wen yi-chih, occurred commonly in Japan, China, and Taiwan, although the debates took different forms under different circumstances. The yen-wen yi-chih movement primarily sought

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65 *Yen-wen yi-chih* [genbun itchi in Japanese] is usually translated rather literally into English as “unifying spoken and written languages.” *Bun* 文 in Japanese is an abbreviation for *bungo* 文語, the word
to record colloquial speech “realistically.” The notion of yen-wen yi-chih as a new ideology of writing, of course, was not uniquely Taiwanese; it found its more enthusiastic and articulate expressions in modern China and Meiji Japan. The yen-wen yi-chih movement in China, as a movement to popularize vernacular Chinese, helped shape the New Literary Revolution, and genbun itchi 言文一致 (the Japanese expression of yen-wen yi-chih) became foremost a new ideology of writing that dominated Meiji Japanese literature.

Like the Chinese and Japanese movements, the Taiwanese yen-wen yi-chih eventually focused on the re-construction of a written system for colloquial Taiwanese. Huang touched only briefly on the issue of “correspondence” between the spoken and


In the Chinese context, the yen-wen yi-chih is recognizable as the movement to popularize the Mandarin vernacular (白話文運動) in order to unify the written and spoken languages. Wen 文 literally means “writing,” with a connotation of literary texts employed in classical Chinese (Wen-yen-wen 文言文), while yen simply means modern colloquial language (pai-hua 白話). In such a case, literary texts that employ the vernacular Chinese (pai-hua-wen 白話文), especially after 1917, contrast with those in classical Chinese (wen-yen-wen 文言文). Lu Xun’s 魯迅 short story, “The Diary of A Crazy Man” (狂人日記) is usually thought to be the first experimental writing in modern vernacular Chinese.

The yen-wen yi-chih movement in the early twentieth century in Taiwan, introduced by Huang Shi-hui and Kuo Chiu-shen 郭秋生, is usually recognized as the Taiwanese Written Language Reform Movement (台灣話文運動) by Taiwanese literary historians and critics. The idea of yen-wen yi-chih can be found as early as 1920 in Chen Hsin’s 陳炘 article “Literature and its mission” (文學與職務). In the article, however, Chen did not touch the issue of reforming the Taiwanese written language, although he complained that Taiwanese colloquial speech could not be completely transcribed through Chinese characters. He accordingly viewed the yen-wen yi-chih movement—as practiced in modern China—primarily as a movement to popularize the vernacular in order to educate the populace. The issue of yen-wen yi-chih had been argued with enthusiasm among Taiwanese intellectuals, including Huang Ch’ao-ch’in 黃朝琴, Huang Cheng-ts’ung 黃呈聰, and Chang Wo-chun 張我軍, who suggested that Chinese writing be reformed for use in Taiwanese. In contrast, Huang Shi-hui, who gave the name of hsiang-t’u 乡土, proposed the Taiwanese written language reform in order to create Taiwan hsiang-t’u 乡土 literature. For a detailed discussion of this subject, see, for example, Hsu Chun-ya 許俊雅, “Reconsidering the Debates on Taiwan’s Hsing-t’u Literature in the 1920s” [再議三十年代臺灣的鄉土文學論爭], 142-6.
written languages. Yet his proposal of the native tongue for hsiang-t’u literature actually provoked significant debates on this subject and consequently resulted in the so-called Taiwanese written language reform movement. Among many, a comprehensive proposal for the language reform was found in Kuo Ch’iu-sheng’s essay, “A Proposal for the Establishment of Vernacular Taiwanese.” Structured by the rules of yen-wen yi-chih, Kuo’s proposal promoted a thorough written language reform in order to transcribe colloquial Taiwanese accurately. Unlike those who attempted to abolish Chinese characters, Kuo proposed to preserve Chinese ideographs and yet suggested necessary adjustments, which included eliminating Chinese pronunciation and creating new characters for colloquial Taiwanese. Significantly, Kuo proposed to “re-place” Chinese writing—in other words, the reconstruction of the Taiwanese language was not through a total “abrogation” of Chinese characters, but rather a profound “appropriation” of Chinese writing.

The yen-wen yi-chih movement shared a similar interest with the phonocentric ideology and treated writing as a vehicle in the service of speech. Such a view accordingly gave priority to the spoken language and treated writing as a secondary phenomenon. As writing was considered subordinate to speech, the issue of yen-wen yi-

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67 Different opinions appeared on the use of written signs. In addition to the dominant opinion of using Chinese ideographs, Ts’ai P’ei-huo, for example, promoted Roman letters as the written signs to create a totally phonetic writing. See, for example, Liao Yu-wen, “A Brief History of the Taiwanese Language Reform”, 470-82.

68 According to Bill Ashcroft and el., the notion of “re-placing” language, which views the function of language primary as a medium of power, involves two distinct process: the “abrogation” and “appropriation” of the language of the center. See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, chapter 2.

69 Phonetic writing is usually seen as the transcription of speech. Saussurean linguistics, for example, treated writing as secondary and exempted it from the analysis of Langue as a system.
chih became simply a choice between Chinese characters and phonetic alphabets. This ideology could be seen in Kuo’s proposal, in which colloquial Taiwanese had the priority and therefore the ability to create new written signs for speech was essential to the written language reform. In addition, Ts’ai P’ei-huo 蔡培火, a radical language reformer who promoted a totally phonetic writing by employing Roman letters written signs, expressed explicitly the phonocentric ideology. Hence, this ideology turned the debates on the Taiwanese written language reform into a question of whether or not Chinese characters should be abolished.

If we set aside the novel-centered bias of canonical narratives of Taiwan literary history during the Japanese occupation, we find the clearest articulation of a phonocentric ideology in the movement to reform modern Taiwanese poetry. With this respect, Chang Wo-chun’s 張我軍 criticisms of Taiwanese traditional poetry that appeared during the 1920s were particularly noteworthy. Having witnessed the modern Chinese literary revolution, Chang intended to urge the same kind of literary reform in Taiwan by bringing the case of China before the Taiwanese. Seeing the Chinese yen-wen yi-chih primarily as a vernacular popularization movement, Chang brought the issue of yen-wen yi-chih into the writing of literature. His criticism of Taiwan’s traditional literature was focused on poetry, the dominant genre during that time on Taiwan. Based on Hu Shih’s suggestions for literary reform, Chang’s argument introduced new rules for versification. He insisted that such literary devices as allusions, cliché, and rhyme—all of which qualified as vital elements of a classical Chinese poem—be abandoned. Clearly, Chang

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70 On this subject, Chang’s well-cited articles include “A Letter to Taiwanese Youth” [致臺灣青年的一封信], “Breaking down the Ruined Temple in the Thicket of Shriveled Weeds” [請合力拆下這座被枯萎草地中的破舊殿堂], “None But the Only Meaning of chi-po-yin” [絕無僅有的擊缽吟的意義], and “The
simply tried to introduce principles for colloquial poetry. These literary devices seen by Chang as “decorative forms,” or more precisely, as “concepts,” had to be removed from versification for a more “realistic” presentation of sounds and emotions. Chang’s view on versification obviously embodied the notion of *yen-wen yi-chih*, thus demonstrating that the concept of *yen-wen yi-chih* could be extended to prose writing since in essence, *yen-wen yi-chih* was a writing system liberated from rhythm and figurative language. Chang’s observations helped develop the idea that any written words were merely a means of transcription, and so were Chinese characters. Chinese characters themselves were never an issue for Chang, since for him, the written language had been reduced to a process of transcription. Ignoring the differences between the Mandarin and Taiwanese vernaculars, Chang thus formulated an argument that was different from the position put forward by those who would expunge Chinese characters. Yet, like many critics during that time, Chang believed that the revival of poetry and the development of new literature depended exclusively on the development of new rules of versification.

The *yen-wen yi-chih* movement in fact underwent various phases. Initially, *yen-wen yi-chih* was promoted, for the most part, as a movement to popularize the vernacular and to publicize a new writing style by employing colloquial Taiwanese in place of Chinese writing, for the latter had been criticized as a “dead” language and literature. During the early decades of the twentieth century, *yen-wen yi-chih* advocates frequently found themselves captivated by the precise and economic nature of such a writing style and accordingly viewed the *yen-wen yi-chih* movement as an urgent and necessary means to

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bring about cultural enlightenment and, ultimately, modernization. They linked the *yen-wen yi-chih* movement particularly to Chinese and Japanese modernization and believed the implementation of such a new writing style was an urgent priority for Taiwan.⁷¹ To many Taiwanese writers during that time, Mandarin, like Japanese, was actually a borrowed tongue. Since *yen-wen yi-chih* had denied Chinese writing—a borrowed written form—for *hsiang-t’u* literature, the *yen-wen yi-chih* movement in Taiwan became one whose purpose was to reform the Taiwanese written system. The debates on written language reform had focused on the issue of whether or not Chinese characters should be abandoned, which was of course endorsed by the phonocentric ideology of *yen-wen yi-chih*. Although those arguments resulted in no final agreements, *yen-wen yi-chih* surely gave vernacular Taiwanese priority and profoundly undermined the privileged status of Chinese writing. During the 1920s and 1930s *yen-wen yi-chih* became foremost a new ideology of Taiwanese writing, in which the unification of the spoken and written languages was essential. Specifically, Lai Ho 賴和, the first established modern Taiwanese novelist and poet, stated that “the objective of the [Taiwanese] New Literary Movement…was the agreement of tongue and pen” (Hsu 150).

**Defining the Colonial Self**

The Taiwanese *yen-wen yi-chih* movement had not merely linguistic significance, which led to writing reform and a broad literary revolution, but also considerable ethnic, cultural, and political importance. As mentioned earlier, Huang Shi-hui, who introduced

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⁷¹ Many contemporary intellectuals shared such an idea, see, for example, the essays by Chen Jui-ming 陳瑞明, “On popularizing the Vernacular,” [日用文鼓吹論], 3-5 and Huang Cheng-t’ung, “On the New Mission of popularizing the Vernacular” [論書及白話文的新使命], 6-19.
Taiwanese hsiang-t’u literature, has associated yen-wen yi-chih with ethnic and political applications. Driven by “patriotic” sentiments, Huang rejected Chinese and Japanese as the vehicles for hsiang-t’u literature because of political and ethnic concerns. To Huang yen-wen yi-chih was more a spontaneous reaction of racial and political resistance to colonialism and imperialism than merely a linguistic choice. Huang’s argument was, of course, not unique among Taiwanese thinkers during that period. By the time the concept of hsiang-t’u literature was introduced, Lien Wen-ch’ing, for example, had articulated the ethnic, cultural, and political significance of the Taiwanese language. He designated the native language a “social mission”—that is, “to defend the invasions of other languages so that the very race might survive” (Hsu 151). Language was therefore linked to the survival of a race by associating the native tongue with the very spirit of the race. Such a perspective endorsed the passion to promote the native tongue by integrating it into a new writing system during the Taiwanese yen-wen yi-chih movement.72

Historical evidence has clearly shown that yen-wen yi-chih was the product of a specific historical order in which Taiwan was exposed by force to foreign languages and cultures. Therefore, the Taiwanese yen-wen yi-chih movement must be considered within the colonial framework. Wang Jing, in her observation of the evolution of Taiwan hsiang-t’u literature, has addressed this issue well: “[The] use of Taiwanese dialect could not be taken as regional and exclusive, but as nationalistic and resistant only to

72 Many Taiwanese intellectuals shared the passion for promoting the native tongue in written language reform during that time. For example, Lien Heng, an acclaimed historian and critic, said that “the very task prior to the promotion of hsiang-t’u literature was the establishment of hsiang-t’u language”, quoted in Hsu Chun-ya, “Reconsidering the Debates on Taiwan’s Hsing-t’u Literature in the 1920s” [再議三十年代臺灣的鄉土文學論爭], 151.
heterogeneous cultures” (49, emphasis mine). By insisting on the use of the native
tongue, both spoken and written, native authors attempted to resist the official Japanese
language. Given that Japan had been making coercive efforts to assimilate Taiwan into
the Japanese empire—economically, politically, and culturally—the awareness of yen-
wen yi-chih was no doubt derived from the colonized people’s confrontation with the
language and culture of the colonizer. The existence, language, and literature of the
colonized, as Franz Fanon tells us, “are always contingent on the presence of The Other”
(Black Skin, White Masks 211). The literary debates of the 1920s and 1930s on yen-wen
yi-chih illustrated the constant presence of the “Other.” It was also within this
preoccupation with “otherness” that a sense of marginality emerged among Taiwanese
literati and a crisis of identity on the part of the colonized developed. From this
perspective, the desire for yen-wen yi-chih was a desire for identification. The formation
of the yen-wen yi-chih system was an articulation, in Homi K. Bhabha’s terms, “of the
subject in the differentiating order of otherness” (The Location of Culture 45).

In his conceptualization of the origins of modern Japanese literature, Karatani Kojin
柄谷行人 has related genbun itchi to the concept of the modern self, arguing that the
formation of the genbun itchi system makes possible the “discovery of the self” (61).
According to Karatani, the very concept of genbun itchi represses the signification or
figurative language (Chinese characters) that precedes “things” and allows “things” to be
discovered. Such a “semiotic inversion” promises the transparency of language and
makes possible a complete transcription of speech. It is at this point that “interiority” is
constituted and the “inner self” is discovered (61). Seen in this light, the yen-wen yi-chih
writing system was essential to the discovery the modern self, for it granted individuals
the capacity of expressing the “inner self.”

My concern has been to consider the formation of the Taiwanese *yen-wen yi-chih*
writing system in relation to the inscription of the modern self in the colonial context. I
believed that the formation of the *yen-wen yi-chih* system made possible the expression
of the central truths of Taiwanese colonial existence. At the same time, the new
conception of writing, which functioned as a means of resistance to the Other, traversed
“otherness.” The Taiwanese *yen-wen yi-chih* movement, in short, was a reform of
writing. While repressing Chinese writing, the writing system reform also profoundly
undermined the privileged status of writing, which was of course accomplished through
the advocacy of an ideology of phonetic speech. As a result, the *yen-wen yi-chih* writing
system in fact “appropriated” rather than “abandoned” Chinese characters and writing.
Significantly, the formation of the *yen-wen yi-chih* system also involved a process of
establishing new literary canons that belonged to the colonized subjects. The following
paragraphs will discuss a short story by a native Taiwanese writer in terms of the
“discovery of landscape,” which had to be related to the *yen-wen yi-chih* movement and
the establishment of new Taiwanese literary canons.

**Establishing New Literary Canons—The Discovery of Landscape**

The “discovery of landscape”—“A Mysterious Self-Shackled Island”

A short story written in 1923 entitled “A Mysterious Self-Shackled Island” [神秘的自制
島] by a writer who use the pseudonym Ignoramus is considered by Taiwanese literary
historians as one of the successful works in modern Taiwanese literature. In this Chinese-style fable, the I-narrator, known as Ignoramus, tells a fantastic story in which he falls asleep after consuming some wine; then in a dream he flies into the sky, traveling thousands of miles, and finally arrives at a mysterious island. With great enthusiasm, the author gives vivid descriptions of the landscape, whose images are obviously those of the island of Taiwan. What makes the island “mysterious,” however, is not that the writer sees the island in a dream, but that what he sees in the island surprises him. People on the island are wearing shackles on their necks as decoration while celebrating a festival. The shackle, according to legend, is an amulet given by the omnipotent Masters that has many charms: keeping people from hunger, fatigue, and curiosity, and giving people privilege and benefit. While pondering the shackle’s magic power, the narrator is caught by a Master and thrown down from the clouds. The narrator awakes suddenly and finds that it was just a bad dream, yet the power of the dream continues to affect his daily life thereafter.

The story is often treated as a political satire that criticizes Japanese colonialism, as well as the passivity of the Taiwanese who ignore such colonial control and have no desire for emancipation. Yet, the story is able to translate the specific historical moment of modern Taiwan and inspire an allegorical reading for modern Taiwanese literary development under Japanese occupation. When considering this text in its specific historical background, one sees that it contains more than expected: the story in fact disclosed a new “landscape” within which the very concept of a history of Taiwanese

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73 Wu Chih, 無知 “A Mysterious Self-Shackled Island” originally published in T’ai-wan (Taiwan) no. 3 (1923). See also in Shi Shu, ed. A Collection of Taiwanese Short Stories Under Japanese Occupation [日據時代臺灣小說選], 5-9. For a further discussion of the story, see, for example, Yet Shi-t’ao, 葉石濤 A Brief History of Taiwanese Literature [臺灣文學史綱], 32-3.
literature took shape. The newly discovered landscape, as described in the text, was both virtual and actual. The “discovery of landscape” was not merely an “internal” event in that the protagonist discovered his “inner life”; it was also the outside surroundings that were new in reality and had not been enveloped in such a way by previous texts. The “discovery of landscape” was a discovery of Taiwan as a new territory, and such a discovery also introduced to the island a new literature—a new Taiwanese writing that differed from the old.74

Landscape, first of all, is what we see outside. To grasp the essence of the “discovery of landscape” was to understand the island of Taiwan as a new colony created through the enslavement of its indigenous people and their forcible assimilation. For its own survival and the expansion of its military and political power, Japan had made elaborate efforts to integrate the island’s economy and people into the Japanese empire. As Japan’s first colony, Taiwan served as a model for colonial policies later applied by Japan to Korea and other Japanese colonies. During that time, Taiwan was a place where various traditions and values converged in a confusing and controversial way. Japan’s rule cut the islanders off from the traditions of the mainland, the island’s modernization and colonial education allowed the indigenous people to taste modern life and encounter non-Eastern values. On the one hand, Chinese values began to shake in the face of Japanese efforts for assimilation, while on the other hand, Japanese ideas of assimilation clashed with such Western concepts as democracy and self-determination. Seen in this

74 These ideas are derived from my reading of Tarakani Kojin’s *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*. In his essay, the concept of “landscape” was viewed as an “epistemological constellation”; it is discovered when a man who appears to be indifferent to his external surroundings and is able to see his “inner life.” More importantly, Tarakani relates the concept of “the discovery of landscape” to the modern concept of “self,” as in the thoughts of Freud and Nietzsche, and argues that the very concept of a history of Japanese literature takes shape in the midst of the discovery of landscape, which is accomplished through advocating the ideology of *genbun itchi*. See Karatani, ch. 1.
context, the “discovery of landscape” was a discovery of a new territory that had never been explored. Chinese émigrés and the mountain tribes had settled on the island for centuries. Although it had been colonized by the Dutch and the Chinese, the land had never been exploited as much as by the Japanese. The splendid mountains of Taiwan inspired awe, as if they were being encountered for the first time by human eyes; the seemingly endless fields of sugar cane that supplied the empire’s economy called for particular attention. In short, to grasp this territory as a new “landscape” required an attitude which perceived the island as an exploited colony, an approach which distinguished the landscape from all the old ones.

Interestingly enough, the “discovery of landscape” is presented in a dream. The story depicts the man in an intoxicated state in which his surroundings are of no importance to him. In order to discover the landscape, the protagonist must cross a boundary separating dream and waking, illusion and reality, and enter into another world that corresponds in no exact way to reality. What interests me, then, is the process whereby the protagonist looks “inside” rather than “outside” in his search for the landscape. The landscape is no longer the external surroundings, but an “illusion,” a “memory” within the “inner man.” At this point, the “discovery of landscape” is not merely an “external” but an “internal” event. As Karatani argues, this kind of reversal of perception allows “landscape” to emerge and is accompanied by a production of “self” (36). To speak in Freudian terms, the libido which was once directed outward has lost

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75 According to Karatani, Nietzsche claimed that European epistemology itself was an “illusion based on the principles of liner perspective”; and the very notion of liner perspective was “an illusion of itself.” Accordingly, the “self,” the “inner,” “consciousness,” and “cogito” in Cartesian philosophy were all based on an “inversion of subjectivity” (36).
its object as the protagonist has lost his interest in the outside world; once the super ego is redirected inward, both “landscape” and “the inner life” appear (38-39).

*Establishing New Literary Canons*

In the realm of literature, the discovery of landscape was complicated by the rediscovery of Chinese literature. By the time new Taiwanese writing was introduced, Chinese writing had definitely been the orthodox literature in Taiwan. Chinese characters and literature had an influential impact on Taiwan’s writing: it was in Chinese literature that natural scenes came into literature and the “flowers, birds, wind and moon” (花鳥風月) were introduced. In the new Taiwanese literary movement which sought new landscapes, new literature writers called for the collapse of the “old temple” of Chinese literature by renouncing oblique, abstruse “mountain-forest” writings (山林文學). Since that time, new literature was dedicated to a literature of “realism” that sought simple and direct descriptions of the surroundings. In the “realistic” representation of the landscape, the Chinese literary canons were challenged: figurative language was removed and its significations were repressed. In the process of writing that deviated from Chinese writing, new Taiwanese literary canons were constituted. In other words, the very concept of a history of Taiwanese literature began to take shape in the midst of the “discovery of landscape,” which was made possible through the deconstruction of the Chinese literary canons.

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The discovery of landscape in the Taiwanese context corresponded to the invention of a new conception of writing during that time—yen-wen yi-chih. Yen-wen yi-chih brought “writing” into conformity with “speech” or speech into conformity with writing, representing the new conception of writing as equivalent with speech. More significantly, yen-wen yi-chih brought about the capacity for the expression of the landscape within the inner man, insofar as yen-wen yi-chih was a purely “inner” speech. As argued earlier, through advocating an ideology of phonetic speech, the yen-wen yi-chih writing eventually “appropriated” Chinese writing, and meanwhile deconstructed the Chinese literary canons. Rather than an actual abandonment of Chinese writing, the yen-wen yi-chih writing system in fact was a profound “appropriation” of Chinese writing. Similarly, the “discovery of landscape” took shape in Taiwanese writing through crossing the boundaries inherent in language itself. Like many Chinese classical strange-story writers, the narrator produces an ambiguity by the end of the story between the realms of dreaming and waking, illusion and reality. To a certain degree, the boundaries become blurred: the dream comes to life and the story becomes an “allegory” (yu-yen寓言) with close associations with reality. The literal realization of the landscape then becomes a figurative expression, a real-life metaphor. Yet the blurring of the boundaries between literal and figurative languages only results in our renewed understanding of the language employed in the new style of Taiwanese writing.
CHAPTER 5

EXCESSIVE NOSTALGIA AND NATIVIST RESISTANCE:
THE RHETORIC OF HSIANG-T’U 紳土 LITERATURE

Excessive Nostalgia—A Mode of Hsiang-t’u Discourse

Earlier hsiang-t’u discourse in the 1920s and 1930s established new literary canons for Taiwanese writing: By advocating the ideology of yen-wen yi-chih, Taiwanese writing claimed a “national literature” that opposed the heterogeneous cultures of the colonial powers. Taiwanese hsiang-t’u literature was therefore celebrated as an articulate representation of the island. This new ideology of writing that sought the unification of the spoken and written languages in fact led to a Taiwanese literary revolution, in which new Taiwanese writings rediscovered the island as a new territory. Lai Ho, for example, who successfully practiced the notion of yen-wen yi-chih in his creative writings, became one of the earlier acclaimed writers of the era.77 The passion for Taiwanese hsiang-t’u literature, however, was quickly disrupted because of Japan’s increasing coercive assimilation policy toward Taiwan—imperialization. To accelerate the imperialization program, the Japanese colonial administration in Taiwan banned the use of Chinese just before the war in 1937 and implemented the so-called komin bungaku 皇民文學—

77 Various languages—including Taiwanese, Chinese, Japanese—were employed for the writing of Taiwanese hsiang-t’u literature. With regard to the writing system, hsiang-t’u advocates expressed different opinions. As a matter of fact, except for the borrowing of Chinese characters, based on the yen-wen yi-chih ideology, hsiang-t’u advocates also promoted Roman letters, among others, as the writing system. Despite all the variants, yen-wen yi-chih certainly has become a foremost ideology for Taiwan’s hsiang-t’u literature during the literary revolution since the 1920s.
“imperial literature”—on the island. Directed by Japanese writers in Taiwan, the literature articulated on the island a literary representation of the Japanese colonial structure. This dominant literary discourse aligned itself with the mystical rhetoric of Japanese ultra-nationalism and preached the ideology of Pan-Asianism, whose primary purpose was to mobilize all the different races in the Japanese empire for the coming war. Consequently, yen-wen yi-chih suddenly lost momentum since Taiwanese writing relied largely on Chinese writing; similarly, hsiang-t’u literature lost its themes because of the new political orientation of the Japanese ruler. Taiwanese authors were forced to use Japanese—the language of the occupier—in their writings. Language thus became a vehicle of oppression, the voice that enunciated the will of the empire; and literature was no longer an expression of the colonized, but the inscription of the Japanese colonial system.

Such a political and cultural domination—which had pushed Taiwan’s hsiang-t’u discourse into the margins of mainstream ideologies—occurred not only in the Japanese era but also in postwar Taiwan. The Nationalist regime in Taiwan did not end the island’s colonial history; it in fact replicated the nightmare of Japanese colonialism. While banning Japanese and the native tongues, the Nationalist regime instituted a “national language”—often referred to as Mandarin in English—as the official medium of government, business, education, and all public discourse. The varieties of native languages were dismissed as “impure” and consequently were silenced. To construct the myth of a Chinese nation in Taiwan, the Nationalist regime also attempted to create a sense of continuity with China’s “immemorial past” by associating the island with
Chinese cultural and historical traditions. As a result, Taiwan’s colonial past was deliberately erased and **hsiang-t’u** discourse was constantly repressed. Furthermore, the industrialized nations, particularly Japan and the United States, maintained their power on the island through forms of neocolonialism such as military and economic aid. Along with Chinese cultural traditions, Japanese and American cultures dominated the literary discourse in postwar Taiwan.

Not until the **hsiang-t’u** literary movement of the 1960s and 1970s—especially the **hsiang-t’u** literary debates of the late 1970s—did the once silenced voice of the colonized reappear. As many scholars have argued, Taiwan’s postwar period and the Japanese era bore so many similarities that the **hsiang-t’u** theorists of the 1970s drew heavily on the **hsiang-t’u** heritage of the Japanese era for inspiration. **Hsiang-t’u** theorists of this period shared with their precursors many perspectives on **hsiang-t’u** literature: they both viewed **hsiang-t’u** literature not only as the “realist” and “truthful” record of the island’s unique environment, but also as an articulate resistance of the colonized self to the colonizing other. They also inherited colonial legacies of language, people, and the land.

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78 In his *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson has suggested that the “myth of nation” is constructed through a sense of continuity with an “immemorial past” (11).

79 **Hsiang-t’u** literary debates, known as “**Hsiang-t’u** wen-hsueh lun-chan” 輿土文學論戰, largely took the form of essays published in a variety of journals and literary supplements. Many major writers and critics have participated in the debates. Due to increasingly polemical and sometimes bitter attacks, the debate participants were polarized into two antagonistic camps: West-learning “Modernists” (現代派) and **hsiang-t’u** nativists (鄉土派). Many of the crucial essays from these debates are compiled by Wei T’ien-ts’ung, *A Collection of Essays on Hsiang-t’u Literature*, (Taipei: Yuan-liu Publicaitons, 1978). As an earnest advocate of the nativist movement, his selections of essays are weighted in favor of the **hsiang-t’u** perspective and position. See Yeh shih-t’ao, *A Brief History of Taiwanese Literature* [台灣文學史綱], 140-50; also, Yip, 46-73.

80 In addition to **hsiang-t’u** literature of the Japanese era—which is cited as the most direct precursor, other sources of inspiration for the nativist **hsiang-t’u** movement include Chinese literature of the May fourth period—which provides the **hsiang-t’u** theorists with the fervent anti-Western rhetoric, American Southern Renaissance literature, and the Gaelic Revival in Ireland. See Yip, 46, n. 33.
The insistence on local dialect, the dedication to the lower strata of society, and the commitment to the land regained their momentum in the hsiang-t’u literary discourse of the 1970s. Hsiang-t’u theorists of the 1970s, however, advanced more radical approaches to many issues than their precursors because of the multiple and complex colonial conditions on the island during that time. In particular, these new champions of hsiang-t’u literature accentuated further the opposition of the colonized to the colonizers, formulated a dualist structure of Self/Other, and sought to relocate hsiang-t’u literature in the center of mainstream ideologies by constructing a hsiang-t’u literary tradition.

Colonial Legacies and Colonial Nostalgia

The ideology of yen-wen yi-chih that dominated Taiwanese writing in the Japanese era inspired many native authors in their creative writings. Yen-wen yi-chih also engendered another evolution of hsiang-t’u literature since the 1960s. Basing their writings on this writing ideology, hsiang-t’u authors often wove the Taiwanese languages into their Chinese writings in order to make writing conform with speech. This is notably the case with Wang Chen-ho 王禎和, whose works are often so heavily-laced with Taiwanese dialect that copious footnotes are needed to render the dialogue intelligible to non-native readers. Although Wang does not consider himself a hsiang-t’u writer and his works to be hsiang-t’u literature, he dedicates himself to this particular writing style. He further defends such a profusion of local dialect in his stories by claiming that local dialects are a necessary means to record local lives truthfully and accurately.81 Undoubtedly, the

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81 See Nadeau, 229; quoted in Yip, 47, n. 34.
profuse incorporation of Taiwanese dialects has caused a certain degree of difficulty for readers unfamiliar with local tongues, particularly for Mandarin-speaking mainlanders.

Through the use of native dialects, *hsiang-t’u* literature was imbued with collective memories and oral history; as a result, it distanced itself from the mainstream literature. As Russian theorist Mikhail M. Bakhtin has argued, the incorporation of the local tongue can also evoke an entire “socio-ideological complex” that is perceived as a potential threat to dominant culture—and such was the case of Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s. *Hsiang-t’u* literature in fact posited a threat to the dominant writings—official anti-communist literature, nostalgic writings of the Chinese émigrés, and “imported” Taiwanese modernism. Historical evidence has clearly shown that *hsiang-t’u* literature prevailed over other genres during those decades. Wang T’o 王拓, for example, has suggested anti-colonial and anti-imperialist sentiments were the reasons for the popularity of *hsiang-t’u* literature during that time since the native tongue and *hsiang-t’u* literature had long been devalued and suppressed by Chinese rulers (“Realism” 115-16). Wang’s view in fact displayed a binary thinking that dominated *hsiang-t’u* discourse during that time. Based on the dualist structure of Self/Other, the complicated amalgamation of the local dialect with the “standard” language was frequently reduced to a simple opposition of the local to the official, the islanders to the mainlanders, native to foreign, and the colonized to the colonizers. Viewed in this light, the use of language in literature was far more than an aesthetic choice; it in fact embodied certain historical norms and political ideologies. Or to put it more precisely, using the Taiwanese languages may suggest political and cultural “separatism.” In order to avoid both the pitfalls of theoretical dichotomy and the accusation of “separatism,” *hsiang-t’u* theorists of this period
modified their opinions on the issue of language choices in writing literature. Unlike *hsiang-t’u* advocates of the Japanese era, who enthusiastically proposed Taiwanese for writing a “national” literature distinct from Chinese and Japanese literatures, *hsiang-t’u* theorists of the 1970s appreciated the native tongue only because it brought the reality of ordinary Taiwanese lives into literature and freshness to the Chinese language (Wang T’o, “Realism” 117). Hence, for most *hsiang-t’u* theorists of the 1970s, *yen-wen yi-chih* was no longer primarily an ideology of writing that allowed the self and new landscape to be discovered, as earlier theorist has seen it; rather, *yen-wen yi-chih* was often viewed as a literary technique responsible for literary “realism.”

Taiwanese writing in the Japanese era rediscovered Taiwan as a new territory, a colony exploited by Japanese colonialism. *Hsiang-t’u* theorists of the 1970s drew attention to the devastated land where the colonized were suffering, and to the villages that were once exploited by Japanese colonialism were again being ravaged by postwar imperialism and neocolonialism. The colonial legacy of the exploited land, however, was transformed into a stronghold of authentic indigenous culture. *Hsiang-t’u* theorists of the 1970s celebrated the village and further idealized it as a symbol of nativist resistance against colonial forces. The village was therefore contrasted with the city which symbolized the forces of modernization and urbanization forced upon the island by the imperialist powers. Significantly, *hsiang-t’u* theorists perceived the village as a “locus of simpler and harmonious existence in the rural past.” Like the Chinese émigrés who came to the island with the refugee Nationalist regime and produced the bulk of nostalgic

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82 Given that the Nationalist control was still solid, *hsiang-t’u* authors’ cautious expression of their opinions certainly reflected the political and cultural environments during that time.
literature, *hsiang-t’u* authors certainly were creating their own “literature of nostalgia” by drawing on memories of the colonial past (Yip 48).

The *Hsiang-t’u* Tradition

The early period of postwar Taiwan was the time of a great following of “invented traditions”—military, political, economic, educational, ethnic, literary and cultural. This period was the time when millions of mainlanders rushed onto the island along with the refugee Nationalist regime; it was also the time when Japanese and Western economic and cultural traditions infiltrated Taiwan’s society through forms of neocolonialism. These two flows were complexly intertwined and central to the process of inventing traditions on the colonial island of Taiwan. Through administrative organization and educational systems, the Nationalist regime held a Cultural Renaissance Movement in counterpoint to the Cultural Revolution that raged on the mainland in the 1960s. An “authentic” Chinese cultural tradition was invented on the island and saved China’s splendor, which had been lost in the mainland. Undoubtedly, this invented Chinese cultural tradition not only allowed the mainland refugees to claim their Chinese “authenticity,” but it also became an overwhelming cultural discourse on the island. From a broad perspective, escapist literature of the 1950s and 1960s—which included nostalgic literature of exile, historical romance, and swordsmen epics—was a product of the grand invented tradition. On the other hand, modernism, imported from the West and

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83 “Invented tradition,” in Eric Hobsbawm’s language, was “a set of practices, normally governed by overly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual and symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (*The Invention of Tradition* 1). The study of invention of tradition, according to Hobsbawm, was not limited to history; it can be applied in many disciplines of humanistic science such as linguistic, politics, and social anthropology (7). To construct a coherent “Chinese” nation on the island required an “invented tradition,” whereby one constructs a spatial and temporal “continuity” between this island and the mainland.
appropriated by the island’s authors, was another significant invented tradition. This imported tradition was initially manipulated against the domination of the Chinese cultural tradition; however, it eventually betrayed the reality and the people of the island. Finally, the hsiang-t’u tradition, the nativist legacy of the remote past, was brought alive in order to replace the previous ones. All the invented traditions of postwar Taiwan—whether imported or created by the native society in response to imported traditions—distorted the past and yet became in themselves realities which told a good deal about colonial encounters during this period.

The hsiang-t’u tradition invented by hsiang-t’u theorists in the 1970s, for the most part, was framed in opposition to modernism and neocolonialism. In their account of the hsiang-t’u literary tradition, advocates often harkened back to the nativist resistance against Japanese imperialism and yet accentuated the clash between native traditions and Western imperialism that was absent in the earlier Japanese era. While making an association with the two nativist movements in Taiwan’s literary history, Chen Ying-chen 陳映真, however, distinguished their fundamental significance. Chen argued that while the nativist resistance to Japanese imperialism had an important political function, hsiang-t’u literature of the 1970s, in contrast, addressed great economic and cultural concerns—to resist the social, economic, and cultural domination of Japanese and American neocolonialism (“Literature Comes from Society” 65-66). Modernism was therefore confused with neocolonialism, and consequently, the polarization of hsiang-t’u tradition and modernism became the opposition of nativism to colonialism. Too often, Taiwanese modernism was criticized as “fabrication” (仿製品) for their blind imitation of Western literature, and “adulation of the West and exaltation of the foreign” (崇洋媚
外) for their over-eager experimentation with Western techniques and ideas (Chen Ying-chen, “Literature Comes From Society” 63). Wang T’o, one of the major hsiang-t’u theorists, further faulted Taiwan’s modernist writers for molding their artistic works not in accordance with their daily life experiences, but with imported Western notions of individualism, alienation, and sexual obsession (“Realism” 113). For most hsiang-t’u advocates, the greatest fault of the modernists was their alienation from the reality of Taiwanese society and their ignorance of Taiwanese native traditions, or in Yet Shih-t’ao’s terms, the failure to “stage Taiwan in the center” (以臺灣為中心) (“Introduction” 72).

As demonstrated by hsiang-t’u theorists, the call for Taiwan’s nativist tradition became the quest for a “national literature” (民族文學)—a realistic mode of writing that reflected actual modern Taiwanese life.84 Hsiang-t’u literature of the Japanese era, with its obsession with native traditions—languages, local landscape, and lower social classes—as well as its overwhelming anti-imperialist spirit and realistic mode of writing, provided a perfect model for the national literature of Taiwan. Imbued with emphatically anti-colonial nationalism, such a national literature appeared to be a “fighting literature,” declaring a battlefield between nationalism and imperialism, native and foreign cultures, the village and the city, the agrarian mode of production and capitalism—whose oppositional binarism has characterized the rhetoric of hsiang-t’u tradition. This “fighting phase” for the establishment of a national literature, as Franz Fanon points out, was also the final stage of the process of de-colonization (The Wretched of the Earth 222-

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84 See, for example, Wang T’o, “It is ‘Realism,’ not ‘Ruralism’” [是現實主義文學，不是鄉土文學], 117; Chen Ying-chen, “Literature Comes from Society and Reflects Society” [文學來自社會，反映社會], 66.
Fanon further argues that the fundamental tasks for the construction of national culture are especially “the liberation of the national territory” and “a continual struggle against colonialism in its new forms” (*The Wretched of the Earth* 235). Taiwan’s *hsiang-t’u* literature—which vigorously depicted the struggles of ordinary Taiwanese people under colonialist oppression—also played a significant role in the arena of politics in constructing a modern nation-state. For most *hsiang-t’u* advocates, literature had not only aesthetic appeal, but also a social function. Similarly, literary criticism was no longer an academic discipline; rather, as Wang Jin puts it, it was “a vehicle for rectifying biased aesthetics and a potential instigator of new ideologies” (“Perspectives” 58-9). All the passion for *hsiang-t’u* literature soon developed into an obsession with the establishment of a Taiwanese national literature in the next postcolonial era.

*Excessive Nostalgia*

Arguing that native traditions were the victim of colonialism, *hsiang-t’u* literature advocates were easily caught in a dilemma. Based on colonial legacies and colonial nostalgia, their analysis of colonialism was primarily articulated as the opposition of the village to the city, which symbolized the two modes of production existing simultaneously in modern Taiwan—agrarian production and capitalism. The village and city were therefore understood as antipodes. On the one hand, the village stood for a stronghold of native cultural traditions and the source of anti-colonialist resistance; on the other hand, the value system of the city, as the product of Westernization, represented the

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85 Fanon has identified three phases that the native intellectuals will undertake during the process of de-colonization: the period of “unqualified assimilation,” “disturbance,” and at last the “fighting phase,” at which point a “national,” “revolutionary,” and “fighting” literature comes into being.
invasion of imperialism. As Wang Jing notes, such a dichotomy of the urban metropolis versus rural village could be extended to many other dichotomies: agriculture versus industry and commerce; the exploited versus the exploiters; the oppressed versus the oppressors; nationalism versus imperialism; nativism versus Westernization; and indigenous consciousness versus Chinese consciousness. Consequently, hsiang-t’u advocates’ obsessive attachment to the values of agricultural society led them to an intuitive hostility toward the values of city; city men were presented as impious, indifferent and egocentric, and people of the village, in contrast, sincere, innocent and diligent (“perspectives” 48).

This eager reaffirmation of native values, however, held the constant danger of falling into an excessively nostalgic presentation of the village as a symbol of simpler and more harmonious existence in the rural past. Such a return to the rural past is often seen in the narratives of de-colonization. Recognizing the excessively nostalgic mode vis-à-vis a national culture, Franz Fanon argues that the appeal to native cultural tradition is necessary for an emerging national arts and literature; however, he also emphasizes that merely substituting the inherited culture of the oppressed for that of the oppressor is not sufficient for creating a new national culture: “A national culture is not a folklore.” To Fanon, the elements of the past must be brought into a dialectical interaction with the present reality of the people (The Wretched of the Earth 232-33). In the Taiwanese context, Wang T’o’s 1977 essay, “It is ‘realism,’ not ‘ruralism’” [是現實主義文學，不是鄉土文學] was one of the attempts to disentangle the confused polarization of city and

86 See Wang T’o [Li Cho], “The Development of Taiwanese Literature in the Twentieth Century” [二十一世紀臺灣文學發展的方向], 127.

87 See also in Yip, 48, n. 37.
village, and bring clarity to the phenomenon of the colonial nostalgia as well. By claiming that \textit{hsiang-t’u} literature actually included writings of the countryside and the metropolis, Wang was able to distinguish \textit{hsiang-t’u} (native) literature from its affinity \textit{“hsiang-ts’un”} (village) literature—whose literal interpretation suggested only a pastoral, rural, and regional literature. In such a manner, city was recruited as a fellow combatant with village in fighting against the invasion of capitalism and imperialism. Furthermore, recognizing the danger of falling into an excessively nostalgic literature, Wang proposed that the elements of the past should be brought into a dialectical interaction with the present reality of the people. He understood well that merely substituting the native inherited culture for foreign cultures was simply insufficient for constructing a new national culture. Calling for a literary “realism” to record lives of ordinary Taiwanese people in both the past and the present, Wang concluded that \textit{hsiang-t’u} literature had to participate in the development of Taiwan’s history (115-19).  

\textbf{Nativist Resistance—\textit{Hsiang-t’u} Literature as Resistance to Colonialism}

The recurrence of \textit{hsiang-t’u} literature in postwar Taiwan was certainly inspired by the international and domestic politico-economic environments; it was also a literary movement in response to contemporary orthodox literature. From a literary point of view, the early period of postwar Taiwan was rather a half-isolated world. To construct an “authentic” Chinese nation on the island, the Nationalist regime in Taiwan made

\footnote{As Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang 張誦聖 sees it, the term “hsien-shih” (現實) means “contemporary reality,” the “here and now” instead of realism (hsieh-shih, 實寫); and accordingly the \textit{hsiang-t’u} literature, instead of writing about rural regions and country people, is concerned with the “here and now” of Taiwan’s society, which embraces a wide rage of social environment and people from the countryside to the metropolis. See Chang Sung-sheng Yvonne, \textit{Modernism and the Nativist Resistance: Contemporary Chinese Fiction from Taiwan} (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 159.}
concerted efforts to expunge Japanese heritage and the colonial legacies of the island; it attempted to disconnect any associations with the Chinese communists—any of which, in the Nationalists’ eyes, could jeopardize their dictatorial rule. As a result, Taiwan was cut off from both its colonial past and modern China. *Hsiang-t’u* literature that thrived in the Japanese era was stifled under Nationalist rule. In addition, the literature of the May Fourth Period was banned by the Nationalist government. Based on the State’s cultural policy, the literature allowed on the island was limited primarily to Confucian classics and classic Chinese poetry from the dynastic era. It should be pointed out that the refugee mainland writers dominated the literary circles during early period of postwar Taiwan as the native writers were gradually eliminated because of language problems and politics. The refugee writers tended to considered themselves exiled on the island; their writings accordingly were imbued with strong sentiments of nostalgia for the mainland. They were concerned more with personal memories and the imagination of their homeland than with the contemporary socio-political reality of the island; their romances and fantastic stories were filled with people and the surroundings of the mainland. This exilic literature was virtually a “fiction” and remained alien to the vast majority of

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89 Major May Fourth writers include Lu Hsun [Lu Xun] 魯迅, Lao She [Lao She] 老舍, and Pa Chin [Ba Jin] 巴金, whose works were banned by the Nationalist government in Taiwan because they were affiliated with the Chinese Communists. However, a few selected works by certain writers, for example, Hu shih 胡適, Hsu Chih-mo [Xu Zhiro] 徐志摩, and Chu Tsu-ch’ing [Zhu Zhiqing] 楚楚清 were permitted.

90 Most nativist authors were either executed or imprisoned by the Nationalist government after its takeover of the island, especially after the 228 Incident. See Chang Hsi-kuo 張系國, “Realism in Taiwan Fiction: Two Directions” in, *Chinese Fiction in Taiwan: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Jeannette L. Fuurot (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1980), 33. In addition, the governmental censorship tightly controlled literature and all other forms of culture and media in Taiwan for decades. Since Japanese was banned during that time, Japanese-educated Taiwanese authors simply lost literary tools for expression. As Chiu Kei-lan notes, in the early years of the Nationalist rule, all Japanese publications were forced to shut down, and the editorships of major newspaper and magazines were held by mainland writers, who effectively created a mainland-dominated literary “canon” (“Discovering Taiwan” 173).
Taiwanese readers, for the content to them was irrelevant and the landscape unfamiliar. As one hsiang-t’u theorist remarks, the writing of mainland writers was “ossified” and “alienated from reality” (Wang T’o, “Realism, Not Ruralism” 109). It was in such a literary environment that hsiang-t’u advocates called for the retrieval of the hsiang-t’u legacy of the Japanese era. In this light, hsiang-t’u literature was a break from the tired nostalgic fiction of the refugee mainland writers and constantly resisted contemporary orthodox literature and the official cultural policy as well. By provoking the island’s nativist literary tradition of resistance, hsiang-t’u authors sought to bring into literature local landscape and lower social classes to replace the fantastic land and historical figures that dominated contemporary writings; concurrently, they also created their own literature of nostalgia to substitute for that of the mainland colonizers.91

Hsiang-t’u literature of the 1960s and 1970s was often perceived not only as a form of resistance to the official cultural policy but also as a rejection of Western modernist arts and literature. Under the State’s restricted cultural policy, Western modernist arts and literature became an alternative through which Taiwanese intellectuals sought liberation. A small coterie of graduates of National Taiwan University began to publish journals, most notably Hsien-tai wen-hsueh 現代文學 (Modern Literature, 1960-73),92 in which they systematically introduced the trend of Western modernist literature and offered translations of articles by certain critics. The list of Western authors include

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91 As Yip argues, by promoting indigenous cultural tradition, hsiang-t’u writings were in fact producing their own literature of nostalgia to replace the nostalgic stories by the mainland colonizers (48).

92 The magazine was inspired by Hsia Tsi-an 夏濟安, a professor in the Department of Foreign Language and Literature at the National Taiwan University. The editor and authors include Wang Wen-shing 王文興 and Pai Hsien-yung 賀先勇, Ou-yang Tsu 歐陽子, and Chen Jo-hsi 陳若曦, most of whom are students of Professor Hsia and are often known as the Taiwanese “modernist writers.”
Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Katherine Anne Porter, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jean-Paul Sartre, Eugene O’Neill, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, W. B. Yates, St. John Perse, and many others, who, with a few exceptions, represented the cream of Western modernistic literature. The magazine not only introduced Western modernism but also served as a mouthpiece for several aspiring creative writers. Fascinated by the literary achievement of Western modernism, the young, ambitious authors strived to “try, seek, and create new artistic forms and styles,” and engaged in a task of “constructive destruction” vis-à-vis Chinese tradition. The rise of the modernist literary movement in Taiwan in fact had a significant impact on contemporary literature in both form and subject matter. Inspired by Western modernists’ linguistic and stylistic performance, the young imitators endeavored to explore new forms and techniques in their experimental writings. By drawing on such trends as Freudian psychology and existentialism, they also attempted to express new spheres of human experience in depth. Taiwanese modernist writers sometimes played with unconventional language and unusual images, showing the common motives and themes in modern literature: psychological turmoil, existential angst, sexual desire, frustration, and disillusionment. In sum, Western modernist literature and arts gave young Taiwanese artists an alternative for inspiration in response to the strict cultural

93 As Leo Ou-fan Lee notes, James Joyce, among many others, seems to have received special attention from his Chinese admirers; and his *Dubliners* received the first complete Chinese translation of modernist work. See Leo Ou-fan Lee, “Modernism and Romanticism in Taiwan Literature,” 14.

94 Stated in the preface to the inaugural issue by Liu Shao-ming; quoted in Leo Ou-fan Lee, “Modernism,” 14-5.

95 For a thorough discussion of the Taiwanese appropriations of Western modernism—both rhetorical and thematic—see Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, *Modernism and the Nativist Resistance: Contemporary Chinese Fiction from Taiwan*. Chang’s monograph is a splendid study of Taiwan’s literary modernism.
policy; and its delicate literary techniques and modern philosophical thoughts also provided them with an efficient and powerful vehicle to explore the complex interior world of the artist’s self.

The modernist writers’ enthusiastic embrace of Western modernism had led to criticism of their literature, particularly by hsiang-t’u advocates, as “subordinate” to Western culture; their obsession with the private interior world of individual psyches and their eager pursuit of occidental exoticism also brought accusation of “solipsism and total abdication of social and political responsibility.”\(^96\) The criticism was of course derived from the ideology that literature was in service of society, which rather conflicted with the notion of artistic autonomy and many aesthetic principles that were mostly shared by these avant-garde writers. As Chang Sung-sheng has argued, to conceive the modernist literature as nihilistic and alienated from sociopolitical reality was unfair, for such a view failed to acknowledge the quintessential feature of modernist works as humanist concerns with individual experience (Modernism 154). Through stories of individual psychological turmoil and existential angst, modernist literature in fact depicted the state of mind of the new Taiwanese generation in the early postwar era—their anxiety about physical unsettlement and spiritual displacement. From this perspective, the literature was certainly a response to the specific sociopolitical realities of the day—that national safety was insecure and national identity was uncertain. In addition, during this period, writers in Taiwan were largely deprived of the native Taiwanese tradition and cut off from the humanistic tradition of modern Chinese literature. Western modernism rather fulfilled young Taiwanese artists’ desire and need for inspiration and liberation; it also

\(^{96}\) See Chen Ying-chen, “Literature Comes from Society and Reflects Society”; quoted in Yip, 41.
provided them with excellent models to express their national, cultural, and aesthetic debts. As Joseph Lau has repeatedly emphasized, the modernist trends in Taiwan in the 1960s were “indirect, distorted reflections of young artists’ reactions to a stifling sociopolitical atmosphere.”

Nevertheless, the modernists’ willing embrace of Western literature and philosophies was not without blame in the eyes of hsiang-t’u advocates, whose discourse was dominated by anti-colonial nationalism. The modernist focus on the private interior world of individual psyches rather than the public external world of social interaction held less and less appeal to a public whose thirst for nationalistic identity was inspired by Taiwan’s series of international diplomatic setbacks and political frustration during the 1970s. While criticizing the modernists’ elitist tendency and neglect of the masses, hsiang-t’u advocates upheld a new literature, one that portrayed the reality of Taiwan, a realistic mode of writing that depicted the lives of Taiwan’s lower classes and captured the specifically Taiwanese experience of postwar socio-cultural change. Consequently, with its strong social concern and emphatically anti-colonial sentiment, hsiang-t’u literature claimed a style of writing whose canons shifted away from Western modernist literary norms toward a “realistic” mode of narrative.

Hsiang-t’u Literary Debates

Hsiang-t’u Literary Debates, known as “Hsiang-t’u wen-hsueh lun-chan” 鄉土文學論戰, largely took the form of essays published in a variety of journals and literary supplements. Many major writers and critics participated in these debates. Increasingly polemical and

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97 Quoted in Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, 61.
sometimes bitter attacks eventually polarized participants into two antagonistic camps: West-learning “Modernists” (現代派) and hsiang-t’u nativists (鄉土派). Based on a binary mode of thinking, hsiang-t’u theorists of the 1970s tended to consider nativism and modernism along the axis of polar opposition—realistic writing versus avant-garde experiment, village versus city, and furthermore, the agrarian mode of production versus capitalist economy. Wang Jing, in her study of Taiwan’s hsiang-t’u literature, has pointed out the dualism of hsiang-t’u rhetoric: “Hsiang-t’u literature could thus best be defined in the idiom of dichotomy: it is nationalist literature set against colonial literature; plebeian literature against aristocratic literature; the literature of society against that of individualism and escapism; realist literature as opposed to avant-garde literature” (“Perspectives” 62). The nativist resistance to modernism was in fact resistance to modernization, or to put it more precisely, resistance to Westernization.

The argument over the Westernization of modern Chinese literature was of course not unique in the Hsiang-t’u Debates. It actually found a more articulate expression in the so-called “Modern Poetry Debates” (現代詩論戰) of 1972 that immediately preceded the Hsiang-t’u Debates. During the years after the Tiao-yu T’ai and United Nations incidents when patriotism and cultural nationalism were exploding, the poets who openly advocated assimilating literary modernism from Europe and America quickly became targets of criticism. Their embrace of Western thought and ideas was, understandably, blamed for betraying Chinese cultural tradition; and their eager experimentation with

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98 See, for example, Yeh, Brief History 140-50; also, Yip, 46-73.

99 Chen Ying-chen, for example, believes the Modern Poetry Debates of 1972 was the immediate precursor to the Hsiang-t’u Debates of the 1977-78; both, he argues, were essentially anti-imperialist, anti-movement. Chen Ying-chen, “A Tenth Anniversary Retrospective Look at the Hsiang-t’u Literary Debates” in The Poverty of Ideology 99-100.
techniques and ideas that were borrowed from such Western movements as symbolism, surrealism, existentialism, or Freudian psychology was charged as “elitist decadence,” and an “abdication of social responsibility” (Yip 52-53). In short, Taiwan’s Modernist poets were seen as dupes of colonization—cultural and intellectual. Critics like Kuan Chieh-ming 關傑明 therefore raised the issue of the “re-sinicization” (中國化) of modern Chinese poetry, challenging the contemporary trend of adopting a Western orientation in cultural development. By encouraging poets to turn their attention to local affairs and ordinary people instead of embracing Western ideas and techniques, Kuan promoted a “national style” (民族風格) for Taiwanese literature. Clearly, Kuan expressed an anti-imperial sentiment derived from patriotic nationalism that opposed Westernization.

As a matter of fact, the controversy over the relationship between “modernization” and the “Westernization” of Chinese culture has aroused continuous debates throughout modern Chinese history and has remained largely an unsolved question. The so-called “New Culture Movement” (新文化運動) in the May Fourth era (1917-21), among many others, presented the most poignant exemplary model. The New Culture Movement was, from the very beginning, profoundly caught by an ambivalent attitude toward Western industrial civilization. Advocates of this new cultural movement found themselves captivated by the power of Western civilization and accordingly viewed

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100 See Chen Ying-chen, “A Tenth Anniversary Retrospective Look at the Hsiang-t’u Literary Debates,” 99. Kuan’s attack on Western modernism in modern Chinese poetry was published as an October 1972 review of Modern Chinese Poetry, the collection edited by Yip Wai-lim 葉維廉. See Wang Jing, 69, n. 17; also in Yip, 53, n. 46.

Western culture as the key to China’s modernization. Ironically, “the driving force behind this movement was the anti-imperialist anger borne out of China’s embarrassing military and political defeats at the hands of Japan and the Western Powers” (Yip, 49-50). As Confucian tradition was under bitter attack for its responsibility for “backward China,” Western civilization, particularly democracy and science, as well as philosophies, literature, and arts, served as perfect models for China’s integration into the modern world. In literature, for instance, New Culture advocates like Hu Shih 胡適 avidly devoured Western literature and aesthetic theories, while calling for a total rejection of Chinese literary tradition and condemning Chinese literature as a “dead literature written in a dead language.”¹⁰²

The idea of modernization through Westernization, of course, invited criticism. In addition to the resistant forces in traditional Chinese society—which included Confucian bureaucrats, old gentry, and local warlords—some New Cultural advocates also began to reconsider their ardent advocacy of Western culture, especially after World War I left Europe in ruins. Liang Ch’i-ch’ao 梁啟超, for instance, who had seen how a modern civilization had led Europe to disaster, questioned the omnipotence of Western science and technology, and defended traditional Chinese civilization. While criticizing the materialism and moral vacuity of Western industrial civilization, Liang urged the youth to reevaluate and rediscover the Chinese cultural tradition. Liang’s challenge to the adoption of a Western orientation in cultural development intensified the controversy over the clash between Chinese and Western civilization, which in later years continued

to rage in terms of competing slogans such as “national form” (民族形式) and “wholesale Westernization” (全盤西化) (Yip 51).\textsuperscript{103}

Ultimately, the controversy over the “modernization” and “Westernization” of Chinese culture resulted in a passion for nativism. The embrace of foreign ideas as the key to national revitalization eventually provoked the desire to return to native cultural traditions. The parallel sociopolitical situations of 1970s Taiwan and May Forth China allowed Taiwan’s hsiang-t’u theorists to make a comparison of the two cultural movements and to draw on this debate for inspiration. Like China, Taiwan saw a similar struggle for modernization through “Westernization”—industrial, institutional, and cultural. As Chen Ying-chen argues, Taiwan was destined to replay the same debate at a later date, since Taiwan was absent from the New Culture Movement when the debate on modernization and Westernization among Chinese intellectuals was taking place.\textsuperscript{104}

Accordingly, as in the May Fourth era, the unsolved tension between native and Western cultures repeated itself in Taiwan’s hsiang-t’u literary debates of the 1970s.

Obviously, hsiang-t’u discourse was imbued with anti-imperialist sentiments, and the arguments over hsiang-t’u literature must be seen within the larger context of nationalism against imperialism or colonialism. For many hsiang-t’u theorists, such as Wang T’o and Chen Ying-chen, their advocacy of hsiang-t’u literature was intertwined with their condemnation of American and Japanese economic exploitation and cultural colonization. In analyzing the historical background of hsiang-t’u literature, for example,

\textsuperscript{103} As Yip notes, the slogan “wholesale Westernization” was originally used in a positive sense by reformists like Hu Shih, who suggested it as a substitute for the term “wholehearted modernization.” However, in later usage—for instance, as used by Taiwan’s hsiang-t’u advocates—the term has definite negative connotations. See Yip, 51, n. 43.

\textsuperscript{104} See Chen Ying-chen, “Literature Comes Form Society and Reflects Society,” 58; also in Yip, 52.
Wang T’o argued that Taiwan’s sudden awakening to imperial aggression was responsible for cultural and political movements in the 1970s; it in fact stimulated the rise of nativist hsiang-t’u literature:

[The movements] serve an important educational and provocative function vis-à-vis our longtime existence under American and Japanese economic incursions masquerading under the guise of “economic cooperation.” They sound an urgent wake-up call to our dormant national consciousness, which has for so long been slumbering under the spell of American and Japanese exploitation. At last, we are able to see clearly the ugly conspiracy between these two nations to invade our country and our control economy.105

Such bitter attacks on the industrial nations’ imperialism and colonialism were echoed by Chen Ying-ch’en, who rendered a similar argument that under the guise of military and economic aid, the true motives of the industrialized nations, particular the United States and Japan, were to establish a neo-colonial relationship of dependence (“Literature Comes From Society” 55-7). These anti-foreign and anti-colonial sentiments permeated hsiang-t’u discourse on culture and literature, creating a battlefield between native culture and colonial forces: Taiwan was frequently depicted as a society vulnerable to unceasing infiltration by the Americans and the Japanese; and the native land was imagined as a “virginal territory,” an intact female body innocent yet exposed to the imperialist project of “exploration, conquest and settlement.”106 Such emphatically anti-colonial discourse constructed a rhetoric of nationalism, which was accomplished

106 Montrose 8; quoted in Yip, 61.
thorough an appeal to native cultural traditions—including both Taiwan’s *hsiang-t’u* tradition and the humanistic tradition of modern Chinese culture.

*The Controversy over Hsiang-t’u Discourse and Chinese Nationalism*

In his *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson has identified two forms of nationalism: the official and the colonial. Official nationalism, which emerged in nineteenth century Europe, can be also recognized as the form of imperialism practiced in Asian and African colonial territories. Colonial nationalism, which arose in response to official nationalism, was a transformation and appropriation of official nationalism for the anti-imperial purpose of resistance. If the emphatically anti-imperial *hsiang-t’u* discourse qualified as what Anderson terms “colonial nationalism” against imperialism, it was in fact a nationalism in both its “colonial” and “official” forms. It was colonial nationalism because it had appropriated and transformed imperialism for anti-imperialist purposes of resistance; it was also “official” because Sinicization was still the State’s official policy, and the anti-foreign rhetoric against economic and cultural imperialism was foremost a mechanism of Chinese nationalism. *Hsiang-t’u* advocates explicitly aligned the nativist discourse with the rhetoric of Chinese nationalism. The conflict between native traditions and foreign cultures was expressed by the tension between Chinese and Western cultures; and the anti-imperialist spirit was uttered as an inherited struggle in pursuit of Chinese self-determination. The association of the *hsiang-t’u* discourse with the State’s policy and with modern Chinese anti-imperialist heritage underscored this tendency. Wei T’ien-ts’ung尉天聰, an enthusiastic *hsiang-t’u* advocate, for example, in

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107 See also Yip, 48.
his defense of *hsiang-t’u* literature as opposed to “separatist localisms” (分裂的地方主義), affirmed his allegiance to “The Three Principles of the People” (三民主義)—the guiding tenets of the Nationalist regime on Taiwan (“*Hsiang-t’u* Literature and the National Spirit” 163). Similarly, in a pseudonymous essay, Chen Ying-chen unified Taiwan’s nativist tradition with modern Chinese resistance movements under the name of anti-imperialism, arguing that the “Taiwanese consciousness” of which *hsiang-t’u* authors speak was an inseparable part of a broader “Chinese consciousness” (“The Blind Spot of *Hsiang-t’u* Literature” 98).

Such an articulation of Chinese consciousness and Chinese nationalism by *hsiang-t’u* advocates, however, often appeared to be little more than lip service. *Hsiang-t’u* advocates, on the one hand, claimed their allegiance to a unified Chinese consciousness and integrated their discourse into the rhetoric of Chinese nationalism; and on the other hand, they accentuated a distinctive regional consciousness and constructed a nativist tradition that would eventually drift away from the Chinese tradition proper. The controversy over *hsiang-t’u* discourse and Chinese nationalism can be exemplified by Chen Ying-chen, a major *hsiang-t’u* novelist and critic, who acknowledged a Taiwanese regional consciousness while insisting on a united Chinese consciousness. In his criticism of his own fictional works, Chen discussed the reality of contemporary Taiwanese society. He depicted the real world of Taiwan as one shaped by a separation from mainland China—a separation that was not only historical and political but also physical and emotional. Accordingly, the people of Taiwan—either mainland refugees who were trapped in memories and who failed to connect with the present reality of Taiwan or the natives who had long felt abandoned by the Chinese motherland—were
suffering from this separation. What Chen expressed was neither a harmonious existence between the mainland and the island nor an unbroken continuity between the two, but rather an expression of alienation derived from the pathos of separation ("A preliminary Discussion of Chen Ying-chen").

Similarly, while making an assertion that “Taiwanese culture was a branch of a larger Chinese cultural tradition,” Yeh Shih-t’ao articulated an elaborate and forceful argument for the uniqueness of Taiwanese culture. Yeh focused on the island’s geographic isolation, distinctive landscape, tumultuous history, and exposure to heterogeneous cultural traditions. Determined to write a Taiwanese hsiang-t’u literary history distinct from the Chinese one, Yeh highlighted cultural elements other than Chinese—including Polynesian, Melanesian, Malay, European, and Japanese cultural traditions. All the elements, Yeh concluded, had an impact on the formation of the Taiwanese cultural tradition. Hsiang-t’u literature, for him, not only recorded the history of the Taiwanese in their fight against colonialism and imperialism, but it also expressed the “Taiwanese consciousness” (台灣意識). Such a regional consciousness certainly helped develop a Taiwanese cultural identity distinct from that provided by the Chinese tradition ("An Introduction to Taiwanese Hsiang-t’u Literary History").

The controversy over hsiang-t’u discourse and Chinese nationalism showed that Chinese nationalism on the island was nothing more than a “conjuring-trick” (Anderson 111). There seemed to be perpetual conflict between the two: while Chinese nationalism emphasized the ruling and aristocratic classes, hsiang-t’u discourse valued the ruled and the populace. Chinese nationalism preached an invented Chinese tradition to consolidate its colonial rule; whereas Taiwan’s hsiang-t’u tradition opposed “foreign” domination—
economic, institutional, cultural, and political. A distinct Taiwanese identity emerged in the core of Chinese nationalism. Interestingly enough, the debates that appeared in the earlier stage as struggles between Chinese and Western cultures were transformed into an opposition between the Taiwanese hsiang-t’u tradition and the orthodox Chinese tradition, as the debates continued to heat up in the late 1970s. Such an opposition can be best illustrated by the attack from the mainland refugee critics and official authorities. By labeling hsiang-t’u literature “proletarian literature” (普羅文學) or “literature of the workers, peasants and soldiers” (工農兵文學) and accusing those with concerns for the lower classes of encouraging “class struggle” (階級鬥爭), the mainland refugees often linked hsiang-t’u literature with socialist realism advocated by the Communist Chinese enemy. Frequently, they also compared the anti-imperial spirit that occupied the heart of hsiang-t’u discourse to the “neo-Boxer Rebellion mentality” (義和團思想)—a chauvinistic nationalism.108

Perceiving hsiang-t’u discourse as a potential threat to its rule, the Nationalist government held a conference in 1977 called the Symposium of Literary Workers, whose true objective, as many have pointed out, was to censure and suppress the development of Taiwanese hsiang-t’u literature. The government and its apologists painted the hsiang-t’u camp as traitorous, regarding their expression of Taiwan’s regional consciousness and their preferred use of local dialect as instance of separatism, designed to sever all ties

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with China and its traditions (Wang Jing, “Perspectives” 43-45).\textsuperscript{109} Ironically, as Yip notes, “the government’s attempts to censure hsiang-t’u literature amounted to precisely the kind of politically-determined ideology for the arts that they wanted to condemn” (69, n. 94). Consequently, ideological writings rose in response, and literary discourse was brought into the arena of politics. The new paradigm of ideological writings moved in a direction which aimed at the construction of a Taiwanese national cultural identity by preaching “ethnocentrism” that opposed the economic, political, and cultural supremacy of the colonizer. Colonialism, as Frantz Fanon sees it, by its very structure was “separatist and regionalist”; it had been shaken by the rise of nationalism but recovered its balance in the ideological writings which accentuated separatism and localism (\textit{The Wretched of the Earth} 73). The rise of Taiwanese cultural nationalism tore Taiwan’s society apart once again. The hsiang-t’u literary tradition was acclaimed as the cultural repository of a nation best suited to the inscription of Taiwanese subjectivity. Hsiang-t’u writings—a collective articulation of the particular race and the entire nation—became a vital part of the “national” literature of Taiwan.

\textsuperscript{109} As Wang Jing argues, the accusation brought against hsiang-t’u literature of political and cultural separatism was often off the mark, for the split between the mainland and the island was seen as one between the old and the new generation, rather than as one between refugees and natives. The localism reflected in hsiang-t’u literature was less the cause than the result of the ideological evolution of the young generation. Hence, the glorification of “Taiwanese consciousness” was less ideological than phenomenal. Yet, the political and cultural separation between the mainland and island was evident. For the new generation, either second-generation Chinese mainlanders or native Taiwanese, “China” had faded from memory. Their tangible experience was the immediate reality of Taiwan (“Perspectives” 61); see also in Yip, 72-73.
CHAPTER 6
NATIVIST WRITING AT THE CROSSROADS:
TAIWANESE WRITING AND THE POSTCOLONIAL MOMENT

Literature as Politics—Nativist Writing in the 1980s and 1990s

In his essay, “Language as Politics: The Metamorphosis of Nativism in Recent Taiwan Literature,” Lin Yaofu 林耀福 has observed that the anti-imperial hsiang-t’u discourse since the late 1970s in fact has included two controversial consciousnesses—the Chinese and the Taiwanese (9). According to Lin, hsiang-t’u discourse was often misinterpreted by the government as either a Chinese nationalism that might evolve into support for the Communist regime on the mainland, or an expression of separatist sentiments that might ultimately lead to the independence of Taiwan (9). Hence, while making concerted efforts to foster an “authentic” Chinese nationalism that would sustain the Chinese national myth on the island, the Nationalist regime in Taiwan attempted to expunge hsiang-t’u discourse. As a result, media censorship was enforced and many hsiang-t’u advocates were arrested by the Nationalist government.110 Taiwan’s socio-political conditions in the later 1980s, however, provided an environment for a dramatic reversal: the Taiwanese consciousness triumphed over the Chinese one.111 The “obsession with

110 Chen Ying-chen, an eminent hsiang-t’u writer, served several years in prison. As a result of a riot in 1979, Wang T’o, Yang Ch’ing-ch’u 楊青矗 and many other outspoken leaders were arrested. See Wang Jing, 67.

111 As Lin Yaofu notes, Taiwanese consciousness grew rapidly after the founding of the DDP (Democracy Development Party 民進黨), the lifting of marital law, and especially the death of President
China” that had prevailed in the previous decades was transformed into an “obsession with Taiwan,” whose ideology has dominated nativist discourse ever since. Nativist discourse that is centered on the Taiwanese consciousness seeks an autonomous “national” literature, which, for many, must be accomplished through use of the Taiwanese language. The writing of literature, in the eyes of nativist advocates, becomes a political task, one whose ultimate goal is to pursue the cultural and national independence of Taiwan. The Taiwanese language, viewed as an immediate expression of Taiwanese consciousness, serves the political end of gaining autonomy from Chinese cultural and political hegemony (Y. Lin 10). The implications of this political use of literature can be best demonstrated by efforts to rewrite Taiwan’s literary history and the insistence on the native language as the literary medium for creating a “national” literature of Taiwan.

The Reconstruction of Taiwan’s Literary History

Taiwan’s long history of colonization provided a context not only for the development of the colonial apparatus but also for the elaboration of patterns of resistance by the colonized. The Japanese colonial administration in Taiwan was dedicated to the assimilation of the island within the Japanese empire. Komin bungaku, the “imperial

literature” that was promoted particularly during World War II, clearly embodied the principle ideologies of Japanese assimilation policy. Directed by Japanese writers, the literature offered a representation of the Japanese colonial configuration on the island. This dominant literary discourse aligned itself with the mystical rhetoric of Japanese ultra-nationalism and preached the ideology of Pan-Asianism, whose primary purpose was to mobilize the different races in the Japanese empire for the coming war.

Significantly, in the name of *komin bungaku*, literature on the island was recognized as an integral part of the body of modern Japanese literature. The Nationalist regime in Taiwan, by contrast, deployed the rhetoric of Chinese nationhood on the island. To construct the myth of a Chinese nation in Taiwan, the Nationalist regime attempted to create a sense of continuity with China’s “immemorial past” by associating the island with Chinese cultural and historical traditions. Taiwan’s colonial past was deliberately erased and Taiwanese literature was ignored or absorbed into the body of Chinese national literature.

Since the late 1970s, Taiwanese nativists have sought cultural freedom by writing a modern Taiwanese literary history from the perspective of the ruled. Yeh Shih-t’ao 葉石濤, a pioneer Taiwanese literary historian, openly broached the concept of Taiwanese consciousness and defined it as a spirit of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. In his 1977 article, “An Introduction to the History of Taiwan’s Hsiang-t’u Literature,” Yeh wrote:

Taiwan *hsiang-t’u* literature demands one precondition: It must be “Taiwan-centered.”…Taiwan writers…must possess a deep-rooted “Taiwan consciousness.”…This “Taiwan consciousness” must be a consciousness that emerges from matters closely related to the vast Taiwanese people….And since the
history of the transformation of Taiwan society is simply the history of the oppression and ravaging of the Taiwanese people, “Taiwan Consciousness,” namely the shared experience of the Chinese who live in Taiwan, is none other than the experience of being colonized and oppressed. In other words, what is reflected in Taiwan hsiang-t’u literature is necessarily the shared experience of “anti-imperialist, anti-feudalist” struggles, and the hardships of settling the raw land, a record of fighting against nature. (“Introduction to Taiwan’s Hsiang-t’u Literature” 72-73)\(^{113}\)

In this article, Yeh traced the origin of Taiwan’s “anti-colonialist” literary tradition back to Dutch colonization in the seventeenth century. His goal evidently was to provide an account of Taiwan’s nativist literature that had been ignored by the Japanese and Chinese colonizers. Such an effort to redefine Taiwanese literature is even more clearly demonstrated in his more detailed literary history, *An Outline of Taiwan’s Literary History* [台灣文學史綱] (1987). Structured by nativist literary traditions, his new account of Taiwan’s literary history disrupts the official genealogical account—the Chinese literary tradition that begins with *The Book of Odes* (詩經)—and presents Taiwanese literature as no longer part of Chinese literature but as a “subject” that has its independent cultural past.

Significantly, by searching for private and local narratives, Taiwanese literary historians manage to recuperate the history of the oppressed, and ultimately, to displace the “official history”—the monologic and totalizing narrative written by the dominant cultures of the colonizers. While shaping new cultural and historical views, this reconstruction of Taiwanese literary history involves the construction of a cultural and

\(^{113}\) English quotation in Lin Yaofu, 11.
national identity, and further, the formation of a modern nation-state. A Taiwanese postcolonial critic, Chiu Kuei-fen, for example, in her study of postcolonial historiography in Taiwan, has observed the close relationship between the narration of native traditions and nation building: “The current reconstruction of Taiwan’s literary history…as part of a counter-hegemonic project… seeks to undermine the legitimacy of the Chinese national narrative”; this reconstruction also aims to build a “nation” by narrating cultural practices in the past (“Writing Women Writers into Taiwan Literary History” 1-2). Hence, the efforts to construct a nativist literary tradition also seek the national freedom of Taiwan. Such nativist discourse, however, is easily caught by the hierarchy of colonizer/colonized, whose rhetoric inevitably repeats the dichotomy of Self/Other. A similar danger of repeating the canonical framework of colonialist domination occurs when nativists insist on using the native tongue for writing the national literature of Taiwan.

**Native Tongue vis-à-vis National Literature**

As a land composed by immigrants, Taiwan is certainly a multiethnic and multilingual society. Languages among various ethnic and sub-groups—the Southern Min, Mainlanders, Hakka, and aborigines that made up Taiwan’s population—are not mutually intelligible. These language problems were complicated by Taiwan’s long history of colonization, during which the native Taiwanese languages had been oppressed. Having considered their language the necessary means to assimilate Taiwan into their empire, the Japanese colonial administrators in Taiwan enforced Japanese language training and education. When Taiwan was handed over to China after World War II, the language
policy in Taiwan drastically changed because of contemporary political conditions. The Chinese Nationalists not only banned Japanese and the native tongues but also instituted a “national language”—often referred to as Mandarin in English—as the official medium of government, business, education, and all public discourse. Native languages were dismissed as “impure,” and the use of Japanese—the language of the former colonizers of Taiwan—signified “disloyalty” to the Nationalist regime.

Historical evidence has shown that the Taiwanese native languages appeared in literature as a means of resistance to Japanese assimilation of Taiwan and Nationalist re-sinicization. The use of Taiwanese not only assured the survival of the very race, but it also raised questions germane to the production of a “national” literature in which the native tongue was comprehended as an immediate representation of the national spirit. For many nativist authors, Taiwanese may not be the imperative literary medium for recording the ordinary lives of the Taiwanese people; however, such a radical nativist writer as Lin Tsung-yuan 林宗源 sees the native tongue as being of the utmost importance for the creation of an autonomous Taiwanese literature. Having viewed Taiwanese as an indispensable tool for the expression of Taiwanese consciousness, Lin considers only writings in Taiwanese as “Taiwan literature” (台灣文學). For him, an autonomous literature can be achieved only through the use of the Taiwanese language,

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114 Mainly the Southern Min dialect. In the following discussions, the native “Taiwanese” language in most cases indicates this dialect.

115 As Lin Yaofu notes, the poet Lin Tsung-yuan perhaps is the most dedicated of all current practitioners of the literary medium. Lin has published ten volumes of poetry in the Taiwanese language. However, he did not gain much attention until noticed by Cheng Liang-wei 鄭良偉, a professor of linguistics at the University of Hawaii. Cheng is a zealous promoter of Taiwanese and has devoted himself into the development of a writing system that would properly represent the speech of the language. He found Lin’s writings a valuable contribution to the system and helped publish his creative works under the title Selections from the Taiwanese Poetry of Lin Tsung-yuan (1998). See Lin Yaofu, 16.
for it conveys cultural content and worldviews distinct from others. Lin’s view presents the Taiwanese consciousness at its most extreme. The insistence on using Taiwanese therefore has a political goal—to seek political and cultural liberation from Chinese imperialism. To achieve the ultimate goal, as Lin argues, the language of the colonizers has to be replaced by that of the colonized. For Lin, Taiwanese writing is essential to the establishment of an independent “national” literature of Taiwan. Obviously, the use of Taiwanese in literature is not merely a language choice, it definitely represents firm resistance to Chinese cultural and political hegemony.

The Debates on “Taiwan Literature”

Taiwan’s literary discourse has been intertwined with national struggles for identity. Recent debates on the concept of “Taiwan literature” as a national literature have raised such issues as language choices, hegemonic practices, cultural subjectivity, and political legitimacy, and the debates certainly embody such political conflicts. Compared to other national literatures, the concept of “Taiwan literature” is a vague one, not only because of the ambiguity of Taiwan’s political status quo, but also because of the variety of languages involved in modern Taiwanese literature. Taiwan’s particular colonial history has produced Taiwanese, Chinese, and Japanese writings—all of which have composed the body of modern Taiwan literature. The insistence on using Taiwanese in literature, however, raises questions germane to the production of a “national” literature. Taiwanese writing, especially during the colonial period, has functioned as a means of resistance to the writings of the colonizers. As a marginalized literature, the practice of Taiwanese

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writing has further constructed a new paradigm for Taiwanese national identity. Recent efforts to rewrite modern Taiwan’s literary history have attempted to recuperate the history of the marginalized and thus to construct narratives that oppose those rendered by the colonial powers. While creating the nativist versions of cultural and national legends, this reconstruction of literary history has helped develop a cultural identity and format a modern nation-state.

The nativist emphases on the Taiwanese spirit and on a new national identity, however, conflict with the cultural uniformity and political sovereignty that underpin the Nationalist myth of a Chinese nation. Not surprisingly, Yeh’s emphatically “Taiwan-centered” discourse has invited separatist interpretations. Among many such interpretations, Chen Ying-chen’s essay “The Blind Spots of Hsiang-t’u literature” was particularly noteworthy. Viewing anti-colonial resistance as shared experiences of Third World nations, Chen has argued that the Taiwanese resistance against Japanese colonial rule must be seen in the context of the Chinese resistance against imperialism; and accordingly, the so-called Taiwanese consciousness, as an inseparable part of Chinese consciousness, was also an expression of Chinese nationalism. Such a view, of course, denied any claim for a separate status for Taiwanese literature. In fact, since the 1980s, noted scholars from both the “unificationist” and “separatist” camps have participated in critical and heated debates on “Taiwan literature,” in which they have focused on the topics of language choice, memories of history, and cultural subjectivity. On the one hand, nativist authors have eagerly promoted native language and memory retrieval projects as a means toward the de-colonization of the Chinese. On the other hand, many intellectuals, while suspecting the hegemonic power of the native Taiwanese, criticize
such a nativization movement by accusing it of repeating colonialist domination.

Understandably, while taking part in the process of de-colonization, current literary activities in Taiwan are involved in the nativist movements. However, nativist emphases on the native language and national identity—which have centered on the “anti-colonialist” ideology—inevitably have eliminated writings that lack such an ideology. Such efforts to define “Taiwan literature” as a singular and absolute entity only limit its possibilities, and further risk a revival of the hegemonic oppression that has characterized the colonial history of Taiwan. In order to free nativist discourse on “Taiwan literature” from the binary thinking of colonizer/colonized, many Taiwanese postcolonial critics have proposed alternative models for rethinking the identity issue in Taiwan by emphasizing linguistic and cultural diversity. For them, “Taiwan literature” should not be understood as a nationalistic model of cultural authenticity, but as cross-writings of colonial encounters that exemplify transnational and transcultural practices. Clearly, Taiwan’s nativist discourse has become a site of struggles intersected by various powers—including both those of localization and globalization.

As many critics claim, Taiwan’s society since the late 1980s has entered into the postcolonial era as the island has gradually gained political and economic autonomy. Inspired by postcolonial criticism, Taiwanese cultural and literary critics, mostly trained by European and American academics, have found a powerful tool for re-examining the linguistic, political, social, and cultural effects of colonialism on the island. Recognizing that the island’s long colonial history had been buried by the colonizers, Taiwanese critics attempt to rediscover the forgotten past. “Rediscovering Taiwan” thus becomes a
primary issue that dominates the political and cultural discourse in postcolonial studies of Taiwan (K. F. Chiu, “Rediscovering Taiwan” 170). Taiwanese postcolonial critics see the rediscovery of Taiwan as a process of de-colonization, a process that dismantles the colonial powers and forces that have not only dominated the imperial era but also remained in the postcolonial period. The rediscovery of Taiwan thus becomes a task of reconstructing a postcolonial discourse on Taiwan’s history and culture through re-establishing new Taiwanese literary canons.\(^{117}\) Nativist discourse has approached the process of de-colonization by proposing a return to native languages and cultural forms as they existed in pre-colonial society. Caught by the hierarchy of colonized/colonizer, the rhetoric of nativist discourse tends to be trapped by the ideology of nationalism and thus to repeat the canonical framework of imperialist colonialism. Postcolonial studies in Taiwan, on the one hand, accuses such a nativist discourse of “cultural essentialism” or “ethnic fundamentalism,” and on the other hand, attempts to free the narrative of de-colonization from the binary thinking of Self/Other. By drawing on such a postmodernist notion as “decentering,” Taiwanese postcolonial critics argue that the “center” signifies both imperialism and nativist discourse that has posited Taiwan in the center (K. F. Chiu, “Rediscovering Taiwan” 169). In sum, Taiwan’s postcolonial studies has provided an appropriate model for re-evaluating colonial effects on the island, yet it has also reflected theoretical conflicts among Taiwanese nativists, postcolonial, and postmodernist critics. By recounting the debates among Taiwanese intellectual circles in the 1990s—which has

\(^{117}\) Having related literary canon to the orthodox rules and principles, Chiu Kuei-fen, for example, sees the process of “canonization” as the presentation of the operation of social and political powers in literature. For the idea of “canon,” see John Guillory, “Canon,” in Critical Terms for Literature Study, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990): 233-49.
rendered questions about, among other issues, cultural subjectivity, identity formation, and national literature—the following discussion attempts to chart the Taiwanese appropriation of postcolonial theory.

Postcoloniality and the Postcolonial Era of Taiwan

Postcolonial criticism or postcolonialism, emerging as a significant development in literary and cultural theory in the late 1980s, deals with the effects of colonialism on cultures and societies. One can see its origins in such influential texts as Franz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* and Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. The study of the controlling power of representation in colonized society led to the development of what came to be called “colonialist discourse theory” in the works of critics such as Gayatri C. Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha (Ashcroft et al., *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* 186). The term “postcolonial,” however, becomes controversial in the broad context of postcolonial criticism. Scholars such as Benita Parry, Arif Dirlik, Aijaz Ahmad and many others have pointed out the pitfalls of literary postcolonialism. They have criticized the “theoretical” and “transhistorical” approach, as provided by postcolonial critics such as Gayatri C. Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, for overlooking the “material effect” and historical content. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, while attempting to reconcile the two camps, draw attention to local concerns and practices. They write, “no matter how we conceive of ‘the post-colonial’, and whatever the debates around the use of the problematic prefix ‘post’, or the equally problematic hyphen, the grounding of the

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term in European colonialist histories and institutional practices, and the responses (resistance or otherwise) to these practices on the part of all colonized peoples, remain fundamental” (Key Concepts 189). Setting aside the ongoing debates on the problematic concepts of “postcoloniality,” Ashcroft and others help develop the idea that the participation of colonized people in the European colonialist practice should also be brought into the discussion of colonialism/postcolonialism.

All these critical opinions on postcolonialism and postcoloniality have been made more complex in postcolonial studies of Taiwan. As Liao Ping-hui 廖炳惠 has pointed out, the sense of what constitutes Taiwanese postcoloniality may vary among divergent ethnic groups living on the island, because of their different racial heritage and various colonial encounters. For instance, the mainland Chinese who came with the Nationalist government (KMT) have established the orthodox account that designates 1945, the year the Japanese colonial administration retreated, as the beginning of Taiwan’s decolonization and hence of its postcolonialism. Yet for some nativist critics—especially Minnan and Hokka descendants—1945 marks a tragic beginning of yet another 50 years of KMT internal colonization. They tend to refer to 1987, the year martial law was lifted, as a new era of postcoloniality. The aborigines in Taiwan have been victims of different periods of foreign and domestic colonial powers—Dutch, Spanish, southern Chinese, Japanese, and KMT. Their concern for cultural autonomy has almost never been addressed in the mainstream discourse of nationalism or postcolonialism rendered by the dominant Han scholars (“Postcolonial Studies” 199-200).

119 Such Taiwanese scholar as Chen Fang-Ming, however, suggests that only after the native Taiwanese president, Lee Teng-hui, sworn his presidency in 1988 did Taiwan finally enter its new postcolonial phase.
Postcolonial theory has primarily based its conceptual framework on the institutional and cultural effects of European and British colonial empires; Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and American colonialist practices are seldom included in the discussion. Because of Taiwan’s particular colonial history, postcolonial studies in present Taiwan faces another challenge; it certainly becomes a site of discursive struggle against the old canonical texts not only from the West but also from China and Japan. Not surprisingly, as in other former colonies, postcolonial studies of Taiwan are often caught by the opposing power of nativist discourse on the one side and global postmodern forces on the other. Despite the controversy over the concept of postcoloniality, Taiwanese postcolonial critics attempt to find ways to appropriate postcolonial theory for Taiwan’s specific historical and cultural content, and meanwhile, to move beyond the posts.

Essentialism vs. Postcolonialism—The 1992 Debate

The appropriation of postcolonial theory for Taiwan’s cultural and literary studies can be best exemplified by Chiu Kuei-fen’s essay, “Rediscovery Taiwan” [發現臺灣], a paper delivered at the sixteenth annual ROC Comparative Literature conference (1992). Chiu’s essay presented Taiwan as a postcolonial society and aroused a debate during the conference between herself and Liao Chao-yang, the panel commentator. The debate soon developed into extended critical exchanges between the two in Chung-wai Literary Monthly 中外文學, a leading journal in Taiwan’s literary studies. In her essay, Chiu Kuei-fen attempts to define Taiwan as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural

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120 Liao Ping-hui has offered a succinct summary of this debate, see his essay, “Postcolonial studies in Taiwan: issues in critical debates,” Postcolonial Studies 2.2 (1999): 199-221.
society, in which the formation of Taiwanese culture has demonstrated a “cross-culturality” (跨文化性)—one that has been reciprocally influenced by various modes of presentation and cultural practices including the metropolitan and indigenous ones. Therefore, all the different languages and cultures in Taiwan—which include the Chinese, southern Min, Hokka, Japanese, and even English—are finally able to mix with the coming of the postcolonial era (177). Moreover, as Liao Ping-hui argues, postcolonialism to Chiu is also “a historical stage of collective memory retrieval and of nation rebuilding” (201). Viewing the function of language as a medium of knowledge and power in colonial practices, Chiu relates the memory retrieval project to literary and cultural fields—a proposal which inevitably questions the Chinese orthodox texts. She proposes the re-establishment of new Taiwanese literary canons in a process of “replacing language”—first, to “abrogate” the privilege of Chinese and its power over other means of communication, and, secondly, to remold Taiwanese for new usages by “appropriating” Chinese, in order to address social experience more adequately (175). Chiu sees such de-colonization of the language already at work in Wang Chen-he’s 1984 masterpiece, *Rose, Rose, I Love You* [玫瑰玫瑰我愛你]. There she finds many levels of “polyglossic utterance”—appropriation of Mandarin, Pidgin English, hybrid Taiwanese dialects, etc.—which Chiu recognizes as a perfect example of a postcolonial text (181-83).

By drawing upon such poststructuralist notions as “decentering” and “syncretism” in her discussion, Chiu’s postcolonial criticism is imbued with postmodernism. The “center,” as Chiu has repeatedly emphasized, signifies not only the imperial discourse but also any cultural essentialism including a “pure” nativist discourse. To avoid any cultural essentialism, Chiu stresses translinguality and cross-culturality. By proposing a model of
“cultural syncretism,” Chiu further attempts to provide a viable model for interpreting Taiwan’s cultural practice in history and its future development. While sympathetic to the native tongue and collective memory retrieval project as laid out by Chiu, Liao Chao-yang, her opponent, finds controversy in Chiu’s postcolonial criticism. In his “Commentary,” Liao sees the two discursive positions presented in Chiu’s argument—subjectivity reclamation and the stress on hybridity—as being caught up in a perpetual conflict. Liao argues that the stress on hybridity implies the recognition of the self in the other and somehow conflicts with a singular subjectivity that the memory retrieval project wishes to reclaim. With an emphasis on the anti-colonial spirit that characterizes postcolonial discourse, Liao also finds Chiu’s postmodernist stance concerning anti-essentialism misleading. Unlike Chiu, who argues that the language in Rose, Rose, I Love You has already exemplified a “postcolonial” multilinguality, Liao argues that the novel rather reveals a colonized society in which Chinese remains the metropolitan language of power. The mixture of different languages—most of which are being used for the purpose of “low-satire,”—presents the voices of the oppressed. To Liao, the stress on heterogeneity or multiplicity can be a hegemonic discursive strategy to subjugate as well as to suppress the Other. Therefore, Liao argues that talk of multiliguality and hybridity may threaten the survival of Taiwan’s native cultures.

In her rebuttal of Liao’s criticism, Chiu makes another attempt to define “cultural syncretism” mainly by relying on the works of Bkhhtin and Bhabha, particularly the latter concerning such notions as “ambivalence” and “hybridity.” She insists that the “cultural syncretism” of hybridity should be the viable solution for appropriating the metropolitan language of power. Liao, on the contrary, simply has no faith in cultural syncretism. In
his “Errors Plus Confusion,” Liao criticizes the strategy of mimicry by employing a cloning metaphor to suggest that Chiu is creating a monstrous theoretical body that mimics and appropriates many things but actually resembles none of them. For Liao, mimicry may be employed by the colonized as a strategy to achieve “sly civility”; however, it has never achieved any form of “syncretism.” Liao further distinguishes Chinese from British colonialism, indicating that the former always attempts to assimilate the minority or marginality for the goal of unification. The KMT government coupled colonialism with nationalism in its colonial practice, and “national” language enforcement has become one sector of Chinese nationalist ideological apparatus. As exemplified by the author, postcolonial mimicry in Taiwan may be adapted as a strategy to strengthen internal colonial rule. The Taiwanese tongues, although largely mixed with Mandarin Chinese, Liao concludes, will not be able to push forward a postcolonial Taiwan.

The Politics of Identity—The 1995 Debate

Postcolonial studies in present Taiwan is certainly intertwined with the politics of a cultural and national identity formation. Such is the case with the 1995 debate between many scholars in Chung-wai Literary Monthly. Chen Chao-ying 陳昭瑛, a junior Chinese literature instructor at the National Taiwan University, opened the debate. Considering that Taiwanese literature has been largely inspired by Chinese literature, Chen launched her critique of Taiwan’s literary studies from a Chinese perspective and

\[121\] As Liao notes, mimicry as a strategy is deployed by such Taiwanese statesmen as Chu-yu James Soong 宋楚瑜, the provincial governor, to strengthen further internal colonial rule and ironically do so with the approval of a majority of Taiwanese.
therefore recognized Taiwanese literature as part of Chinese literature. Such a perspective immediately provoked criticism by a number of scholars including Chiu Kuei-fen and Chen Fang-Ming 陳芳明, who saw this view as an instance of Han chauvinism. Later at the request of the editor, Liao Chao-yang and Liao Hsien-hao 廖咸浩, two professors teaching at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the National Taiwan University, also joined the debate. By recounting the debate, the following discussion attempts to show how postcolonial and postmodern theories shape the politics of Taiwanese identity formation.122

In his essay “The Pathos of Chinese History and Ethnicity,” Liao Chao-yang draws on Slavoj Zizek and makes a case for a “blank and yet fluid postcolonial identity” for Taiwanese cultural subjectivity.123 Liao’s notion of the subject is a Lacanian one, updated by Zizek and understood as “the original void.” The subject therefore has to be strictly distinguished from the effect of subjectivation, for the former is an empty place, and the latter is a symbolic presentation and is always distorted and displaced. Acknowledging that identity formation is constrained by materials and history, Liao claims that such a “blank” subject, the lack of symbolic structure, preserves all possibilities.124 By employing such a notion of subjectivity, Liao certainly rejects any notion of a fixed identity, and hence that of a Chinese identity. Liao applied the notion of a “blank” subject in his study of Taiwan’s cultural practices concerning subjectivation in colonial

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122 Interestingly enough, all the participants represent different ethnic groups. As Liao Ping-hui notes, though not explicitly, ethnicity in fact plays a vital role throughout the debate. For a detailed discussion, see Liao Ping-hui, “Postcolonial Studies,” 199-211.

123 Quoted in Liao Ping-hui, “Postcolonial Studies,” 206

history. In a recent article, “The Representation of Modernity,” he employs the term “borrowed modernity” to describe the historical effects of Japanese colonialism in Taiwan. By giving an alternative reading to such films as *Dosan* (多桑) and *Banana Paradise* (香蕉天堂), Liao argues that the conflicts between postcolonial scholars and nationalists demonstrate clearly the differential interpretations and appropriations of the colonial past.125

Having singled out Liao Chao-yang as a major target, Liao Hsien-hao highlights the problematic of cultural identity. In his essay “Beyond the National,” Liao Hsien-hao rejects the application of “black yet fluid identity” for interpreting Taiwan’s cultural practices. Instead, he draws on Slavij Zizek’s idea of “constitutive antagonism,” which, according to Liao Hsien-hao, more adequately addresses Taiwan’s political and cultural conflicts among different ethnic groups. In his account of historical conflicts between the mainland Chinese and “native” Taiwanese on the island, one can find Liao’s anxiety about the rise of Taiwanese consciousness. To Liao, the cultural nationalism introduced by Taiwanese nationalists would lead to another exercise in cultural hegemonization. Although not explicitly, ethnicity plays a vital role in the debate. Liao Hsien-hao belongs to an ambiguous ethnic group labeled as “second-generation Chinese mainlanders”—offspring of the Chinese émigrés who came to the island around 1947 with the KMT government. With recourse to multiculturalism and postmodernism, he therefore advocates the idea of a cultural China or Chinese “cultural federalism” (文化聯邦主義) as an ultimate solution to the problem of Taiwanese cultural identity. However, Liao

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125 This article was originally published in English under the title “Borrowed Modernity: History and the Subject in a Borrowed Life,” reprinted in *Postmodernism and China*, ed. Arif Dirlik and Zhang Xudong (Durham: Duke UP, 2000), 275-93.
Ping-hui has pointed out that, to Liao Hsien-hao, postmodernism means a “cultural politics of re-negotiation in an uneven world, rather than a poetic of re-vision”; hence, his proposal of Chinese cultural federalism reveals not only his fear of Taiwanese cultural nationalism but also his unintentional celebration of “national unity at the expense of multiculturalism” (“Postcolonial studies” 205-06).

While the Chinese nationalist view has subordinated Taiwanese literature to Chinese literature, Chen Fang-Ming, a Taiwanese nativist critic, attempts to reconstruct a Taiwanese cultural subjectivity by rewriting Taiwan’s literary history. His essay “One Hundred Years of Taiwanese Literature and Style” characterizes Taiwan’s literary production since the 1920s as a literary tradition of resistance—which includes exilic and anti-imperialist writings. Chen argues that such a resistance literature perfectly embodies the Taiwanese struggles against colonialist oppression from the Japanese occupation through the Chinese Nationalist rule. In another essay, “Colonial History and Taiwan’s Literary Studies,” Chen further connects literary production with historical experience. Recognizing that the Taiwanese suffered a great deal from the loss of language and memory during their long history of colonization, Chen insists that the construction of Taiwanese identity be accomplished by re-evaluating Taiwan’s colonial history.

Nativist, Postcolonial, and Postmodernist Discourse
The application of postcolonial theories to Taiwanese postcolonial studies recalls the importation of Western modernism in the 1960s. Both appropriations of Western theories have led to serious debates over Taiwan’s cultural subjectivity. Taiwanese modernists have advocated the idea of “progress,” which underlies modernism as the
absolute model for Taiwan’s literary and cultural practices by repressing nativist discourse. Taiwanese postcolonial critics, however, are aware that their appropriation of Western theories may in fact introduce another form of colonialist oppression. By rejecting any privileged position of “authenticity,” postcolonial studies in Taiwan, in fact, have viewed “Taiwan” as a textually constructed “imagined community” made possible by various languages and different cultural codes (Liao Hsien-hao, “Deconstructing Taiwan” 31).

On the other hand, these debates over Taiwan’s cultural subjectivity and national identity have certainly reflected the tension between nativist and postcolonial discourse. It is evident that while nativists publicize language and memory retrieval projects, postcolonial critics disapprove of such a nativization movement and further accuse it of cultural essentialism or anti-racist racism. For instance, Chang Sung-sheng has criticized the earlier stage of the nativization discourse: “the pure/impure binary opposition and the concept of ‘origin’ featured prominently, and one frequently encountered the fetished image of the ‘land’ and ‘mother tongue.’”¹²⁶ In a recent essay, Chen Fang-Ming, by contrast, criticized the postmodernist and multicultural perspectives of current Taiwanese society.¹²⁷ Recognizing that the Taiwanese suffered a great deal from the loss of language and memory, Chen considers the language and memory retrieval projects as urgent and essential to Taiwanese identity formation and nation rebuilding. He therefore sees the postmodernist discourse of multiculturalism misleading, for the postmodernist


stance reduces the matter of racial survival to triviality. To Chen, the postmodernist ideas of multilinguility and multiplicity only defer the language and memory retrieval projects and consequently delay native cultural revitalization as well. Chen further criticizes postmodernist critics for their “multiple” stances. In particular, their rejection of any notion of a fixed identity, as they pass judgment outside history and outside any specific location, in Chen’s eyes, is merely a ploy which allows them to disguise themselves as “transnational intellectuals.”

Yet, the use of nativist and postcolonial discourse here may cause some confusion, since, arguably, these terms remain ambiguous to Western scholars; moreover, the appropriation of these foreign ideas for the use of Taiwanese literary critics can become extremely complex. Consequently, Taiwanese critics’ different glossing of such critical terms as “postcolonialism” and “postmodernism” leads them to develop controversial perspectives on postcoloniality. For instance, while sharing with nativists the passion for the memory retrieval projects in identity formation and nation-reconstruction, Chiu Kuei-fen and Chen Feng-Ming have developed conflicting views about the effects of postmodernism on postcolonialism. To Chiu, postmodernity is projected as a “sequential and liner progress” of postcolonialism, where multiplicity and multiculturalism have been achieved. Chen, however, rejects the postmodernist interpretation of Taiwan’s contemporary cultures, although he has proposed the term postcolonialism in describing Taiwan’s current condition (Liao Ping-hui, “Postcolonial studies” 208).

Indeed, it is almost impossible to draw a clear-cut line between nativist and postcolonial discourse in Taiwan’s postcolonial studies. They are contesting and yet supporting each other. In fact, postcolonial criticism has been introduced as a theory not
always opposed to but “supplementing” nativist discourse. Chiu Kuei-fan, a major Taiwanese postcolonial critic, has clearly stated that postcolonial concerns about race, culture, and nation may contribute to the study of Taiwan’s postcolonial condition; postcolonialism, in fact, provides theoretical bases for nativist discourse (“The Dialectic of Postcolonialism in Taiwan”). As a result, shaped by postcolonial criticism, Taiwan’s nativist discourse has undertaken a significant transformation. Such fundamental ideas as national identity and national literature, which have underpinned Taiwan’s nativist discourse, have been discussed in the context of postcolonial conditions.

Postcoloniality or Alternative Modernity

As Aihwa Ong tells us, postcolonialism in Western cultural theories refers primarily to the ways colonialism has shaped contemporary minority-identity and the critique of Western societies. In non-Western countries (except Japan), postcolonial theory has become a model for understanding “contemporary relations of domination, subjugation, and subjectivization” (Flexible Citizenship 32-33). Taiwan’s postcolonial critics have appropriated this model for an analysis of this area’s racial, economic, cultural, and national domination stemming from the colonial era. Being aware of Taiwan’s particular colonial experiences, Liao Ping-hui, for example, suggests “alternative modernity” rather than “postcoloniality” as an appropriate framework to grasp the problematic of Taiwanese identity caused by the clash between Chinese and Japanese cultures in the early-twentieth century. Liao has observed the multiple levels of ambiguous attitudes toward Taiwan on the part of the Chinese and the Japanese imperial powers. First, by the time Taiwan was ceded to Japan, this island had never been seriously considered part of
China. Second, sharing with China significant elements of a common East Asian cultural tradition, Japan always found an affinity with Taiwan when making efforts to assimilate it into the Japanese empire. Third, Taiwan occupied a central place in Japan’s “southward advance” project during the wartime because of its advantageous geographical location. All these factors, according to Liao, have greatly affected relations between Taiwan and its foreign rulers. As a result, Taiwan’s colonial history has demonstrated “the effects of Chinese and Japanese imperial powers in their unstable mixtures and mutual contestations.” Moreover, “instead of suffering from the perpetual collision between the Chinese and Japanese identities,” Liao concludes, Taiwanese, merchants in particular, developed a “fluid albeit ambiguous” identity during the period of the Japanese occupation (“Postcolonial Studies” 209-10).

Similarly, calling for a move beyond an analysis based on colonial nostalgia or colonial legacies, Ong proposes a model of “alternative modernity” for studying the transformation of political, economic, and ideological modes of domination in the Americas, India, Africa, and other third-world countries. The “alternative” in alternative modernity, according to Ong, suggests different kinds of modernity, “constituted by different sets of relations between the development or postdevelopmental state, its population, and global capital,” and “constructed by political and social elites who appropriate ‘Western’ knowledges and re-present them as truth claims about their own countries” (35). By re-evaluating mostly the effects of Japanese and Chinese colonialism on the island, Taiwan’s postcolonial studies has attempted to establish its own political and cultural discourse, which has given primacy to cultural subjectivity and national identity. By appropriating Western knowledge and terms, such a discourse has presented
Taiwan as a “modern” nation-state. Interestingly enough, the contesting debates between nativist and modern/postmodern discourse in Taiwan’s cultural studies have also composed an “alternative modernity,” in which the canonical east/west framework is reproduced in a local construction.

“Taiwan Literature” Reconsidered—A Postcolonial or National Literature

These debates over cultural subjectivity and identity have also involved another thorny issue, which concerns the concept of “Taiwan literature.” As in the foregoing, Chen Fang-Ming has proposed to rewrite Taiwan’s literary history by re-examining its colonial history in order to construct a Taiwanese cultural subjectivity. Too often, Chen equates modern Taiwan’s literature with the tradition of anti-colonialist writings, which he considers as the best representation of Taiwanese struggles under colonialist domination. In fact, the anti-colonialist spirit has occupied the central place in the nativist accounts of Taiwan’s literary history. Yeh Shih-t’ao, for example, has identified anti-colonialist spirit as foremost a phenomenon and ideology in modern Taiwan’s literary production. By recording anti-colonialist writings, nativist literary historians have managed to recuperate the history of the oppressed, and ultimately, to replace the “official history” written by the dominant cultures of the colonizers. By writing a new literary history, they have also attempted to construct a Taiwanese cultural and national identity. One can see the same efforts in Chen Fang-Ming’s rewriting of modern Taiwan’s literary history in the context of postcolonialism.128

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128 Chen Fang-Ming’s most recent work on Taiwan’s literary studies is Postcolonial Taiwan: Essays Taiwanese Literary History and Beyond [後殖民台灣: 文學史論及其周辺] (Taipei: Rye Filed Publicaitons, 2002).
Having focused on the anti-colonialist ideology, the nativist accounts of modern Taiwan's literary history in fact raise questions germane to the production of a “national” literature, in which anti-colonialist writing is seen as the best cultural and historical repository of a nation. While creating the nativist versions of cultural and national legends, the rewriting of Taiwan’s literary history certainly has helped develop a cultural identity and form a modern nation-state. In her 1995 essay, “It Is ‘Post-colonialism,’ Not ‘Postmodernism,’” Chiu Kuei-fen has observed that both Chen Chao-ying and Chen Feng-min from the two opposing camps have demonstrated two different versions of the discursive formation of postcolonial historiography. Chiu argues that their accounts of Taiwan’s literary history and cultural territory are closely connected to the reformation of national identity. In her recent study of postcolonial historiography in Taiwan, Chiu addresses further the close relationship between history narration and identity formation: “The current reconstruction of Taiwan’s literary history…as part of a counter-hegemonic project… seeks to undermine the legitimacy of the Chinese national narrative.” To Chiu, this reconstruction also aims to build a “nation” by narrating cultural practices of the past. By drawing on Stuart Hall’s remarks on identity formation and Benedict Anderson’s idea of “imagined communities,” Chiu believes that the “narrativity” of rewriting Taiwan’s literary history is finally able to format an identity, and further, to “forge a sense of community in the people as the subjects of the nation.” To Chiu, the writing of Taiwan’s literary history has become a site of discursive struggles intersected by the discourse on “national identity, national narrative, and the (re)creation of national tradition” (“Writing Women Writers into Taiwan Literary History” 1-2).
Inspired by postcolonialism, Chiu also attempts to define Taiwan literature as a “post-colonial” literature. The term “post-colonial,” of course, has caused a certain degree of confusion. By drawing on the works of Bill Ashcroft et al, Chiu gives a description of “post-colonial” and “post-colonial literature”: the term “post-colonial” includes “all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day,” and “post-colonial literature” indicates writings which “emerged in their present time out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by their emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial center” (emphasis mine). Accordingly, Taiwan’s anti-colonialist writings since the Japanese occupation, which have articulated the Taiwanese struggles against colonialist oppression, can be recognized as “post-colonial” literature. However, such a definition of “post-colonial” literature inevitably eliminates writings including those that have endorsed the imperial power and those that have lacked the anti-colonialist ideology. It is also at this point that Chiu questions the definition of Taiwan literature as a “post-colonial” one. Taiwan’s particular colonial history has produced Taiwanese, Chinese, and Japanese writings—all of which have composed the body of modern Taiwan literature. Specifically, the so-called *komin bungaku*, mainly written in Japanese and produced during the last decade of the Japanese occupation, has operated as an administrative apparatus for the imperialization policy. Employing Japanese—the “national” language during that time—as their literary medium, native Taiwanese writers celebrated the policy of imperialization at the expense of the anti-colonialist spirit. In addition, the bulk of

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“escapist literature” created by the Chinese writers who came with the KMT government—including nostalgic literature of exile, historical romance, and swordsmen epics—has little to do with Taiwan’s literary tradition of resistance. Should both komin bungaku and escapist literature be included in Taiwan literature? Should the spirit of anti-colonialist resistance that characterizes “post-colonial” literature be the only criterion for defining the “national” literature of Taiwan?

By emphasizing the anti-colonial spirit, many Taiwanese nativist literary critics have used the term “postcolonial literature” to describe Taiwan literature. Such a perspective has reduced the whole body of modern Taiwan’s literary production into anti-imperialist writings and inevitably excludes a large corpus of writings that lack the anti-colonialist spirit. Such efforts to define Taiwan literature as a singular and absolute entity only limit its possibilities and risk hegemonic oppression, which has characterized the colonial history of Taiwan. From a broad historical perspective, Taiwan literature should not be limited to “post-colonial literature,” although Taiwan’s literary activities have been intricately associated with the experience of colonization and intertwined with national struggles for identity. In order to free nativist discourse on Taiwan literature from the binary thinking of colonizer/colonized, many Taiwanese postcolonial critics have proposed alternative models for rethinking the identity issue in Taiwan by emphasizing linguistic and cultural diversity. For them, Taiwan literature should not be understood as a nationalistic model of cultural authenticity, but as cross-writings of colonial encounters that exemplify transnational and transcultural practices.
PART III:

THE NATIVIST LITERATURE
Chapter 7

The Dislocation of Empire: Identity, Exile, and Writing

In Wang Chang-Hsiung’s 王昶雄 A Raging Current 奔流

Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895 by the Chinese Ch’ing Empire at the end of the Sino-Japanese war. For fifty years, Japan’s rule of the island provided a context not only for the development of a colonial apparatus but also for the elaboration of patterns of resistance by the colonized. Guided by its assimilation policy, Japan attempted to integrate the island into the Japanese empire through zealous educational and cultural campaigns. The process of cultural assimilation and subordination, however, produced sentiments of displacement on the part of the colonized subjects. Cultural and subjective ambiguity, which best describes the colonial encounter, tends to inscribe colonial literary discourse within a context of alienation and dislocation.

By examining komin bungaku the “imperial literature” produced by native Taiwanese authors, this chapter attempts to show how the cultural and subjective ambiguity inherent in such a counter-discourse indicates displacement in the elaboration of a colonial identity. Among many representative works, I have chosen Wang Ch’ang-hsiung’s A Raging Torrent as a primary example of displacement. The I-narrator of this novella, caught between the colonizer and the colonized, is emblematic of the paradoxical ambiguities of colonialism. Driven by a confusion of identity, the narrator reveals a self-

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130 Part of this chapter was presented at the 41st Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS). Armstrong Atlantic State University, Jekyll Island, GA. 17-19 January 2003.
which negotiates the cultural and subjective codes of the colonial encounter. The constant negotiations between the colonized self and the colonizing other strongly suggest the dislocation of the colonizer’s discourse and produce a text that expresses an identity paradigm of ambiguities and multiplicity for imperial subjects.

_The Imperialist Discourse and the Nativist Imagination—Komin bungaku_

Being aware of the deep-rooted Chinese heritage on the island, the Japanese colonial administration in Taiwan managed to transform this “segment of traditional China into an integral part of modern Japan” (Tsurumi 11). Through various educational and cultural campaigns, the Japanese administration in Taiwan attempted to expunge the Chinese heritage from the Taiwanese and in order to inculcate in them a Japanese cultural tradition. The process of cultural assimilation and subordination, however, produced sentiments of displacement, especially on the part of the colonized subjects. George Kerr has observed that the rising generation of Taiwanese under Japanese domination crossed “an ideological frontier as real and as important as the physical frontiers crossed by [their] immigrant ancestors” from China two centuries ago (Kerr, Formosa 180). However, there was always a doubt that the Taiwanese subjects were able and willing to recognize themselves as Japanese by crossing the racial and cultural boundaries between them. In fact, as many scholars have argued, the Japanese-educated new Taiwanese generation displayed a spectrum of orientations, one pole of which included those who were committed to the inherited Chinese cultural and intellectual order and the other those who were fascinated with modern Japanese civilization (Lai et al, _A Tragic Beginning_ 18). In
sum, Taiwanese subjects, caught in a disturbing space of in-betweenness, oscillated between assimilation to and alienation from the Japanese empire.

Cultural and subjective ambiguity, which best describes the colonial encounter, tends to inscribe colonial literary discourse within a context of alienation and dislocation. *Komin bungaku*, or “imperial literature,” expresses such sentiments of displacement, especially on the part of the colonized. Functioning as a colonial apparatus for the “imperialization” movement (*kominka*), *komin bungaku* served the Japanese empire. Directed by Japanese writers, the ideology of the “imperial literature” offered a representation of the Japanese colonial configuration. This dominant literary discourse aligned itself with the mystical rhetoric of Japanese ultra-nationalism and preached the ideology of Pan-Asianism, whose primary purpose was to mobilize all the different races in the Japanese empire for the coming war.

In the name of *komin bungaku*, literature on the island was recognized as an integral part of the body of modern Japanese literature. On the other hand, the nativist imagination entails the drawing of cultural and psychological boundaries between the colonizers and the colonized. As the native Taiwanese authors sought strategies to mediate the conflicts of this colonial elaboration, the profound sentiments of displacement compelled them to inscribe subjectivity, which was accordingly accomplished through the use of the language of the colonizers. The problems implicit in their writings raised questions germane to the production of colonial literature, in which the interrogation of identity was one of the primary concerns. In the inscription of discursive identity, native authors adopted narrative forms that tended to undermine and subvert the norms imposed by the colonizers. The narrative forms often presented a
movement from a position of imaginary union between self and other to one of self-alienation and self-fragmentation. The process of writing also demonstrates the colonial heritage of division and plurality. Such a particular configuration, caught in the tension of demand and desire, provides a narrative structure in which the colonized subjects construct a paradigm of a colonial identity.

The writing of colonial subjectivity reinforces issues of alienation and duality. Exile, alien by nature, provides a perfect narrative model for the expression of the displacement of colonized subjects. In fact, many representative works of Taiwan’s literature under the Japanese occupation inscribe colonial subjectivity as a counter-discourse of colonialism through the narrative of exile. What becomes more intriguing is that in the case of marginalized literature, the narrative of exile leads to the elaboration of discursive codes of resistance as a means toward the construction of a culturally specific identity paradigm. An examination of komin bungaku produced by the Taiwanese authors may encounter these issues. Among many representative works, I chose Wang Ch’ang-hsiung’s novella *A Raging Torrent* (1942) as a primary example of alienation and displacement. By examining the narrative of exile in this acclaimed “imperial novel,” this essay attempts to show how the cultural and subjective duality inherent in the

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131 In this regard, Wu Chuo-liu’s acclaimed novel, *Asia’s Orphan* (1947), which depicts the schizophrenic disjunction between self and other of a native Taiwanese intellectual in exile, is definitely the best exemplar. The title has since become the defining symbol of the traumatized Taiwanese identity. As the Taiwanese literary historian Chen Feng-ming has pointed out, the theme of exile, along with the theme of resistance, compose two major “styles” of modern Taiwan literature. Chen Feng-Ming, “Taiwanese literary style in recent hundred years.” *Chung-wai Literary Monthly* 23.9 (1995): 44-55.

inscription of a counter-discourse indicates displacement in the elaboration of colonial identity.

The I-narrator of this novella, caught in the conflicts between the colonizers and colonized, is emblematic of the paradoxical ambiguities of the colonial paradigm. Born in Taiwan, the native youngster has studied abroad in Japan since his early childhood in order to obtain a modern profession. Having been molded by Japanese colonial education, the narrator accepts the colonial discourse delivered by the colonizers. Ironically enough, troubled by the conflicts of Japan’s colonial discourse in his homeland, the narrator lives in exile in his homeland upon completion of his education in Japan. Driven by a confusion of identity, the narrator then reveals a self which negotiates the cultural and subjective codes of the colonial encounter. The constant negotiations between the colonized self and the colonizing other strongly suggest the dislocation of the colonizer’s discourse, and the affirmation of the self demonstrates the desire to “subvert” the colonial discourse. More significantly, the process of writing illustrates a paradox of the colonial heritage—the legacy of division and plurality. As a result, the inscription of the self provides a text that expresses a specific identity paradigm of ambiguity and multiplicity.

Identification and the Place of the Other

One prominent feature of colonial writing by the colonized is the inscription of identity since the erasure of identity is a primary product of subjection to the colonizer’s discourse. Writing the subject into being through fictive discourse, the colonized show their cultural effort to rewrite historical experience in their own terms. The continuing
dialectic between the colonized self and the colonizing other is of course derived from the exercise of the colonial discourse as an apparatus of power. The objective of colonial discourse, as Homi K. Bhabha puts it, “is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (The Location of Culture 70). As a result, the process of cultural and subjective subornation, which appropriates the colonial identity, produces in the colonized subjects “a paradoxically mimetic sense of alterity” (Murdoch 73-74). In other words, the colonized subjects not only see themselves through the eyes of the colonizing other but also draw on aspects of the colonizers in order to elaborate their own sense of subjectivity. Bhabha has suggested the reading of this particular social reality concerning the colonized subjects in terms of “fetishism” in a colonial framework. According to Bhabha, the colonizer as the fetish object has dual functions for the existence of the colonized: “reactivation of the material of original fantasy” and “normalization of the difference and disturbance” (The Location of Culture 74).

However, there exists a constant tension between the desire for self-origination and the objective Other, which reveals itself in the inscription of colonial subjectivity.133 David Lloyd has addressed this issue inherent in the construction of colonial identity, particularly in relation to the writing of autobiography. Viewing autobiography as the particular representation of a general paradigm for the constitution of subjectivity, he writes: “A perpetual tension subsists between the desire for self-origination, to produce oneself as if without a father, and the awkward knowledge of indebtedness to what

133 For the problematic use of “other,” see, for example, Ascroft et al, The Key Concept of Post-Colonialism.
precedes and influences the subject.” Inevitably, the constitution of self is motivated and determined by the cultural and psychological precursor, the figure that Lloyd terms the “metafather” (Lloyd 163). In sum, to grasp the colonial identity paradigm is to recognize the presence of the cultural and psychological Other, a figure in whom the colonized subjects define themselves and construct their own paradigm of identity.

As a representative work of *komin bungaku*, Wang Ch’ang-hsiung’s *A Raging Current* presents a culturally specific paradigm of identity on the part of the colonized subjects. This novella is emblematic of the textual confluence of issues of resistance, alienation, identity, and language as specific themes in *komin* literature. Published during World War II when the “imperializaition” (*kominka*) movement was intensifying, this novella, instead of proposing a reconciliation of incongruities, questions the imaginary union between the colonized self and the colonizing other. Through the language of the colonizers, the author depicts the schizophrenic disjunction between self and other, exploring the problematic of a cultural identity on the part of the colonized subjects. Figuring the protagonist as a distanced observer, this novella not only examines the process of cultural assimilation, but also translates the agony caused by the colonized’s subjugation to the colonizer’s discourse into an intricate aesthetic of individual and national paranoia. Adopting self-alienation and self-fragmentation as its primary discursive strategy, the narrative, in fact, embodies an aesthetic of displacement. Such a narrative strategy aims to evoke the anguish and ambiguity of the colonized subject as both self and other and to intensify the dislocation of the colonizer’s discourse. The narrative eventually becomes the means by which the author incribes the discursive

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codes of self and other. Crucial to the process of inscription is the dialectical relationship between the desire for recognition and writing, in which questions of identity are interrogated and the image of identity is produced.

To consider the process of identification undergone by the colonized subjects, Bhabha writes, “is to be called into being in relation to an otherness, its look or locus.” In other words, the desire for recognition always emerges in “the place of the Other [where] colonial desire is articulated” (The Location of Culture 44). As the story begins, the narrative is immediately caught in the desire for seeing/being seen, assuming the look of the colonizing other. This novella, in particular, depicts these exchanges of looks among the I-narrator, the “Japanified” native elite (Ito Shunsai 伊東春生), and the young native student (Lin Bonien 林柏年). The I-narrator, speaking from the position of a native, casts his sensitive eyes on the “Japanified” native elite, Ito. At a glance, the narrator recognizes his “sparkling eyes and glowing face,” which sharply distinguishes him from other native islanders (326). The narrator expresses his secret admiration for what he sees. The appearance of Ito reminds the narrator of Japan, soothing his yearning for the mother land and rescuing him from the agony of alienation. The proud display of Japanification, however, implicitly contrasts with the narrator’s unease with his colonized condition. While being attracted by Ito’s Japanese speech, manner, and the admirable ancient samurai spirit, the I-narrator reveals an inscrutable sentiment:

I was magnetized…Picture this: an islander who married Japanese, who had become completely Japanese in speech and manner, standing at the lectern in middle school, proudly teaching the national language (Japanese)…There he was, sowing the ancient samurai spirit. As I watched, an inexplicable emotion, not exactly joyous
but quite intangible, suddenly overcame my entire being, my soul…All the loneliness and ennui I had felt coming here from the north [Japan] was dispelled.\textsuperscript{135}

This scene of the gaze demonstrates the colonial scene, which refers to the dynamic of subjectification and power. By observing the figure of the Other represented by Ito, the narrator imagines and invents his own image of identity. The very place of identification is caught in the tension of demand and desire, defined by Lacan as that which is never satisfied. In the same sense, Ito presents the “Imaginary” within the Lacanian schema, in which the image as identity is always threatened by “lack” (Bhabha, \textit{The Location of Culture} 77).\textsuperscript{136} In light of such a reading, the recurrent appearance of Ito’s image not only indicates the constant presence of the Other but also reflects the narrator’s deep anxiety about identification.

The place of the Other, according to Bhabha, is also “the phantasmic space of possession” that “permits the dream of the inversion of roles” (Bhabha, \textit{The Location of Culture} 44.) From this perspective, the image of the Japanified Ito presents the admirable Other that allows the narrator to imagine and invent his own image of identity, and brings forth the primary yearnings for female love, true beauty, and human worth. In this novella, these desires come together in a Japanese woman. Ito’s Japanese wife awakens the narrator’s nostalgia for life in Tokyo and the unforgettable Japanese woman: “she


\textsuperscript{136} A Lacanian approach to the desire for recognition helps illuminate the inscription of subjectivity in a colonial context. In the Lacanian framework, as Mourdoch writes, “the constitution of the subject places him or her as secondary in relation to the signifier, which then imposes its laws on the subject, turning it, in effect, into a signifier which will then constitute meaning only in relation to another signifier. In the colonial context, then, the subject may be said to await approval and approbation from the colonizer, while, at the same time, he/she becomes an object of this Other’s discourse through being defined by him, being spoken for, as well as by being forced to express his/her quest for identity in the colonized language” (74).
who enlightens my soul infinitely…is my teacher, friend, love object.” She is depicted as an ideal woman whose dedication to the art of flower arrangement has inspired the narrator’s interest in Japanese arts, including chyado 茶道, kimono 和服, no 能, and kabuki 歌舞伎—all of these severing as metonyms for Japanese feminine culture. Just as Ito represents the masculine aspect of Japanese colonization, the Japanese woman epitomizes ideal femininity. Such neatly textural symmetry indicates that cultural assimilation is a primary strategy in Japan’s colonial configuration. It is in the same sense that Angelina C. Yee argues that the title Benliu (a raging torrent) suggests “a self-reflexive metaphor for the narrator’s surging passion for Japanese culture’s sublimating beauty” (“Constructing a Native Consciousness: Taiwan Literature in the 20th Century,” 89-90). However, such adulation is often accomplished by the narrator’s sense of shame for his own “immaturity” as an individual, as he recognizes the almost insurmountable barrier between the colonizers and the colonized.

As the colonizers desire to see through the colonized, the colonized subjects want to be seen. Beneath the desire of being seen lies the colonized subject’s demand to be recognized. In this novella, the desire of being seen is materialized by the young native student, Bonien. The confrontation between the Japanified Ito and the native Bonien draws racial and cultural boundaries between the colonizers and the colonized. Not surprisingly, in many komin literary works, Taiwanese authors depicted the native figure as one associated with sheer youthful energy, childlike innocence, filial piety, and love of the homeland, instead of as a degenerate individual. Furthermore, the appearance of the native Bonien also prepares the narrator for a shift in the locus of his alter ego from
Japanified Ito to the native Bonien. As many critics have argued, the real interest of the story lies in “the vicissitudes of the narrator’s self-discovery” (Yee 89).

More importantly, from this point, the silent observer begins to watch Ito through the reproachful eyes of Bonien whereby the narrator undergoes a process of identification. The young native student resents Ito’s disdain for his own biological mother while living with his Japanese mother-in-law. The narrator then witnesses the violent confrontation between Ito and his mother, which leads the narrator to confusion. The deliberate juxtaposition of the colonial display versus the native mother not only exhibits the conflicts of the individual, blood, race, culture, and nation, but also foretells a crisis of identity. No longer accepting Ito as the ideal model of Japanification, the narrator therefore confronts a dilemma: to maintain a distinct Taiwanese identity while making efforts toward Japanese assimilation, which would efface native roots. The narrator is thus trapped in a liminal place of uncertainty and ambiguity.

*The Ambivalence and Double Articulation*

The uncertainty of identity that the narrator confronts is exactly the dilemma of the colonized subject. Bhabha has made it clear that “the place of identification is also a place of splitting”—“It is not the colonialist Self or the colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in-between” (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 44-45). Molded by Japanese educational and cultural programs, Ito aims to become an “imperial citizen,” a “reformed, recognizable Other” (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 86). By modifying personal behavior, language, accent, and manner of speech, and further, by mixing his blood through interracial marriage, Ito attempts to erase any signs that would indicate his
colonized existence. However, the recurrent appearance of his native mother reminds him of his racial and cultural origins. Ito is ultimately different from the Japanese, his colonizing masters. The Japanified figure becomes, as Bhabha puts it, “a subject of a different that is almost the same, but not quite” (The Location of Culture 86, emphasis original). Moreover, Bhabha argues that “[b]lack skin, white masks’ is not a neat division; it is a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once.” Ito’s efforts at imitation aim to occupy the master’s place; yet, his efforts exaggerate the difference. Ito’s image always articulates dual figures—the colonizer and the colonized—and thus is unable to reside in either place. At this point, no fixed identity seems possible.

Most characters in this novella—including Ito, the narrator, and Bonien—are trapped in just such an ambiguous existence. Bonien, in particular, confronts the dilemma between Japanese assimilation and nativist resistance. Although he despises Ito’s attitude toward Japanese assimilation, Bonien compromises native allegiance and Japanese assimilation in a curious way. He vows to master samurai sword-fighting in Japan for the ultimate purpose of serving his native place. This particular resolution is revealed in the letter he writes from Japan to the narrator:

Yes, henceforth I must be a Taiwanese who stands tall. We needn’t despise ourselves because we were born in the south [Taiwan]. To assimilate into life here [in Japan] does not mean we must despise the stretch of our native soil. Even if my mother were an unsightly aborigine, I would still remember her with infinite love; if my mother
were to show her ill-favored face here, I would not feel any embarrassment or shame. I would let her embrace me, like a child, naturally.\textsuperscript{137}

Bonien transforms filial piety into love of the homeland. Yee states that his “nativism is grafted on to a curious mixture of Japanese masculinity, sheer youthful energy and a return to childlike innocence.”\textsuperscript{138} Declaring an identity that differs from that of the Japanese masters, Bonien, however, has never escaped the fate of being a colonized subject—the nightmare of assimilation. Ironically enough, unbeknownst to Bonien, his study in Japan is financially sponsored by Ito, whom he had condemned.

As many critics have pointed out, this work does not reconcile Japanese assimilation and nativist resistance. Rather, it contemplates the nature of assimilation by recording symptoms of subjugation to the colonialist force. Puzzled by the confusion of identity, the narrator ponders the fate of Taiwanese subjects. Although “patchy, enigmatic,” Bonien’s solution certainly awakens the narrator to the tradition and beauty of his homeland. The following scene toward the end unfolds the narrator’s complex psychology:

Sitting on the meadow…I could see the distant Taiwan Strait spread desolately before me. The blue sea merged into the blue sky, as if the tiniest breath of air would take on its color. The deserted harbor, once eulogized as the cultural origin and trading port of Taiwan from time immemorial, now slept quietly in the cradle of spring-hued Mother Nature. \textit{An indescribable feeling crept upon me, as if I was tied to some great, age-old, unintelligible being}. Coming into contact with

\textsuperscript{137} Wang Ch’ang-hsiung, \textit{Raging}, 360; translated and quoted in Yee, 90.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
these mountain woods and meadows and the dazzling sunlight in the blue sky, I could feel the distinct palpitation of life. Japan’s clear winter had stamped an indelible imprint in my heart, and it suddenly dawned on me that I had forgotten the splendor of my native land’s eternal summer. No, I had not loved my native soil enough.  

The vulnerable tie to the greatness and beauty of his homeland, however, thwarts the narrator’s demand for identity. The image of Ito soon returns and reminds himself of the disturbing existence of a colonized subject. The story ends with the question: “In this era, in order to secure liberation from our deep-rooted vices, should we not conquer them resolutely with our lives, thereby allowing the next generation to internalize [Japanese values] as their own?” This question echoes the dilemma of Japanese assimilation and nativist resistance. Neither urging an anti-colonialist revenge nor embracing a filial return, the story voices a desperate plea to accept assimilation at the expense of self-denial. This work articulates the deep anguish of a colonized subject at his own multiple psychic split: assuming the colonizer’s values with a guilty conscience, while embracing the glory and ugliness of the homeland.

Exile and the Space of Writing

Through education, the narrator has been molded by Japanese colonial discourse and yet has been troubled by its conflict while he attempts to apply this discourse to his homeland.

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140 Ibid.

141 See also Yee, 90-91.
Such an experience results in a sense of alienation not only from his motherland but also his homeland. Driven by a confusion of identity, the narrator then reveals a self which negotiates the cultural and subjective codes of the colonial encounter. It is such a displacement that impels the author to inscribe colonial subjectivity through writing. Adopting a narrative of self-alienation and self-fragmentation, the author presents a disruption between the colonized self and the colonizing other. More significantly, the writing of subjectivity attempts to undermine colonial desire and ultimately seeks to affirm the validity of the subject by its very inscription.

The process of writing, however, reinforces issues of alienation and dislocation, which seem to be immanent in the production of colonial subjectivity. The colonial subject it constitutes, in fact, is the embodiment of displacement, which Caren Kaplan sees as an explanation of alienation and exile in language and literature. Borrowing the term “deterritorialization” from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Caren Kaplan locates this moment of alienation and exile in language and literature: “In one sense, it describes the effects of radical distanciation between signifier and signified. Meaning and utterances becomes estranged. This defamiliarization enables imagination, even as it produces alienation” (358). The paradoxical nature of the moment in displacement, as Kaplan notes, can be realized in language or in the literature that Deleuze and Guattari designate as “minor” in relation to “major” or “masterpieces.” The writing “travels, moves between centers and margins”; and “within the constructs of Deleuze and Guattari’s theory, this process…[is] both deteritorialization and reterritorialization—not imperialism but nomadism” (“Deteritorializations” 358-9). This subjective nomadism

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strongly suggests that in the case of minority or marginalized literatures, the articulation of encounter-discourse is exacerbated by the particular configuration in which exile plays a key role. Exile—physical and textual—whose narrative figures the colonized subjects through a map of self-alienation and self-fragmentation, may ultimately be read as a metaphor for the entirety of colonial writing. In such an imaginary narrative, the travelers invent their existence, legitimatize their status as subjects, and construct their own history of identity while dismantling norms, values, and canons of their masters.

The exilic experience in both subjection and writing is exacerbated by the use of the colonizer’s language. Albert Memmi, in his observation of the confrontation between the colonizers and the colonized, has pointed out the nature of exile in “colonial bilingualism”: Using the colonizer’s language “make[s] the colonized feel like a foreigner in his own country….Possession of the two languages is…participation in two psychic and cultural realms. Here, the two worlds symbolized and conveyed by the tongues are in conflict; they are those of the colonizer and the colonized” (The Colonizer and the Colonized 106-7). The linguistic and cultural conflict suggested by duality is absolutely the product of the imposition of colonial desire. Therefore, the colonized have to rewrite and subvert the discursive framework of oppression from the very space of its own elaboration since the colonizer’s discourse has imposed the language and deployed its significations through the dominant forces of assimilation and acculturation. The writing of colonial subjectivity expresses an ultimate paradox, the paradox of having to write in the colonizer’s language. It is the master’s tongue that provides the means for writing and the eventual subversion as well. Such a colonial bilingualism echoes Bhabha’s claim that the space of writing is therefore a space of “splitting” and “doubling”
since adoption of a master’s tongue makes the subject become native and stranger, self and other (The Location of Culture 44).

Language thus remains expressly important in the double gesture. To the extent that the writing subject is trapped in-between languages and discourses, the colonized self is in exile in the language of the colonizing other. The writing subject travels as a foreigner in two separate linguistic and cultural domains, bringing up the sense of linguistic and cultural withdrawal that Memmi has termed “foreignness” (107). This is precisely the dilemma faced by the colonial subject in the construction of identity through the colonizer’s language. More significantly, this is the form that exile assumes in the text. Murdoch has addressed this issue well: it is “a separation not simply from self, from country, but from language itself, from a singular discourse within and through which one can inscribe for the subject a valid and coherent sense of identity” (90). In sum, the inscription of subjectivity through the master’s tongue is a rewriting of established codes of self and other, and, as Bill Ashcroft et al have argued, it will involve “a radical subversion of the meanings of the master’s tongue” (The Empire Writes Back 146).

It is important and necessary to point out the cultural and political significance of using Japanese at a time when Taiwanese writers produced these so-called komim bungaku. As mentioned earlier, Taiwanese intellectuals under Japanese domination displayed varying degrees of alienation from and assimilation with the Japanese empire, of identity with an ancestral link with China, and more significantly, of desire to refer to a native “imagined community.” Such a problematic identity was exemplified and exacerbated by linguistic gaps among written Chinese, official Japanese, and the local vernaculars—mainly Minnan and Hakka dialects. While the older generation was trained
in Chinese, the younger generations were schooled in the Japanese language enforced by the assimilation policies. As Japanese acculturation began to take root, an entire generation grew up with no knowledge of spoken and written Mandarin. Towards the war years, with the intensification of the kominka movement, the circulation of Chinese materials was banned and Japanese became the only vehicle for publication. Ironically enough, such a linguistic quandary brought about the yen-wen yi-chih movement, a writing reform that calls for the creation of a written system for the local vernacular. This linguistic movement, which originally sought the unification of spoken and written languages, raised questions germane to the production of colonial literature in which resistance to colonialism prevailed. Under such cultural and political circumstances, the use of Japanese thus signified a dilemma. One may ask, does the very act of writing through the colonizer’s language condemn the self to a position of servitude?

Indeed, the use of Japanese forces Taiwanese writers to withdraw from their native tongue and the discourse within and through which they can inscribe a valid and coherent sense of identity. The writing subject becomes alienated within the domain of the Japanese language and Japan’s colonial discourse. This is precisely the dilemma that the Japanese-educated Taiwanese writers face. In this novella, the writer is aware of such an alienation in master’s language and constantly depicts its function by separating different linguistic and cultural domains. Often, the writer locates a character’s social and cultural

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143 During the early years of Japanese occupation, some native writers were still able to use Chinese to excoriate the colonizer by varying modes of protest and satire. Writers such as Lai He, Chen Hsu-gu, Tsai Ch’iu-t’ung and Wu Chuo-liu composed their works in Chinese or Japanese.

144 Young Japanese-educated Taiwanese writers won prizes for their publications in Japan, among whom one might mention Yang Kui, Lu He-ruo, and Long Ying-tsong. While some historians gloat over their accomplishments, some bemoan their lack of knowledge of the mother tongue.
status by indicating the specific languages that characters use. In many cases, the
narrator appears as a translator, bridging the gaps separating the different linguistic and
cultural domains.

The crossing of different linguistic and cultural domains is also a process of both
“destruction” and “creation.” The Japanese-educated Taiwanese writers undoubtedly
confronted the ultimate paradox of having to write in the colonizer’s language. Although
haunted by a sense of exile, they understood well that the master’s tongue provides a
means for writing and eventual subversion as well. They had to rewrite and subvert the
discursive framework of oppression from the very space of its own elaboration. Through
a map of self-alienation and self-fragmentation, the authors rewrote the established codes
of self and other and created their own history of identity. In other words, in the domain
of their master’s tongue, the Taiwanese writers relocated the implementation of the
Japanese colonial desire and rediscovered the meaning of the Japanese “imperialization”
movement.

Conclusion

This particular komin literary work presents an identity paradigm of ambiguity and
multiplicity for imperial subjects. The question of identification for the colonial subject,
says Bhabha, “is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling
prophecy—it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of
the subject in assuming that image” (*The Location of Culture* 45). In the place of
identification, the presence of the cultural and psychological Other assumes its
dominance. It becomes a figure in whom the colonized subjects define themselves and
construct their own paradigm of identity. The colonized subjects not only see themselves through the eyes of the colonizing other but also draw on aspects of the colonizers in order to elaborate their own sense of subjectivity. As in this novella, the structure of the colonial gaze displays the dynamic power of colonial elaboration and a specific paradigm of identity. The place of identification has never been an image of a fixed identity, but the disturbing space of “in-betweenness.” Ito’s efforts are made toward becoming an “imperial citizen.” Yet, his efforts at imitation only exaggerate the colonized existence distinct from the colonizers. Likewise, the narrator finds himself always trapped in a liminal space of uncertainly and ambiguity. From this perspective, this work articulates the anguish of a colonized subject witnessing his own multiple psychic split: assuming the colonizer’s values with a guilty conscience, while embracing the glory and ugliness of the homeland.

Another interesting aspect of this work is that the narrative of exilic imagination leads to the elaboration of discursive codes of resistance as a means toward the construction of a culturally specific identity paradigm. Driven by a confusion of identity, the narrator reveals a self which negotiates the cultural and subjective codes of the colonial encounter. A narrative of exile becomes the means by which the author inscribes the discursive codes of self and other. Through a map of self-alienation and self-fragmentation, the writing subjects invent their existence, legitimatize their status as subjects, and construct their own history of identity while dismantling the norms, values, and canons of their masters. The process of writing, however, reinforces issues of alienation and dislocation, which is exacerbated by the use of the colonizer’s language. The Japanese-educated Taiwanese writers confront the paradox of having to write in the
colonizer’s language; however, they know how well to subvert the discursive framework of oppression from the very space of its own elaboration. By crossing the boundaries of different linguistic and cultural domains, the Taiwanese writers are able to relocate the implementation of the Japanese colonial desire and rediscover the meaning of the Japanese “imperialization” movement.
CHAPTER 8145

EXILE AS IMAGINATION: RE-WRITING SELF, NATION, AND HISTORY

IN WU CHOU-LIU’S 吳濁流 ASIA’S ORPHAN 亞細亞的孤兒

This chapter explores the narrative of exile in relation to the writing of colonial subjectivity, in which exilic imagination leads to the elaboration of discursive codes of resistance as a means toward the construction of a culturally specific paradigm of identity. One prominent feature of the colonial writing produced by the colonized is the inscription of identity; this is a reaction to the erasure of identity which results from the colonial domination. Writing the subject into being through fictive discourse, the colonized make a cultural effort to rewrite historical experience in their own terms. In other words, the writing of subjectivity attempts to undermine colonial desire and ultimately seeks to affirm the validity of the subject by its very inscription. The process of writing, however, reinforces the issues of alienation and dislocation which seem to be immanent in the production of colonial subjectivity. The colonial subject it constitutes, in fact, embodies displacement, which Caren Kaplan sees as an explanation of alienation and exile in language and literature (“Deteritorializations” 358-59). This expression of displacement indicates that in the case of minority or marginalized literatures, the articulation of encounter-discourse is exacerbated by the particular configuration in which exile plays a key role. Exile—physical and textual—whose narrative figures the colonized subjects

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through a map of self-alienation and self-fragmentation, may ultimately be read as a metaphor for the entirety of colonial writing. In such an imaginary narrative, the travelers invent their existence, legitimize their status as subjects, and construct their own history of identity while dismantling the norms, values, and canons of their masters.

The disjunction between self and other can be illustrated by the celebrated Taiwanese novel *Asia’s Orphan* by Wu Chuo-liu. As the title suggests, this novel treats the plight of colonial Taiwan’s traumatized identity: discarded by China and brutalized by colonialist Japan. The protagonist transforms the exilic experience into an intricate aesthetic of national and cultural paranoia and rivalry. Exile becomes not only the material resource for the protagonist’s adventure, but also the capital narrative stock against which he can redeem a series of national, cultural, personal, and aesthetic debts. In other words, exile provides a scheme by which the worlds of reality, history, and the self can be intelligible. By examining the author’s attempt to rewrite colonial history and its subjectivity, this chapter shows how the inscription of displacement informs the critical role played by exilic imagination in the elaboration of colonial identity and the writing of colonial history. I will argue that as exile becomes the protagonist’s sovereignty, the exilic imagination becomes the sovereignty of its narrative representation. Through exilic imagination, the protagonist enters a liminal space which is essentially ambiguous, unsettled, and unsettling.

*Exile and the Narrative Imagination*

An exile, as Paul Tobori defines the term in *The Anatomy of Exile*, is “a person compelled to leave or remain inside his country of origin,” and “a person who considers his exile
temporary (even though it may last a lifetime), hoping to return to his fatherland when circumstances permit” (27). This definition indicates that an exile is someone who inhabits one place yet remembers or projects the reality of another. Therefore, no matter whether the person crosses the boundaries of the country of origin or stays in place under various guises, exile means separation, withdrawal, and displacement.

_Asia’s Orphan_ by Wu Chou-liu depicts this specific quality of displacement through its narrative of exile. The protagonist, Hu Tai-ming 胡太明, is a Taiwanese intellectual who suffers the plight of a traumatized identity. Molded by Japanese education, Tai-ming accepts the ruler’s colonial discourse and sees himself as Japanese. Upset by an unfulfilled romance in which he is rejected by a Japanese girl, he realizes the vulnerability of a romance between ruler and subject. Tai-ming then enters the domain of exile. While in his homeland, he imagines the reality of another through his intention of going to study abroad in Japan. Japan, therefore, becomes his first exilic territory. Tai-ming hopes this projection will release his terrible internal sorrow and bring himself new life. After his sojourn in Japan, where he experiences the almost insurmountable barrier between the Taiwanese and the Japanese, Tai-ming returns home. Frustrated by daily life in his homeland, the impulse of exile once again prevails in his mind. He agonizes over the prospect of leaving his homeland forever. However, the exilic territory he projects this time is not merely an area alien to exile, but also a supplemental homeland to which he desires to return—i.e., his imaginative world of China. To Tai-ming, the impulse of being-in-exile, which is the desire for separation, is also a wish not only to gain a new life but also to seek a supplemental homeland.
Tai-ming’s exile entails both imaginary and actual action. Not only does exile take place in his imagination, but real exilic experiences also follow his crossing of national boundaries. Eventually, these exilic experiences prove to be temporary twists of his homeland. Tobori has addressed the condition of exile by emphasizing its dynamic character, both materially and psychologically: “an essential element in this process is the attitude of the exile to the circumstances prevailing in his homeland which are bound to influence him psychologically” (3). Indeed, exile tends to express both the circumstances occurring in the exile’s homeland and the assimilation process in new exilic territories. Not surprisingly, memories of homeland are so powerful and influential that the emotional expression of exile always entails a sense of loss or lack, which is usually manifested as sorrow, though it sometimes appears as nostalgia. In this novel, Tai-ming’s memories of his homeland dominate the narrative representation of his exilic experiences; the task of this representation is to transform the figure of rupture into the figure of connection. On the one hand, his projection of being-in-exile helps postpone discouragement and accumulate a kind of freshness; on the other hand, his suffering through exilic experiences suggests a course of exile to exact and redeem what he would have had if he had remained in his homeland. In this regard, the belatedness of his exilic sufferings broadens the product of his imagination and reflects the experience that exile imaginatively registers.

Therefore, Tai-ming’s exile involves double conditions: one is his imagination that projects and relocates the experience of being exiled while in his place of origin; the other is his real exile, during which he might repair the previous opacity. Eventually, the protagonist, whatever his personal or political traumas are, gains imaginative sustenance
from exile. Experiences native to the life of the exile seem to become almost activated in his inner life: separation as desire, alienation as a new being. At the same time, the imagination, concerned with either the desire for separation or the expectation of delivering a new life, not only compensates for exilic loss, but registers that loss as aesthetic gain.

Exile is a material resource for Tai-ming’s adventure as legend; it is also an imaginative resource for narrative, the novel, and literature. Michael Seidel states that “exile is a compelling subject and a propelling action; it names a figure and establishes a narrative ground” (1). Tai-ming’s exilic necessity is derived from the agony of his disappointed love and his realization of a false identification, an agony that turns his life into despair. It later emerges that the protagonist prefers the torture of separation, which is what he sees as a form of “salvation,” to the repair of his remorse because the imaginative anticipation is greater than its resolution. Such a sense of estrangement also ignites narrative imagination. It is almost as if imagination requires the impediments of time and distance for activation. Tai-ming’s exilic imagination serves as a figure that propels the desire of his separation and inspires narrative imagination. Exilic territory for him, henceforth, is anywhere but the specific place where he stands, including the homeland from whence he comes.

Tai-ming’s experience of exile therefore accounts for the intricate patterns projected in the narrative. Tai-ming’s action of separation is in some sense a necessary withdrawal, but the meditation on its necessity becomes something like a recurring plot. His exile, often blending into the same or similar categories, demonstrates deep exilic anxieties that actually integrate parts of his exile. Not surprisingly, when arriving in new
territories, Tai-ming inspires himself to negotiate the images of cities, people, and especially, his fervent desire for love. His doing so suggests an attempt to draw a profit-and-loss balance sheet both from exile and his homeland. Or to put it another way, his blending into the same or similar categories is the demand to decide whether he would have achieved the same if he had remained in his homeland. The issue of nationhood, the demand for identification, and the sorrow of lost love are readdressed in exile in a viable form. In alien territories, the stranger keeps asking the same questions. In fact, these questions themselves process a double structure: they occur at two times and two places, and it is the traveler who actually asks them and hears them. Tai-ming’s exile thus demonstrates the controversial fact that he is indeed of two places, yet his displacement becomes his homeland. In other words, to the wanderer, the very state of movement is being at home.

A clear dividing line, however, must establish. Seidel argues that in the exilic mind “imaginative powers begin at the boundaries of accumulated experience” (2). A construct of imaginative beginnings takes place in these scenes of observing cities, including Keelung 基隆, Tokyo 東京, Nanjing 南京, and Shanghai 上海. These sites may be regarded as a mental borderland controlled by the generative notion that the line marking the end of the familiar is the same as that marking the beginning of the unknown. Thus, the line that limits is also the line that dares. With his gaze at the cities in both the known and unknown spaces, Tai-ming crosses national borders and thus becomes engaged in the prospect of leaving or staying in a temporary home. The gaze definitely reveals his deep exilic anxiety, yet it also reflects a witnessing of an inside action from the outside world. These experiences also suggest that his efforts give convertible
dimensions to his imagination: the exilic outland is a version of the inland; the possible becomes a version of the previous.

Therefore, these real and imaginative boundaries separate and supplement, differentiate and replicate. The exchange of experiences by crossing national boundaries displays many of the notions of difference and distance that make the exilic situation central to narrative representation. Tai-ming always confronts the dilemma of choosing between outland and inland, outside and inside, the unknown and known. In this regard, his adventure represents intricate primary patterns projected in narrative, such as the pattern of either/or, outside/inside and periphery/center.

Exile sets the territory of alienation and separation that circles a differently disposed or a differently located homeland. As Seidel tells us, “the typical exile in literature, although by nature a wanderer, is also by habit a homebody” (10). In Tai-ming’s legend, the memory of home is paramount in a narrative in which home itself becomes such a memory. Home is locus, custom, memory, familiarity, ease, and security. Whatever one has been doing in exile can never alter the power of home as an image. In exile, the expression of the desire for home, embodying the emotion attendant upon the image, becomes a substitute for home. For instance, the episode of Tai-ming’s exile to China is entitled “The Call of the Mainland” [祖國的召喚], which suggests that his repatriation is an eternal return (Wu 130). Not surprisingly, many of the adventures in Mainland China serve to dim Tai-ming’s homeward compulsion by making exilic space a substitute for the homeland. In this regard, his endeavors to learn the Chinese language and his attempts to erase his identity as a Taiwanese are efforts to be domesticated within this exilic territory. Similarly, Tai-ming finds himself at the beck and call of a Chinese lover,
Shu-chun淑春— a duplicate of his ideal lover in his homeland. That the substitution is thus in some way a replication is not merely something that happens to Tai-ming, but something that he is bound to desire, that has been on his mind. Hence, the spatial frame of the narration: Tai-ming, temporarily domesticated at the far bounds of Mainland China, dreams of domestication with Rui-e瑞娥 and Hisako久子 at its Taiwanese center. In doing so, he “displays not only the range of the exilic course, extension and return, but also the power of exilic imagining, extension as return” (Seidel 11).

In sum, exile inaugurates the long way around, the journey for the redemption of individual souls, memories, cities, and nations. In the narrative of exile, the home place is destroyed, contaminated, and rendered illegitimate. Without a native place recognized as secure, the traveler thus imagines in new surroundings the conditions that existed before the trauma that necessitated the displacement. This suggests the basis for narrative imagination: the exilic imaginer seeks to capture supplemental spaces in an imagined terrain, a strange area, or an alien place. Tai-ming’s exile is thus an invitation to conversation, not simply a movement from place to place but a transformation—imaginative and psychological—of one place into another. In other words, exile establishes a narrative ground whose scenes are set by the projection of activity in a mimetic or supplemental space.

*The Poetic Transformation of Exile*

The notion of exile leads itself to the narrative expression of this novel. It is the perception of exile that inaugurates Tai-ming’s long journey for the redemption of personal and national debts. The idea of exile is developed by the author as a theme, a
metaphor, and a component of narrative structure. Under various guises, exile means separation, withdrawal, and displacement; its emotional expression conveys a sense of loss or lack which is manifested as sorrow and nostalgia. Tai-ming’s exilic experiences in Japan and in Mainland China revise the underlying themes and motifs that give them expression. The protagonist finds a second world, an imaginary kingdom that disguises an impulse toward restoration. The imaginary kingdom often aligns itself with romance, whereas the memories of the homeland appear in the guise of the elegiac. Yet, it is evident that in the parallel society created from exile, the protagonist attempts to rediscover and enact the values that are presumed by a memory governed by the original order from which the protagonist has been expelled.

Thus, exile indicates a sense of separation and alienation not only from self but also from society. After being rejected by a Japanese girl, Tai-ming propels himself into exile in Japan with the hope of seeking a true identity. The author extends the separation of place into self-alienation, fusing the two in the narrative representation. Thus, the denial of self that is equated with exile paradoxically becomes a means of salvation—that is, of regaining oneself. Accompanied by geographical movements, exilic experiences follow his real life. Tai-ming, actually or textually, has entered another world. New exilic territories are new societies. This suggests that the fact of exile tests notions of not only self but also the social order. Robert Edward has addressed this specific fact of exile well: “exile does not simply magnify personal separation to a collective displacement; rather, it intensifies the dialectical relation of the individual within the social” (17). On his journey, Tai-ming sets out to seek a true identity and to discover a new life. The prime consequence of losing social position, along with the crossing of national
boundaries, is to remove external definitions of self. Therefore, the protagonist’s separation from family and country becomes a necessary withdrawal; its narrative representation is an aesthetic gain of new perspective and new being. Tai-ming’s separation from family and country involves an interesting thematic ambivalence. The separation from self, family, and country as well as its expression of displacement constitute the content of his exile. Yet exile also allows the writer to construct sustained fictive worlds whose between-ness requires poetic justice and fosters myths of culture that integrate new elements within the old society.

Robert Edwards postulates three modes of the poetic transformation of exile. The first mode involves the “function of memory” within exile. Edwards argues that exile has the power to transform original experience by viewing it from a different perspective (24). In other words, from the place outside homeland and community the writer can define the role of the individual with particular clarity and can depict the behavior of an individual within a certain social order. Likewise, the demands of a traveler’s life pursued in isolation assume coherence as the narrator views them from a distance.

Tai-ming’s exilic experiences in Japan as well as in Mainland China color the transformations of memory. Tai-ming has traveled to alien territories in order to rediscover and enact the values of the old. The wanderer makes it clear that such perspective is also an aspect of memory: his separation from the homeland extends to exile, and his exile substitutes for the homeland. The “function of memory” of exile can be best exemplified by the setting of Tai-ming’s love experiences in his journey. As they are told, love experiences follow the course of Tai-ming’s exilic life. His lovers, who are
influential and determinate, have distinguished and marked the relatedness of the homeland and exilic territories. In his journey, lovers tend to be re-imaged and they rehear the sounds and accents of an exilic spot. Tai-ming’s recapturing of Rui-e, Hisako, and Tsuruko is the recentering of actual, fervent, and abundant desire in the region of the exilic state. Though the state is piercing and painful, the poetic stress on temporality builds from a sense of personal loss into a recognition of life’s transience. In this expansion, memory acquires new boundaries, becoming a spiritual battle against traumatized identity, and the idyll continues as an elegy of restless life.

The second mode of the poetic transformation of exile, according to Edwards, involves the creation of an alternative society. This change deals with a narrative, and within it lies an impulse toward “restoration instead of predicament” (25). Tai-ming’s exile, accompanied by his physical movement out to exilic territories, may resemble emigration. His exile, on the one hand, magnifies personal separation; on the other hand, it intensifies the dialectical relation of the individual with the social order. A parallel society is created from exile by an attempt to rediscover and enact the values that are presumed to have governed the original from which it has been expelled. Therefore, the narrative actually involves an eventual reintegration of the old and new social structures.

A clearer illustration of how exile generates a parallel society and defines the self may be found in Tai-ming’s journey in Mainland China, which displays his banishment and efforts to form a new kingdom beyond his homeland. Clearly, Tai-ming’s exile to Mainland China shows a strong impulse toward restoration rather than a perpetuation of his predicament. The title “The Call of the Mainland” indicates a call for restoration, rather than for staying in his predicament (Wu 130). One may also see his efforts to
make this exilic space a substitute for the homeland. He finds his Chinese lover, Shu-chun, filling the role of Hisako; he enjoys abroad the marriage that he would wish for himself with Hisako in the homeland. The substitute is in some way a replication by which an imaginary kingdom is established in an exilic territory. The new kingdom signals a reintegration and discovery of a new life. The new and old social orders converge in his marriage, where he temporarily soothes his grief. It is exile that makes alternative society and legendary romance possible. A new perspective and new being are obtained within this newly created parallel society.

According to Edwards, the two modes of transformation—memory and an alternative society—connect to the past and present respectively, yet there is “a third mode [that] avoids this determinism by projecting toward the future through the experience of imagination” (29). In this regard, the development of Tai-ming’s perspectives on his own exile may help us understand this mode of transformation. In his plan to study abroad in Japan, exile is considered as a hope not only for releasing his sorrow but also for bringing new life. His exile becomes a means of regaining himself. Before long he returns to his homeland; then Tai-ming finds himself alienated in the homeland community. He is consequently absorbed in meditation on specific personal and social situations, attempting to discover a larger synthesis of political reality within poetic truth. Such displacement compels Tai-ming to launch another journey—a voluntary exile to China, his imaginary homeland. At this time, he assumes exile will guarantee stability. His optimism about China shows his confidence in the promise that an ideal society and a stable identity can eventually be found. However, the result of his meeting with Shu-chun, a Chinese spy who later becomes his wife, transforms the nature
of his exile. His exilic experience in China is located in a vision where misfortune and reality meet. Tai-ming eventually realizes that his Chinese lover and wife is not his lover in the homeland, but simply a substitute. In prison, Tai-ming broods over his personal history as well as his exile since its very beginning. His soliloquy stresses temporality and a recognition of life’s transience; it also suggests the fact that exile exists at a convergence of time. Through imagination, the people, customs, and landscape of his homeland come alive in his mind and endlessly disturb him. Tai-ming’s sorrow at his loss of confidence eventually leads to a clear recognition of the moral mission of his separation and isolation (Wu 202-3).

Tai-ming’s experience suggests that the exilic mind refuses to stay in either the past or the present; rather, the exilic mind implies a mode of transformation that projects the unknown through the experience of imagination. Time thus plays a crucial role in the narrative. Beyond the linear concept of temporality, the writer tries to recapture lost time by reorienting the order of time; through memory, the experience of imagination, and writing, he transforms what has happened and what is happening. The author tentatively brings together the past and the present and defines the meaning of one at the expense of the other. Therefore, the numerous references to his faltering memory show that Tai-ming’s transformation of exile is something more than an elaborate retrospection in which the past is described as if it had not yet occurred and in which the narrator assumes a different perspective on the past. His memory concerns time as it flows seamlessly toward him. When mourning over the death of his brother, for example, he soliloquizes that “this kind of misfortune happens not merely to my brother, it will happen to me and my father soon” (Wu 322-3). At this moment, what might seem fixed in memory is in
fact part of a continuous process: future coming into the present and going into the past. But these boundaries of experience must be engaged in the here and now. This also explains why Tai-ming takes recourse to imagination as an activity of the mind where the reality of exile is revealed in its full meaning to a self still enmeshed in contingency.

**The Creation of a Liminal Space**

Tai-ming’s separation both from self-definition and from society makes it possible to create an alternative society where he can enact and rediscover the values of the old. The nature of Tai-ming’s exile exemplifies the modes of poetic transformation of exile that Edwards describes. The first part of the exilic narrative delineates how Tai-ming comes to the decision to leave his family and society and undertake a sojourn in Japan as a student. It recounts the circumstances of alienation and displacement, not only in exilic territory but also in the homeland. The second part presents a narrative structure parallel to the first. Unsatisfied with the society of his homeland, Tai-ming exiles himself again to Mainland China in search of an ideal society. Unlike in Japan where he lives as a virtual recluse, Tai-ming endeavors to be domesticated in the new exilic territory. After he is suspected of being a spy, Tai-ming returns to his homeland and again suffers regret and despair. The structural doubling suggests that exile can occur without one’s being driven from the homeland. More significantly, it delineates a middle period, bounded on one side by a willful segregation from family and society and on the other by a reintegration with them.

The parabolic shape of Tai-ming’s exile may exaggerate what Victor Turner has identified as the “liminal phase” of ritual structures. As Turner tells us, Arnold van
Gennep distinguishes three phases in a rite of passage: separation, transition, and incorporation. The first phase of separation clearly demarcates sacred space and time from profane or secular space and time, including symbolic behavior which represents the detachment of the ritual subjects from their previous social status. During the intervening phase of transition, which is in van Gennep’s terms “margin” or “limen” (“threshold” in Latin), the ritual subjects pass through a period and area of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo which has few of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane social status or cultural states. Then, the third phase, called by van Gennep “reaggregation” or “incorporation,” includes symbolic phenomena and actions which represent the return of the subjects to their new, relatively stable, well-defined position in the total society (From Ritual to Theater 24). Of particular interest here is this second stage of rite of passage. This period, after separation and before one rejoins the society, is the transitional and liminal stage which accentuates an awareness of being “between and betwixt” (Forest of Symbols 97). Tai-ming’s exile, after separation and before segregation, parallels this transitional and liminal period. His removal from society and his entrance into new exile territories reflect the fact that he occupies a sort of social limbo, a period and area of ambiguity. Since he has lost his previous social and cultural status, the effect of Tai-ming’s exile, in fact, has the function of a construct in which time and space converge to shape a real personality.

According to Turner, the passage from one social status to another is often accompanied by a parallel passage in space, a geographical movement from one place to another. He states that “an extended liminal phase ... is frequently marked by the physical separation of the ritual subjects from the rest of society” (From Ritual to Theater
Tai-ming’s exile coincides with the symbolic geography of a threshold between an organized space and the wasteland outside. As evidenced by Tai-ming, the voyage out to exilic territories marks physical separation, which may symbolically correspond to this accompanying geographical movement. The voyage is thus the literal crossing of a threshold that separates two distinct areas, one associated with the subject’s pre-ritual or pre-liminal status, and the other with his post-ritual or post-liminal status.

The spatial passage, in Tai-ming’s case, may involve a long pilgrimage and the crossing of many national frontiers before the goal is achieved. The episode in which the rites of consecration are performed before his departure makes the symbolic meaning of spatial passage clear. All family members are sincerely engaged in these rites. Their enthusiastic participation in these rites only intensifies the responsibilities of Tai-ming’s pilgrimage. These rites inaugurate his journey, the redemption of individual souls, and the duty of his exacting pilgrimage. In fact, the images of these particular rites can be regarded as the symbolic geography of a threshold, whose installation at that particular spot has been accompanied by rites of consecration. In this regard, the conversations during the rites of consecration can be seen as crucial. They convey hope, inspiration, and expectation for Tai-ming himself and for all family members. This episode suggests that Tai-ming’s isolation has two controversial aspects: he seems to be weak because he is outside a given group or society and has no actual power over it, yet he seems to be strong because he is, in respect to the group’s members, potentially powerful. The traveler is a combination of weakness and strength. Hence, liminals are imbued with a magical potency; however, they still manifest the subject’s ambiguous and paradoxical position of being outside society.
It is in the liminal phase that the traveler is released from previous definitions and the dialectic between inside and outside becomes possible. In this period, it is not sufficient merely to reject what one has been; one has to posit something tentative to take its place, even when returning to one’s position within the old society. It is in this sense that Tai-ming’s exile allows the writer to construct a sustained fictive world whose alterity or betweenness fosters myths of culture that integrate new elements within the old.

The liminal phase is not merely a transitional state; it is an “anti-structure.” The liminal phase, as Turner puts it, is “the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses, enacting a multiplicity of social roles” (*From Ritual to Theater* 44). Turner’s claim for the liminal experience of anti-structure lies in the critical stance that obtains in the space-time outside quotidian existence. The liminal is therefore oppositional in the sense that it provides a vision of possibilities beyond normative and institutional interaction. Tai-ming’s being in-exile, because he is betwixt and between, outside the boundaries of society’s normative structure, is a liminal period. These circumstances, such as being a student studying abroad, being in Mainland China without fluency in Chinese, have inscribed the stage of a man outside normative social structures. Tai-ming’s negotiations over his relation with the place of remove and the place of resettlement, inland and outland, the known and unknown worlds, and his dilemma between *either/or, outside/inside, periphery/center*, therefore, represent a series of liminal experiences.

The liminal phase, as Turner insists, is both more creative and more destructive than the structural norm. It is “hypothesis” and “speculation”: “In either case it raises
basic problems for social structural man, invites him to speculation and criticism” (*From Ritual to Theater* 47). Tai-ming’s exile is an endeavor to shape a new personality through the experience of imagination, where time and space converge. Yet the process of shaping a new personality is speculation and criticism.

It is noteworthy that Tai-ming’s narrative of exile is constructed in the subjunctive mood. “Subjunctive,” by definition, is the “mood of a verb used to express supposition, desire, hypothesis, possibility, etc., rather than to state an actual fact, as the mood of ‘were’ in ‘if I were you’” (*The Anthropology of Performance* 101). As far as Tai-ming is concerned, his study in Japan *might be* helpful to his search for a true identity, and China *might be* an ideal society and an eternal “homeland.” What is created and what results in exilic territories is not only a new space in which to exercise new being but a medium through which Tai-ming can imagine his beginnings. Therefore, Tai-ming actually occupies the best possible world. Narrative also admits the possibility of heroes, as well as the frailty of heroes, since the “subjunctive” expresses supposition, desire, and possibility rather than stating an actual fact.

Turner further elaborates the “subjunctive” mood in its relation to the structure of narrative: “the subjunctive indeed, contains the dialectical, that is, the notion that an idea or event generates its opposite, it is not merely a matter that the indicative unquestionably exemplifies the ideal; heroes must go through hell to attain paradise” (*The Anthropology of Performance* 41). From this perspective, what Tai-ming goes through in liminal surroundings is necessary for him to obtain his imaginary kingdom—the paradise and the estate which conveys the dialectical—and to gain his possibilities by virtue of narrative. It is through the liminal phase that Tai-ming becomes reflexive. His participation in
performance creates a second world or parallel society in which he can rediscover the values that governed the original order from which he has been expelled. Thus, Tai-ming’s entrance into the liminal phase is a movement between fixed points and into a space that is essentially ambiguous, unsettled, and unsettling.

The model of *communitas* in the sense given by Turner in *The Ritual Process* best characterizes relationships among those jointly undergoing ritual transition. *Communitas* may be said to exist more in contrast than in active opposition to social structure, as an alternative and more “liberated” way of being socially human, a way both of being detached from social structure and of being a “distanced” or “marginal” individual attached to other disengaged persons (*From Ritual to Theater* 50-51). Tai-ming occupies a liminal condition of *communitas* in which he removes himself from his individual social status and then participates in its performance. Tai-ming’s journeys both in Japan and China are absolute ways of being detached from the normative social structure of the homeland. According to Turner, *communitas* has the power and energy “potentially of periodically evaluating its performance” and “sometimes of evaluating a social structure’s historical performance in common with them” (*From Ritual to Theater* 51). Tai-ming’s exile has the power to liberate all identities from general norms and to allow him to pass judgment on normative structures and alternative models for social organization.

*Communitas* “preserves individual distinctiveness.” Turner has described *communitas* as a means “by which persons see, understand, and act towards one another as essentially an unmediated relationship between historical, idiosyncratic, concrete individuals” (*From Ritual to Theater* 45). In the novel, Tai-ming plays specific roles
both in his homeland and in the exilic territories. His separation and alienation, including a loss of social position and definition of the self, provide the experience of anti-structure and a chance for identification. Tai-ming’s journey—an experience of anti-structure or communitas—represents the desire for an “unmediated relationship” between person and person, a relationship which safeguards the individuals’ uniqueness in the very act of realizing their commonality. His experiences of searching for a true identity and an ideal love and society signify this. Exile eventually proves to be an ambiguous state, a social structure that provides a measure of limitation and security.

Exilic Imagination and the Colonial Identity Paradigm

As the narrative shows, Tai-ming’s separation from self, family, and country—along with its expressions of displacement—constitute the content of his exile. Through the experience of exile, the writer constructs a sustained fictive world whose betweenness fosters myths of culture that integrate new elements within the old society. In this regard, exile not only serves as a metaphor for the state of the narrative imagination, but also becomes a kind of capital narrative stock against which the traveler can redeem an almost endless series of personal, national, cultural, racial, and aesthetic debts.

Exile serves narrative as “an initiation and supplementing action” and as “a figure for allegory itself” (Seidel 13). A good deal has been written on the complexities of allegory as an imaginative and verbal activity. Seidel, for example, presents a useful aspect of allegory related to the narrative of exile. He argues that the central feature of allegory is that “its figures must represent something ‘other’ to signify, even if that other is the process of signification itself” (14). From this perspective, Tai-ming’s exilic legend
is an allegory because his search for otherness becomes its very subject, and the record of his exile in narrative is essentially an “alien voicing,” the meaning that the word allegory conveys.\textsuperscript{146}

Tai-ming is thrust into an alien land to test all values and seek out a true identity. Caught in the demand for identification, his quest is to make things signify in a manner allegorically comparable to the narrative that tries to render it. His adventure is the redemption of his soul and his memory as well. He measures the exilic territories in his request for a future homeland, but he pauses to express the tearfulness of things, forming a relationship with the place of remove and with the place of resettlement. Thus, the narration takes up the cadences of exilic refashioning and exilic anguish. He becomes a citizen of exilic territories, reflecting the homeland that he has departed from and the one he has departed for. As a traveler, Tai-ming the pilgrim is a type of redeemer—a stranger, a prophet without honor in his own land.

Isolation is the state of Tai-ming’s remove; it is also the material terrain for the allegory that sustains his mimetic performance. The depiction of isolation requires the validation of “voice” to inaugurate and corroborate the existence of its silent circumstances. While in Mainland China, in order to settle in Chinese society, Tai-ming hides his Taiwanese identity and pretends to be a Chinese. What Tai-ming does in China announces his nominal presence and yet hints at his ontological absence. The fact that he both names and obliterates the identity that he works to establish stipulates his \textit{alibi} and his status as \textit{alien}.\textsuperscript{147} In effect, he reimagines Taiwan in all aspects, including his love, 

\textsuperscript{146} As Seidel notes, \textit{al} means “other” and \textit{goria} means “voicing” (14).
\textsuperscript{147} James Nohrnberg provides a list of words related to allegory’s first syllable, such as \textit{alibi, alien, also, alternate, alteration, parallel, alien, else, ulterior, as, alibi}. Citing these words, Seidel argues that they suggest a catalogue of the basic concepts for any theory of allegory. The words \textit{alibi} and \textit{alien} are two
family, people, and landscapes, as if he were reimagining himself. The isolation that
exile imposes on his adventure makes a significant impression on the reader; this
impression is intimately connected to the power of his experiences and their expressions.
Tai-ming in isolation is therefore a walking allegory: he represents both his own moment
in time and then, as in the very act of narrative creation, all moments experienced over
again in their retelling.

Once he crosses into the environs whose survey he cannot satisfactorily comprehend
he seems fully committed to the notion that his allegorical lot is the same as his exilic one.
Nevertheless, people and objects in exilic territories represent the very allegorical
principles upon which they were received. His exile, encompassing characters as well as
narrative places, enters as allegory. At the boundary between the place of remove and the
place of resettlement, Tai-ming always names and at the same time obliterates the
identity which he works to pursue. The narrative thus indicates two constituent
properties of allegory: “its mimetic figures and its alien nature, its being and its figuring
forth” (Seidel 15). Therefore, the doubleness implicit in exilic positioning allows the
recording of exile in narrative to be an “alien voicing” which gives the meaning of
allegory.

Tai-ming’s is not simply an allegory of his personal fate, but also an allegory for a
race, a nation, and history. It should be pointed out that the author has related Tai-ming’s
exile to history: “the whole life of Tai-ming represents a sample of sacrificing to a
distorted history” (Wu vi). In the preface of the Japanese version, the author states the
reason he wrote this autobiographical novel: “History is always unpredictable.
Confronting its capricious nature, what one can do is to understand the reality of history
by finding a way of escaping from the destiny that history has designated. In other words, one needs to examine history in order to learn the lesson” (Wu vi). For the writer, then, Tai-ming’s exile is not merely a perspective from which he acknowledges the storms brooding over history and nostalgically relives the pastoral order of his homeland. It is, rather, the very condition of the narrative, its most profound metaphor. Neither is the version of the pastoral fable simply a parody of historical events; it is neither a romance of an imaginative kingdom nor an elegy for memories and dead hopes. It is rather a way of elaborating a homeland of the mind against the horrors of history, a homeland that is drawn upward into the expectation of resurrection. The allegory, whether its form is parody or elegy, resides in the hope that resurrection remains possible in the homeland; the possibilities rest on the virtue of hope that governs the motif of the author’s writing of this exilic narrative.

What becomes more interesting, then, is that in the case of marginalized literature, exilic imagination leads to the elaboration of discursive codes of resistance as a means toward the construction of a culturally specific paradigm of identity. This autobiographical novel was written during the second world war when Japanese assimilation was intensifying. By intertwining personal experience and historical events, the author provides a narrative scheme by which the worlds of reality, history, and the self can become intelligible. However, the movement of the narrative also denounces the illusoriness of this very project and draws the structure of sense into the possibility of error. That is to say, the author writes in the mode of allegory and also recoils from it. This wavering is not simply a way of describing the occasional moments of a writer’s troubled doubts. It describes, instead, the bind within which his voice is forever caught,
and it disrupts the sense of a stable continuity between reality and its representation. The allegory thus occupies an ambiguous space between these two possibilities. It also dramatizes the choice with which the reader is confronted.

Tai-ming’s exilic existence and the specific mode of exilic narrative imagination may be best described in terms of liminality. A liminality that characterizes the existence of the exilic individual soul, the quality of his living in the world and yet outside it, of being, in Turner’s language, “betwixt and between” the structures of society, is crucial to the understanding of Tai-ming’s exile and its narrative. The narrative’s structural doubling suggests that his internal alienation outlines a middle period bound on one side by a willful segregation from family and society and on the other side by a reintegration within them. In this period, he does not merely reject what he has been, but posits something tentative for a return to the old society. Therefore, the phase of liminality that he sets out to institutionalize by the foundation of the homeland order is the area of mediation between the world of contingency and history and the absolute model of an imaginative paradise. In this sense, allegory is an apt rhetorical form for portraying the prefiguration of an imaginative paradise.

This quality imposed on and created by the narrative may be symbolically depicted in the climactic scene toward the end when Tai-ming becomes a lunatic. In his state of insanity, Tai-ming disguises himself as a god sitting on an altar (Wu 325). Tai-ming’s lunacy is both a moment of violence and a narrative crisis. A lunatic imagines himself as pursuing judgment; however, instead of passing judgment on reality, history and the self, Tai-ming becomes silent. The denouncing of narrative is ironically heralded by an exilic lunatic who imagines himself as the implicit text of the action and who brings the
narrative to an end. The narrative whose subject did not contain enough of Tai-ming’s story now contains all of it when the writer who creates this episode formulates a final reflection upon a life that ends in exilic lunacy.

This specific cultural identity paradigm is articulated by the author’s hope to elucidate the meaning of history and to reconsider the relationship between contingency and history. Hope, a metaphor of time opened to the future, is the promise of final times. Yet it tells that the past can never be regarded as a closed and dead archeology, and the past itself has seeds for the future. This hope, to be sure, cannot be domesticated entirely within the bounds of history nor exhausted in messianic expectations. The details in this work exemplify, from one point of view, the doctrinal counterpoint of reality and history on which the narrative is explicitly articulated, and it is tailored to suggest that this text surpasses and humbles both the imitations of reality and the artifice of history. It also exemplifies a way of writing, of deliberately wavering between the empirical version of order and the mimesis of history. This hope places us in history and against history, in the liminal space which is the specific exile where travelers are always on the way.

From this point of view, narrative performs not only as an experiential rival but as an aesthetic substitute or supplement. In *Asia’s Orphan*, exilic space is the metaphoric terrain of projected adventure, and exilic time becomes a resource for narrative repatriation. It is precisely the metaphoric lines that exile plots along both temporal and spatial axes that make it so dominant a condition in narrative and so prominent an emblem for narrative imagination. And yet, narrative imagination inhabits the exilic domain where absence is presence, or, to put it the other way around, where presence is absence. It is in this sense that Tai-ming’s *alibi* and *alienation* enter as the basic concepts
of allegory. Tai-ming’s exile becomes his sovereignty, as exilic imagination does in his narrative representation. Significantly, Tai-ming as a character soon comes to understand that he cannot remain apart, just as the narrative, in its presence, refuses to rest in its absolute otherness. Once the protagonist turns the definition of self, reality, and history into an eternal void, he then occupies the horizon of *communitas*, engaging in a powerful rethinking in the phase of liminality.
The Nationalist Chinese took over Taiwan after the Japanese colonial administration retreated at the end of World War II. While the Nationalist government cemented its political and ideological grip on the island, nativist resistance against the Chinese control began to form. Narrated by a Taiwanese aboriginal woman, Chuwas Lawa, the ethnographic narrative reconstruction, *So Remote the Romance* (1997) recounts a romance between herself and a Japanese soldier during this period of turmoil. This chapter addresses the issue raised by this work of re-writing a colonial history through public memories and private autobiography.

In this work, the narrator intertwines her memory of childhood, desire, love, marriage, and family with major historical events in a story stretching from the Japanese occupation to the period of Chinese control. The story is richly detailed, and the book becomes a moving common history of a native woman under colonial domination. Through reminiscence of her personal romance, the narrator rediscovers her female body and her deserted life. The book shifts its focus from individual values to ethnic, racial, cultural, and national significance. It not only recaptures memories of the romance but also reorganizes fragments of the nation’s occupation history. The romance is therefore
not only between individuals but also between the ruler and the ruled. Through the memory of a native Taiwanese woman, the violence of the Japanese and Chinese empires is revealed. For this reason, critics have often considered this personal memoir as a historical text—a history of an individual, a gender, an ethnic group, and a nation—that addresses the issues raised by the domination of colonial power.

Furthermore, the revitalization of personal and national memories has the potential of allowing the colonized to rewrite colonial history from their own point of view. Memory is the material resource of Chuwas’s romance. In other words, the narrative of memory provides a scheme by which the self, gender, ethnic origin, nation, and history become intelligible. Writing private autobiography into history, the author re-presents the history oppressed by the colonizers. However, the process of writing reinforces the unreliability of the literary representation of history. This book was narrated in the Japanese language, recorded by a Japanese anthropologist and then translated by a Taiwanese historian into Chinese. Not only language translations but also the various perspectives that different authors undertake affect the presentation of history. For instance, by incorporating graphic references into the story, the Japanese anthropologist presents the book as an example of the modernization of the specific ethnic group. The translator, by contrast, interprets the story as a text of resistance against colonialism and male chauvinism by integrating feminist and nationalist discourse into the content. This chapter will also examine various narrative strategies in this work and investigate the problems of the representation of history through public memories and private autobiography.
Narrating Romance

*So Remote the Romance* is a romance narrated by a Taiwanese aboriginal woman Chuwas Lawa. The Japanese anthropologist Nakamura Masaru 中村勝 transcribes this romance, and then the Taiwanese historian Hung Chin-chu 洪金珠 translates it into Chinese. Published in 1997, this book reveals an unforgettable love story between the Taiwanese aboriginal woman Chuwas and the Japanese soldier Onishi 大西. This book has gathered attention from both readers and critics since its publication, because of its subject of a romantic love. Many elements—including the historical background on which the story is based, the racial and cultural characteristics of the characters, the way in which the book is edited, and the political atmosphere during its publication—add significance to the work. Its particular subject and historical setting have inspired critics to read this personal memoir as a text of “women’s history” or “colonial history.”149 Situated within feminist and nationalist discourse, Chuwas’s romance has been seen as a historical text that addressed gender, racial, cultural, and national differences.

Chuwas’s love story serves an oral history of a Taiwanese aboriginal woman under the Japanese and Chinese colonialist domination. Chuwas recounts her adolescent love, her first marriage, her encounter with a Japanese soldier, and later her marriage to a Chinese immigrant. Through remembering, Chuwas reconstructs her personal romance, in which she rediscovers her female body, self, love, race, and life. Her lover Onishi was originally a Japanese soldier. After Japan withdrew its colonial administration from Taiwan, Onishi was forced to become a special agent serving the newly settled Chinese

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Nationalist government in Taiwan. Chuwas sympathized with Onishi’s condition of being a Chinese spy, and her sympathy later turned into a fervent love for him. Such compassion, as the translator Hung notes, is derived from her intention to repay the “kindness” of the Japanese colonial administration, an appreciation that is derived from personal characteristics and especially from the cultural heritage of the T’ai-ya racial group. This special quality of “appreciation” or “thankfulness” was then transformed into her belief in love, marriage, and her loyalty to the colonialist empire as well (Nakamura and Hung 24-25). Such loyalty both to love and to the empire, however, received no corresponding reward. Ironically enough, Chuwas’s story doesn’t recount a woman’s happy life or praise the welfare of the Japanese empire; on the contrary, the hardships and miseries that make up her romance address the unfaithfulness of a husband, the untrustworthiness of a marriage, and cruel domination of a colonialist empire.

Chuwas’s romance intertwines her individual experience with major historical events, making her romance not only between individuals but also between the ruler and the ruled. Her romance recaptures memories of her personal life; it also reorganizes fragments of the nation’s occupation history. This personal memoir therefore becomes a historical text of an individual, a gender, an ethnic group, and a nation. The romance does not simply describe a woman betrayed by love and discarded by marriage, but it also depicts a colonized subject suffering under colonialist control. It thus becomes a vital accusation of men’s domination and the empire’s exploitation. Chuwas’s autobiographical memories lead to the elaboration of discursive codes of resistance, whereby she rediscovers her life and reconstructs her female body, while destroying the myth of an empire and rewriting colonial history.
Re-membering Oneself

History—personal and national—never returns; one can only bring it back in memory. Memory thus becomes a vital subject in Chuwas’s telling of her romance.

Autobiographical memories tend to reveal what has been buried in the past. What Chuwas reveals in her story is a romance that has never been told and a history that was deliberately erased by the colonialist governments. Through remembering, Chuwas is able to regain herself: she discovers the meaning of her existence as a woman and a colonized subject. In the narrative representation, memory plays a key role in the act of narrating in which the past is retrieved to participate in a dialogue with the present. In the process of narrating, Chuwas is divided into two independent selves—the present and the past, the narrator and the character—who debate, criticize, and pass judgment on one at the expense of the other. From this perspective, Chuwas’s self-remembering is also a process of self-examination and self-identification. It is also from this perspective that Chuwas recognizes herself as a woman and as a colonized subject within her autobiographical memories.

Chuwas’s reflection on life is also a confession of former sins and inner strife. Confession foregrounds a narrative terrain in which the past is called back and exchanges dialogue with the present. This action is activated by an attempt to rediscover the values that are presumed to govern the previous experiences from which the inner strife was derived. Yet, the prime consequence of confession is that former sins are cancelled and previous struggles are resolved. As Chuwas’s former self and present self are synthesized, her life reaches a new balance. Likewise, Chuwas’s narration actually
involves an eventual reintegration of the past and the present, in which all the past experiences are reshaped and acquire new meanings. From this perspective, Chuwas’s confession is not merely a perspective from which she acknowledges all the miseries brooding over her life and nostalgically relives her inner sorrow. It is rather a way of elaborating the meaning of life, a life that is drawn into the expectation of peace. Eventually, Chuwas reappears no longer as a young female grieving for her own miseries and resisting the empire’s cruel control, but as a peaceful woman with a new understanding of life. In this regard, remembering, for Chuwas, is also a means toward self-salvation.

Chuwas’s narration aims to recapture memories of her romance and to rediscover the values that have governed her previous experiences. For Chuwas, remembering the past is a propelling action and a compelling subject, and its narrative representation is an aesthetic gain of new perspective and new being. Chuwas’s hardships and miseries as well as her reflections on those past experiences constitute the content of her romance. Memory allows the narrator to construct a sustained world whose perspective requires judgment and fosters a process of identification that involves an eventual reintegration of the past and the present.

*Re-membering History*

Intertwined with major historical events, Chuwas’s romance functions as an interesting historical text. It testifies to the cruel history of an individual, an ethnic group, and a nation under colonialist domination. Chuwas’s romance provides a narrative
whose aboriginal female perspective tends to undermine the political, cultural, and historical discourse that has been dominated by the male colonizers.

Postcolonial feminist criticism has centered on the male, colonialist aspect that dominated colonial historical discourse. Viewing “mapping” as a “distinctive form of spatial representation,” Allison Blunt and Gillian Rose argue that the colonial space is actually visualized as a “sexual space”: “The construction of a ‘sexual space’ paralleled the construction of space to be colonized, and the desire for colonial control was often expressed in terms of sexual control.” According to them, such “visibility” is also emphasized in “imperialist history” in its legitimatizing of conquest (10). Colonies, along with the people, are often imagined as abundant female bodies that await the male conquerors in the “official” colonial history. Chuwas’s romance, which addresses the relationships between male and female and between the colonizers and the colonized from the aspect of an aboriginal woman, challenges the authenticity of the colonialist history provided by the male colonizers. In her version of history, Chuwas neither admires the empire’s great achievements nor defends its colonialist policies, as imperialist historians would have done. Rather, the colonial space that Chuwas presents is characterized by a deserted female colonized subject suffering a miserable life due to the colonialist control. Chuwas’s naïve expectation for a better life is accompanied by her resistance to the cruel control of the empire, which has turned her life into misery and despair.

As a Taiwanese aboriginal female, Chuwas occupies a very special social and cultural position in the colonial space of the empire. As Liang I-ping 梁一萍 notes, Chuwas occupies a space of “in-between” because she neither belongs to the society of...
the colonizers nor to her aboriginal tribe due to her marriage. Such a unique status puts her in a particular discursive position in the narrative, whose operation is apt to deconstruct the established codes of colonialist domination and “re-map” the colonial space from a female colonized viewpoint (338). In this regard, Chuwas’s romance is no longer between individuals; rather, it presents a historical narrative that creates a dialogue with the colonialist discourse dominated by the male colonizers.

*Unfolding Empire*

As argued earlier, Chuwas’s love story is a romance not only between individuals but also between the colonizers and the colonized. Likewise, her autobiographical memories that focus on her secret romantic love functions as the historical text of an individual, a gender, an ethnic group, and a nation. Chuwas’s female body may symbolize the colony exhausted by the violent power of colonialism, and her romance informs the rewriting of colonial history in opposition to “imperialist history.” However, one may ask whether the aboriginal female perspective in Chuwas’s historical account has the power to overthrow the male colonizers’ political, cultural, and historical dominance, or would it repeat such dominance. In other words, does Chuwas’s narrative actually reconstruct a new colonial history that opposes the “imperialist history,” or does it ultimate duplicate a history that repeats the hierarchy of male/female, colonizer/colonized?

It would be too naïve to believe that Chuwas’s narrative will shape a new historical perspective, and further, compose a new history on the part of the aboriginal. In the narrative, the narrator, the transcriber, and the translator present various narrative perspectives, demonstrating various positions in discourse; their positions occupy and
share the power of knowledge. In her discussion of narrative presentation in relation to
the operation of the power of knowledge, Chiu Kuei-fen points out that “the complexity
of interests and the dialectic of ideologies in this book prove this romance to be not
simply a common oral history. A dramatic tension lies between those particular
discursive positions of the narrator and the interpreters, and between their supplementary
and critical interruptions” (Liang 357). Liang makes it clear that “the dialogue, mingled
with Nakamura’s theory on modernization, Hung’s feminist discourse on ‘Taiwanese
women’s fate,’ and Chuwas’s intimate love, actually exchanges no words at all. They
speak only for themselves.” Liang argues that this book is “a postmodernist text between
an anthropological report and an oral history, a romance that masks the Taiwanese
aboriginal myth, Nakamura’s imperialist masculine gaze, and Hung’s Taiwanese feminist
complex. Such an overlapping text displays a ‘partial’ perspective; everyone sees what
she/he desires to see”(360). Chiu and Liang’s insightful observations help understand the
notion that discursive positions compose the structure of the power of knowledge.
Undoubtedly, such a power configuration is germane to the various perspectives
presented by the narrator, transcriber, and translator.

In the eyes of the Japanese anthropologist, Chuwas’s narration is more than a
personal love romance, for it is a record of “the modernization process of a Taiwanese
aboriginal tribe” (Nakamura and Hung 4). Nakamura constantly interrupts Chuwas’s
narration by inserting notes, which include explanations of historical events,
interpretations of the T’ai-ya tribe’s specific cultural traits, corrections of years, and
information regarding historical facts, etc.. These notes express Nakamura’s
humanitarian concern and his reflection on the modernization effort that the Japanese
empire made on her colonies. As the first colony that Japan acquired overseas, Taiwan was to be built as a “showcase” of the modern Japanese empire to the Western colonialist powers. With this goal in mind, early Japanese colonial administrators in Taiwan made great effort to “modernize” Taiwan, accompanied by gradual and aggressive assimilation policies.150 In his study of Japanese assimilation as part of its efforts at modernization, Harry Lamley has argued that Japanese assimilation reflects a certain humanitarianism with a feeling of superiority (498-99). Nakamura’s endless notes share similar concerns with those of the Japanese colonizers half century ago. Nakamura describes his encounter with Chuwas as “an excitement as if shocked by lightening” (Nakamura and Hung 4). Such an excitement, as Liang puts it, is actually the haunting “colonialist ghost” that reappears on the stage of postcolonialism in the masquerade of Taiwanese nativism (360).

With his imperialist masculine gaze, Nakamura attempts to “transcribe” Chuwas’s romance into an “imperialist history.” His effort can be best illustrated in the Introduction in which he composes six parts: “Women’s Oral History,” “The Natural Environment of the K’a-la tribe,” “The Retreat of the Japanese Administration,” “The Chinese Military Invasion,” “The 228 Incident,” and “Special Police Agency.” These categories indicate that besides his anthropological interest, Nakamura aims to restore a Japanese “imperialist history” viewed from the perspective of an imperialist historian. Nakamura expresses regret over the retreat of the Japanese administration in Taiwan by listing its “unavoidable” guidelines and policies; yet, he criticizes the Chinese military invasion and Kuomintang’s dictatorial rule. Nakamura presents the illusion that Taiwan

150 Among many, these Japanese administrators include the governor Lodama Gentaro and his civil administrator Koto Simpei, Alashi Motojiro, and Den Kenjiro.
is still a part of the Japanese empire, a territory that requires urgent modernization to be carried out by its “motherland,” and the Taiwanese remain the “imperial” subjects, the same as all other races within the Japanese empire. Clearly, Chuwas appears to Nakamura not as a female individual who lived throughout this period of turmoil; rather, she represents the entirety of a Taiwanese aboriginal tribe as imperial subjects that remain intact in a Japanese imperialist’s memory. Therefore, Chuwas and her tribe become an object for anthropological study, and her life becomes a perfect example that witnesses the history of a former colony over which Japan lost control. Chuwas’s personal love and marriage never become the focal point in Nakamura’s account of history; the aboriginal tribe that Chuwas signifies is visualized as a “sexual space” through the eyes of the former imperial colonizers. Nakamura makes an effort to compose an “unfinished” imperialist history, as he strives to testify to the “uncompleted” process of modernization by the Japanese empire.

In the translator’s account of Chuwas’s romance, however, feminist and nationalist discourse takes place. In the Introduction, Hung adds feminist and nationalist significance to Chuwas’s role by magnifying it as a symbol of “Taiwanese women” and the colony. Thus, as her miseries indicate the destiny of Taiwanese women, they also inscribe the fate of the “nation” of Taiwan as a colony. Hung suggests that such a feminist perspective is a vital key to understand Taiwan’s colonial history (Nakamura and Hung 22).

Caught in a deep anxiety for history, Taiwanese postcolonial critics often consider the retrieval of historical memories as a primary task for gaining cultural freedom and as a project for rebuilding a nation. Many Taiwanese postcolonial feminists combine this
postcolonial concern with feminist discourse, viewed as a powerful tool to deconstruct all the historical discourse dominated by the former male colonizers. The translator Hung, who recognizes Chuwas as a symbol of colonized Taiwan, expresses a perspective similar to that of such postcolonial feminists. Relating Chuwas’s fate to the destiny of modern Taiwan as a colony, Hung compares the colonized nation to a female’s body. Hung postulates that the female is destined to be “minor,” just as the colonized nation is to its motherland. Clearly, Hung recognizes Chuwas’s text as a postcolonial feminist historical discourse that opposes colonial control and male domination. In passing judgment on Chuwas’s romance, Hung occupies a dominant discursive position that only benefits her own social and political purposes. Hung’s interpretations demonstrate that Chuwas once again becomes a “minority” in the domain of modern Taiwan’s historical discourse.

Unlike Nakamura’s anthropological approach and Hung’s nationalist/feminist perspective, Chuwas sees her romance, marriage, race, nation, and history from a personal viewpoint. “Modernization,” for Chuwas, is neither an abstract concept of “progress” nor a colonialist policy of the Japanese empire; rather, it indicates a series of changes that happened to her tribe and altered her personal life. Owing to modernization, Chuwas, along with other members of her tribe, lost their land, culture, language, and

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151 Liang, however, criticizes such a comparison of a colonized nation with a female’s body. She argues that Chuwas becomes a “minor” not simply because she is a “colonized woman,” but because of the “intrusion of nations” (359). In other words, it is nation (the colonialis occupation), rather than gender, that makes the female a “minor” group. Liang aims to bring up the notion that both nation and the female are not “minor” in the first place; the female becomes “minor” only when the nation is occupied by other nations. “Minority” is therefore a structure of comparison; Chuwas is a minor female as opposed to the male Japanese, male Chinese, and even the female Taiwanese—for instance, the Taiwanese translator Hung.

152 In her study of the representation of the subaltern, Gayatri C. Spivak argues that the bourgeoisie in the third world are not truly nationalists, as their discourse often serves particular economic, social, political, and ideological purposes. See Gayatri C. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Selected Subaltern Studies, ed. Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (New York: Oxford UP, 1988), 66-111.
ways of living; in order to survive, they were forced, among many things, to learn the Japanese and Chinese languages, to become servants in the houses of the colonizers, and to work in the factories. They experienced for the first time the operation of a “national” apparatus that was so ubiquitous and powerful that no one could escape. However, it would be a mistake to suggest that Chuwas acquires a better understanding of the concept of a “nation” after confronting those drastic changes. Nation seems to Chuwas a vague notion; the distinction between Japan and China is characterized by and only can be recognized by her different sentiment toward her Japanese lover Onishi and her Chinese husband Tan 譚氏. The former conveys intense emotions and preserves many memories; the latter, however, signals a “formal marriage without actual content” (Nakamura and Hung 261). Her lovers, Onishi and Tan, mark the distinction and relatedness of the various forms of colonialist domination. Importantly, it is always the memories of love that occupy the central place of Chuwas’s narration.

Chuwas’s search for individual identity relies mostly on the historical discourse dominated by male characters. Or to put it another way, Chuwas could only discovers herself in the midst of historical events that are imbued with nationalist/feminist resistance. In her observation of Chuwas’s narrative, Liang points out that “historical discourse often overrides love romance…women’s desires are often oppressed by nationalist discourse” (360). Chuwas’s narration informs such an ironic narrative structure. The image of Chuwas becomes vivid when it is displayed along with other racial and cultural traits, and her existence as a woman and as a subject becomes recognizable when she appears in the major historical events that characterize Taiwan’s colonial history. Not surprisingly, Hung, in the Introduction, presents Chuwas as a
symbol of Taiwanese women and her miserable life as a faithful representation of modern Taiwan’s colonial history. Chuwas’s romance thus becomes a site of discursive struggles against the colonialist domination that characterized modern Taiwan’s colonial history.

Conclusion

Nakamura, the Japanese anthropologist, has treated this text as a field research report concerning a Taiwanese aboriginal tribe. Under his masculine gaze, Chuwas’s female body becomes an object of colonial desire, and the colonial space of her tribe becomes an “other” for the recognition of a lost empire. In addition, with his humanitarian concern, Nakamura regards his research as a witnessing of the modernization process of the T’ai-ya tribe. In contrast, viewing Chuwas as a symbol of the entirety of Taiwanese women, Hung, the Taiwanese scholar, translates this romance into a site of discursive struggles against the colonialist domination that characterized modern Taiwan’s colonial history. Clearly, they see what they expect to see.

Indeed, the dialectic of ideologies in this book indicates that this romance is not simply a common oral history. A dramatic tension lies between those particular discursive positions of the narrator and the interpreters, and between their supplementary and critical interruptions. This book is about Chuwas’s intimate love; it is also an anthropological report and an oral history. Significantly, the narrative representation of this romance masks the Taiwanese aboriginal myth, the Japanese imperialist masculine gaze, and Taiwanese feminist complex. These discursive positions reveal the structure of the power of knowledge and blur the truthfulness of history. Perhaps, remembering is also forgetting. This overlapping text displays only a ‘partial’ perspective; everyone sees
what she/he desires to see. The narrator, the transcriber, and the translator speak only for themselves.
CONCLUSION

GLOBAL FRAGMENTS:
NEGOTIATING TAIWAN LITERATURE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

During the long history of the occupation of Taiwan, Taiwanese native authors have produced a considerable amount of literature that addressed issues related to individual and national struggle under colonialist dominations. In this postcolonial era, which seeks cultural and national freedom, Taiwan’s literary discourse has been closely associated with the experience of colonization and deeply implicated in the national struggle for identity. This colonial imagination, which builds on colonial nostalgia and colonial legacies, however, is caught between the affirmation of an ‘authentic’ local culture and the celebration of global cultural amalgamation. In his concluding section, I would like to address the problematic nature of the cultural production of locality in an age of globalization by examining literary discourse in the postcolonial era in Taiwan. Taiwan’s postcolonial literary discourse has been overwhelmed by questions of the construction of cultural and national identity. This study investigates the conflicts between these nativist movements and the trend of globalization that signals the hybridization of identity. Taiwan’s local narratives function both as liberation from oppression and as rejection of universal modernity; these narratives should be reviewed in their contingence in terms not only of narratives of de-colonization but also of the politics of globalization. This study, therefore, considers Taiwan’s local narratives in the global context. It pinpoints the
process whereby the cultural production of local subjectivity, as a new paradigm of life, negotiates with the global forces that seek to disorganize it, reconstitute it, and assimilate it into pattern of global homogenization. By citing local narratives as productive forces tending toward globalism, this study aims to move postcolonial discourse beyond the rhetoric of Self/Other produced by the hierarchy and antagonism of the colonizers and the colonized. It attempts as well to shift the understanding of Taiwan’s local narratives from a nationalistic model of cultural authenticity toward a more global perspective of difference, multiplicity, and hybridity.

Taiwan’s ‘Postcolonial’ Era and the Literary Activities

First of all, the postcolonial study of Taiwan’s nativist literature confronts the question: When does ‘postcolonial’ era begin on the island of Taiwan. As a matter of fact, the recognition of Taiwan’s ‘postcolonial’ era has been a complex and mostly a political issue. Based on their racial heritages and different experience of colonial encounters, different ethnic and sub-ethnic groups living on the island develop various perspectives of postcoloniality. As I have mentioned many times in this manuscript, the mainland Chinese who came with the Nationalist government (KMT), 1945, the year the Japanese colonial administration retreated from Taiwan marks the beginning of Taiwan’s de-colonization and hence of its postcolonialism. In contrast, for some nativist critics—especially Minnan and Hokka descendants—1945 marks a tragic beginning, of yet another 50 years of KMT internal colonization. Adopting the viewpoint of Taiwanese nativist critics, this manuscript sees Chinese Nationalist rule mainly as a colonizing power over the island from the mainland.
Since Taiwan’s colonial past was deliberately erased and its literature was ignored, many Taiwanese nativists seek national and cultural freedom by promoting the retrieval of historical memories. Taiwan’s nativist literature thus voiced a deep anxiety about history, and such an anxiety led to the productions of historical novels and Taiwan’s literary history. Not surprisingly, those works showed a vigorous desire and a greater ambition to recover historical memories. As a result, the practice of writing announced a Taiwanese literary tradition that took deep root on its colonial history, it also helped create an identity of an imagined community.

All the controversy over literary activities in postcolonial Taiwan converge in the heated debates on the concept of “Taiwan literature,” which concerns itself with the problems of language choice, cultural subjectivity, and the legitimacy of sovereignty. The debate on ‘Taiwan literature’ is above all a political issue. Could ‘Taiwan literature’ be labeled as a ‘national’ literature or a ‘postcolonial’ literature? The concept of “Taiwan literature” is ambiguous not simply because Taiwan’s political status quo is unclear, but also because of the fact that many languages involved in the production of modern Taiwan’s literature. One may ask, should does Taiwan’s national literature include all the writings in Taiwanese, Chinese, Japanese, and many aboriginal languages? Arguing that the native tongue represents the national spirit, many nativists insist that Taiwanese is of the utmost importance for the creation of a national ‘Taiwan literature.’ It is evident that the nativist insistence on using the native tongue implies resistance to Chinese cultural and political hegemony.

Taiwanese postcolonial critics also describe modern Taiwan’s literature as a “post-colonial” literature. Despite the controversy over the term ‘post-colonial,’ Taiwan’s long
tradition of anti-colonialist writings seems suitable for this definition. However, such a
definition reduces the whole body of modern Taiwan’s literary production into anti-
colonialist writings and excludes a large corpus of writings that lack the anti-colonialist
spirit. More importantly, any effort to define ‘Taiwan literature’ as a singular and
absolute entity only limits its possibilities and risks hegemonic oppression.

_National Literature in the Global Context—Difference, Multiplicity, and Diversity_

While taking part in the process of de-colonization and nativist movement, Taiwan’s
nativist writing faces another challenge: How will the promotion of local subjectivity
negotiate with the global forces that seek to assimilate it into the global homogenization.
In his criticism of the postcolonial condition, Arif Dirlik views postcolonialism as
expressive of the “logic” of what he has called “Global Capitalism” (70). Global
Capitalism indicates a process of transnationalization and globalization of production. It
homogenizes the globe economically, socially, and culturally, while blurring the
boundaries of nations and deconstructing identity. From this perspective, it is clear that
local narratives that seek to affirm some “authentic” local culture are constantly
disorganized by the global force that seeks to assimilate them within global
homogenization (Dirlik 100-01). Taiwan’s nativist discourse, which has given primacy
to cultural subjectivity and national identity, has aimed to reaffirm a cultural tradition and
to reconstruct the nation. As expressed by a radical economic slogan,” Think globally,
act locally,” Taiwanese literary critics who have understood the unavoidability of the
global forces attempt to situate the discourse of Taiwan’s national literature in the global
context. Calling for a move beyond an analysis based on colonial nostalgia or colonial
legacies, the efforts that sought a literature autonomous from the former colonizers are redirected to formulate a new form of literary discourse that values *difference, multiplicity, and diversity*. Combining the various dimensions from the most individual and local to the fully global, local narratives, as Dirlik believes, are ultimately able to serve as building blocks for the global future (101).
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