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Arif Dirlik, Ping-Hui Liao, Ya-Chung Chuang, eds. *Taiwan: The Land Colonialisms Made*. Volume 45, issue 3 of *boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018. 200 pp. \$12.00 (paper), ISBN 978-1-4780-0357-1.

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Taiwan's contested sovereignty provides the platform for the late Arif Dirlik (1940-2017) to urge in his introduction greater attention to the "relationship between colonialism and historical identity formation" as not just "deviations from the evolution of national identity [but] constituents of its formation" (p. 3). Dirlik marshalled considerable chronological and geographic sweep in situating the island state, which is considered by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to be a renegade province, as a compelling example of why the historical experiences, cultural adaptations, and political values accrued under colonial rule are necessary elements of contemporary identity formations and boundary claims. This lens enables closer scrutiny of the expansive category of "Chineseness," its historical construction over two millennia, and the diverse geographies, peoples, and cultures claimed through "Sinicization" as components of the powerfully absorbant Han Chinese Confucian Empire. Drawing on the work of anthropologist Melissa Brown (*Is Taiwan Chinese? The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities* [2004]), Dirlik stressed the less familiar possibilities of de-Sinicization as readily discerned in Taiwan's multiple colonial eras and the many divergences between its history and politics from those of the Chinese mainland. Although increasingly marginalized politically and economically in international arenas, Taiwanese claims to independence based on distinctive historical, political, social, and cultural experiences parallel the challenges that are being posed from other geopolitical areas claimed as "Chinese" by the PRC, such as Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang. For these reasons, the problem of Taiwan for the PRC projects far beyond

the small island's shores because of the fissures it reveals of a Chinese nation based on claims of a unifying "Chineseness."

Dirlik contextualized aspects of these constructions, such as the multiple and inconsistent usages of such key terms as "China" (*zhongguo* or middle kingdom), which only relatively recently came to consistently refer to China and Chinese through labeling by foreign powers. Dirlik dated this shift in international relations and national identification to the signing of the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689. Even so, through the late nineteenth century, dynastic names such as the Qing (or earlier Ming) remained the most common self-referents. Although references to a "middle kingdom" date back about two millennia, the geopolitical entities so described were northern-based kingdoms that irregularly ruled over areas further south and west. Dirlik highlighted disjunctures with southern Yue-speaking peoples of the Guangdong region and their apparent differences from their northern conquerors to highlight the constructedness of Han or Hua ethnicity, which projects a unified Confucian cultural and social system, values, and written language. The presumed successes of Sinicization or assimilation (*hanhua* or *tonghua*) mask the tremendous diversity of localized persons, spoken languages, lived experiences, and communal identifications only partially "Sinicized" through territorial conquest. In the case of Taiwan, "colonization and resistance to it have framed the forces that have propelled the island's cultural formation, giving it a unique identity of its own which is not merely a local version of some abstract 'Chineseness' but an inde-

pendent identity, the product of a process not of ‘sinicization’ but of Taiwanization” (p. 8). In this conceptual framing, if the PRC were to succeed in its campaign to impose sovereignty over Taiwan and its peoples, the result would be recolonization, rather than reunification with fellow Chinese.

The eight substantive articles appearing in this special issue explore varied manifestations of “Taiwanization.” First presented at the eponymously named conference convened December 2014 at the College of Hakka Studies, National Chiao Tung University in Taiwan, the articles share several conceptual stakes and themes. Except when evoking indigeneity and indigenous persons as key aspects of contemporary Taiwanese society, most focus temporally on post-Qing history divided into the following eras: Japanese colonial rule (1895-1945); recolonization by the Kuomintang (KMT), which governed as a dictatorship that imposed martial law (1945-87); and postcolonization marked by democratization and emergence of a Taiwanese civic sphere (1987-present). The gulfs between the timelines of Taiwan and mainland China foster the presumption that Taiwan was at best a marginalized, Chinese frontier and now constitutes “a separate national formation” woven together from a unique fabric of aboriginal cultures and successive waves of settler colonialisms by Hoklo and Hakka and post-1945 refugees arriving along with the defeated KMT (p. 9). Cultural projects such as fiction and poetry, television dramas, political discourses, and varieties of multiculturalism all manifest elements of Taiwanization.

Given these marked differences from the PRC, the contributing scholars also explore why many Taiwanese continue nonetheless to identify with their would-be conquerors. The enormous gravitational pull of the Chinese economy shoulders much of the responsibility but so does the insidious hegemony of Sinocentrism, which fuels beliefs in the Chineseness of Taiwanese people and therefore inextricable kinship to their cross-straits neighbors. The resulting ambivalence about Taiwanese, and whether and how it is constituted distinctly from Chineseness, fuels contestations and uncertainties about what it means to be Taiwanese and thus the political direction the islanders should follow. Most of the articles reference the 2014 Sunflower Movement in which college students occupied the national legislature for twenty-three days to protest the lack of transparency and irregular processes on the part of the KMT as it attempted to enact an economic agreement intended to open up Taiwan’s service sector with PRC businesses. In addition to the procedural irregularities, the protesters and

their broad base of public supporters believed that the Cross Strait Service Agreement (CSSA) would damage local job prospects and force unacceptable levels of integration between the Taiwanese and PRC economies. The vehemence, political cohesion, and logistical skills displayed in the Sunflower Movement marked unprecedented levels of agreement regarding the gulfs between Taiwanese interests and PRC expansiveness and Taiwanese capacities for political mobilization and messaging, but also highlighted the powerful neoliberalist rationales that have fostered tightening economic ties and the KMT’s active complicity in binding Taiwan’s future to the mainland.

Fang-chih Irene Yang’s “The Politics and Aesthetics of Chinese Drama (*Huajyu*) in Taiwan” most squarely addresses the intersection of cultural production, politics, and economic markets that advances ideological and infrastructural attachment of Taiwan to the PRC. Remark- ing on how aesthetics often serve as masks for political projects, Yang analyzes television dramas produced by the Taiwanese Chinese Television System, which is dominated by post-1945 mainlander elites and develops shows intended for the “Chinese-language market” that is dominated by PRC audiences. The Chinese drama (*huajyu*) formula claims to showcase “Taiwan’s strength [which] is its Chinese culture with Taiwanese characteristics” to compete against Korean productions (p. 156). In service to the Chinese-language market, however, the dramas subsume Taiwanese characters and their cultural capital to Han Chinese characters of higher status, wealth, and ethical and family formations. Yang comments that “the repriviling of Chineseness operates through the commodification of Taiwanese as ethnicity, and thus as difference, in the age of globalization, which works to the advantage of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the KMT’s goal for unification” (p. 150). The seemingly irresistible allure of profit by collaboration with PRC markets, and the KMT’s abiding attachment to the Chinese mainland despite its historic enmity with the ruling Chinese Communists, infuses popular culture productions with political implications in ways that can be hard to register even as they naturalize connections to Chineseness. P. Kerim Friedman also critiques the KMT for claiming Taiwanese in ways that affirm essentialized ties to China. In “The Hegemony of the Local: Taiwanese Multiculturalism and Indigenous Identity Politics,” Friedman observes that KMT efforts to claim multiculturalism, which was a necessary legitimation strategy after the end of martial law in 1987, included outreach to indigenous populations that projected local represen-

tativeness but without relinquishing the centrality of its orientation to China.

A recurring theme examines the repeated failings of discourses that claim Taiwan's belonging to a Sinocentric sphere in the face of social and political experience. In "Democracy under Siege: *Xiangmin* Politics in Sunflower Taiwan," Ya-Chung Chuang critiques PRC assertions that Chinese people are unsuited for democracy and are better ruled by a "meritocratic decision-making process," such as found on the mainland under the elite leadership of a "CEO-scholar-official collaboration," such as that which attempted to enact the CSSA (pp. 73, 75). The Sunflower Movement not only rebutted this kind of elitism and authoritarianism but also revealed the effectiveness of *xiangmin* (country people) discourses cultivated by bluntly outspoken youth through emergent civic spheres operating through social media platforms, such as the Bulletin Board System. Ping-hui Liao challenges claims of an "affective community" based on cultural commonalities between Taiwan and PRC Chinese in "Dangerous Liaisons and the Sexual Politics of Brotherhood: Strait Talk on Affective Communities." Liao's close reading of Li Ang's 2009 novel *Affective Affinity for Seven Generations* about a failed erotic relationship between a Taiwanese feminist writer and a mid-level PRC official illuminates the "rather twisted politics of sanguinity and brotherhood across the Taiwan Strait" (p. 45).

The special issue features efforts to identify and map out paths that clarify aspects of Taiwanization. Leo T. S. Ching's "Reconciliation Otherwise: Intimacy, Indigeneity, and the Taiwan Difference" explores indigeneity as constituting a key difference in Taiwan as does reconciliation with Japanese colonial experiences as suggested through the "intergenerational intimacy" that Ching identifies in accounts of the Musha rebellion (1930) in the movie *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale* (2011) and the novel by Tsushima Yuko *Exceedingly Barbaric* (2008). Yin Wang considers the impact of KMT authoritarianism on the generation of Taiwanese intellectuals born before 1970 in "From Anticolonial and Subnational to Ambivalently Postcolonial: Postwar Taiwanese Intellectuals in Lai Xiangyin's Literary Portraits." Wang draws on the fiction of Lai Xiangyin "as postwar se-

quels to Wu Zhuoliu's *Orphan of Asia*" (1946), which features "sub-Chinese" who navigated the switch of dominant language from Japanese to Chinese and the degrading treatments they received during the authoritarian period. Taiwanese identity remains infirm, however, in part because of the materialism of Taiwanese business elites who sought fortunes in China during the "postdictatorship" period. Nikky Lin and Shu-jung Chen, in "Poetry as Protest in Modern Taiwan," like Yang, acknowledge that politics are often masked by aesthetics but provide examples showing that from the colonial period through the Sunflower Movement, Taiwanese poets have sought to capture lived realities through their writings. Jing Tsu's "Comparative Taiwan Literature, Within and Without" suggests strategies for rescaling comparative literary approaches—specifically Hakka literature from Taiwan in relation to Macau productions—to demonstrate a methodology that allows greater consideration of cultural formations emerging from marginal sites to decenter Sinocentric assumptions about Chineseness. These ventures into versions of Taiwanization and Taiwanese-ness are by no means conclusive, and tend to underscore the incompleteness and ongoing negotiations around these identity formations.

With Taiwan at the center of the target lines for the PRC's surging nationalist projects, this special issue dovetails with the *boundary 2* editors' mission to publish "only materials that identify and analyze the tyrannies of thought and action spreading around the world and that suggest alternatives to these emerging configurations of power" (back page). Published in this venue, this gathering of Taiwan studies scholars seeks to rally "sources of social power [that] are simultaneously both local and cosmopolitan" to forge political power among "the international network of government agencies and human rights groups" (adapted from Friedman's description of the political power of international networks for indigenous groups, p. 91) to which *boundary 2* speaks. They demand recognition for Taiwanese people's historical and cultural distinctiveness not only among scholars of Taiwan, or of Asia, but also of critical literary and humanities specialists at large in hopes of securing a permanent future for this vulnerable, would-be nation-state.

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