

Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang. *Literary Culture in Taiwan: Martial Law to Market Law*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. xi, 271 pp. Hardcover \$38.00. ISBN 0-231-13234-4.

Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang's study of the contextual forces that shaped literary history in Taiwan from 1949 to the early 1990s is the most comprehensive and theoretically sophisticated treatment of contemporary Chinese literature from Taiwan available to date in English. As a work that focuses on underlying issues such as cultural institutions, various literary camps, the political climate as it evolved through the decades, and other forces that shaped the environment in which literature was produced, this book is a very good complement to her previous book, *Modernism and the Nativist Resistance: Contemporary Chinese Fiction from Taiwan* (Duke, 1993), which primarily performs close readings of many salient literary texts written during the same period. The basic thesis of *Literary Culture in Taiwan* is that, given the gradual shift from political repression to hegemony and soft authoritarianism and finally to the predominant influence of market forces on literary trends, a new paradigm is necessary in order to adequately grasp the true nature of literary events in Taiwan over the past half-century. In particular, what is required, according to Chang, is a contextual approach that foregrounds the impact of politics and the marketplace on literature because these two external factors played such a determinative role in its production. She turns for her analysis of this relationship to the theoretical works of two exponents of Western Marxism—Raymond Williams (the monumental British cultural theorist) and Peter Uwe Hohendahl (a U.S.-based scholar of the Frankfurt school)—and to the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Each of these scholars has emphasized the social factors that condition cultural phenomena. Chang generally views the literary terrain in Taiwan as breaking down into four groups of authors: mainstream, modernist, nativist, and localist. Her book is divided into eight chapters that sketch in detail both the critical framework and discuss the literary events in Taiwan largely in chronological fashion.

In reading the book, I have come to the broad conclusion that above all the book is accurate. That may seem like faint praise to the reader, but it is not. By virtue of her constant study of Taiwan literature over a period that has spanned

nearly three decades, Chang has at her fingertips the knowledge of historical minutiae on many different levels that allows her to place into context immediately practically any event, any work of literature, or any trend. She does this with the self-assurance of a master. Books on literature are always open to subjective evaluation to some extent—some more than others. It is my experience that occasionally books get published with wildly inaccurate views—not just of the literature in question (which I am willing to concede is open to various interpretations)—but of the historical, cultural, and social context as well. In some cases, these works have simply been wrong in their empirical understanding of the historical milieu. It is a pleasure, and actually somewhat refreshing, therefore, to read Chang's book and see that it not only comports with my understanding of the historical context but that it has enlightened me in some ways too. One usually gains insight from the critical readings of other scholars. What I found particularly noteworthy about this book, however, was Chang's complete grasp of Taiwan's postwar history as well as some subtle nuances in it that had escaped my attention.

In Chapter 1, Chang sets the stage for her analysis by providing a brief theory of previous approaches to the study of Taiwan, all of which are now essentially outmoded. She notes, for example, that in the first thirty years following the Civil War between the Nationalists and the Communists, most Western scholars did not have direct access to resources in mainland China and thus had to rely on Taiwan as a sort of micro-example of what modern Chinese culture and society supposedly looked like. Thus, many anthropologists, for example, used Taiwan as case study material for findings that were thought to be emblematic of Chinese culture in general. And since Taiwan did not undergo a Communist revolution, it was further considered an example of what China might look like if it had not encountered such social upheaval. As China opened its doors, interest from the outside world in Taiwan waned, but it still held some cachet as a component of mainland China. As Taiwan diminished in the eyes of those who saw it as a place to conduct research that could serve as a synecdoche for China proper, Taiwan studies as a field in its own right began to emerge, particularly within Taiwan's academic community itself. Many scholars began to focus their research on Taiwan itself and the social capital of the localist intellectual groups who had long been touting Taiwan as a place of study on its own began to rise. The emergence of poststructural theory as a method of analysis coincided with this trend, and as a result Taiwanese studies tend to be highly theoretical in nature. Chang argues that the "contextual approach" of her book is designed as an ameliorative to the lack of historicist scholarship on the island and its culture.

As a work that is foremost interested in discovering the "conditions under which writing and reading occur" (p. 31), Chang's book naturally makes use of the theoretical framework fashioned by Hohendahl in his study of literature as an institution in nineteenth-century France and Germany. Hohendahl's

approach is concerned not with individual traits but with a system of literary production as it relates to other cultural systems. Institutional peculiarities in Taiwan, such as the establishment of government-sponsored literary journals, prizes, associations and, ultimately, *fuelliton* (newspaper literary supplements—*fukan* 副刊 in Chinese), are analyzed in systematic detail in Hohendahl's work. From Bourdieu, Chang derives her notion of the literary field, a social formation that is hierarchically organized and set up according to its own rules but, while autonomous from other fields, interacts with and is affected by others. These positions played and still play an important role in Taiwan as their relative clout with the government or with public sentiment or the market has great bearing on their ability to garner the resources necessary to perpetuate themselves. Raymond Williams, a theorist who is interested in historical shifts in literary and cultural phenomena, provides Chang with the notions of hegemonic, alternative, and oppositional cultural formations, a framework that she uses to characterize various literary positions at various times in recent history. Although Chang's theoretical framework is sophisticated, it is not obtrusive. In fact, one could argue that it only very subtly underlies her otherwise decidedly historicist and one could even say empiricist way of presenting her subject matter to the reader. But she does from time to time return to this general tripartite frame.

Chang sketches the historical background for many of the government-sponsored institutions that supported literature in Taiwan in the decade after the Retrocession in her second chapter. Citing the scholarship of Zheng Mingli, she outlines how Zhang Daofan 張道藩, a high-ranking Guomindang (GMD) official, first set out to create a role for the political apparatus in literary policy and then shows how he endeavored to enact that policy in Taiwan during the 1950s. Following Zheng and adding some sophisticated analysis from Charles Laughlin, she argues that what Zhang Daofan did in establishing a "collectivist" strategy (pp. 50–54) with tight restrictions behind the scenes by political operatives such as Zhang Daofan ironically had resonances with the literary and art policy promulgated by Mao Zedong in 1942. What Chang should have included in this portion of her book was some reference to my dissertation that devotes extensive space to the importance of Zhang Daofan as a political operative who guided literary policy from 1942 in Chongqing through the mid and late 1950s in Taiwan. It is clear from a careful examination of Chang's book that she did not consult my dissertation, which is unfortunate since it was published one year before Zheng Mingli's article on Zhang Daofan and literary policy (and, in fact, the relevant portions were written several years prior to publication of the dissertation and presented at various conferences and other venues).¹ Chang clearly moves beyond the issue of GMD literary policy that I first discussed in my dissertation and Zheng Mingli subsequently covered in her article when she turns to her analysis of Jiang Gui's 姜貴 classic novel *Whirlwind* 旋風. It has been conventional wisdom for several decades, and my impression too,

that the main reason Jiang's novel failed to be published widely and develop a broad following of readers was because there had been some covert mischief involved in subverting his chances of locating a willing publisher. And the reason for this mischief stemmed from the fact that the novel was not sufficiently anti-Communist for some of the very political operatives who were well placed in the state apparatus in the 1950s. What Chang advances does not gainsay the generally held view; however, it adds a further perspective, and that is that the novel also failed for marketing reasons. That is to say, the novel did not adopt a literary structure of what I have called "historical romance" that was palatable to the readership in 1950s Taiwan. In addition, the market for anti-Communist novels nostalgic for mainland China was already oversaturated. Chang offers the counterexample of Pan Renmu's 潘人木 *Cousin Lianyi* 漣漪錶妹 as a work that did cater to the tastes of the reading public while still maintaining good anti-Communist credentials. Pan's novel was a critical success and sold well. The importance of Chang's argument is that she suggests here for the first time that there was a significant set of market forces already in play in the 1950s that presaged further power in the bookstores in subsequent decades.

In chapter 3, Chang adds further flesh to the bone by exploring the ways in which mainstream intellectuals exerted power over the publishing industry under a "soft-authoritarian" style of rule through ideological means, not foremost through the means of political repression. The principal trope used in this effort was based on what Chang calls "Sinocentrism," in this case a subtle and pervasive effort to remind, at all times, the reading public in Taiwan of their close and fraternal bond with mainland China. She also shows how *chunwenxue* 純文學 or "pure literature" emerged as a shibboleth for intellectuals who, though their general sentiments were allied with the party ideologues, nevertheless chafed at their constant monitoring for ideological purity. One site of this was the *fukan* (supplement) of the *Lianhe bao* 聯合報 headed up by Lin Haiyin 林海音. Lin's family had good political connections in Taiwan, and she was seen as a "safe" member of the *bensheng* 本省 (native Taiwanese) to lead a major literary concern such as this *fukan*. In a strange political scuffle, however, she was forced to resign and eventually went on to found her own coterie journal under the name *Chunwenxue* (pure literature). While not exactly an irritation to the ideologues, the title of that journal still reminded the government that intellectuals were most comfortable putting literary merit above political expediency. Lin's work at *Lianhe bao* signaled a long and lasting tradition of intellectuals publishing literary works in mainstream dailies, a fact that remains today despite the vast changes along the way, changes that Chang goes on to detail in subsequent chapters of her book.

Another very interesting insight of Chang's is her analysis of the ways in which the "China trope," as she calls the employment of sinocentric themes in literature, shifts over time and, in particular, becomes more and more "aestheti-

cized” with each passing year. She begins this discussion in chapter 4 but continues it in subsequent chapters as well. Also in this chapter, she discusses two influential intellectuals—Xia Ji’an 夏濟安 and Yu Guangzhong 余光中—who were instrumental in transferring the controls of the literary apparatus in Taiwan from people like Zhang Daofan to people more like themselves—intellectuals who were loyal but independent from the state. The first part of this chapter centers on the crucial role of Xia Ji’an, and as Chang relies fairly heavily on my article on Xia, I can hardly argue with her there. Xia virtually singled-handedly slammed shut the door on the sort of anti-Communist “eight-legged-essay” style of writing 反共八股 and pushed Taiwan firmly in the direction of a realist mode of writing where formal considerations took precedent over those of political ideology. But, again, Chang moves beyond my argument, this time with her discussion of Yu Guangzhong, best known for his poetry (and also for his literary essays), who established several influential tenets of his own. Essentially, Yu, someone taken both with the positive aspects of traditional Chinese culture and with Western liberalism, advanced the notion that classical and modern literature are not antithetical to one another. This point opened Taiwan up to all sorts of new voices on the literary scene that both exploited the technical innovations of Western literature and freely made reference to China’s illustrious literary past. The large body of exquisitely wrought literary material written in Taiwan during this period is one central reason why people outside Taiwan have held contemporary Chinese literature from Taiwan in such high esteem. The neoclassical position that Yu adopts to some extent from Pound and Eliot, along with the efforts of Xia as an editor and publisher of an important literary journal, ushered in a new era of literary seriousness in Taiwan. But it also had its sinocentric side, as Chang reminds us, and she rounds out this chapter by discussing some works of three authors (one of whom was Yu) and the various ways in which the China trope was a dominant fixture in mainstream Taiwan literary imagination.

But there is another side to the recent literary history of Taiwan. What of the authors who did not flee mainland China but had been living in Taiwan already? One can imagine that they did not embrace the China trope with an enthusiasm equivalent to the writers exiled from China, especially since it was the latter writers and their cohorts that controlled most of the public resources devoted to supporting literature and literary events. The authors, whom Chang divides into two groups—the “nativists” 鄉土 who maintained a connection to mainland China and the “localists” 本土 who have been emphasizing a Taiwan cultural field separate from mainland China—receive more attention in the ensuing chapters. Chapter 5, for example, sketches the trajectory of the localists in the postwar era. The first two decades were particularly difficult for them because of the language barrier (most of the localist authors had grown up learning Japanese—not written vernacular Chinese—in school, and the publica-

tion of Japanese was banned shortly after the Retrocession) and GMD political and cultural indoctrination. By the early 1960s, many *bensheng* Taiwanese involved in the Modernist movement, such as Chen Ruoxi 陳若曦, Ouyang Zi 歐陽子, Wang Zhenhe 王禎和, Qideng Sheng 七等生, Chen Yingzhen 陳映真, Wang Tuo 王拓, Ye Shan 葉珊 (Yang Mu 楊牧), and Lin Huaimin 林懷民, placed their affinities with this movement and not with the authors who would eventually emerge as advocating a separate cultural formation from mainland China based on a unique social history. It was not until the late 1970s, when the Nativist Literary Debate 鄉土文學論戰 flared up and a short-lived alliance formed between the nativist and localist writers, that writers born and bred in Taiwan who did not embrace the sinocentric model gained ascendancy. Chang focuses on two of those writers and the submerged manner in which they went about their business: Wu Zhuoliu 吳濁流 and Zhong Zhaozheng 鍾肇政. Wu was an established writer from the latter days of the Japanese Era, and Zhong, while still young, received virtually all his education prior to the end of the War of Resistance to the Japanese. Many of Wu's writings, which center on the plight of Taiwanese and in some cases touch upon the taboo subject of the February Twenty-eighth Massacre of 1947, were written in secret. In some cases, these writings were published posthumously by Zhong, his protégé. Zhong did not switch to writing in Chinese until he was twenty years old and long struggled with his writing style. Nevertheless, he pioneered the writing of large saga novels 大河小說, "big river" novels, as Chang calls them, that eventually achieved wide prestige as symbols of Taiwan's historical development related through fiction. The two did not overtly take on the GMD establishment, recognizing that it would be futile and end in self-destruction. But eventually Zhong emerged as a powerful spokesperson for the localist cause in the 1980s and hence. Chang also shows how vastly different the life experiences of two authors from different camps could be, ending the chapter with a comparison of two contemporaries: Yu Guangzhong, a stellar mainlander/mainstream author, and Ye Shitao 葉石濤, one of the most gifted of the localists. Yu's résumé reads like a pedigree of literary breeding and success—one of the few poets in Taiwan who is a virtual household name, a professor and dean, a recipient of Fulbright awards and extended trips overseas. Ye is illustrious in his own circle, but his more productive younger years were spent in prison, his family was impoverished, he had to learn vernacular written Chinese, and he had difficulty securing gainful employment. He struggled for years, managing to eke by, only to build a name for himself slowly. Eventually, he emerged in the 1980s as a giant of contemporary Taiwanese literature, having written many novels and short stories and, perhaps best known, having written a great body of criticism highlighting Taiwanese authors of both the Japanese and the contemporary periods.

But Chang's book does not spend a great deal of time offering close readings of specific literary texts. For those, one must return to her previous book.

She is primarily interested in the important issue of literary institutions, and the most important of those in Taiwan, beginning with Lin Haiyin, was the literary supplements. In particular, she identifies the *Lianfu* 聯副 (supplement of the *United Daily News*) and *Renjian* 人間 (supplement of the *China Times*) as the two premier fuelliton in the post-war era. Chapter 6 offers a detailed narrative of their development and especially of two cultural figures, Gao Xinjiang 高信疆 of *Renjian* and Ya Xian 痙弦 of *Lianfu*, who, respectively, ran each. She argues that while these two essentially occupied the middle ground of Taiwan literary society in the 1970s and 1980s, there were some important differences between them. *Renjian*, she argues, was more amenable to nativist and to some extent localist voices. *Lianfu* was more pro-government. She also depicts their different characters: *Renjian* under Gao became a sort of cultural forum, printing many provocative essays and serving as a catalyst to some heated discussions over issues literary and cultural. *Lianfu* under Ya eschewed ideological confrontation and instead tried to create a marketplace and constituency for some of the high art literary styles and ideas that he and others he was associated with had learned from when growing up. I have to say that I have really learned something here, because, individual differences between Gao Xinjiang and Ya Xian notwithstanding, I had been under a slightly different impression. That is, I generally had viewed these two literary supplements as both being middle-of-the-road—certainly not overtly confrontational to the GMD establishment, but not willing to do its dirty work either. I had never detected the pronounced difference between the two that Chang spends some time establishing in chapter 6. What has always seemed clear to me is that to the political right of these two literary supplements stood *Zhongyang Ribao* 中央日報 (the *Central Daily*) and to the left stood *Zili Wanbao* 自立晚報 (the *Independence Evening Post*). Chang's book leaves me wondering why she did not speak of these two fuelliton. She may, perhaps, feel they were not as important as I perceived them to be. Perhaps by the 1970s that might have been so with the *Central Daily*. Perhaps most serious members of the literary scene took its hardcore political loyalty to the GMD as too doctrinaire for themselves, especially given the fact that Xia Ji'an had so securely nailed shut the coffin on that twenty years previous. But, of course, it still had its adherents well into the late 1980s, when it was refashioned with a more mainstream editorial voice under Mei Xin 梅新. The *Independence Evening Post* under the editorship of Xiang Yang 向陽 in the 1980s is more difficult to ignore, in my opinion, because so many of the most provocative cultural pieces were published in it, constantly testing the waters and nudging the line as martial law was in its last throes. In any event, in this chapter Chang illustrates most convincingly not the politics but the tension between high culture and middlebrow tastes as the market and the authors that wrote for it pushed and pulled against each other. She provides interesting extra-literary examples. In Edward Yang's 楊德昌 1987 breakout film *The Terror-*

izer 恐怖分子, one of the characters is precisely the sort of middlebrow reader of the literary supplement while another is a distraught author whose works are published in its pages. Hou Hsiao-hsien's 侯孝賢 (Hou Xiaoxian) classic *A City of Sadness* 悲情城市, Chang argues, avoids direct representation of violence in the way that literary works in the *fukan* have been conditioned over the years to avoid too graphic a representation of violence, politics, profanity, or sexuality lest they encounter what Wang Wenxing 王文興 did in the early 1980s: suffering the midstream removal of his serialized novel owing to the vociferous objections of a middle-class readership not ready for truly avant-garde fiction.

Chang continues to chart this tension between writers and the marketplace in chapter 7, arguing that even in the late 1980s and beyond there was a “lingering” penchant for high culture and “serious” literature in Taiwan. She also notes that the nativist effort has continued to gain strength and that into the 1990s and the past few years the localists have become the dominant voice. As a response to this trend, for example, many departments of Taiwanese literature have formed in the past few years throughout the island. Contemporary literature has historically been shunned by the highly traditional departments of Chinese literature in Taiwan. In a way, they inadvertently created the need for these departments. Departments such as Foreign Languages at National Taiwan University and Chengchi University in Taipei and the English Department at Tamkang University have long been the breeding grounds for contemporary Taiwan authors. But there has been a sea change in recent years with the emergence of these new departments whose guiding ideology is localism. But in the *fukan* and art house publishers (several of which have been founded by people closely associated with the *fukan*) the boudoir literature of female authors such as Yuan Qiongqiong 袁瓊瓊, Zhu Tianwen 朱天文, Liao Huiying 廖輝英, Xiao Lihong 蕭麗紅, and Jiang Xiaoyun 蔣曉雲 (all influenced by the looming presence of Zhang Ailing 張愛玲—the most influential modern author never to live in Taiwan) has reigned. At the same time, authors such as Zhang Dachun 張大春, who is certainly given to high culture tendencies, have deftly exploited the middle-class tastes of his readership, keeping one step ahead of them by continually reinventing his literary styles in tantalizing ways that remain palatable to a broad leisure audience.

Chang's last chapter must necessarily be an ongoing one, because she is discussing relatively recent cultural events and literary trends in Taiwan. She makes several provisional but nonetheless important observations. First, the localist position—a *bentü* spirit with Taiwan as its center—is now dominant. But the cultural claims of modernism are still very strong in Taiwan, as could be witnessed by a public event staged by *Lianfu* in 1999 with government backing. Most of the works selected for a list of “classics” of Taiwan literature turned out to be precisely the same works that were products of the mainstream and modernist writers of the late 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. But the boisterous protests with

which this list was met confirmed that the contested positions in Taiwan, while they may have shifted in terms of cultural power and symbolic capital, have essentially remained the same through the decades.

I have generally mixed my own comments into the exposition of Sungsheng Yvonne Chang's book in the preceding paragraphs. I should add a few evaluative comments that are clearly my own. Most important, this is an excellent book. It is detailed and theoretically sophisticated. That the book utilizes the work of one of my own mentors from graduate school—Peter Uwe Hohendahl, who gave me my first and most thoroughgoing introduction to Western Marxist thought—endears me to the theoretical framework employed within it. That Chang is so immersed in the minutiae of Taiwan literary events, and yet remains apart from them, gives her the optimal vantage point from which to survey this literary landscape. And as a product of it herself (Chang was born in Taiwan of mainland parents with very close ties to the GMD establishment), it is impressive that she is able coolly and rationally to give voice to those who had long been oppressed in Taiwan while not diminishing the establishment and modernist authors important to her own development. To use the cliché, then, the book is fair and balanced. Readers may likely be surprised with the heavy emphasis put on positions and social fields if they are not familiar with her prior work. This book is best read in conjunction with her first book. In my own reading of the same period, I wonder to some extent about the issue of positioning. Of course in hindsight it is clear—and, given the ethnic divides in Taiwan, perhaps inevitable. But I wonder if these positions were as premeditated as they seem in her book. For example, in the 1950s, people in Taiwan and throughout the non-Communist bloc truly did have a fear of communism. And this fear permeated all levels of society. One of the features of it was a wariness of “the enemy within”—the communist infiltrator that looked like us but was not one of us. That paranoia fueled much of the anxiety that motivated the literary works that now seem to be highly dogmatic. I don't think that would have been clear without the advantage of hindsight. And coterminous with that was the “China trope” or “Sinocentrism” that Chang writes of at length. But again, many people, and in fact many *bensheng* Taiwanese, have a deep affinity for traditional Chinese culture. In fact, one can ironically make the claim, backed up by empirical sociological as well as literary and cultural evidence, that in many ways Taiwan has preserved more of the typical Chinese traits than mainland China, given the latter's recent history, its purges, its destruction of culture during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, and now the demolition that is being carried out in the name of modernity. So while it may seem sometimes that an affinity for things that are culturally Chinese is tantamount to an affinity with China, we must remember that the two are not synonymous. Chinese culture is a heritage and a civilization, not just a nation-state, just as Western culture is a civilization that the United States chose to lay claim to while simultaneously

breaking politically with Europe. This is not merely a position and not merely a trope. But the virtue of Chang's book in casting it this way is that for once we can view how "Chineseness" has been marshaled to the cause of certain social groups in Taiwan for the purpose of establishing and maintaining cultural power over others.

Finally, a practical gripe: I wish that books like this would include Chinese characters in them, either in text or in a glossary at the back. Chinese has too many homonyms, and it makes it very difficult in many instances, particularly with names but also with key terms, to know exactly what is being referred to. Chang's book is by no means alone in this omission. On the contrary, I would wager that over half the books I read on Chinese or Taiwanese studies in English do not include the characters. But despite the prevalence of this tendency, this does diminish the ability of such a scholarly work to be used for further research on the topic.

Christopher Lupke

Christopher Lupke is associate professor of Chinese and coordinator of Asian languages at Washington State University. He is the editor of two volumes, The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment, and Fate in Chinese Culture (University of Hawai'i Press, 2005) and New Perspectives on Contemporary Chinese Poetry (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). A prolific translator, Lupke has completed a translation of Yeh Shih-tao's pathbreaking study A History of Taiwan Literature, among other works. He is currently finishing a book on the auteur Taiwanese filmmaker Hou Hsiao-hsien that will be published by the University of Illinois Press.

NOTES

1. See Christopher Lupke, *Modern Chinese in the Postcolonial Diaspora (Taiwan)* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1993), especially pp. 28–39 and 50–54. After an extensive analysis of Zhang's original article and several contemporary responses, I conclude that "with the codification of national forms in orthodox Communist literary criticism in Yan'an came a resounding if ironic concurrence of opinion from the molders of nationalist literary policy in Chongqing. And this policy was to have lasting repercussions for the development of literature in Taiwan after the retreat of the Nationalists to this island" (p. 39). Compare that with Chang's analysis of Zheng Mingli's article: "Zheng makes the point that, insofar as both understood literature to be subservient to politics, Zhang's thinking was not very different from Mao's" (p. 51). I go on to discuss the "hegemonic" relationship of these government officials and literary figures using Antonio Gramsci and Chantal Mouffe for my theoretical framework.