

Literary Field and Literature in Early Post-war Period Táiwān (1945–1949)

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the literature and literary field of early post-war Táiwān (1945-49). This period, when Táiwān was politically reintegrated into China after 50 years as a Japanese colony, exerted a crucial influence on later historical events and developments. During these years, measures for the sinicization of Táiwānese society were implemented, but intellectuals also articulated views of distinctively Táiwānese as opposed to Mainland Chinese cultural features that were revived by proponents of the Táiwānization (*běntǔhuà*) movement in the 1980s.

As laid out in chapter 1, the methodology of the thesis is based on the theory of the *literary field* formulated by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. The literary scene is understood as a structure created by relationships between various agents who aim to attain the dominant position in the field by accumulating the largest amount of *symbolic capital*. This is defined as prestige by Bourdieu but should be understood as a combination of prestige and political clout in the Táiwānese context, as this dissertation will argue. To occupy the dominant position enables agents to define Táiwānese identity, culture, and literature (especially vis-à-vis China).

Chapter 2 introduces the historical background of the postwar period with a particular emphasis on processes of political and economic integration of Táiwān and the 2.28 Incident as a watershed in the postwar period.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the cultural scene. It looks at the geographic distribution of literary activities across Táiwān, describes the literary production, and sketches out the activities of literary groups and salons as well as drama societies and theatres.

The analytical part of the thesis is divided into two chapters. Chapter 4, “Distant Reading”, proceeds from a quantitative analysis of post-war periodicals. This analysis helps to situate agents within the literary field. The chapter introduces the position of selected agents and describes the interdependency between their position and disposition (*habitus*). It also scrutinizes which dispositions are shared among the most frequent publishing agents. The chapter thus sheds light on the question of what constituted symbolic capital and whether the literary field in the early post-war period was autonomous, as would be suggested by Bourdieu’s theory about the independence of the literary field from external influences.

Chapter 5, “Close Reading”, presents an analysis of literary writings and articles about Táiwān culture and literature in order to outline the *literary style* of selected periodicals. In accordance with the definition of the historian of modern Chinese literature, Michel Hockx, literary style is understood as a conglomerate of language, content and form, and *habitus*. In a series of case studies, this chapter shows how Táiwān literature was defined on the level of argumentative discourse in certain periodicals (and at different positions in the field). It also illustrates how ideas about Táiwān literature found expression in literary writings published in these periodicals. Some of the writings under discussion have not previously attracted scholarly attention.

The perspective chosen in this dissertation is thus a complementary one which, on the one hand, reveals the dynamics and mechanisms of substantial areas of the literary field while,

on the other, presenting a detailed analysis of literary writings that accounts for the respective positions in the field as a whole. This two-pronged approach which combines quantitative and qualitative investigations of early post-war Táiwān literature represents a new methodological perspective on supplements, literary production and the literary field in general.

Key words: literary field, early post-war period Táiwān, quantitative analysis, literary style, post-war journals, literary supplements