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EVALUATION (“ako oponent”)

of the Ph. D. thesis “Literárne pole a literatúra v ranom povojnovom období na Taiwane (1945–1949) / Literary Field and Literature in Early Post-War Period Taiwan (1945–1949)”

by Mgr.a Táňa Dluhošová

The thesis under review is among the rare cases that from the very beginning stand out by clear organization and an accordingly clear methodological approach. The corresponding reflective consciousness is pleasantly accompanying the full course of the thesis’ enquiries. In anticipation, it may well be said without exaggeration that the study presented here is the far most systematic and comprehensive application of Bourdieu concept of the ‘literary field’ or *champ littéraire* undertaken for a Chinese context. After the pioneering work by Hockx (2003) which, however, both attempted at clarifying certain implications of Bordieu’s theory of the ‘literary field’ or *champ littéraire* for China, and had proposed itself a far longer period of two decades and a for more complex literary context accompanied by a heterogenous and shifting socio-economic environment, and therefore *a fortiori* lacked in depth, while presenting a wealth of hitherto unnoticed material, a number of Chinese and Taiwanese scholar have undertaken to examine how Bourdieu might contribute to the understanding literary developments, but have to my knowledge never succeeded so thoroughly and convincingly as it is executed here, not least because it proceeded in a wise limitation in space and time, i.e. the island of Taiwan of then clearly less than 7m (against 23m today), and the years 1945–49, which makes, *inter alia*, possible also meaningful quantitative analysis.

Znak znamenajúci «východ» od Liu Xie 劉澗 (1781–1840), vyrytý do nefritu podľa vzoru zo začiatku nášho letopočtu.



The introduction (ch. 1) gives a very detailed state of research for the tricky post-war period when Taiwan, with Japanese colonizers withdrawing after the final collapse of their vision of a 'Greater Asia Prosperity Area' was taken into possession by the Guomindang administration, itself part of a state just becoming engaged in a bloody civil war that ended with the victory of the CP, and makes clear, how much research on this period since the later 1980s has for the first time ever brought to light material hitherto unknown and/or tabooed, and is both part of Taiwan identity policies and has itself become a battleground for various related positions. The chapter also gives a succinct introduction of all relevant methodological tools, including explanations of how quantitative and qualitative approaches are employed, the role of the periodical press in general, and the adaptation of the 'official line' as a label employed for the large-scale efforts to sinicize the former Japanese colony. It is doubtful here, however, whether the slogan of *dazhong wenxue* coined in the 1930s is best rendered as "masifikácia literatury" (4) while it was employed to denote 'literature for the masses', and if possible 'by the masses'. And it remains uncertain whether taking up the orthodox Marxist interpretation employed to explain the nature of the May Fourth movement of 1919 and taken up again after 1986 to characterize GMD rule over Taiwan as 'half-colonial and half-feudal' (5) has any analytical potential.

In ch. 2, the historical context of the "integration" of the former colony Taiwan is sketched with all relevant details, with the bloodily suppressed protest Movement of Feb 28 (1947), with their preceding anti-US demonstrations of Dec 12, 1946, and the core issue of 'autonomy' which marked a turning point in GMD policies. As a consequence, the following ch. 3 devoted to a description of actors in the 'cultural scene' is divided into two parts dealing with the pre- and the post-Feb 28 period, followed by detailed assessment in the periodical press with its shifts and changes, ban on certain titles and subsequent re-launches after Feb 28, mostly by government and government-controlled bodies. Not less than 22 different supplements (published between May 19, 1946, and Apr 27, 1949) to the official paper *Taiwan xinsheng bao* are systematically listed here—and the fact that only two of them, namely *Qian* (Bridge) and *Wenyi* (Literature) have been discussed in research literature (68) sufficiently highlights the range of reach of the thesis. However, the general linguistic situation on Taiwan in 1945 where the colonial power had gradually enforced Japanese as the sole accepted medium of written communication since the early 1930s only occasionally enjoys the attention it would actually deserve, such as in the mention of the (official) Chinese-Japanese Bilingual



Chinese Literature Series (56) or the hint that in fact several newspapers were bilingual (73), due to the limited Chinese literacy.

The two chapters 4 and 5 may well be addressed as the core of the present theses. They are not only innovative in choosing the very accurate label of 'Distant Reading' or 'Reading from Afar' ("Čítanie z diaľky") in order to contrast the perspective to 'Close Reading' ("Čítanie z blízka") and thus integrate both a sociological and critical literary point of view, and quantitative and qualitative tools of analysis. They also testify to the enormous wealth of material that has been processed, starting with a minutely described corpus formed by 48 periodicals (85f), and continuing with the striking number of 3,775 persons as actors identified and classified according to a broad range of criteria in the table on 'symbolic capital' (247–249). Despite the remarkable amount of research on Taiwan over the past two decades, the list of types of sources for personal biographies (for author-actors who have some times used dozens of pseudonyms) may illustrate the synthetic effort: 1) authority file in National Taiwan Library; 2) "Taiwanpedia"; 3) catalogue of writers and works in the National Museum of Taiwan Literature; 4) National Repository of Cultural Heritage (Ministry of Culture); 5) biographical dictionaries; 6) *Taiwan shiren zhi* (1947); 7) research literature; 8) individual interviews and consultations; 9) blogs about Feb 28 (87–88). From theses data, individuals are collocated with the number of periodicals in which they make their appearance. From this list, a sample of 64 individuals involved in 4 or more periodical publication is extracted to serve as a convincing basis for a quantitative and therefore truly representative closer analysis (89–91), centering on the 'status' of authors (while the *habitus* remains a bit vague, 100–107). The 'mapping' of the cultural field (*recte* literary field) with a division into 1) Taiwanese; 2) official line; 3) progressive intellectuals from Taizhong; 4) opposition to official line; 5) "autonomous"; 6) conservatives; and 7) peripheral actors results in a set of very elucidating charts (109–123) commented in detail.

The 'close reading' in ch. 5 first presents the institutional basis of the 'official line' with their individual interdependencies, before introducing the "comprehensive concept of culture" in which the uncontestable Japanese cultural heritage is opposed to the Chinese national character of Taiwan culture (136–139). As a consequence, action against the "venomous books left by the Japanese" is taken by a number of book series (which are rightly seen in a continuity with the GMD New Life Movement of 1934). They mostly undertake a 'rewriting' of Taiwan history, from the failure of the Republic of Taiwan



(*Taiwan minzhuguo*) as a precursor of the Republic of 1912. A number of literary texts, mainly from the journal *Zhengjing bao* and from the newspaper supplement *Qiao* are analysed in detail, from poetry in regulated 7-syllable verse (with an interesting parallel to Guo Moruo's verses "Gui guo za yin", 1945) in the *Zhengjing bao* (167–173), up to the call to open to the West and translating world literature into Chinese, because the country had been occupied and needed to return to the culture of his forefathers. As a technique for the latter, the flourishing of historical tales is discussed, with a prominent example by Ye Shitao where the French writer Pierre Loti undertakes a fictitious journey to the Penghu islands (Pescadores) in 1885.

As a concluding paragraph in this chapter, the *Taiwan xinsheng bao* supplement *Taiwan funü* (Women of Taiwan) is taken under closer scrutiny, under the previously established category 'peripheral'—with a question mark swiftly dismissed (cf. preliminary results published in *AO* 79,3 [2011], 357–377). We learn, however, that the basically Confucian-minded editor Lü Runbi (1914–2000) nonetheless articulated views critical of traditional gender roles. The unhappily asked rhetorical question is certainly not a problem, but the paragraph, also by its illustrations giving a number of cover pages of the supplement, indirectly discloses one weak aspect of the thesis, i.e. the almost total neglect of drawing, painting, dance, theater and other art forms. Although it appears occasionally, such as in the mention of the "Café Bolero" where "painters and other artists" were meeting (48), or in the sometimes casually interchangeable use of "literárne pole", "kultúrna scéna" and "kultúrne pole", the emphasis on the periodical press and its genuinely multimedial nature in modern times could have inspired slightly more attention towards cover designers and others involved in the production of periodical publications. As a corollary, paralleling four women's profiles on the cover of issue no 4 to the heads of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in Soviet iconography (222) is little convincing.

This does, of course, by no means affect the overall value of the work, nor of the enormously rich 7 appendices of which at least 5 deserve to become authoritative compendia for years to come.

Although just sufficiently proficient in Slovak, I feel so free to comment critically on other renderings from Chinese: *Noviny Dá míng* seems an unsatisfactory equivalent to *Daming bao* (56); the journal *Xinxin* is 'very new'



or 'newest', not just "nový" (77). A *corrigendum*: Lu Xun's collection is titled *Gushi xinbian* (not *Gushi zaibian*) (157).

For the reasons elaborated above, I may therefore warmly recommend to the Committee to accept the thesis (and if need were: to grade it with the highest possible mention).

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("ako oponent")

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