

Introduction: Negotiating Identities and Cultural Sensitivities through Mobility

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While Taiwan-centric nativization has been a prominent trend in post-martial law Taiwan literature and film, there has been a notable transformation in literary works and films in the new millennium. This transformation has been characterized by endeavors to explore Taiwan's intricate interactions with the global community, specifically through the lens of people's movement, migration, and displacement. For instance, Zhang Yixuan's time in Paris and Kevin Chen's relocation to Berlin have, respectively, inspired works like *Not in Love for Long: Recollections of Nantes and Paris* (愛的不久時：南特／巴黎回憶錄, 2011) and *The Good People Upstairs* (樓上的好人, 2022), which juxtaposes Berlin and Zhonghua. Similarly, the critically acclaimed Kotomi Li adeptly navigates between her writing in Japanese and self-rendered re-writing in Chinese when addressing gender-related themes.

In parallel to Taiwanese authors' emigration, writers and directors from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds have immigrated to Taiwan. "Mahua" (Malaysian-Chinese) authors in

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Taiwan is one of the groups that has generated “multi-generational” writers and continues to interact closely with Taiwan’s literary establishment. Maniniwei and Teng Kuan Kiat are representative younger Malaysia-born authors based in Taiwan. Alongside the impressive oeuvres produced by the Mahua writers, the Hong Kong writers and filmmakers from other Southeast Asian countries are gradually gaining momentum. Noteworthy Hong Kong authors in Taiwan, including Chan Wai, Liu Wai Tong, and Leung Lee Chi, have captured attention in Taiwan. In the film industry, directors like Midi Z from Burma and Ong Lay Jin, Lau Kek Huat, Ho Wi Ding, and Sam Quah from Malaysia have produced award-winning films, building on the legacy of pioneering directors such as Tsai Ming-liang. They variously collaborate with Taiwanese artists, offer fresh perspectives on Taiwanese society, shed light on migrant workers’ living conditions or Malaysian history, or simply enjoy Taiwan’s creatively stimulating environment.

As nearly a quarter-century has elapsed, it is now an opportune moment to reflect on how literary works and films created in the past twenty-five years have depicted Taiwan’s evolving social, cultural, and political landscape, as well as on the experiences of individual writers and directors adapting to these transformative shifts. Several new phenomena are noteworthy. The emergence of translingual writers like Badai, who writes in his mother tongue (the Beinan language) and Mandarin Chinese, together with Kotomi Li, as mentioned above, signifies an increased multilingual practice among Taiwanese authors. The rise of second generation Taiwanese-American writers, such as Charles Yu, Hua Hsu, Winnie M Li, and Shawna Yang Ryan, as well as the establishment of the Taiwan Literature Award for Migrants, since 2014, which welcomes submissions in the mother tongues of new migrants, are significant advancements outside and within Taiwan. Furthermore, in the past decade or two, several popular Taiwanese films focusing on youth romance have been well-received internationally, leading to multiple adaptations. Films like *You Are the Apple of My Eye* (那些年，我們一起追的女孩, 2011), *Our Times* (我的少女時代, 2015), and *Someday or One Day* (想見你, 2019) are just a few examples. These instances demonstrate that literary and cinematic productions in Taiwan transcend the Sinophone sphere and can be adapted and appreciated in diverse contexts beyond Taiwan.

In light of these changes, the term “mobility” in Taiwan must be understood in a multidimensional way. It can encompass the actual movement of Taiwanese people, both domestically, from rural areas to cities or vice versa, and internationally through travel or living abroad facilitated by globalization. It also includes individuals who immigrate to Taiwan from other places in search of better economic opportunities or more conducive creative environments. Literature and film serve as creative platforms for articulating the myriad challenges individuals encounter while adjusting to their new life, navigating social disparities, and grappling with questions of identity and belonging. Through the lens of “mobility,” we aim to explore the diverse avenues through which place-based identities can be forged during movement or as a result of long-term stays in immigration destinations. We value the abundance of inspirations and creative visions that emerge from movement. Our emphasis is on exploring the transitional space between rootedness and fluidity in movement, as well as delving into personal reflections following

migration, depicted through a wide array of artistic expressions and diverse languages and ethnic backgrounds.

On a textual level, mobility includes genre transplantation, translation, and the reimagining of previously published or filmed works. One notable reinvention, known as “neo-nativist literature,” is observed in the works of younger writers. In the realm of 21st-century cinema, the once highly esteemed “art films” of Taiwan’s new wave in the 1980s have had limited impact on the domestic market, while several 21st-century films, such as Wei-Te-sheng’s *Cape No. 7* (海角七號, 2008), John Hsu’s *Detention* (返校, 2019), Cheng Wei-hao’s *Marry My Dead Body* (關於我和鬼變成家人的那件事, 2023), along with the aforementioned three films, have achieved significant commercial success. This era has also witnessed a shift toward transmedial storytelling, exemplified by two popular television series—Yang Ya-che’s *The Magician on the Skywalk* (天橋上的魔術師, 2021), adapted from Wu Ming-yi’s 2011 eponymous novel, and Tsao Jui-Yuan’s *Segalu* (斯卡羅, 2021), adapted from Chen Yao-chang’s novel *Puppet Flower* (傀儡花, 2016). Furthermore, the theme of “mobility” allows for exploration of major theories and analytical frameworks, such as the Global South, minor transnationalism, migration or diaspora studies, indigenous studies, environmental humanities, and more. Therefore, we propose using “mobility” as a prism to illuminate the multifaceted nature and interconnections of movement, migration, and displacement within Taiwanese society.

This special issue comprises six articles that present various case studies of Taiwanese culture related to migration broadly. They cover the HK-Taiwan creative alliance, female migrant care providers’ poems, Indigenous people’s migration, Taiwanese-American writing, the mutually beneficial collaboration between Midi Z and Lim Giong, and Taiwanese teen romance film’s border-crossing remakes. Despite the diverse topics, the essays can be grouped into three interrelated themes—poetry and immigrants’ identity, migration and geopolitical reflections, and transmedia and transnational connections. In most cases, identity remains a distinct concern among the writers or directors discussed, while form-related questions, such as rhetorical skill or cinematic narratives, are also highly relevant.

Poetry, Language, and Identity

Henry Poon’s and Jennifer Marie Nunes’ articles represent the first theme, focusing on the poetry penned by migrant writers in Taiwan. Poon’s analysis dissects the poems collected in *The Land of Extended Solitude* (拓孤之地, 2023), the first volume of the tripartite anthology *The Letter after the Kalpa* (劫後書) by the Guangdong-born Hong Kong poet Liu Wai-tong, who relocated to Taiwan in 2018. The article elucidates Liu’s ability to transcend the boundaries of history, geography, and language in his poems. By accentuating the artistic language of the collection and its reflections on language and identity, Poon highlights Liu’s innovative approach to mobility and resistance through linguistic techniques. Poon also investigates the role of the mother tongue in shaping identities and in serving as a mode of resistance against various hegemonies. Liu draws inspiration from historical figures marginalized in Taiwan’s grand narrative, such as the composer

Jiang Wenye, the Zou-tribe vocalist Paicu Yatauyungana, and the Japanese-language writer Huang Lingzhi, crafting a collective voice of the oppressed that bridges Taiwan's past with Hong Kong's present.

Jennifer Marie Nunes' essay complements Poon's, partly due to its exploration of migrants' self-representations, diverging from Liu Wai-tong's portrayal of Taiwan's Indigenous people that risks reducing them to mere "cultural objects," and partly due to its scrutiny of the gender and class dimensions present in the poems of female caregivers. Nunes uses affect as an entry point, emphasizing the emotional expressions that are a defining characteristic in the poetry of these migrant care providers. Through a close analysis of selected poems, Nunes posits that while the works by migrant caregivers featured in government-sponsored anthologies convey a sense of familial connection, it is crucial to acknowledge their poetry writing and sharing as acts of care and reflections of their way of life.

Migration and Geopoliticized Identity

While Poon and Nunes focus on immigrant writers' historical reflections and personal sentiments through poetry, Min-xu Zhan redirects attention toward the prose of the Indigenous (Rukai) writer Auvinni Kadreseng's *The Disappearing Country* (消失的國度, 2015). This poignant narrative chronicles the migration of Kucapungane people from 1945 to 2012. It also approaches the displacement following Typhoon Morakot with a sensitivity rooted in environmental humanities, simultaneously examining the imbalanced Han-Indigenous relations and the unjust global capitalist structure. By introducing the notion of "climate refugees," Zhan offers a fresh insight that moves beyond the conventional emphasis on ethnic identity in Indigenous literature. By connecting Taiwan's immigration-themed writing to global communities and incorporating perspectives from the Global South, the essay offers a more expansive and inclusive understanding of the subject matter.

Jack Wei-ting Liou's essay also takes a global view of Taiwan, focusing on the depiction of idealized Taiwanese Americans in the second-generation Taiwanese-American author Julie Wu's 2013 immigration saga *The Third Son*. In Wu's debut novel, the protagonist Saburo, the least favored son of the Dong family, symbolizes Taiwan's struggle to establish a stable identity amidst the influences of modernity represented by Japan and later America, as well as the challenges posed by the authoritarian KMT rule and the White Terror era. Akin to Liu Wai-tong as discussed by Poon, Julie Wu also explores the connection between one's mother tongue and cultural identity. In Wu's case, the Taiwanese Southern Min dialect, rather than Japanese or Mandarin Chinese, emerges as the language that best conveys the intimate emotions of Taiwanese Americans and plays a crucial role in shaping a Taiwanese American identity.

Transmedia and Transnational Connection

This special issue concludes with two essays examining the transnational dimensions of Taiwanese cinema. Nien-ying Wang investigates Midi Z's collaboration with Lim Giong in *City of*

Jade (翡翠之城, 2016), particularly their shared audiovisual aesthetic, while Hao-tang Chang explores the remakes of Taiwan's box-office hit *You Are the Apple of My Eye* in other Asian countries.

Addressing cross-media and cross-cultural collaborations between Midi Z and Lim Giong, Wang's article conceptualizes the reinvention of "mobility" in three interrelated ways. First, due to the filmmaker's real-life migration from Myanmar to Taiwan, his return to his hometown for filmmaking establishes a transnational connection between Taiwan and Myanmar. Second, aesthetic mobility emerges through the interplay of sound and cinematic creation between these two artists. Finally, both adopt similar strategies integrating imaginative elements into real-life portrayals, contributing to the fluid boundary between fiction and nonfiction. Wang's article effectively demonstrates the transmedia and transnational connections between two artistic forms, two artists, and two geographical locales in relation to broader social and political contexts. In particular, *City of Jade* offers a unique transborder audiovisual experience, fostering a heightened awareness of the Global South.

Similarly, in examining the transnational circulation and remaking of contemporary Taiwanese films, Hao-tang Chang identifies "little freshness" (小清新) as a crucial factor in the cross-cultural reception and adaptation of *You Are the Apple of My Eye*. Chang observes that so-called "Taiwaneseness" is often omitted in remakes to appeal to local audiences, which complicates efforts to enhance Taiwan's global visibility through filmmaking. However, the narrative and structure of feeling of a "little freshness" in these remakes remains faithful to the original text, strongly reflecting Taiwan-style nostalgia and local sensibilities. Thus, the process of worlding Taiwan in relation to Asia can be realized through transnational remakes.

Overall, mobility entails a sense of exhilaration and, at times, dissatisfaction, yet it also creates new environments, perspectives, references, and experiences that empower individuals to articulate themselves with greater ingenuity. Although not all languages are commensurable and certain cultural nuances cannot be fully translated, cross-border mobility remains feasible, often facilitated by a shared structure of feeling that accommodates local idiosyncrasies. This special issue provides an initial survey of Taiwanese cultural production through the lens of mobility, presenting it as a key concept that opens up new avenues for research in the 21st century.