The Prototype of Idealized Taiwanese Americans and Assemblage of Technological Prostheses—An Example in Julie Wu's *The Third Son*

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Abstract

Julie Wu's *The Third Son* (2013) embodies elements of postcolonial technoscience, in which a specific prototype of idealized Taiwanese Americans is mainly associated with a linear vision of modernist progress. The Taiwanese protagonist, Saburo, struggles to become a Taiwanese American immigrant. Yet, some Taiwanese elements with Japanese legacy, intermediated through long-distance Taiwanese cultural nationalism in the postwar era, remain untamed and even strengthened in this transnational journey of biopolitics. Technological prostheses are assembled in his mindset and body. Different kinds of capital acquired by Saburo in the American field are internalized into his habitus and serve as his guidelines, such as technological rationality, criteria of being a Ph.D. in electrical engineering, and experiences in a space exploration project and a geophysical research team. Saburo successfully transforms into a Taiwanese American with a modern scientific temperament. However, elements of Southern Min songs, romanizations of Southern Min, Mandarin Chinese, and Japanese, the overseas version of the February 28th Incident, Taiwan nativeness, and the Japanese cultural layer are tenaciously appropriated and strategically deployed by Julie Wu, a second-generation Taiwanese American English-language writer, as ways to demonstrate the distinction of Taiwaneseness. As such, Julie Wu manages to write back against the rules of art in the English literary field and distances herself and her work from the genre of Chinese American or Asian American writing. Through this position-taking, Julie Wu and *The Third Son* have constructed a distinction of the Taiwanese American literary genre in the American literary field.

This essay deals with the following questions. Regarding the technological prostheses assembled in Saburo, what kind of idealized Taiwanese American identification and ethnic distinction is embedded in *The Third Son*? In terms of long-distance cultural nationalism, how are Taiwan's nativist literary elements and historical elements appropriated in this work? Considering the translated Chinese version *Sanlang* (《三郎》2015) in terms of cultural translation, how could Taiwanese elements in this English work be deployed as a postcolonial writing back strategy in the English-language literary field in the US?

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Introduction

Since the publication of English works by Taiwanese American writers in America around the 2000s, Taiwanese American literature in English has gradually become an established literary genre in the American field. These writers include Janie Chang, K-Ming Chang, Pauline Chen, Ted Chiang, Elaine Hsieh Chou, Jennifer J. Chow, Justina Chen Headley, Hua Hsu, Pete Hsu, Eddie Huang, Jessica Lee, Brenda Lin, Chia Chia Lin, Ed Lin, Francie Lin, Grace Lin, Tao Lin, Emily X.R. Pan, Shawna Yang Ryan, Kathy Wang, Charles Wu, Julie Wu, Anna Yen, etc. Differing from the first-generation Taiwanese writers who mainly wrote in Chinese (e.g., Juan Huang) or Sinophone languages (Lei Chen has written in Chinese and Taiwanese Southern Min), most of them are second-generation Taiwanese immigrants, and thus, they have acquired the cultural capital of English to write and publish in the American literary field. These works have projected a distinctive prism that is quite different from that of Chinese American literature. Academia has noticed this emerging category. Firstly, Chih-Ming Wang put Brenda Lin and Francie Lin's works under the genre of Taiwanese American Literature, demonstrating how long-distance nationalism has affected the content of the two novels (Wang 2010: 49–55). I-ping Liang considered Francie Lin's *The Foreigner* to have been written by the first English-language writer who grew up in the US (Liang 2018: 508). According to Hsieh Hsin-chin, Joyce Huang (Juan Huang), a first-generation Taiwanese American writer, coined the term Taiwanese American literature and defined it as "literary works regarding lived experiences of Taiwanese Americans in the United States since the 1980s" (Hsieh 2017: 27–29). In addition, Hsieh differentiated two linguistic approaches to Taiwanese American literature: the first-generation writers' Chinese writing and the second-generation ones' English writing. Hsieh further scrutinized the English-language work by Brenda Lin, Pauline Chen, Justina Chen Headley, Grace Lin, Charles Wu, and Shawna Yang Ryan. Given the sociopolitical context of the ethnic politics of the United States, Hsieh pointed out two crucial periods in the development of Taiwanese American literature. Firstly, the 1960s became the turning point beyond which the Chinese immigrants and the Taiwanese immigrants differed from each other. Secondly, according to Hsieh, because of the pro-independence and nativist movements in Taiwan in the 1980s, which contributed to the construction and dissemination of Taiwaneseness by Taiwanese immigrant writers overseas,

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"Taiwanese American Literature thus becomes a new category that differs from Chinese American literature with reference to the authors' self-positioning and connection with Taiwan" (Hsieh 2020: 41).

These Taiwanese American writers, whether writing in Chinese or in English, have some common factors. The February 28th Incident, Southern Min songs, Taiwanese culture and customs, Japanese legacies, phonocentric elements of the languages of Taiwan, and even Austronesian legends have been appropriated by these immigrant writers or the younger generation of ethnic Taiwanese American writers—in the way of long-distance cultural nationalism. In a case study of Shawna Yang's *Green Island*, Wei-Ting Liou points out elements of phonocentrism, such as romanizations of Southern Min, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, as well as songs that are strategically used by the author to constitute the subjectivity of Taiwanese Americans in the English literary field in the US (Liou 2020: 92–100). Benedict Anderson's idea of long-distance nationalism has been adopted by Chih-Ming Wang (2010: 49–55) and Hsieh (2020: 43–44) to analyze the specific genre of diasporic literature. In Anderson's definition, long-distance nationalism refers to the presumption that the exiled groups still maintain their political identification with the original homeland. These migrants could gather and mobilize to influence the politics of their homeland (Anderson 1992: 1–14). John Hutchinson first coined the term "cultural nationalism" to distinguish the cultural nationalist programs (rather than political nationalist programs) in the Irish Independence campaign (Hutchinson 1987). Following the idea of cultural nationalism by Hutchinson, A-chin Hsiau argues in *Contemporary Taiwanese Cultural Nationalism*, "The 2-28 Incident is a major source of Taiwanese nationalism" (Hsiau 2000: 5).

Julie Wu (吳茗琇 1957–) is a second-generation Taiwanese American born in Canada, whose father and mother are Pei-lin Wu (吳沛霖) and Shu-zhen Lin (林淑貞) (*The Third Son* Acknowledgements 1/3), first-generation Taiwanese Americans who settled in Bloomington, Indiana. She is married to Kai Saukkonen, a doctor. She majored in literature at Harvard University and was enrolled at Indiana University Bloomington in a master's program in opera performance.[1] She attended the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons and formerly practiced as a primary care physician. She is now a certified real estate agent (Seniors Real Estate Specialist).[2]

The Prototype of Idealized Taiwanese Americans

According to Julie Wu in "Listening to Dad: A Note from the Author" at the end of *The Third Son*,[3] the fictional work is based on her father's life. A first-generation Taiwanese American, her father, Pei-lin Wu, was mistreated by his family. He went to junior college in Taiwan, persisting through difficulties, and then immigrated to America, where he earned a PhD and began his career as an electrical engineer. Julie Wu considers her father to be a role model. The characterization of

[1] Anna Wu, "An Interview with Julie Wu, Author of The Third Son." https://www.taiwaneseamerican.org/2013/04/julie-wu-the-third-son/. Accessed 12 December 2023.
[2] Keller Williams Realty, "Julie Wu, Real Estate Agent > About Me." https://juliewu.kw.com/about-me Accessed 12 December 2023.
[3] This part, "Listening to Dad: A Note from the Author," was not translated in the Chinese version (April 2015).

Saburo Togo (石川三郎 in Japanese and Jialin Don 董家麟 in Chinese), the third son in the well-off Don family,[4] can be regarded as being a prototype of the first generation of "Successful Taiwanese Americans" with a technological background. Christopher T. Fan points out that the rise of the second, English-speaking and writing generation of Taiwanese Americans was related to their being in the professional-managerial class (PMC). As the Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act (1965) loosened racial limits, the number of Taiwanese students in scientific, technical, engineering, and math subjects increased accordingly (Fan 2023: 212–213). Among other second-generation Taiwanese American writers who write in English (as their cultural capital, borrowing Pierre Bourdieu's term), such as Janie Chang, K-Ming Chang, Ted Chiang, Hua Hsu, Pete Hsu, Brenda Lin, Chia-Chia Lin, Ed Lin, Francie Lin, etc., Julie Wu's medical background fits well with the PMC tag. That is, Wu's MD training and practice, even though she is now a real estate agent, would qualify her career route as ideal in the eyes of many first-generation Taiwanese immigrants. Similarly, the scientific engineering study and academic career in astrophysics of the first-generation Taiwanese immigrant Saburo also reflect this idealization of the PMC tag, one well-received by first-generation Taiwanese immigrant parents.

The Third Son was written in English and was first published by Algonquin Books in America in 2013. It was translated by Sihan Liu (劉泗翰) and published in Chinese as *Sanlang* (《三郎》) in Taiwan in 2015. Largely following the protagonist Saburo's story, the fiction is divided into Part 1, 1943–1957, and Part 2, 1957–1962. Part 1, set in Taiwan, narrates how the protagonist Saburo grows up and suffers in a big family in pre-war and post-war Taiwan, in which the February 28th Incident plays as a national trauma, not only for Taiwanese in Taiwan but also for Taiwanese-Americans-to-be. In Part 2, set in America, Saburo fights his way from being a student with a vocational degree to becoming an MA graduate, and then a teaching fellow and a PhD in atmospheric science. Ultimately, he successfully secures a tenured academic position in the United States and becomes a first-generation Taiwanese American.

As the third son among seven siblings, Saburo suffers from the imbalanced treatment of the traditional Taiwanese ways of parenting. The family runs a family business, a pharmaceutical company. The first son, Kazuo, enjoys most of the privileges, while Saburo is largely neglected and excluded from educational and economic resources, such as the opportunity to go to college, not to mention the eggs rationed by the Japanese government. He is even anemic due to his being malnourished. He is also blamed for the younger brother's (Aki's) death, who died from pneumonia. However, Saburo saved Fan-zi (芳子, Yoshiko in Japanese, 羅麗香 in Chinese) , his future wife, in an American air raid. Saburo is close to his cousin Toru (阿徹 in Chinese), a doctor who studied in Japan, whose pro-America worldview—"But America itself—it's a country founded on principles, on personal freedom"—deeply shapes young Saburo's American dream (*Sanlang*: 36).[5] Toru gives Saburo a Japanese encyclopedia, *The Earth*, which he had received from his math teacher, and expects Saburo to be a great inventor, scientist, or artist. It should be

[4] Saburo (さぶろ) refers to the third son in Japanese.
[5] The page numbers refer to the translated Chinese version of *The Third Son, Sanlang* (2015).

highlighted that a scientific agenda strongly combined with American modernity (rather than Japanese colonial modernity) is set forth for the young Taiwanese Saburo. Saburo realizes that, as Toru has advised him, academic success would be his ticket to see the world (*Sanlang*: 57).

Saburo attends the best school, Chien Kuo Middle School but is expelled from school for mocking a non-provincial ("*gua-shing-a*") teacher,[6] Mr. Lee, by drawing a pig-like image on a mud wall. The scene is set during February 1947, when the February 28th Incident would happen. Fredric Jameson argues that "all third-world texts are necessarily allegorical, and in a very specific way…to be read" as what he calls "national allegories." Considering Lu Xun's writing, reflecting new China's political reality in the 1910s to 1920s, Jameson points out the stories "Diary of a Madman," "The True Story of Ah Q," and "Medicine" allegorically refer to China itself (1986: 65–88). Likewise, in a national-allegorical way, Julie Wu utilizes the famous Taiwanese saying "The dogs go, and the pigs come" (狗去豬來) in *The Third Son* to depict the transitional post-war era of 1945–1949 in Taiwan, especially when the February 28th Incident erupted. In *The Third Son*, a banner with "THE DOGS GO, AND THE PIGS COME" hangs on the street by the crowd as Saburo walks by (*Sanlang*: 59). The "dogs" and the "pigs" are vivid Taiwanese national allegories. The "dogs" refers to the Japanese regime—which conducted a violent colonialization until 1945—whilst "pigs" refers to the newcomers—some of the corrupt KMT officials who hijacked properties left by the Japanese regime. After the February 28th Incident, Saburo refuses to attend Chien Kuo High School anymore but instead attends the Taipei Provincial Institute of Technology, a five-year vocational junior college. Saburo experiences the April Sixth Event in 1949, in which some students of NTU and NTNU were arrested by policemen who broke into the campuses, and he survives the White Terror safe and sound due to his father's worldly wisdom and connections. During this period, he listens to Glenn Miller's swing jazz while he fixes radios. He receives injections of vitamins and glucose on a regular basis from his cousin Toru, a doctor:

> Sixty milliliters of vitamins—B6, B12, C, glucose, and who knows what else—every day for months without end. The veins shrank from the assault, burrowing deep into my flesh and making each needle stick more excruciating. The very sight of Toru's office made me sick. (*The Third Son*: 7-9/9)

Julie Wu has created a character who, during the White Terror era, unlike the majority of Taiwanese Americans who either established themselves in the United States or chose a path of self-preservation by returning to Taiwan, represents the idealized prototype of long-distance Taiwanese nationalism for Taiwanese American men in the US—empowering Taiwanese male immigrants as actively engaged "organic intellectuals" (a term coined by Antonio Gramsci) who fought for the Taiwanese American social group's cultural influence and mobilized a certain degree of political clout in the US, which was otherwise impossible in White Terror Taiwan. According to Antonio Gramsci, who distinguished between organic intellectuals and traditional intellectuals, "organic intellectuals" refers to "the industrial bourgeoisie in the form of technicians, managers, economic

[6] Romanizations are deliberately presented throughout the whole English-language novel which refer to the Southern Min (Hoklo) language used by the Taiwanese ethnic group in Taiwan. This is obviously a strategy for ethnic distinction in the American literary field.

advisers, lawyers, and so on." The careers of the social group organic intellectuals as designated by Gramsci roughly fit with those of Christopher Fan's PMC class, mentioned previously. In addition, organic intellectuals, as opposed to traditional intellectuals, possess a most distinctive asset, the "cultural self-consciousness, the self-criticism of the dominant class." On the other hand, "traditional intellectuals" refers to men of the church, certain state officials, and even scholars. They were originally linked to feudal society and are nowadays linked to administrative personnel in certain national domains (Hoare and Sperber 2015: 34–35). In *The Third Son*, the first generation of Taiwanese Americans, such as Saburo, Professor Peter Hong, and postdoctoral researcher Wen-Chong Ni, who actively participate in long-distance Taiwanese nationalist activities, can be seen as organic intellectuals in this sense. In contrast, the pro-KMT characters, such as Li-wen, the Professor, and Kuo-Hong, who work for the KMT to spy on Taiwanese nationalist activities, can be regarded as traditional intellectuals. The Taiwanese protagonist Saburo not only fights against his fate as the third son in his family (in contrast to his elder brother, who receives abundant resources, Saburo faces an unjust resource distribution within the family), but also, as an active and rational Taiwanese student studying abroad, he delivers a harsh critique of the KMT's governance in Taiwan and its political surveillance of Taiwanese students and immigrants in the US.

More ideally, after passing exams to study abroad, enduring the rigorous selection process of American aerospace technology teams, and completing his PhD qualifying exams, Saburo successfully transforms from a student on a scientific pilgrimage into a Taiwanese American technologist. In the end, Saburo has become a rational Taiwanese American who has internalized American individualism in familial relationships and *bravely* confronts his authoritarian father at the conclusion of the novel, exposing the family's long-standing unjust resource distribution, emotional manipulation, and his elder brother Ichiro's collaboration with the Kuomintang intelligence unit, which affected both Saburo and his wife, Yoshiko. By the way, note that the imbalanced gender description of Saburo versus Yoshiko and the few other female voices do not seem to be the main concern of *The Third Son*.

Assemblage of Technological Prostheses

In the twentieth century and beyond, with the rapid rise of technology, humans are no longer defined, translated, or established solely through human-designated value objects. With the assistance of technological prostheses, such as machines, virtual networks, and artificial intelligence, many aspects of the definition of human beings and the meaning of humanism have been reconsidered or even denounced when addressing issues such as the relationship between humans and animals, gender and body politics, interpersonal identity, political philosophy (e.g., Michel Foucault's anti-humanist critique of Marxist humanism's anthropocentrism, leading to the idea of the "death of man," see Foucault 1994: 386), science and technology, digital culture of new media, environmental protection, ecocriticism (e.g., humans and plants, humans and stratigraphy), biotechnology, neuroscience, automation, evolution theory, and animal protection. Considering

classical humanism, its applicability is no longer sufficient to explain the understanding of humans themselves and the relationship between humans and non-human species. Thus, posthumanism has emerged following critiques of the "concept of humanity and humanistic tradition in Europe since the Renaissance" by scholars like Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Irigaray, and Fanon (Lee 2013a: 14–15). In other words, in the late stages of humanism, with the rise of various "post-" movements (post-structuralism, postcolonialism, postmodernism, etc.), and particularly through post-structuralism's critique of human-centrism, the complicit Eurocentrism, and phallogocentrism, and even carnophallogocentrism—the concept of male-human as the subject of the world, the boundaries between genders, human and machine, and humans and animals have been challenged.

From a postcolonial geography perspective, Western (male) individuals became "scientific men," with dominating identity recognition in the colonial context after the Enlightenment. Joanne P. Sharp points out that the rise of Western colonial knowledge is related to the standard of "measuring humans with machines." In the post-Enlightenment era, European men began to separate themselves from nature, and, in fact, it was the specific group of men, not all humans, who conquered nature and dominated other races in the world. Technology and science became complicit in Western colonialism and were used as standards of judgment. Even Western geographer Alexander von Humboldt and his Western companions (both Western white males) were represented as "scientific men" (Sharp 2012: 42–45). Returning to the post-structuralist critique of structuralist binary discourse, the epistemological and binary boundaries between humans and non-humans are gradually being broken. Under this new classification framework, the "posthuman" or "half-human" could be a cyborg (cybernetics) (Huang 2015: 118).[7] According to Huang, thereby:

> The initial condition of human existence is already an openness to different heterogeneities as if continuously attaching <u>prostheses</u>. Genetic engineering or information technology merely makes the blurring of boundaries more intensive between human and non-human, nature and technology, which reveals the ubiquity of the cyborg and makes us realize that humans have long been in a "posthuman" state. Learning to manage this posthuman body, which is constantly connected to other heterogeneities, can allow our definitions of identity or subjectivity to become less confined and limited. (Huang 2015: 118, my translation and underline)

Under the extended definition of posthumanism proposed by Huang and other posthumanist thinkers (Joanna Zylinska, Bernard Stiegler, Katherine Hayles) (Huang 2015: 118), posthuman studies can address issues of the hybrid between humans and animals and the breaking of the boundary between humans and animals; also, distinctions between men and women could be erased, and even the boundary between humans and ghosts is blurred.

In Taiwan's post-war context, Yu-lin Lee has proposed to see "Health Realism" cinema in 1960s and 1970s Taiwan from the perspective of prosthesis modernity (義肢現代性). Lee argues

[7] The term "cyborg" is formed by combining the words "cybernetics" and "organism," and is also translated as "human-machine hybrid" (Huang 2015: 118).

that this specific genre of cinema intervenes in the film industry due to "governance through the creation of historical memories and affective subjectivity" (Lee 2013b: 116). Lee maintains that "defective body/prosthesis" has surpassed its original bodily reference and has become a connotation for the idealization of the assemblage of meanings of cultural artifacts:

> Prosthesis gives persons and characters the prototypes of ideals and models. At this level, the operation of prostheses is both political and ideological. However, defective body/prosthesis transcends its literal and textual denotation at this level and becomes metaphoric. That is, bodily symbols refer to a system of meanings or institutions woven by prosthesis, including family, society, state, politics, economics, technology, culture, etc. (Lee 2013b: 120, my translation and underline)

Lee also observes that the "narrative prosthesis" can be considered a supplement to something originally lacking (128). Lee quotes the idea of "narrative prosthesis" from David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder: "This kind of void or lack is, at the same time, personal, societal, and collective." As Mitchell and Snyder argue in "Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor":

> Nearly every culture views disability as a problem in need of a solution, and this belief establishes one of the major modes of historical address directed toward people with disabilities. The necessity for developing various kinds of cultural accommodations to handle the "problem" of corporeal difference. (Mitchell and Snyder 2000)

It is due to this *lack* in different levels of human society that narrative prosthesis can be established to fill the knowledge gap, to cure imperfect bodies, and to build the Taiwanese American identity from a disabled state. Technological prosthesis, with postcolonial pitfall, becomes necessary in transforming the two prototypes of Saburo, the premodern one under Japanese rule and KMT rule in the Republic of China, Taiwan, and the modernized one in the US. In *The Third Son*, the defective body/prosthesis of Saburo is physically supplemented by vitamin potions while mentally supplemented by Western modernity via Japanese and American mediation. Regarding the appropriation of the cultural layers in Taiwan by Julie Wu, the cultural discourses of Japan and America have become superior layers to the layer of post-war Chinese culture brought in by the KMT regime. Roughly speaking, under Julie Wu's deployment of the plots, the former two layers suggest modernity (the Japanese layer was only mixed with a slight hint of colonialism). At the same time, the latter is associated with pre-modern governance, such as the stressed February 28th Incident.

In addition to forging a path of long-distance Taiwanese American cultural nationalism, this work also contrasts the KMT's White Terror in Taiwan with a tendency to view American and Japanese symbols as representing a utopia of technological rationality, even implying a form of postcolonial technological rationality. By configuring Saburo with modernity-related technology and rationality transmitted through the agency of his cousin Toru and positioning Saburo as someone allowed only to succeed (by becoming a naturalized American professor), the work presents him as a prototype character in a posthuman technological enlightenment novel. In other words, this ideal type of Taiwanese American has shed the psychological mindset of Taiwanese

students on a pilgrimage—one preset to return to Taiwan eventually—and has instead shifted toward "becoming American" or "becoming Taiwanese American," incorporating both physical and psychological aspects.

In the material dimension (e.g., Saburo's traveling cross-country in the U.S. and his purchasing an American-style house in the latter part of the novel), the psychological dimension (e.g., his reflecting on Taiwanese patriarchal family dynamics through an American family relationship model), the biopolitical dimension (e.g., his viewing the February 28th Incident caused by the "Chinese" KMT from the perspective of an overseas Taiwanese American citizen), and the cultural-national dimension (e.g., his disdaining his father's bribery of KMT officials during the February 28th Incident), Saburo gradually embeds an American perspective and becomes a Taiwanese American.

In this discussion, I aim to utilize the concept of "technological prostheses" to generate a view of how *The Third Son*, which deals with a lot of the first generation of Taiwanese Americans, projects an assemblage of body and mind that is to some degree idealized and fits into the agenda of linear modernity that was embedded in the social-political contexts of post-war America—the designated land of modernity after Saburo's transnational crossing from post-war Taiwan. The trending saying went viral in 1960s Taiwan: "Come, come, come; come to National Taiwan University. Go go go; go to America." As Hsieh points out, Taiwanese students and immigrants in the US in the 1960s started to differentiate themselves from Chinese students and immigrants. The 1965 Immigration Act resulted in a radical increase of Taiwanese immigrants to the US (Hsieh 2017: 27). *The Third Son* offers a realistic, precise description of the drive and the momentum of the movement of Taiwanese immigration to the US since the 1960s. The liberal ally of Free China (Taiwan during the martial law period then), the US, with the space race between the US and the Soviets underway since the 1950s, was metaphorically the technological prosthesis, or the remedy of the void, that Saburo, who had experienced Japanese and KMT rule, aimed to assemble.

For Saburo, or the group of "idealized Taiwanese Americans" projected by the author, technology can be treated as extended technological prostheses. Saburo, who went to the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology to pursue a master's degree in electrical engineering after graduating from the Taipei Institute of Technology, as with many Taiwanese Americans after the 1960s, largely relies on technical and engineering expertise to establish himself in the United States. The plots of the assemblage of technological prostheses in *The Third Son* echo what Fan has pointed out previously, that the number of Taiwanese immigrants and students in scientific, technical, engineering, and math subjects increased due to the Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act (1965) (Fan 2023: 212–213).

It can be observed that Saburo's technological prostheses have two sources. The young Saburo initiated his enlightenment regarding (colonial) modernity through his cousin, Toru, in his youth during Japanese rule. After the February 28th Incident, in which the KMT regime killed many Taiwanese elites, Saburo makes up his mind to study abroad in the US. In his academic journey, through serendipity, Saburo shifts from studying electrical engineering to pursuing a Ph.D. in

astrophysics. During Japanese rule, Saburo got the nickname "Horse" due to the injections of the yellow solution of vitamins he received regularly from his cousin Toru.

> THE MOLECULES FROM the yellow bag swirled through my blood, reinforcing the scaffolding of my bones and the marrow within them. My cells feasted, divided and grew. I grew tall—taller than my father, my legs so long they earned me the new moniker Horse when I joined the school's track team. (*The Third Son*: 8-1/4)

Several scenes with injections in *The Third Son* play the role of the assemblage of technological prostheses. Saburo experiences a kind of whole-body transformation thanks to his cousin Toru's injections. After receiving them, he becomes "different" from his fellow Taiwanese family members. Metaphorically speaking, the function of medical injections remains effective until Saburo becomes a Taiwanese American immigrant. In addition, the scientific encyclopedia *The Earth* (a Japanese encyclopedia) he receives from Toru serves as a multi-route enlightenment regarding his worldview. That is to say, the epistemology of science and ecology is seen spreading from European, Japanese, and American sources, originating in the Age of Enlightenment, in which reason was one of the themes to be discussed, vaccines were invented and became popular, and the production of encyclopedias was popular among intellectuals like Voltaire (1694–1778). It is not a coincidence that Toru also saves Saburo's life by injecting a new antivenom to treat a snake bite. Toru seems to play the awakening role of the Age of Enlightenment, including reason, knowledge, medicine, encyclopedias, etc., or, to summarize, the shaping force of being a Reasonable Man in the 18th century. This *grafted* epistemology becomes an exit for the protagonist—to construct his subjectivity now and accept the modern agenda as later laid out in the following chapters, in which he will become a *successful* Taiwanese American. At this stage, the assemblage of prostheses (here referring to being equipped with the knowledge of a modern man) is necessary for future development.

In fact, during the preparation for the Examination to Determine Eligibility to Pursue Graduate Study in the United States (only 12 people were accepted per year), Saburo starts to accumulate the required cultural capital (in Pierre Bourdieu's terms), such as English language proficiency, the subjects of biology, mathematics, Western history, calculus, and chemistry, and magazines like *Modern Radio*, as well as articles in *Time* and *Life* magazine borrowed from the United States Information Agency (USIA). Through self-study, Saburo has acquired knowledge of physics, quantum mechanics, and astrophysics. The International Geophysical Year in 1957, held in the New World, becomes a beacon for this Taiwanese-American-to-be.

In Part 2 of *The Third Son*, Saburo starts his overseas study in America, first at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology for a master's degree in electrical engineering and then for a Ph.D. in astrophysics at the University of Michigan. Craving knowledge about the stratosphere, ionosphere, upper atmosphere, etc., Saburo has largely changed his route of study away from the assigned undergraduate pharmacy program at Baylor University, which came with the offer of a scholarship and was in keeping with his Taiwanese Don family's expectation that he would go back to the family-run pharmaceutical branch of Taikong Company to work. During the ascent of the flight to America, he is filled with feelings empowered by modern technology:

> I was flying…And yet, as the propellers pounded, leaving Taiwan far behind us, and the earth itself became veiled beneath the layers of vapor outside my window, I felt the molecules of the air loosen around me and felt gravity lose its relentless grip. I was no longer that boy in secondhand clothes, Kazuo's detested little brother, dragging his feet home while he gazed up at the sky. I was in that sky, cutting my own path through the rippling patterns of clouds, through the layers of stratified gases, to a land where no one knew me.
>
> In the vastness of the sky, I felt also my smallness. I was simply a man, dressed in a Japanese broadcloth shirt and a finely tailored suit that Yoshiko had insisted on having made so I would look just like the other men, all white, who sat in rows around me. A man like any other. And when the plane landed, no one would know my name, nor that of my father, my brother, or even my hometown. From now on, all that mattered was the man I was now and the man I planned to be (*The Third Son*: 15/7-30).

The first part of the passage quoted above implies that the agenda of *becoming an American* is propelled by the knowledge of physics, astrophysics, mechanics, electronics, etc., which Saburo would depend on for the rest of his American academic life. Like a surgeon's *graft*, it is necessary to perform a cession followed by a transplantation. Due to Julie Wu's vigorous Taiwanese cultural nationalism, it is to be inferred that the protagonist, Saburo, should abandon Chineseness rather than Taiwaneseness, and the plots go this way. In the due course of becoming an American, Saburo relinquishes elements of Chineseness and embraces linear modernity as represented by Japaneseness and Americanness. The course of *becoming an American* includes a sub-agenda: becoming a Taiwanese American or a Chinese American. Regarding Julie Wu's setting of Taiwanese cultural nationalism in *The Third Son*, the former option requires a reflexive reconstruction of Taiwanese subjectivity that largely differs from the long-established ethnicity of Chinese Americans, which Saburo obviously aims to abandon and reject. The passengers on the flight see the northern lights, and Saburo refers to the phenomenon as the auroras, as explained in *The Earth* as follows: "When the sun has flare, it sends gas over and this somehow interacts with Earth's atmosphere" (*The Third Son*: 15-9/30). This gesture denotes another example of technological prosthesis, a graft of Western science into the social agent, a quasi-Taiwanese American on the way.

The common postcolonial issues for migrating students are still shown in this work, such as experiences of racial discrimination, diasporic feelings of dislocation in the "neocolonial" pilgrimage (of course, the United States has never colonized Taiwan), dystopian aspects of the New World, and differences in the level of modernity between America and Taiwan, etc. Because of the high intensity of linear modernity endorsed by the United States in the Cold War setting, an undertone of postcolonial description can be suggested in reading this fiction. The linear modernity suggests a forwardly progressive modernity, the opposite of what Walter Benjamin saw epitomized

by Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus* (Benjamin 2015: 289). Not denying the neocolonial perspectives of an immigrant struggling to live in America as a foreign Taiwanese ethnic, as Saburo has experiences of exclusion, isolation, and racial discrimination, *The Third Son* stresses the utopian side more than the dystopian.

Even though the second paragraph quoted above suggests a utopia for the Taiwanese ethnic, right from the moment when Saburo lands, he cannot escape from the overseas surveillance conducted by the KMT government, hinting at the dystopia of long-distance Chinese nationalism. One example is the infiltrated half-KMT student organization FOCUS (Friends of Chinese University Students). Saburo gets involved in long-distance Chinese nationalist activities sponsored by KMT-governed Taiwan. In fact, he reluctantly participates in a social circle where Du Kuo-Hong, the son of a KMT secretary in Taoyuan who has spied on Saburo's father, is now spying on Saburo in the United States. Julie Wu narrates a profound revulsion towards overseas KMT agents via the character Kuo-Hong. Saburo feels in "limbo" right at the moment of meeting the Nationalist agent at a social party: "My stomach clenched, and I felt, redoubled, that strange sense of limbo, of unreality" (*The Third Son*: 15-22/30).

Simon Gikandi suggests reading colonial Caribbean literature with the idea of limbo. Limbo dance originally took place in a limited space with the slaves on the ships in the middle passage between Africa and the Caribbean. According to Gikandi, limbo dance served as a multi-faceted metaphor. Firstly, it suggests a form of cultural dislocation from Africa to the Caribbean, where "pre-modern" discourses meet acclaimed modernism and modernity. At the same time, limbo addresses the limited social space that different cultural fragments and multiple ethnic identities are forced to fuse together by corrective imperialism. In addition, the limbo dance in movement shows the unstable state of anxieties that generate ironies to subvert "the authority of imperialist discourse" (Gikandi 1992: 13–15).

Differing from the feelings of dislocation of migrants from other colonial countries, or the "limbo" Saburo feels regarding the different weather in Taiwan and the United States when he lands in America, the second "limbo" he experiences refers to the long-distance surveillance conducted by the KMT government in America. As the story progresses, it turns out that his elder brother Kazuo has set him up, accusing him of being a Taiwan independence activist and almost putting him on a KMT blacklist.

Saburo's PhD study includes the atmosphere, including the upper atmosphere—the stratosphere and ionosphere. Astrophysics professors surround him, representing the most cutting-edge science in America in the 1950s–60s. Saburo teaches at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, where he builds an academic relationship with Professor Beck, the head of the department at the school. He participates in research projects for the launch of satellites directed by Professor Gleason with the Aeronautical Engineering Department at the University of Michigan. Linus Pauling, the pioneer in quantum chemistry and molecular biology, is a topic of discussion between him and Professor Gleason. The space race between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War is the very setting of this fiction. The happy ending of *The Third Son*, in which Saburo's long-waiting Taiwanese wife and son are finally reunited with him in America, suggests

the realization of the prototype of idealized Taiwanese Americans. Atmospheric science, the technological prosthesis, is cleverly embedded into Saburo's journey of becoming a rational Taiwanese American and a metaphor serving first-generation Taiwanese Americans.

Writing Back with Taiwanese Elements

The term "writing back" comes from *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures.* Especially in chapter two, "Re-placing language: textual strategies in postcolonial writing," Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin explored the works of post-colonial writers in Asia, Africa, Australia, and Central America and found that these writers used local language(s) or multiple languages (including colonial languages, such as English) as strategies to challenge the conception of a correct and pure English. The culturally distinctive strategies included abrogation and appropriation (Ashcroft et al. 2002: 37–76).

The linguistic strategies employed by postcolonial writers have challenged the long-established cultural hegemony of English. At the same time, through the practice of certain "writing back" strategies, the dominated "phones" could construct their distinction of subjectivity in the English literary field. According to Wei-Ting Liou, the elements of phonocentrism in Shawna Yang's *Green Island*, such as the Southern Min voices, the Japanese language, and a Chinese song produced in post-war Taiwan, have become heterogenous and "palimpsestic phones" for ethnic Taiwanese American literature in the English literary field in the United States to demonstrate Taiwanese American ethnic distinction (Liou 2020).

In Sinophone studies, Shih Shu-mei's idea of "against diaspora" (反離散) has stressed the elements of localizing Chinese immigrants in postcolonial linguistic contexts within and outside China (Shih 2017). Therefore, for the second generation of Taiwanese American writers, "writing back" does not imply a total rejection of the use of English nor a total acceptance of long-distance (cultural) nationalism. Considering "market law" in Sung-sheng Chang's sense (Chang 2004), in the context of publishing in the United States, a total return to the use of Chinese in writing for the second generation of Taiwanese American writers, as the first generation of Taiwanese American writers undertook, or a strong Taiwan-centered ethnic stance is unrealistic in the American literary field.

In translation studies, Lawrence Venuti stresses the importance of the method of foreignizing translation rather than that of domestication in order to undermine the cultural hegemony of English. Venuti argues that

> I want to suggest that insofar as foreignizing translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation, it is highly desirable today, a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs, pitched against the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others. Foreignizing translation in English can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations" (Venuti 1995: 20).

The technological prosthesis grafted to Saburo does not lean toward American mainstream culture entirely. Elements of Taiwan's long-distance cultural nationalism, Taiwanese folk songs, romanizations of Taiwanese Southern Min (白話字) and Japanese, and the February 28th Incident are crucial supplements to the newly built, quasi-voided Taiwanese American identity. As such, ethnic Taiwanese Americans can reach their ethnic distinction under the everyday life biopolitics dealing with hegemonic ethnic stereotypes: Asian Americans, Chinese Americans, ethnic minorities, etc. Therefore, the deliberate preservation of foreign Taiwanese elements, such as distinctive romanizations, syntax, semantics, or even songs, as Julie Wu has strategically deployed in *The Third Son,* can be seen as a positive means of cultural intervention against hegemonic English, especially when seeing her as a translator between Taiwanese and American cultures.

The utilization of such an a foreignized writing-back style could be categorized into three kinds of voices to represent the "phones" (as in the "phone" in Sinophone studies), Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese Southern Min, and Japanese. The former two phones belong to the Sinophone, and the latter to the Nipponphone.

Firstly, regarding the use of Mandarin Chinese, the phonetics of "*Bo po mo fo De te le ne Ge ke he Zhi chi shi ri*" (the initial phonetics of the Zhuyin system for Mandarin Phonetic Style I) remind Saburo of his obedient childhood in post-war Taiwan, learning phonetics. These phonetics of Zhuyin are not glossed or translated for English readers, but English readers might be able to guess negative meanings from the context. Saburo is waiting in a hospital, regretting that he had not stood up to his father earlier and rejected accompanying him on his long tour around America with Yoshiko, who has just miscarried due to exhaustion from traveling. Perhaps to the shock of English readers, there is no explanation for the "syllabic chant." However, the narrator hints that this foreign "rhythm" comes from the "Old World," Taiwan under KMT rule. It follows with the doctor's voice: "*It's not your fault*." (*The Third Son*: 43/1-2). The italicized English utterance by the American doctor offers consolation to Saburo. The rational thinking and individualism symbolized by the Western doctor justify what Saburo has done—confronted his Taiwanese father. This figure chose to cooperate with the KMT government in the White Terror period, just like his first son. The process of assembling Saburo himself with technological prostheses also involves the pursuit of *abjection* (Kristeva 1982: 1). That is, while accepting the modern discourses in America, Saburo must expel impurities to purify himself. Then, the establishment of the subjectivity of a Taiwanese American will be complete. "The impurities" refers to elements related to the "Old World." More specifically, given the obviously Taiwanese stance of Julie Wu, the elements of Chineseness, such as Mandarin Chinese, patriarchy, blind filial piety, etc., should be reexamined or even abandoned.

Secondly, the romanizations of the Taiwanese Southern Min language play a quintessential role in representing Taiwanese American subjectivity in *The Third Son*, as the Taiwanese American Citizens League (TACL) has dedicated decades to promoting the Taiwanese Language Writing Movement in the US. In the field of Taiwan, the Taiwanese Southern Min language has long been a synonym for Taiwanese people's identity, a function which can be traced back to literary debates in the 1920s–30s. At the end of *The Third Son*, a Taiwanese song, *Mending the Broken Net* (補破

網), addresses a happy ending. The contents of the lyrics suggest, in a national allegorical way, that the Taiwanese people no longer need to repair the broken net because the KMT regime has been overthrown. The connotation made it a forbidden song under the KMT in the martial law period. Thus, the forbidden Taiwanese Southern Min song, in the transnational context of the newly reunited Taiwanese American family, suggests an existence of *a priori* importance. The Taiwanese Southern Min, which had been forbidden by the KMT government in Taiwan in the White Terror period, has been promoted and revived in Taiwanese American communities in the US.

Taiwanese Americans' revival of Taiwanese Southern Min in the US and the ban on its use during martial law in Taiwan suggest that we examine the transboundary biopolitics of the language and the communities that use it. To extend Giorgio Agamben's terms, the *state of exception* can be used to interpret the conditions of the Taiwanese Americans' linguistic practice of Taiwanese Southern Min. In *Homo Sacer*, in the chapter titled "The State of Exception as a Paradigm of Government," Agamben constructs the concept of a state of exception by exploring the scope of legal sovereignty. Political states of exception and the condition of being under the jurisdiction of a major authority (such as in Nazi concentration camps) often exist within the boundaries of biopolitics, where individuals do not consciously distinguish or identify. Agamben argues that "the significance of the jurisdiction of the field is precisely that it is not a field of law" and "the state of exception is neither external nor internal to the juridical order … it is a threshold, where inside and outside do not exclude each other but rather blur together" (Agamben 1998: 322/1259). The state of exception was once a temporary exclusion during a governing crisis, but it became the norm. Hsin-Chin Hsieh applies Agamben's "state of exception" and "bare life" to observe how filmmakers processed the biopolitics of the immigrants in Taiwan, as well as the bodily politics and labor governmentality of the migrant workers (Hsieh 2022). In terms of the Taiwanese American literary domain, Wei-Ting Liou appropriates Agamben's "state of exception" to examine the biopolitical phenomenon between linguistic capital and political government in Emily Pan's *The Astonishing Color of After*, in which the negation and acquisition of the cultural capital of Taiwanese Americans are embedded in the biopolitics of this ethnic group (Liou 2024).

Regarding this idea of biopolitics in terms of language for Taiwanese Americans, Taiwanese Southern Min was once a lively language in Taiwan before the imposition of martial law by the KMT government. It was forbidden afterward and was once illegitimate cultural capital. However, Taiwanese Southern Min came alive in its transboundary journey to the US. As mentioned, with the promotion by Taiwanese societies in the previous decades as a form of long-distance Taiwanese nationalism, the state of exception of Taiwanese Southern Min in KMT Taiwan has become legitimate cultural capital for ethnic Taiwanese Americans. For some writers who deeply associate Taiwanese Southern Min with Taiwanese nationalism, such as Taiwanese Canadian writer Lei Chen (陳雷), the romanization of Taiwanese Southern Min rather than of Han characters (漢字) serves as an exclusive and quasi-legitimate means for the constitution of Taiwanese identification, either in the US or in Taiwan. Julie Wu and other, first-generation Taiwanese American writers, such as Juan Huang (黃娟), have inherited this linguistic ideology and the

biopolitics underneath. In this sense, the deliberate use of romanizations of Taiwanese Southern Min by Julie Wu in *The Third Son* can be justified. For example, "*A-hianh*" ("brother" *The Third Son*: 1-14/16), "*moachi*" ("sweet snack" *The Third Son*: 1-7/16), "*chit-pieng*" ("here" *The Third Son*: 6-3/25), "*Hun-chi*" ("sweet potato" *The Third Son*: 6-/15/25), "*Kianh-kianh*" ("Quick quick" *The Third Son*: 6-18/25), "*Bien-la-bien-la*" ("Not-necessary, not-necessary" *The Third Son*: 6-18/25), "*Ane hou*" ("That's good" *The Third Son*: 7-4/10), "*Lai*" ("Come" *The Third Son*: 3-7/12), "*Gau tsa*" ("Good morning" *The Third Son*: 44-9/14), etc. Some of them offer English explanations, and some do not. This is a typical writing-back strategy to remind English readers of the foreignness of Taiwanese American Southern Min phone. In terms of cultural translation, as a translator between Taiwan and the US, Julie Wu strategically adopts the method of foreignization translation, as supported by Venuti, to demonstrate her distinct Taiwanese heritage.

Thirdly, Japanese spellings are persistently used, such as Saburo, Yoshiko, Toru, Kazuo, "*Otosan*" ("Father" in Japanese, *The Third Son*: 8-1), etc. Julie Wu's gesture towards the Nipponphone stresses the Japanese cultural layer regarding Taiwan's colonial palimpsest. Japanese rule was the first power to massively introduce modernity and modernization to Taiwan. It is for the same reason that Saburo Togo (石川三郎 in Japanese) rather than Jialin Don (董家麟 in Chinese) is used by Julie Wu throughout the whole English novel. While in the translated Chinese version, it is the other way around—Jialin Don is used throughout by the translator. *The Third Son* demonstrates the insistence of the linguistic hierarchy (Taiwanese Southern Min, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese) employed by Julie Wu and the biopolitical anxiety of linguistic representation for the excluded ethnic group—Taiwanese Americans in the American literary field.

From the perspective of sound elements in translation studies and long-distance Taiwanese American nationalism, *The Third Son* portrays the February 28th Incident in 1947 by hybridizing sound signifiers of two languages, the romanizations of Mandarin Chinese and of Taiwanese Southern Min, to present the conflict between Chinese national identity and Taiwanese national identity. The use of ㄅㄆㄇㄈ (Bopomofo phonetic symbols), Mandarin speech, and other auditory signifiers represent the actions of the Nationalist government during the February 28th Incident, while nativist Taiwanese phrases like "sweet potato" and songs, such as *Flower in the Rainy Night* (雨夜花) and *Mending the Broken Net*, reflect Taiwanese sounds/phone, marking the trauma experienced by Taiwanese within the province (*The Third Son*: 23). In the American context, the work uses "Formosa," as in the Formosan Association (*The Third Son*: 42), to present symbols distinct from the Republic of China. Japanese elements, including the novel's title's Japanese association and Japanese spellings of the names of Taiwanese characters, are consistently interwoven throughout the novel. In previous research, Wei-Ting Liou points out that Taiwanese American author Shawna Yang Ryan, in *Green Island*, appropriated Taiwanese and Japanese sound elements, a form of phonocentrism, to establish a Taiwanese American identity (Liou 2020). In *The Third Son*, it can be observed that Julie Wu anchors the Taiwanese American spectrum by employing Japanese and Taiwanese phonocentric elements, pre-Japanese colonial references (e.g., descriptions of the Dutch colonial period), and American technological rationality layered across different cultural levels. However, there is an implicit hostility toward the Nationalist

government's Chinese cultural framework, deliberately excluding it from Taiwanese American cultural nationalism.

Conclusion

In *The Third Son*, set against the post-February 28th White Terror era, characters such as Doctor/Cousin Toru, Taiwanese Peter Hong (a KMT-blacklisted professor), postdoctoral researcher Wen-chong Ni, Professor John Gleason of the University of Michigan, and Professor Beck are all linked to disciplines of astrophysics or a temperament of modern rationality. These characters subtly represent what Saburo needs to become. Thus, technology and rationality serve as what Mitchell and Snyder (2000) call a "supplement of void." For Saburo in *The Third Son* (thinking of the radios he assembled in Taiwan and the rockets he assembled in the US) or the metaphorical group of Taiwanese Americans, during the Cold War context of the space race in the United States, technological prostheses became an indispensable, inseparable part of the physical and mental assembly. Regarding the struggle of long-distance national identity politics, *The Third Son* chooses the route of being Taiwanese American rather than Chinese American. By internalizing American technological rationality, Saburo in *The Third Son* reminds us of the void and lack of some Taiwanese who are (about to become) Taiwanese Americans, offering the idealized prototype of Taiwanese Americans. After the assembly is complete, Taiwanese Americans can become *distinct* from the Taiwanese who identify with the Republic of China in *The Third Son* (such as certain Taiwanese students who work for the Kuomintang) and also different from the Chinese immigrants who identify with Chinese symbols (such as the Chinese students working at a restaurant).

Not without criticism, *The Third Son* offers a linear narrative for both the protagonist and ethnic Taiwanese Americans, such as modernity in linear progress, which is almost a *bildungsroman* way to examine how an ideal Taiwanese is constituted. However, given the genre of Taiwanese American is still in its budding phase, this kind of justification of the root (Taiwan rather than China) and routes (elements of Taiwanese phonocentrism) is necessary for constituting the subjectivity and distinction of Taiwanese Americans. Furthermore, the highlighted elements of technological prostheses in *The Third Son* may face the danger of bluntly racial-stereotyping the Taiwanese figures—seeing them as "Alien Asian," a term coined by Stephen Hong Sohn. However, Julie Wu has strived to make a U-turn and present a positive version of "techno-orientalism" in *The Third Son*. According to Stephen Hong Sohn's perspective, following the Euro-American racially discriminatory discourse of the "yellow peril" against Chinese immigrants, "Techno-orientalism" emerged by the late 20th century, initially referring specifically to post-war Japan and overseas Japanese immigrants. It became a stereotype used by Euro-American societies to label the Japanese as "Asian/Aliens" under the guise of their fear of Japan's technological advancement (Sohn 2008). According to Takeo Rivera, the term "Techno-orientalism" was originally proposed by David Morley and Kevin Robins in 1995, suggesting that the Euro-American portrayal of Asian (specifically Japanese) high-tech culture carried a racial bias. Rivera argues that in the evolution

of the term Techno-orientalism, it has moved beyond its initially derogatory connotations and expanded its scope. It has become an analytical concept within Asian American studies, referring to the "American imagination of Asians and Asian people in the cultural production and political discourse of high-tech fields" (Rivera 2018: 229). In this sense, the positive use of technological terminology more strongly reverses the negative connotations towards Asians initially associated with Techno-orientalism in the late 20th century. Such positive application of Techno-orientalism can be said to permeate *The Third Son* in its entirety. Considering the novel's publication in 2013, the reversed version of Techno-orientalism in *The Third Son* effectively creates positive images of Taiwanese Americans.

Following the discussion of Techno-orientalism above, which implies a biopolitical reading approach, *The Third Son*, as a literary work originated in the American literary field, generates alternative ways to read works by Taiwanese American writers. The plots of *The Third Son* bear a resemblance to Juan Huang's Taiwanese American writing, such as in the *Bayberry Trilogy* (楊梅三部曲). The linguistic practice of *The Third Son* (the use of multiple languages of Taiwan) echoes the multilingual soundscape in the *Bayberry Trilogy*. Similarly, regarding the return narratives as appropriated by other diasporic writers, *The Third Son* also aims to make debt claims against the dominators, as other minor ethnic writers do. Nevertheless, the debtor here refers to the KMT government rather than the dominant mainstream in the US. As a second-generation Taiwanese American writer, Julie Wu's life journey (medical background, trained in the US) has enabled her to write toward the tendency of "against-diaspora" (反離散) (coined by Shu-mei Shih (2017)). On the one hand, a strong Taiwanese nationalist sentiment is clearly shown in *The Third Son*, and thus, *claiming diaspora* seems to be the right choice, especially for first-generation Taiwanese Americans. On the other hand, the structure of the feelings of the American-born author is embedded into the writing of the work, thus *claiming America* turns out to be the destined answer, especially for second-generation Taiwanese Americans. The technological prostheses underneath the cultural and historical contexts of the space race are the profound keynotes for this specific diaspora.

Since *The Third Son* was published in 2013 in the US in English and translated into Chinese in Taiwan in 2015, this work can be counted as a comparatively *early* Taiwanese American novel written in English, thus profoundly influencing later second-generation Taiwanese American writers, especially considering its extensive multilingualism and conspicuous Taiwanese nationalist stress on the February 28th Incident. The multilingual writing back linguistic strategy and the Taiwanese nationalist event—the February 28th Incident—can be considered common factors for some second-generation Taiwanese American writers. Shawna Yang Ryan's *Green Island* (2016) utilizes a multilingual strategy and also focuses on the February 28th narrative, while the narrator is a nameless first-generation Taiwanese American female. Charles Yu's *Interior Chinatown* (2020) aims for a broader Asian American readership, though the Taiwanese American protagonist's father also experienced the February 28th Incident in Taiwan. *Interior Chinatown* won the National Book Award in 2020. K-Ming Chang's *Bestiary* (2020) focuses on the second-generation protagonist's queer narrative, with multilingual use, and the February 28th Incident is

interwoven into Atayal legends and magical realism. Hua Hsu's *Stay True: A Memoir* (2022), which won the Pulitzer Prize for Memoir in 2023, mentions the White Terror since the end of the 1940s and how Hsu's first-generation Taiwanese American parents got involved in the Protecting Senkaku Islands event in the US and were banned from returning to Taiwan for about twenty years. To sum up, *The Third Son* serves as a seminal work, out of which later Taiwanese American works come in different shapes and demonstrate various approaches to claiming Taiwanese Americans.

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