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What's in a Name?: Second-generation Mainland Writers' Literary Works as a Contested Genre[1]

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In Taiwan, the term mainlanders (or *waishengren*) generally refers to civil war Chinese migrants who moved to the island in the mid-twentieth century. Stories of these forced migrants' flight and their lives after this are one of the common subjects addressed by their children. These writers are often identified by critics as second-generation mainland writers in order to highlight their genealogical lineage, and the literary works as a peculiar genre dealing with issues surrounding their family memories, the groups' lives in Taiwan, and their identity struggles. While these works are popular and well-received, the genre has not been clearly defined and thoroughly investigated in terms of its characteristics and socio-historical meanings. This paper aims to examine how the genre is structured, and what ideological notions it is associated with. I examine these writers' family backgrounds, looking at how historical and familial factors have influenced these writers' identities, as well as the content of their works. I argue that this genre involves a complicated nexus of the ideas of *jiguan* (original hometown), ethnicity and self-identification. While the writers' family homeland and ethnic backgrounds function as vital factors that frame the genre, the historical traumas that their parents lived through made such a profound impression on the second generation that the question of cultural identity assumes special importance in their works. I contend that the trajectory of second-generation mainland writers' works reflects the migrants' change in mentality from that of sojourners to settlers, which can also be seen as the group's indigenisation and acculturation in Taiwan.

Keywords: Second-generation mainland writers, identity, jiguan, imagined ethnicity, Taiwan

The Second Sino-Japanese War followed by the Chinese Civil War resulted in a huge exodus in the late 1940s and 1950s. An estimated over one million refugees fled to Taiwan with the Nationalist (Kuomintang) government, starting the long-standing political confrontation across the Taiwan Strait between ROC (Republic of China) and PRC (People's Republic of China) that still continues today (Yang and Chang, 2010). Despite the increasing social contacts and economic exchanges between the two sides since the late 2000s, the political issues remain a Gordian knot. For those who followed the KMT to Taiwan, this political stand-off is more than textbook history: it represents the background to their whole lives.

During the 1950s and 1960s, under the influence of the KMT's pervasive propaganda, these Chinese refugees were convinced that they would soon retake the mainland and return home. However, their long hopes for a glorious return were undermined with the loss of the ROC's UN seat in 1971 and Chiang Kai-shek's death in 1975. Although some

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of the émigrés regarded Taiwan as a temporary harbour, from where they then migrated to other countries, most of them, for various reasons, settled down and raised their families on this island. These Chinese migrants are usually called mainlanders or *waishengren* (外省人) by other Taiwanese, literally meaning people from other provinces. Although these migrants were eventually allowed to visit China in the late 1980s, tearful family reunions often ended with frustration at the severe changes to their homeland, accompanied by culture shocks and laments for an irretrievable past. Homecoming did not satisfy their lifelong nostalgia for their lost home. Instead they felt more ambivalent. While most of the first-generation migrants have now passed away, their life experiences and complicated emotions towards China have greatly influenced their descendants. While their stories of exile have been repeatedly told in families and widely spread within their own communities, very few wrote about their experiences. Rather their personal narratives were adapted into literary fiction by their children. These works are now regarded as a valuable cultural asset in Taiwan, showing how the historical catastrophe of the Chinese civil war affected a generation who were born in Taiwan and have never experienced the conflict (Wang and Chi, 2004). In fact, the attitudes of these first-generation migrants as presented in literary works have, to some extent, also shaped the views of Taiwanese readers toward China.

From the mid-1970s onwards, second-generation mainlanders, most of whom were born in the 1950s and 1960s, started to produce literary works, which often focused around their parents' memories of war and exile, the group's life circumstances in Taiwan, and their identity struggles. Many of these works were best-sellers in Taiwan, and won numerous literary awards.[2] Some of them, such as Zhu Tianxin's *The Old Capital* (*Gudu*) and Zhang Dachun's *Wild Kids* (*Yehaizi*), were also published and well received in China and Hong Kong, and have been translated into different languages. As these writers have taken prominent positions in Sinophone literature (Tsu and Wang, 2010), their works are often compared and discussed together by critics. Among them, leading writers including Zhu Tianxin (朱天心), Hao Yuxiang (郝譽翔), Zhang Dachun (張大春), Su Weizen (蘇偉貞), and Luo Yijun (駱以軍), have usually been identified as 'second-generation mainland writers'.[3] These writers might not regard themselves as a formal literary grouping, and some of them even felt offended by the label. Nonetheless, in response to rapid changes in Taiwan after the lifting of martial law, these writers did show interest in exploring similar issues with regard to family stories, their feelings of being marginalised in Taiwanese so-

2 For example, the achievement of second-generation mainland writers can be seen in the list of *Yazhou Zhoukan*'s (亞洲週刊) top 100 literary works. In 1999 *Yazhou Zhoukan* invited fourteen scholars, writers and literary critics to select the one hundred most important Chinese/Sinophone novels of the twentieth century. Many of the second-generation mainland writers' works were on the list, including Pai Hsien-yung's *Taipei People*, Zhu Tianxin's *The Old Capital*, Su Weizen's *The Silent Island*, Zhu Tianwen's *Fin de Siecle Splendour*, Zhang Dachun's *Sixi Worries about the Nation.*

3 Critics including Yang Jiaxiang (2004), Hu Yannan (2005), Su Weizen (2004) and Xiao Baofeng (2010) group second-generation writers' literary works together and classify them as a literary category. There are also a number of theses in Taiwan examining second-generation mainland writers' works as a genre.

ciety, and the ambivalent emotions toward China.[4] One of the most prominent examples is their depiction of military dependents' villages (眷村 *juancun*), which became a common topic of such works in the 1980s and 1990s, and which I will discuss in this paper.

It is notable that the genre of literature produced by second-generation mainland writers remains poorly defined, even though these works are popular. Moreover, there have been few academic investigations examining the underlying historical, political and even genealogical meanings that make the genre identifiable as such. Thus the question of who should be included in this group remains open and contested. Can such writers be identified according to their provincial background, ethnic identity or self-identity? In order to clarify this genre, and to uncover some of the obscure but important cultural dynamics that exist in relation to this group of writers, as well as their works, this paper examines how the genre was first named, and what ideological notions it is associated with. I will examine these writers' family backgrounds, looking at how historical and familial factors have influenced their social and self identities, as well as the content of their works. I argue that while the writers' family homeland and ethnic backgrounds function as vital factors that frame the genre, the historical traumas that their parents lived through made such a profound impression on the second generation that the "mainlander" issue, namely the question of cultural identity, assumes a special importance in their works. I contend that the trajectory of second-generation mainland writers' works reflects the civil war migrants and their descendants' change in mentality from that of sojourners to settlers, which can also be seen as the group's indigenisation and acculturation in Taiwan.

FROM *JIGUAN* TO ETHNICITY

The idea of a mainland identity is the key to a greater understanding of the genre of second-generation mainland writers' works. In fact, the notion of 'mainlander' is formed and conceptualised on the basis of one's provincial background and/or ethnicity. The term was originally used in Taiwan to distinguish civil war Chinese migrants from the native Taiwanese residents, whose families had lived on the island for at least one hundred years. In the early days after the KMT government relocated to Taiwan, it used *jiguan* (籍貫) to identify citizens' original domiciles in China, so as to "endorse its ruling legitimacy over the Mainland and Taiwan" (Li, 2002, p.118) and to achieve social categorisation (Li, 2002; Chen, 2007). Under such a system, each citizen's provincial origin was marked on their household registration record and ID card. One of the goals of this system was to integrate people with different provincial backgrounds under the big umbrella of Chinese nationalism (Wang, 2005). However, since the government was wary of a resurgence of national identity among the pre-existing Taiwanese population after the fifty years of Japanese rule, the *jiguan* system was conveniently used as a tool to segregate residents in Taiwan. As Wang Fu-chang (2005) notes, before the 1970s a disproportionate number of civil servants in the central and local governments were mainlanders, and native Taiwanese were discriminated against in this regard.

4 Zhu Tianxin, Zhu Tianwen and their teacher Hu Lanchang established a literary group and published literary journals *San San Jikan* and *San San Magazine* in the late 1970s and 1980s. It has a profound influence on the contemporary literature in Taiwan. While most members were mainlanders, it did not exclusively target at mainland writers. It thus cannot be seen as a second-generation mainland writers' literary group.

Whether intentionally or not, the practice of *jiguan* divided people into two groups, *benshengren* (本省人 , people of this province) and *waishengren*. If *jiguan* was a political tactic that was misused to differentiate the self from the other, during the martial law period mainlanders were usually seen as the superior group under the KMT's grand narrative of Sinocentrism, although the situation was reversed in the 1990s, with the rapid development of democratisation and nativist movements, when Taiwan was keen to present a new historical narrative that was largely free from the influence of China. While in the earlier days *jiguan* was exploited by the KMT to achieve its ideological aims, in later years it was seen by dissidents as evidence of the institutional bias against the local population. Within such a discursive framework, the KMT is usually seen as a colonial regime, with mainlanders as its collaborators and beneficiaries. The relationship between the two groups is thus interpreted as hostile, or at least often in conflict.

Pen Hsiao-yen's "Historical Revisionism in Taiwanese Literature and Culture" (2003) examines how *bensheng* writers struggled to construct a historical narrative against the dominant Sinocentric account, and to revive Taiwanese literature, which was suppressed by the KMT government during the martial law period. Although Peng emphasises that nativism was not exclusively supported by native Taiwanese, she also points out that many authors with mainland backgrounds, such as Zhu Tianxin, Zhu Tianwen and Zhang Dachun, felt alienated, discriminated and left behind in the face of the socio-political changes that took place when Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese literature came to the fore in society during the 1990s. In the process of constructing a nativist historical account in the literary works, many mainland writers believed that their voices were then being neglected by the wider society.

While the implementation of *jiguan* system hindered a possible rapprochement between mainlanders and native Taiwanese, the government's policies during the martial law period, such as the forceful promotion of the Mandarin language, the prohibition of vernaculars and the establishment of military dependents' villages did not achieve cultural assimilation, but instead widened the gap between the two groups. Many local Taiwanese felt culturally and socially discriminated, and thus the divisions which originally arose from people's provincial origins and family connections to China gradually evolved into a more complicated cultural issue with its roots in ideas about ethnic identity.

In the early 1990s, the discourse of imagined ethnicity took the place of the ideas associated with the *jiguan* system, categorising the Taiwanese population into four subethnic groups (Lupke, 2009)—the aboriginal people, the Hoklo, the Hakka, and mainlanders.[5] Akin to Benedict Anderson's idea of imagined communities (1983), the concept of imagined ethnicity underscores the invented kinship or solidarity that binds people together. The Hakka and Hoklo, like mainlanders, originated from China and their ancestors also belonged to the Han ethnicity; they shared a common experience of Japanese colonisation, the arrival of the KMT government and subsequent episodes of state violence, such as the February 28 Incident. Thus, their experience of Taiwan has been quite different to that of mainlanders. In addition, the different home dialects and cultural practices of these two groups further distinguish the Hoklo from the Hakka. Language, culture and tradition

5 The concept of four subethnic groups (si da zuqun) was first proposed by the Democratic Progressive Party, the main opposition party to the KMT, in 1993, in its white paper on ethnic and cultural policies.

superseded the geopolitical *jiguan* concept, serving as key parameters in the discourse of imagined ethnicity. Although there are still arguments concerning classification criteria, to date it remains the most widely accepted approach to classify the Taiwanese population (Le Pesant, 2011). According to a report issued by the Taiwanese government in 2011, around 67.5 percent of the inhabitants are Hoklo, 13.6 percent are Hakka, 7.1 percent are mainlanders, and 1.8 percent aborigines (Hakka Affairs Council, 2011).[6] However, regardless of the proportion of the population that each group accounts for, the major focus of this discourse is on social and cultural equality, and an appreciation of diversity (Wang, 2005).

Within the discursive framework of imagined ethnicity, issues surrounding mainlanders no longer lie in their connections with China, either as a geographical entity or a cultural centre, but in their lives and identity struggles in Taiwanese society. In Chen Guowei's *Imagining Taiwan: Ethnic Writings in the Contemporary Novels* (2007), the author does not see mainlanders as collaborators with a colonial power, but instead examines mainland writers' works with regard to their life experience in military dependents' villages, the anxiety of being marginalised in Taiwanese society, and their feelings of loss in city spaces. Chen's analyses confirm Wang Fu-chang's argument that the transformation of categorisation from *jiguan* to imagined ethnicity is a process of indigenisation (Wang, 2005). In examining mainland writers' literary works, particularly those by the second generation, Chen has put this group in the context of the wider Taiwanese society, with the foci being their lives in Taiwan and their interactions with other subethnic groups.

While this ethnicity discourse has become a widely accepted approach to categorise residents in Taiwan and to understand the cultural diversity, I would argue that in considering second-generation mainland writers' literary works, the classifications of *jiguan* and imagined ethnicity do not adequately explain the complicated dilemmas about identity that are revealed in their works, since both approaches neglect the complexity of intermarriages, the subsequent problems of identification among the children of such marriages, and mainland writers' subjectivity. The practice of *jiguan* in Taiwan is based on a patrilineal system, and apart from some special cases it only takes paternal lineage into consideration (Wang, 2005; Hu, 2005; Chen, 2007). Even after the registration system was abolished, when it comes to one's ethnic background, the paternal side is prioritised over the maternal one. The category of second-generation mainland writers, in its literal sense, alludes to its relation to the previous generation, and the heritage they have received from their first-generation mainland fathers or parents (if both were mainlanders). However, the fact is that since most postwar Chinese migrants were male, inter-ethnic marriages were not uncommon, and many of these writers' mothers were non-mainlanders. For example, the siblings Zhu Tianxin and Zhu Tianwen have a Hakka mother, Hao Yuxiang's mother is Hoklo, as is Luo Yijung's. However, their mothers' ethnic backgrounds are usually disregarded, and they are classified as representative second-generation mainland writers (Yang, 2004; Hu, 2005).

A tricky question raised from the imbalanced weight that is put on paternal and maternal lineages is how much the externally imposed labels of *jiguan* and ethnicity can

6 This survey was conducted by the rule of single self-identity. It is significant that aside from the four subethnic groups, around 7.5 percent of the interviewees insisted that they were Taiwanese, which may indicate the rise in the acceptance of this ethnic identity, and the mobile boundaries of the idea of ethnicity itself. See also Tanguy Le Pesant's "Generational Change and Ethnicity among 1980s-born Taiwanese" (2011).

represent these writers' actual ethnic identity, particularly when the concept of hyphenated identity is not commonly used in Taiwan. Indeed, some writers with mainland backgrounds show strong identification with their fathers and the mainland subethnic group. However, this identity is not a direct reflection of their *jiguan* or ethnicity, but derives more from the way they present their life stories. Zhu Tianxin's short story "In Remembrance of My Buddies from the Military Compound" (2003), which was written and first published in the 1990s, when mainlanders' identity was being strongly challenged by nativists, defends the mainlanders' sense of identity crisis, arguing that they did not identify with Taiwan because "they didn't have any tombstones to sweep" there (248). She claims that a land without traces of ancestors cannot be called home. It is notable that while in the story Zhu acts as a spokesperson for mainlanders, especially for women who grew up in military dependents' villages, showing the Chinese migrants' feelings of displacement and rootlessness, she does in fact have tombstones to sweep in Taiwan, since her mother is a Hakka Taiwanese. To defend her ethnic identity as a mainlander, Zhu elided her maternal connections and seemed to overstate her culture shock when describing her interactions with native Taiwanese.

Similar to Zhu's affective tie to mainlanders, Hao Yuxiang grew up in a broken family with her mother, a Hoklo Taiwanese, and father, a mainlander. Brought up by her mother, Hao is however obsessed with her father, who was absent for most of her life. Her *Reverse Journey* (*Nilu* 2000) and *Hot Spring Washing Away Our Melancholy* (*Wenquan xiqu women de youshang* 2011) portray her quest for fatherly love, who was a Shandong student in exile.[7] Hao's deep affection for her father raises her curiosity about the history of the Chinese exodus, and leads to her strong self-identity as a mainlander. She writes, "To this day if I am asked about my *jiguan*, I would say Shandong. This, of course, comes from a stubborn, insolvable, and worse, 'politically incorrect' provincial complex" (Hao, 2000, p. 189). Unlike Zhu, who recounts mainlanders' stories in military dependents' villages so as to support the existence of mainland culture in Taiwan, which she believes is diminishing, Hao's strong identification with the ethnic group of mainlanders reveals a very private emotion of yearning for the absent father. Although both Zhu and Hao show similar emotional bonds to mainlanders, their works tell totally different stories. Their ethnic identity does not result from the ethnic label that has been imposed upon them, nor does it stem from blood and body, but is more associated with the complicated emotions they feel from their respective life experiences.

The ethnic identity which is shown in second-generation mainland writers' works is arguably more of an ascription than a heritage, as it is associated with self-identification and choice. While ethnicity is categorised on the grounds of the seemingly objective criteria of *jiguan*, language and cultural tradition, these divisions are in fact given by outsiders (Le Pasent, 2011), and thus cannot fully explain the complicated formation of identity. Moreover, literary works reveal not so much the author's ethnicity as his or her self-identity, and writers' ethnic backgrounds do not necessarily relate to their identification with a particular ethnic group. Liglave A-Wu (利格拉樂・阿烏) is an example. A-Wu's father was

7 The history of the Shandong students was not disclosed to the public until the 2000s. In 1949 around ten thousand students followed their principal to Penghu. Most of them were forced to serve in the army by the KMT troop. Those who refused to do so were killed. The principal was later falsely charged as spy and executed.

a mainland soldier and her mother was an aborigine. Like Zhu, she grew up in a military dependents' village, and inherited the ethnic label of a mainlander. However, experiencing racial discrimination herself, and witnessing her mother being treated unfairly by other residents, she underwent a dramatic identity metamorphosis. A-Wu adopted an indigenous name, and devoted herself to protecting indigenous culture and women's rights.

Compared with A-wu, Lin Yaode's (林 耀 德) works show a more complicated historical and ethnic viewpoint, which has transcended his genealogical background and the ideological limitations that may come with different ways of categorisation. Lin is a second-generation Hoklo mainlander, who thus has few cultural and language barriers in relation to native Hoklo Taiwanese. Lin seldom writes exclusively about mainlanders; on the contrary, his highly acclaimed novel *1947 Lilium Formosanum* (1990) contests the historical narrative of one of the most sensitive events in recent Taiwanese history, the February 28 Incident, examining how the interplay of different colonial powers may impact on the destiny of the land as well as the indigenous people's lives. Focusing mainly on indigenous characters, Lin adopts the perspective of new historicism to present a hybrid culture and to suggest that Taiwan is a site of multiple historical accounts (Chen, 2011).

In juxtaposing the cases of the four writers, Zhu Tianxin, Hao Yuxiang, Liglave A-wu and Lin Yaode, with regard to the slippery relationships between categorisation of ethnicity and ethnic identity, I am not arguing that only children of mixed marriages would encounter the struggles with identity. My contention is that the patriarchal classification of *jiguan* and ethnicity cannot be taken as the sole criterion to understand second-generation mainland writers and their works, although their genealogy may have helped to establish these writers' ethnic identities and interest in certain issues. Given that all second-generation mainland writers are mainlanders in terms of ethnicity, this rule does not apply *vice versa*. In other words, being ethnically a mainlander does not suggest that a writer would focus on their family genealogy and on their parents' post-war collective experiences, which is usually regarded as the defining feature of the genre. The topics and issues that they engage with count as much as the classification of the *jiguan* system and ethnicity with regard to their identities as mainland writer, and this explains why *juancun* literature plays a vital role in this genre.

JUANCUN LITERATURE[8]

As a matter of fact, the genre of second-generation mainland writers' works can be regarded as an expansion of *juancun* literature which emerged in the 1980s. In her preface to the *Collection of Taiwan Juancun Stories* (2004), Su Weizen connects second-generation mainlanders with *juancun* (military dependents' villages), narrowing the sense of the group to a locale. For Su, these places account for the mainlanders' complicated ethnic and genealogical backgrounds, and encapsulate mainland culture in Taiwan. Like Su, many other second-generation mainland writers also grew up in *juancun* and witnessed the rise and fall of the communities. She writes:

There was a group of people. They hardly had any relatives, but had a lot of neighbours.

8 The term "juancun literature" (*juancun wenxue*) was coined by Chi Pang-yuan in her *When Fog was Clearing* (*Wu Jianjian San De Shihou*), published in 1998.

Their idea of relatives began from neighbours. All of these families commemorated their ancestors on important holidays, but they didn't have tombstones to sweep. Their parents had strong accents. When they were at home, they talked to parents in dialects of their parents' *jiguan*; in the neighbourhood and in schools, they spoke different dialects with other kids […]; when they left the village, they spoke mandarin, Hakka or Taiwanese. …

Jiguan on their ID cards could be patched together as a small China […], but they were born in Taiwan and live in Taiwan. … [These communities] are so-called *juancun*. These people are known as second-generation mainlanders. (Su, 2004, pp.7-8)

The two paragraphs quoted above vividly depict many second-generation mainlanders' memories of their lives in *juancun*. While post-war Chinese migrants came from different provinces in China and brought with them diverse cultures and dialects, their lives in *juancun* become the collective experience which bound them together and defines this group. The peculiar lifestyle and social structure in these communities thus turned the socially imposed ethnic label into an identity, shared memory, and a culture.

Juancun, also known as military dependents' villages, are communities established by the KMT government during the 1950s and 1960s in order to accommodate soldiers and their families who fled to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek's army. Except for some native Taiwanese and indigenous women who married mainland soldiers and moved to the villages, most residents were mainlanders.[9] These self-contained villages featured a special social structure and were under close control by the military authorities. It is important to note that not all Chinese refugees had the opportunities to live in these villages and since many of them were not soldiers or not given housing in the compounds, they were scattered and integrated into local Taiwanese communities. According to Li Kuang-chun (2010), only one fifth of the Chinese soldiers and their families ever lived in these villages. Despite the small proportion of the *juancun* residents in comparison to the huge number of Chinese migrants, the communal lifestyle and unique culture developed in these villages eventually came to serve as cultural symbols that represent the mainlanders' collective memories and validated the presence of mainland culture in Taiwan. The images of narrow alleys, shabby buildings, and compassionate neighbours often appears in second-generation mainland writers' works as the backdrops to the stories.

When establishing the villages, the KMT might not have intended to separate the lives of mainlanders from those of native Taiwanese, but *juancun* residents did show a sense of emotional alienation and estrangement from local Taiwanese society, particularly before the government started to conduct urban renewal projects in the 1980s (Zhang, 2010). Zhu Tianxin writes, "Many kids from the military compound … had no experience at all with 'Taiwanese' before they left in their twenties to attend college or serve in the military" (2003, p. 263). Su Weizen also states, "People of One-one-seven Highland [where the narrator's village is located] know too little about other places" (2002, p. 294). As Chen Guowei (2007) notes, military dependents' villages, composed of various fantasies of China, are like "castles in the sky" (p. 281) floating over the land of Taiwan. That is, although these communities are located on the island, they never culturally belong to it.

It is because of the residents' close connections with China and isolation from local so-

9 Only soldiers with families were eligible to apply for houses in *juancun*. In 1952, the government passed a law forbidding single mainland soldiers from getting married. The policy was cancelled in 1959.

ciety that these communities are often regarded as the sites that best represent the relocation of Chinese culture in Taiwan, and ones that preserve the traumatic memories of the Chinese exodus. As Su Weizen (2002) and Zhu Tianxin (2003) have noted, the imagined homeland of China plays a key role in their childhood memories, either in war stories that their parents told or in their everyday lives, such as the contents of their lunch boxes—what they ate revealed their parents' original culture and *jiguan*. Profoundly influenced by their parents' homesickness and nostalgia, some writers, like Zhu Tianxin, show a strong emotional attachment to China, which sociologist A-chin Hsiau (2010) terms as a "quasi-exilic mentality" (16), meaning that second-generation mainlanders' strong feelings for and memories of China are not based on their own personal experiences, but are instead based on their parents' emotions. These children's sense of national identity often reflects their parents' patriotism with regard to the KMT and the Republican era in China in the early twentieth century, a past they did not experience and can never return to. In her early works, such as *Everlasting* (*Weiliao* 1981), Zhu regards China as her real homeland, a place she has always desired. Although not all second-generation mainland writers demonstrate similar bonds to China, their ambivalent relationship with it is one of the major issues that they feel obliged to address and make sense of, in particular after the ban on cross-strait tourism was lift in the late 1980s, and quite a few of the first-generation migrants took a trip to or even decided to move back to China.

As the KMT never fulfilled its promise to 'recover' the mainland and take the Chinese refugees home, military dependents' villages which were initially designed for temporary shelter, have become a makeshift 'homeland' for many second-generation mainland children, a station en route to the imagined homeland of China. Growing up in these isolated and enclosed communities, they had not put down roots in Taiwanese society before martial law was lifted in 1987. Feeling detached from Taiwanese society, they often developed a strong tie to the villages and their inhabitants, with *juancun* becoming one of the most common themes of their works. This fascination with life in *juancun* functions as an important mark to show these writers' self-identity. As I have argued above, the category of 'second-generation mainland writers' reflects a preoccupation with their mainland fathers' life experiences, as well as the issues with regard to genealogy, ethnicity and identity. However, these writers' descriptions of their childhood memories in *juancun* also demonstrate that their identification with China has been mediated by their personal experiences in the villages. While strongly influenced by their parents' nostalgia for China, they have developed a different sense of homeland based on their lives in *juancun*. As is evidenced in their works, China is often depicted as a distant homeland and a nostalgic past belonging especially to their parents.

In the mid-1970s, second-generation mainlanders like Zhu Tianxin and Sun Weimang (孫瑋芒) began to write stories about *juancun*, but the real boom in *juancun* literature did not start until the 1980s. Recognising that these villages were about to be torn down because of urban redevelopment, and thus that the physical remains of their homes would no longer exist, these writers were eager to record their memories of such places. Zhu Tianxin's *Everlasting* (*Weiliao* 1981), Yuan Qiongqiong's *This Love, This Life* (袁瓊瓊, *Jin Shen Yuan 1988*), Ku Ling's *Mainland Homeland* (苦苓, *Waisheng Guxiang* 1988), and Su Weizen's *All for Destiny* (*Youyuan Qianli* 1984) are all set in military dependents' villages, presenting the characters' lives in these enclosed but emotionally warm enclaves. While

these novels may mark the end of the era of *juancun*, they demonstrate the writers' determination to keep alive their memories of it and to turn these memories into an integral part of cultural history in Taiwan.

Juancun literature did not come to an end with the demolition of the compounds, and more works were published that examined the lives of children from these villages after they had grown up and left them. Because of the frustration of losing a homeland mingled with the belated cultural shock when entering local Taiwanese society, these writers gradually shifted their concern from preserving the memories of *juancun* to considering their relationships with other subethnic groups and their position in Taiwanese society. With the radical changes of the political and social climate that came with a move from the KMT's hegemonic Sino-centric narrative to greater calls for democratisation and nativism, many of the second-generation mainlanders suddenly awakened from the illusion of imminent unification that they were taught to believe in by their parents and the government (Peng, 2009). When they faced the destruction of the future they had once trusted, their anxiety over reinventing a new selfhood, as well as their unease over their cultural difference with local Taiwanese society, become the main concerns of second-generation mainland writers, such as in Zhang Qijiang's *The Vanishing* (張啟疆, *Xiaoshi De* 1997), Su Weizen's Leaving Tongfang (*Likai Tongfang* 1990) and *A Silent Island* (*Chenmo Zi Dao* 1994), and Zhu Tianxin's "In Remembrance of My Buddies from the Military Compound" (*Xiang Wo Juancun De Xiongdi Men*; English version 2003, Chinese version 1992) and *The Old Capital* (*Gudu*; English version 2007, Chinese version 1997). These works all reveal the second generation's discontent at the socio-political situation in Taiwan, when mainlanders seemed to be excluded from the prevailing discourse of indigenisation and democratisation (Yang and Chang, 2010), leading to confrontations with other subethnic groups, particularly the Hoklo, who became the dominant power in society, and most significantly the reconfiguration of their identities. While they may show anger, agony and hostility in their works, what comes alongside these emotions is the desire to open a conversation with Taiwanese society. The *juancun* in these works are lingering ghosts, which show up now and then to haunt the characters, reminding them of their uniqueness in terms of childhood experiences and cultural memories, and at the same time luring them back to the nostalgic past of their bitter-sweet lives in *juancun*.

While most literary works about *juancun* were written as short stories and novels during the 1980s and 1990s, around a decade later, in 2008, Stan Lai and Wang Weizhong's play *The Village* (*Baodao Yicun*) revisited the subject, successfully popularising mainlanders' nostalgic memories of the villages. The play adopts a humorous tone, attempting to come to terms with the bitter history of the Chinese exodus as well as the subsequent ethnic tensions in Taiwan. Different from other *juancun* literary works, which foreground the alienation of the compounds' residents, the disputes between mainlanders and other subethnic groups, and the feeling of displacement, Lai and Wang attempt to mediate past conflicts by means of comedy. Putting a happy face on *juancun*, Lai and Wang challenged the earlier interpretations of the communities and mainlanders, seeking to enter the *juancun* experience into Taiwan's collective memory. The play was highly acclaimed in Taiwan, China, Singapore and America. *Juancun* became something of a cultural phenomenon, widely recognised as part of the mainland culture, and the most readily seen aspect of mainland writers' works.

The prevailing *juancun* literature as the representative mainland culture and literature is not without problems. In the preface to her recently published novel, *Peach Blossom Well* (*Taohua Jing* 2011), Jiang Xiaoyun (蔣曉雲) expressed concern with the fact that *juancun* are the main focus of this genre, arguing that it is squeezing out the voices of other mainlanders. Being a second-generation mainlander herself, she hopes to speak for those who never lived in a *juancun* and were not loyal towards the KMT. Patching together the fragmentary memories of her parents' life stories, she states that "not all mainlanders in Taiwan have the same face. Outside the military compounds are also exiles' tears" (p. 9).

Indeed, *juancun* literature contributes to revealing the bitter history of the Chinese exodus, the rapid democratisation and modernisation of Taiwan after the end of martial law, and the tensions between different subethnic groups. *Juancun* also played an important role in nurturing the mainland culture in Taiwan, upon which second-generation mainlanders were able to establish their identities. However, as Jiang indicates, while *juancun* culture is a vital part of the mainland culture, it cannot capture the full panorama of the Chinese exile experience in Taiwan, because many of the migrants did not have military backgrounds. The celebration of *juancun* culture leaves out the non-*juancun* residents, who were often more marginalised when confronting social transformations and identity struggles.

HISTORY AND FAMILY MEMORY

Since the 2000s, second-generation mainland writers, whether from *juancun* or not, began to address the issue of historical revisionism, considering their position not only in Taiwan, but also in line with a broader history. Such works primarily focus on family history, the exile and return. If *juancun* literature shows second-generation mainland writers' contemplation of their lives in Taiwan and the line between their own subethnic group and others, their narratives concerning family stories turn genealogy into a means for exploring the meaning of their lives in relation to those of their forebears. The identities of these writers were no longer anchored by the spatial concept of *juancun*, but instead shifted to a deep concern with their relations to history, considering how the previous generation's life experiences are imbedded in the context of history, how their parents' historical trauma caused their identity struggle, and how their proximity to the historical catastrophes of China have enabled them to reinterpret the past.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century these writers were not keen to envision a future, but instead looked back to examine how events in the past could influence the present and future. As Hayden White (1978) suggests, history, akin to fiction, is constructed by emplotment and subjective interpretation. The writers' interest in family history can be interpreted as a contest against official narratives of history, which are constructed by different political parties in order to fit into the prevailing political ideology, basing their own version on more concrete personal memories. With anxiety over their parents' deaths and a desire to position themselves on more stable ground, these writers started to trace their mainland fathers' life stories, which they had neglected for long.

It is intriguing that most novels which tackle mainlanders' family memories are written in a semi-autobiographical form, and are narrated by the authors themselves. Works including Zhang Dachun's *As One Family* (*Lingting Fuqin* 2003), Luo Yijung's *Moon Name* (*Yueqiu Xingshi* 2000), and Hao Yuxiang's *Reverse Journey* (*NiLu* 2010) oscillate

between telling the history of their family and presenting an invented story of this chaotic time. These works are not so much fiction as monologues. Writing about their family stories, these authors seem to conflate the voice of the narrator with their own. The process of writing is thus implicitly autobiographical and revolves around an exploration of their own identity crises in search for an account that can explain their being in Taiwan, and further clarify their relationships with their parents' homeland in China. Stuck between "the quasi-exilic mentality" that they inherited from their parents' life-long desire for home and their own yearning for an emotional settlement in Taiwan, the place where they were born and brought up, these works manifest the authors' attempt to reconstruct a family history so as to explicate their own struggle. As Hao Yuxiang indicates in the epilogue to *Reverse Journey*, her motivation for writing the work is to settle the souls of the exiles and "to settle [her] own history" (189). Chasing after her nomadic father's life, Hao searches for an anchor for her own life.

Different from Hao's desire to fit her family stories into history, so as to justify her father's account as well as her being, Luo Yijung maps together his father's stories of flight, his own vague memories of childhood, and other family members' narratives of the ambiguous past, in order to demonstrate the unreliability of both memory and history. Attempting to construct a family history, Luo actually deconstructs it, showing that our lives in some way are determined by a series of accidents, mistakes, and careless decisions made by our forebears. These second-generation mainlanders tell family stories so as to create their own history and counteract official histories, invented either by the KMT or the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party).

In recounting family genealogy, the topic of China is probably one of the most difficult issues to tackle, due to these writers' emotional investment in the imagined homeland, caused by both the KMT's educational system and their parents' repeated narration of the nostalgic land. As many of these writers still have relatives in the imagined homeland, the interpretations of their relations with China become more complicated when trying to define their social and cultural identities, and when they eventually visit the place. After decades of separation, personal contact with China for the mainland children who were born and brought up in Taiwan is more a strange adventure than a fulfilling homecoming. Hao Yuxiang's travel book *A Brief Dream* (2007 *Yishun Zhi Meng*) and Luo Yijung's *Distant Land* (2003 *Yuanfang*) both depict their first encounters with China, which is far different from Zhu Tianxin's imagined homeland in her *Everlasting*. As the titles of the books suggest, their journeys are dreamlike experiences into an alien place. While Hao undertook a research trip in China, Luo rushed there in order to 'rescue' his father who had a stroke when travelling in Jiangxi. Coming face to face with the dreamland and their long separated relatives, both writers are surprised to find that they did not at all feel at home there, but were lost in the cultural gap between the two lands. Or to be more precise, they were lost between the imagined and actual China. Visiting China, they find that the question of who they are has again become a poignant irony. Luo (2003) writes that when 'returning' to China, people like him were no longer called mainlanders, but instead were known as "You Taiwanese", and suddenly he fell back to the role of a stranger (pp. 54-60). As such, the identity as a mainlander becomes problematic again in a different context. Returning, these authors feel more estranged than at home.

Jiang Xiaoyun's *Peach Blossom Well* (2011) may be read as a comprehensive overview

of second-generation mainland writers' exploration of family genealogy in relation to China. The novel tells of a first-generation mainlander's life after he moves back to China, as well as his entangled relationships with his relatives on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Jiang questions the happy ending of a homecoming, and takes it as the beginning of another spiritual exile. Elaborating on the irreversible historical damage that has occurred, and the cultural gap between China and Taiwan, this novel reveals that a physical return does not promise a spiritual settlement, and that the second generations' emotional connections with mainland will eventually fade away with the death of their parents. Considering mainlanders' return to the homeland, *Peach Blossom Well* shows three generations' detachment from the people and the land, presenting an unreturnable past and unredeemable present.

CONCLUSION

In considering second-generation mainland writers' works as a genre, I have argued that they are characteristically structured around questions of ethnicity and identity. While being categorised as 'mainlanders', which signifies their status as migrants or outsiders from Taiwan, these writers' literary works contest this classification, and instead show stories that happened in Taiwan to characters living on the island. Centring on the civil war Chinese migrants' movement between Taiwan and China, and the psychological mobilisation of their families, these works represent a local perspective which started from the authors' obsession with the previous generation's stories, but was developed based upon the authors' life experiences in Taiwan, and has become a valuable part of the diverse cultures that comprise what we now know as Taiwanese culture.

Shih Shu-mei (2007) in her *Visuality and Identity* maintains that diaspora always has an expiration date. Migrants will one day turn into settlers and then into the local population: "When the (im)migrants settle and become localized, many choose to end their state of diaspora by the second or third generation. The so-called nostalgia for the ancestral land is often an indication or displacement of difficulties of localization, either by force or by choice" (p. 185). Shih's words apply well to the case of mainlanders in Taiwan. The works of second-generation mainland writers clearly show the trajectory of their indigenisation, from the first generation's strong attachment to China, to the second generation's inheritance of parents' nostalgia, and through to their identity crisis in Taiwanese society and in the wider context of history. Their works demonstrate not only the previous generation's historical trauma and struggles between their homeland in China and new home in Taiwan, but also the second generation's wounds and puzzlement concerning their social and cultural identity. Born and raised in Taiwan, these writers inherit from their parents the emotions of melancholy, displacement and nostalgia, none of which are based on their own personal experiences. Positioned between Taiwan and China, between war and peace, these writers speak for their aged parents and other civil war Chinese migrants' families in attempt to gain a secure identity. As Shih indicates, struggles are a process of acculturation and localisation. Writing about *juancun*, social changes, genealogy and China, second-generation mainland writers are not only writing about their identity struggles, but also contesting the historical narratives constructed by the KMT and the DPP, the two competing political parties in Taiwan, both of which are keen to frame the debate about relations with China. Telling their own stories, these authors are presenting alternative voices which are

based on their lives, and which, more often than not, support neither of the political accounts. Constructing accounts of the history by means of literary works, they show the attempts to define themselves against externally imposed labels, seeking an identity that can be recognised by themselves, their group, and the whole of Taiwanese society.

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