

Culture, Memory, and Space on Stage:
The Construction of Female Hakka Contemporary Theatre in Taiwan

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as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Drama

February 2012

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Abstract

Theatre is a location of cultures, the reflection of our daily lives, the present moment we are living. This thesis focuses on studying performances of the Hakka Contemporary Theatre created by female directors (Hakka and Non-Hakka) in Taiwan to observe how they combine western modern theatre forms with Hakka traditional and cultural elements and further transformed the specifics of Hakka culture on stage and represented various images of Hakka women. Through applying theories in relation to diaspora discourse, the hybridity of post-colonialism and postcolonial feminism and theatre study as the foundation of academic research, I attempted to critically examine the hybrid forms and development of the Hakka Contemporary Theatre to explore in depth the meaning of Hakka culture represented in theatre.

In this thesis, I firstly offer performance analysis and draw on hybridity discourse and feminism in relation to post-colonial study to discuss three elements: the interaction and negotiated relationship between Hakka women (including female directors and the Hakka actresses), Hakka culture, and modern theatre forms. Furthermore, as part of my research, I critically reflect upon a practical performance project I have undertaken to illustrate how Hakka culture could be presented as subject and be constructed as the subjectivity of the Hakka ethnic group in post-colonial Taiwan. I hope that this thesis may encourage more Taiwanese to appreciate the value of Hakka culture and offer Taiwanese theatrical practitioners a practice of critical hybridity in associating ethnic and cultural issues of Taiwan in the future.

Acknowledgements

Theatre is a location for people to encounter, connect and communicate with each other. Owing to my attraction to the mystery and fascination of theatre, which cannot be put into words, I had this special opportunity to meet a group of people who deeply love the performing arts in the UK. It is the theatre which connects you and me. The completion of a doctoral research is never only one person's achievement; I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone associated with the Hakka Contemporary Theatre project. Firstly, I am grateful for the support of my parents and family members; without you, I could not complete this difficult task so far away from home. I want also to give thanks with all my heart to the most important promoter of this thesis: my supervisor, Dr. Jane Milling. Thank you for appreciating this research project and for your tolerance to accept my perspectives in the process of writing and your insights into issues of Hakka culture and theatre study. It has been an honor for me to work and complete this project with you who show the wisdom and approach of theatre scholar. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Jill Cadorath for educating me in the mysteries of academic English writing and carefully proofreading for me. Most especially, I am grateful for the generosity of Prof. Graham Ley in our GPC meetings, and the useful suggestions offered by examiners, Prof. Nadine Holdsworth and Dr. Rebecca Loukes, for correcting and refining this thesis. Finally, I would like to thank all my theatre partners and friends - Fung Bobo, Chen Hui-Yun, Kim Sun-Hee, Lin Chien-Lang, Wu Yi-Chen, Ho I-Lien, Sawita Diteeyont, Num Grisana Punpeng, Mariko Hara - for your company and encouragement along the long research journey.

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Introduction: Whose Culture? Whose Identity?

Research Motivation

Being a Hakka from a small town, Zhudong, in northern Taiwan, my childhood memories are intertwined with the constant recollection of my grandmother's chatting in Hakka and drinking tea with neighbours, and Hakka mountain songs from the radio during the nap, and, on the table, pickled plums and vegetables as daily foods, and steaming rice cakes for festivals. During my up-bringing, I never noticed any difference between myself and others. However, speaking fluent Mandarin during my education, I gradually noticed that it had become difficult for me to communicate with Hakka elders. My grandmother, who had no chance to be educated and could only speak Hakka, could only smile to me after I grew up because she understood that the younger Hakka generations can only speak Mandarin. After I went to University and studied in Tainan city, where most residents speak Hokkien in their daily life; for the first time I realized that cultural, ethnic difference existed in Taiwan. By attending a university module on Taiwanese Literature, it became clear to me that Taiwan is a society composed of heterogeneous ethnic groups. The distinction between different ethnic groups did not of itself create conflict but served as a way of identifying oneself in order to understand the power relationships among the ethnic groups and to further affirm oneself as 'subject'.

In order to really understand my ethnic group's culture, to preserve it after I grew up, I attempted to do research about Hakka performing arts. Combining a personal interest in modern performing arts and exploring Hakka culture in the theatrical field, my Masters dissertation involved a study of Hakka Contemporary Theatre. Searching the little available literature in relation to Hakka Contemporary Theatre, my dissertation,

entitled *The Study of Hakka Contemporary Theatre in Taiwan: Taking Jia Li Shian Theatre Group and the Uhan Shii Theatre Group as Examples*, outlined forms of Hakka Contemporary Theatre and how it was developed in Taiwan. In addition, my dissertation focused on how these two theatre groups created a new Hakka theatre form through combining Hakka history, tradition, culture, language, and music with modern theatrical elements. The dissertation was an attempt to describe the landscape of Hakka Contemporary Theatre in Taiwan.

During the process of writing my Masters dissertation, I noticed that some female directors, related to the Hakka and making a contribution to modern theatre, are rarely mentioned in Taiwanese modern theatre history. Most of them are aware of their ethnic and gender identity and actively participated in modern performing arts in Taiwan. This motivated me to consider a focus on Hakka female directors for doctoral research. Furthermore, my personal experience as a Hakka female and my exploration of Hakka Contemporary Theatre not only became an important motivation for me to examine Hakka women in relation to the performing arts but also gave me a solid basis for creating a Hakka Contemporary Theatre performance in the UK.

Hakka female directors and their performances will be the major materials in my research. In this thesis, in addition to using script and video analysis, I analyze documents from my field work and undertake interviews with female directors who have created Hakka Contemporary Theatre. Performance analysis is fundamental to my research, and I draw on hybridity discourse and feminism in relation to post-colonial study to discuss three elements: the interaction and negotiated relationship between Hakka women (including female directors and the Hakka actresses), Hakka culture and modern theatre forms. Furthermore, as part of my research, I critically reflect upon a practical performance project I have undertaken to

illustrate how Hakka culture could be presented as subject and be constructed as the subjectivity of the Hakka ethnic group in post-colonial Taiwan.

Hakka Ethnic Groups in Taiwan

The island of Taiwan is 240 miles long and 85 miles wide, shaped like a sweet potato. The government, officially known as the Republic of China (ROC), controls the main island of Taiwan, the Penghu island group in the Taiwan Strait, and the Jinmen and Matsu islands near the coast of the Chinese mainland. In terms of the resident populations, Taiwan contains 22 million inhabitants which can be divided into four ethnic groups: the Aborigines, Hokkien, Hakka, and Mainlanders.

Although the aboriginal people, as Taiwan's first inhabitants, are frequently discussed as a 'single' category of ethnic groups, each of the 14 tribes that make up this group has its significance in culture, customs, language and ethnicity.¹ The total number of Taiwanese aborigines is around 490,000 and makes up 2% of the population, forming a real minority in Taiwan. Several distinct groups of people who migrated to Taiwan from China in different periods were all classified as Han Chinese; these can be separated into three major ethnic groups: Hokkien, Hakka and Mainlanders. The Hokkien people currently form the largest ethnic group and make up about 70 % of the population. Their migration was heaviest from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, after the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644. Their experiences under Japanese colonial rule and the Mainlander-dominated postwar KMT (Kuomintang) regime forged a strong 'Taiwanese' identity. Governed by Japan for fifty years, Taiwan reverted to the control of the ROC on Japan's defeat in 1945. Ethnic Chinese who

¹ These tribes include the Amis, Atayal, Bunun, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Sakizaya, Saisiyat, Sedip, Thao, Truku, Tsou, and Yami. (Resource from the Council of Indigenous Peoples website: <http://www.apc.gov.tw>)

settled in Taiwan after World War II and retreated to Taiwan after 1949 after losing civil war in China are referred to collectively as the 'Mainlanders'. Since their arrival, Mainlanders have dominated the high-ranking positions in government, the military, and education.

Generally, the term 'Hakka' would be understood to relate to those people who emigrated mostly from Guang Dong province in Mainland China during the seventeenth century to Taiwan. Clyde Kiang refers to the name Hakka is a Cantonese pronunciation of the Mandarin word Ke-Jia which means 'visitors' or 'guests'. Kiang argues that 'the ethnic concept of the term Hakka is concisely defined as a group of people without a state or nation of their own. Because they are a separate ethnic group, the Hakka are often quite distinct from the local natives in language, social customs, and physical features' (1991: 4).

Historically, Hakka people, called Ke-jia-ren (guest people), migrated from Yue (Guang Dong province) China to Taiwan during the Qing dynasty. Among political policies related to government in Taiwan, there was a crucial migration policy, The Prohibition of Migration to Taiwan, which was pronounced in 1684 by the Emperor Kangxi mentioned in the third clause that 'The Yue area is usually full of pirates and barbarians; so, residences of the Yue area are forbidden from crossing the ocean to Taiwan' (Wu Mi-Cha, 2000). This migration prohibition had a severe impact on Taiwanese Hakka immigrants: firstly, Hakka people, who formed the majority of residents of the Yue area, could not legally migrate to Taiwan and only a few of them crossed the ocean illegally. Compared to the Hokkien immigrants from Fujian province of China, who were legal immigrants, Hakka people formed a minority. Secondly, the Hokkien people owned the permission to reclaim Taiwan and to occupy the agriculturally rich land of the plains; whereas the Hakka people, who arrived later,

could only occupy the mountain areas. According to Chiang Yun-Kui, 'The Prohibition of Migration to Taiwan lasted from 1685 to 1791, a total of 106 years, and this resulted in the Hakka immigrants losing equality with the Hokkien immigrants' (1996:246). In addition, Taiwanese Hakka scholars point out that the Qing governor perceived Taiwan as part of the Fujian province of China; therefore, Hakka people who came from Yue (Guang Dong) province were seen as 'guest' people. Most of these Hakka people were 'guest workers' hired by Hokkien employers. Yang Chang-Cheng suggests that the term 'Hakka' may reflect the perception of ethnic division or domination by a mainstream ethnic group:

At that time the term 'Ke' had the meaning of a host-guest contrast. These farm labourers and workers, most of them from the Yue area, were called 'Ke-zi' (guests). Gradually, the term 'Ke' combined with the idea of people who had come from the Yue area and the terms 'Min' and 'Yue', and 'Min' and 'Ke' were combined; as a result, 'Ke' became a term to define the Hakka ethnic group. (Personal Translation. 2007:394-395)

After 1791, a number of Hakka people lost the chance to settle in the southern plains and could only move to mountainous areas in the North such as Taoyuan, Hsinchu and Miaoli. As a result of the migration process the Hakka ethnic group not only settled geographically in marginal locations of Taiwan and formed a minority Taiwanese population, but also had a minority status and invisible ethnicity during the social development of Taiwan. Similar to the Hokkien, the Hakka people in Taiwan have experienced political change from Qing imperialism (17th to 18th century) through Japanese colonization (1895-1945) to the KMT regime (1945-1987). The total number of Taiwanese Hakka today is about 2 million and makes up 10% of the population.

With regard to the minority status of the Hakka people, the questions I propose to consider in this study are the following: For an ethnic group, seen as and named

'other' by the settlers or colonizers, what culture do they have? How have Hakka people faced their long-term marginalization? To what extent do Hakka people, who have identified themselves with the dominant central hegemony culture at different times in their history, feel a relationship with a Hakka ethnic and cultural identity?

In relation to globalization in the 21st century, there is a wave of localization in the world. When the Taiwan government advocates internationalization in order to open up the global market; respecting various internal cultures and affirming Taiwanese 'local' cultures become a crucial response. Thus, Hakka culture has become one of various Taiwanese cultures involved in the specificity of Taiwanese-ness. In Hakka literature or cultural studies, male writers and researchers have been the first to preserve Hakka traditions and restore the honor of Hakka culture.² The question arises as to how, Hakka women are represented or interpreted by these male writers. In the book *Hakka Women in Taiwan*, Hakka female scholar Chang Tien-Wan writes that,

Behind the image of perseverance depicted by Hakka ethnic group, people overlook the nature of Hakka women and the double identities of ethnicity and gender and let them struggle in those stereotypes. (Personal translation. 2004:6)

As an immigrant colonized minority, the identification of Hakka people has had an important influence on ethnic, cultural, and gender construction. In my opinion, in the theatrical field, the narrative and power relationship between dominant and marginal ethnic groups in Taiwanese society, which reflects cultural and political inequality, needs to be discussed. The vulnerability of the minority (in this case, Hakka women)

²Chang Tien-Wan (2004) points out that most well-known Hakka writers are male, such as Wu Zhuo-liu, Chung Li-He, Long Ying-Tsung, Li Qiao and Zhong Zhao-Zheng, and rarely female. She specifically refers to female Hakka writers of Hakka literature such as Tu-Pan Fang-Ke, Huang Chuan, Hsieh Tien-Shuang, and Chiu Hsiu-Chih.

and the narrative difficulty of their life experiences can also be further observed in theatre.

Purpose of the project

Chen Kuan-Hsing describes his profound experience with cultural study in Taiwan (a third world 'location') as follows:

In Taiwan, the third world never became a critical-analytic or political category. Politicians, intellectuals, and business people have always identified themselves with advanced, first-world countries and felt it shameful to be put into the category of the third world. The absence of a third world consciousness has been a basic condition of intellectual life in Taiwan. (2010:21)

Chen thus identifies a blind spot in Taiwanese academic research: Historically, most researchers have identified themselves with theories or concepts developed by scholars from first-world countries, tending to ignore the fact that Taiwan is similar to a third-world country, that is composed of heterogeneous ethnic groups and has experienced multiple colonizations, and that its internal experiences will never be the same as those of first-world countries. Exploring third-world cultural studies enables Chen to identify a vantage point from which to address local cultural issues in Taiwan:

Refusing to duplicate existing power structures requires that third-world cultural studies not limit itself to critiquing Western imperialism and capitalism. It will also have to overcome its overinvestment in nationalism, so as to bring out the complexity of power relations within third-world spaces; make transparent its own internal hierarchical divisions; and counter the emerging third-world sub-imperialism. (2010:24)

Taking Chen's perspective, Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances may reflect

internal cultural differences and the complexity of power relationships in Taiwanese society. As a Hakka female researcher, I hope that I can find a critical position from which to examine the complexity of Taiwanese Hakka culture in modern performing arts. One morning, as I was writing this introduction, I had a realistic dream: I was washed away by a muddy flood and floated on the water while drizzle hit on my face. Just as I gave myself over to in the flood, my head accidentally touched a small mound; I was free of danger. Although my dream was unreal, it reflects the real conditions of Hakka female researchers in Taiwan, who are faced with the question of how to construct the subjectivity of Hakka culture in theatre, rather than singularly match it to the cultural identities of first-world countries (by which I mean narrowly conforming Hakka cultural identity to a model that corresponds to that of first-world countries). After studying in the center of the first-world, the United Kingdom, and examining post-colonial discourse, I have realized that the contemporary British colonial empire is still facing post-colonial circumstances (political, cultural, and economic). Moreover, in reading third-world studies of post-colonialism, I have found ways of constructing the subjectivity of Hakka ethnic and cultural identity.

The subjectivity of Hakka identity must be constructed via interactions with ‘others’. Having situated myself in the first-world academic research field, I have had the opportunity to see myself through the eyes of ‘others’ and to realize the internalized Hakkaness of my personality. I still remember the impression made upon me by a talk with my supervisor, Dr. Jane Milling, when I was writing a performance analysis of Wang Chi-Mei’s *Mundane Orphan*. In my essay, I devoted a long paragraph to a description of the cultural and linguistic hybridity in one scene of the play but failed to illustrate how this hybridity indicated an unequal power relationship. Jane kept asking me about the point of my description, until I said, ‘The teacher who spoke in

Mandarin taught the local visitor who spoke in Hokkien not to despise aboriginal people. It seems to me that this scene again strengthens the pre-dominant and correct position that Mandarin occupied and presented Hokkien as a subordinate language, suggesting that people who speak it need to be educated'. Jane said excitedly, 'Write this down', and I immediately answered, 'No, I cannot. I am afraid to write this'. She asked curiously, 'Why?' I thought for a while and answered, 'Maybe because this is my teacher's production and she is a Mainlander who was also the first to use Taiwan as the main subject of her plays. So, I cannot criticize my teacher'. Jane tried to encourage me by saying, 'Oh! Do not be afraid. Maybe you could deal with this in such a way that the paradigm or contradiction is an alternative reading'. I thought again and said, 'I will try, but I still have no confidence'. Jane again asked, 'Why?' This time, I answered, 'Maybe it is because I am a Hakka. I come from a minority'.

After speaking out, I became conscious of my characteristic identity as a Hakka minority from Taiwan: I was unconsciously choosing to hide my feelings and opinions, in order to identify with the mainstream cultures (that is, to develop the Chinese consciousness promoted by the Mandarin language policy in Taiwan and the cultural consciousness of first-world countries). For the first time, I profoundly recognized the 'Hakkaness' that exists deep inside me but that I had never noticed before. As an 'intellectual', I could not even find a position between Hakka culture and these 'other' cultures from which to voice my opinions; hence, I wondered, in what way could Hakka women generally express themselves? Studying in the UK, a first-world country, enabled me to step out of the research 'frame' of Taiwanese cultural studies, re-examine the life experiences of Hakka women (including myself) and re-think the dwarfed and invisible characteristics of the Hakka ethnicity formed in

different colonial periods, so as to understand the double marginalization and multiple oppressions (which intertwine with colonial patriarchy and economic and gender classes division) of Hakka women in Taiwan. The de-colonization movement has been very painful, as Chen Kuan-Hsing notes,

Decolonization is the attempt of the previously colonized to reflectively work out a historical relation with the former colonizer, culturally, politically, and economically. This can be a painful process involving the practice of self-critique, self-negation, and self-rediscovery, but the desire to form a less coerced and more reflexive and dignified subjectivity necessitates it. (2010:3)

Chen's sentiments are closely linked to the purpose of my own research: examining Hakka female directors' performances with an eye to understanding the relationship among Hakka women, Hakka culture, and modern theatre and to critically constructing Hakka cultural and gender subjectivity. This dissertation attempts to clarify the role of female directors in postcolonial Taiwan and includes a discussion of women's performance art, exploring possible strategies that Hakka women could use to form a reflexive and dignified subjectivity in the future.

Research Methodology

This thesis, entitled *Culture, Memory, and Space on Stage: The Construction of Hakka Contemporary Theatre in Taiwan*, takes a cross disciplinary approach, including performance analysis as academic research and performance practice as research at the end of my study. In terms of research methodology, I attempt to integrate my interview data together with newspaper articles and reviews, and literature on post-colonial theories as a basis for performance analyses. My research materials include both Hakka and non-Hakka female directors' theatrical productions.

These materials include *Mundane Orphan*, which was produced by Wang Chi-Mei in 1987 and again in 1992; *A Piece of New Bamboo* (1992) and *The Story about Nei-Wan Lane* (1995), which were produced by Chiu Chuan-Chuan; Hakka female oral history performances produced by Peng Ya-Ling, including *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here* (2000), *Taiwanese Confession X: When Spring Comes* (2003), two Hakka musicals *The Smell in The Kitchen* (2005), and *Cat Walk Awakening* (2009); and *River in the Heart* (2003) and *Pear Flowers* (2004), created by the Shigang Mama Theatre Group and female director Li Hsiu-Hsun. The above performance contexts include scripts and recordings of performances. Owing to the time of the productions, Wang Chi-Mei and Chiu Chuan-Chuan's performances were only offered in script form. In chapter 2, the narrative strategy focuses on the content of the scripts together with interviews with the directors and their performance journals, as well as newspaper reviews; this strategy has two aims: firstly, to objectively express female directors' thoughts related to Hakka ethnic groups, culture and music; secondly, to explore the creative direction of Hakka Contemporary Theatre by both female directors. Furthermore, the inclusion of a hybrid discourse of post-colonialism in the discussion enables me to critically demonstrate my perspectives on their performances. The research materials of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group and the Shigang Mama Theatre Group include both scripts and recordings of performances. Thus, the research methodology of the third chapter concentrates on describing some specific scenes and the actresses' body movements in order to provide a visual interpretation of the script and offer the readers a different approach to analyzing performance. Performance analyses offered in the thesis (including both scripted and recorded performances) attempt to show the original ideas and female directors' individual cultural practices in relation to 'Hakka', as a sizeable category involving ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and historic issues.

Taking into consideration the colonial history of Taiwan and its postcolonial circumstances, my narrative method not only interprets performance contexts, but also combines post-colonialism, third-world cultural studies, and Hakka cultural studies of Taiwan, with the aim of deepening discussion of representations of Hakka cultural symbols, Hakka women's life memories, and Hakka female images and theatrical space, as well as expressing the complexity and diversity of Hakka culture. The arguments presented in this thesis are inspired by researchers in the post-colonial cultural and theatre fields. They include, for example, Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity, Stuart Hall's ideas of diaspora and cultural identity, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's idea of subalterns speaking out and critique of the epistemic violence of Western dominant intellectuals, and Helen Gilbert and Joanna Tompkins's discussion of the practice of discursive resistances in post-colonial theatre. I also refer to Taiwanese scholars' post-colonial perspectives of cultural and theatre studies, including Chen Kuan-Hsing's concept of critical syncretism, defined as 'a cultural strategy of identification for subaltern subject groups' (2010:99), Chiu Kuei-Fen's notion that the essence of Taiwan consists of the cultural differences that defined Taiwanese colonial history, and Wang Wan-Jung's analysis of the *Taiwanese Confession Series*, produced by Peng Ya-Ling, from a post-colonial perspective. My interdisciplinary approach attempts to consciously address the complex nature of Hakka identity in female director's Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances, in order to avoid analyzing them from a narrowed or restricted point of view. For each scholars mentioned above, I will offer in the second and third chapters detailed discussions in relation to their concepts.

In addition to completing the academic research, I directed a practical performance piece as a response on my doctoral research topic and examined it in the concluding

chapter of this thesis. I would like to consider my practical piece as a challenge of transdisciplinary research in the Hakka academic field. Baz Kershaw referred to the idea of defining performance as a research methodology:

Thus performance practice as research more precisely defines itself as method and methodology in search of results across disciplines: a collection of transdisciplinary research “tools”. Boundless specificity produces precise methodological opportunities generally and a plethora of insights, understandings, knowing relevant to a wide range of disciplines specifically. (2009:5)

According to Kershaw, the boundless specificity involved in performance practice as research and the way in which it resists ‘becoming a single discipline’ (2009:5) opened up a different methodological aspect of theatrical study. Based on the study of female director’s Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances, my practical piece crosses over from the academic research field to the practical theatre field; in other words, the research context is expanded into ‘theatre’, rather than limited to literary discussion. Therefore, my personal practical piece and individual creative experience recorded in the conclusion form a transdisciplinary research methodology in Hakka and theatre study, which becomes a unique part of the construction of female Hakka Contemporary Theatre in Taiwan.

Literature Review

The literature reviewed for the thesis can be separated into three major fields: postcolonial discourse, Hakka cultural study, and female directors’ Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances in modern theatre venues in Taiwan. In the following, I will highlight the relevant literature in each field and define the landscape of my study.

To begin, much of what has been written on post-colonial theory is on hybridity and post-colonial feminism. In terms of hybridity as it relates to post-colonialism, I make an argument for the hybridity of Hakka culture presented in theatre. Relevant literature includes, Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), which regards hybridity as a representation of cultural difference and cultural authority by minorities, and 'Culture's In-Between' (1996), which holds that hybridity opens a negotiating space where power is unequally distributed; Stuart Hall (1990) notes in 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' that hybridity, as a conception of identity, reflects the constant production and reproduction of the diaspora experience; Verinder S. Kalra and Raminder Kaur, in the book *Diaspora and Hybridity*, are concerned with, 'delineating the way in which diaspora and hybridity have certain commonalities in their relationship to notions of migration and disjunction and to show how these have come to be articulated in terms of the subversion of naturalized forms of identity centred on the nation' (2005:2). Applying the foregoing concepts of hybridity, I attempt to discuss the hybridity evident in different aspects of female directors' Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances to reveal, on the one hand, the acculturation and interaction of an immigrant society, as Taiwan has contained various heterogeneous ethnic groups at different periods during its colonial history; and, on the other hand, the fluidity and changeability of Hakka culture.

Apart from discourse on hybridity, I also utilize discourse on post-colonial feminism, such as Spivak's post-colonial criticism of the 'subaltern' as female; to use her words, 'Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling that is the displaced figuration of the "third-world woman" caught between tradition and modernization, culturalism and development' (1999:304). Spivak

criticizes the oppression of third-world women undertaken not only via colonial patriarchy and imperialism but also via the epistemic violence of indigenous intellectuals: 'I think it is important to acknowledge our complicity in the muting...The postcolonial migrant investigator is touched by the colonial social formations' (1999:309). Furthermore, I refer to Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkin's *Post-colonial Drama: Theory, practice, politics*, which discusses the multiple locations and subjectivities occupied by third-world women in postcolonial theatre. In terms of post-colonial feminism in Taiwan, Chiu Kuei-Fen, in the book *Reading Taiwan/Woman* (1997), applies post-colonial perspectives to the discussion of female issues in Taiwanese literature; in her PhD thesis *Reminiscence Theatre: Devising and Performance* (2006b), Wang Wan-Jung illustrates the post-colonial circumstances of Taiwan and defines the Uhan Shii Theatre Group as an exemplar of postcolonial feminist theatre in Taiwan. I also point out Tuan Hsin-Chun's attempt, in her book *Alternative Theatre in Taiwan: Feminist and Intercultural Approaches* (2007), to employ Western theories such as feminism, intercultural performance, Orientalism, post-colonialism, and theatre study in examination of Taiwanese performances. Although Tuan examines a number of documents related to feminist theatre in Taiwan, she falls into what Chen Kuan-Hsing has criticized as a trend of 'identifying with first-world countries' (2010:21). Hence, she re-invigorates first world women's ideology but fails to relate it in depth to the concerns of ordinary women in Taiwanese society. The above are the primary literature on post-colonial studies used in this dissertation.

Most Hakka cultural studies are written in Mandarin and provide important information to offer an examination of female directors' performances. Such works include Wang Fu-Chang's *Ethnic Imagination in Contemporary Taiwan* (2003), which

discusses the ethnic imagination and consciousness of four ethnic groups in Taiwan; Shih Cheng-Feng's 'The Hakka Movement in Democratic Process of Taiwan' (2008), which describes how Hakka ethnic identity formed during the Hakka movements of the 1980s; Yang Chang-Cheng's 'Relationship of Ethnicity' (2007), which illustrates Hakka immigration history, the construction of Hakka consciousness, and the fluidity of Hakka identity; and Chang Tien-Wan's 2004 discussion of female stereotypes in Hakka literature and the transformation of depictions of Hakka women by Hakka female writers.

Some English-language authors of Hakka cultural and identity studies are also referenced in this thesis; for instance, Nicole Constable (1994), in the essay 'History and Construction of Hakka Identity', explores the cross-border identity of the Hakka people and the construction and reconstruction of Hakka identity in Hakka history by examining Hakka migration history. Howard J. Martin, in 'The Hakka Ethnic Movement in Taiwan, 1986-1991' (1996), attempts to examine Hakka consciousness as it relates to the Hakka Ethnic Movement. Wang Li-Jung, in 'Diaspora, Identity, and Cultural Citizenship: The Hakkas in Multicultural Taiwan' (2007), regards the Hakka ethnic group as a diaspora and stresses the effects of the diasporic experience on the Hakka people's formation of a cultural hybridity and multifarious identity in Taiwan. The preceding contexts provide a variety of perspectives from which to re-think cultural and ethnic identity while analyzing female directors' Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances.

Theatre studies can be divided into two contexts: Taiwanese contemporary theatre contexts and Western modern theatre contexts. In regard to Taiwanese contemporary theatre, Chiu Kun-Liang (1997), in *Theatre and Cultural Changes in Taiwan*, discusses the problem of stage language in New Theatre by reviewing the

development of modern theatre in Taiwan; Lin He-Yi (2003) briefly introduces different theatrical genres in Taiwan, including the Hakka Tea-Picking Opera and New Theatre. Zhong Ming-De (1999), in *The Little Theatre Movement in Taiwan- in search of Alternative Aesthetics and Politics*, provides a systematic overview of the Little Theatre Movement from the 1980s through the 1990s, discussing the problem of dividing the Little Theatre into different periods, and describes its aesthetic and politics. By exploring contemporary theatre trends in Taiwan, I have tried to draw attention to the association between Hakka culture and contemporary theatre.

Based on the analysis of female directors' Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances, I expand another field related to Western modern theatre. Gay McAuley's discussion of theatrical signs and classification of theatre spaces in the book *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (2000) is useful to discussions of space in Hakka Contemporary Theatre and depictions of Hakka images. Paul Thompson's (1998) 'The voice of the past' describes the social purpose and function of oral history, and Pam Schweitzer (1998) outlines the oral history performance project of The Age Exchange. Eugenio Barba (1986) writes about the concept of cultural exchange and 'barter' in theatre, and Rustom Bharucha (1993) criticizes barter in the chapter 'The Theatre of Migrants'. These writings offer points of view that are important to my discussions of Peng's performances. Furthermore, in *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1974), Augusto Boal attempts to liberate theatre audiences with the Image Theatre and Forum Theatre in Latin America. His theories offer concepts in performance training and theatre that are relevant to my examination of the Shigang Mama Theatre Group's performances. Each of the foregoing studies and contexts is significant to my dissertation. In addition, the application of intercultural theatre sources to analyze female directors' performances was considered during my writing process. However, I

decided not to include intercultural theatre in the discussion as it is primarily ‘a Western-based tradition’, as pointed out by Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert: ‘More recently, intercultural theatre has been associated with the works of Richard Schechner, Peter Brook, Eugenio Barba, Ariane Mnouchkine, Robert Wilson, Tadashi Suzuki, and Ong Keng Sen. Even when intercultural exchanges take place within the “non-West”, they are often mediated through Western culture and/or economics’(2002:36-37). According to Lo and Gilbert, although intercultural theatre can be viewed to a certain extent as postcolonial theatre to ‘explore and critique alternative forms of citizenship and identity across and beyond national boundaries’, they went on to use Patrice Pavis’s binary categorization of ‘West and the rest’ in the book *The intercultural Performance Reader* (1996) to illustrate how interculturalism, as it has been theorized and documented thus far, is already over-determined by the West (2002:37). With regard to the specific context, Hakka culture in Taiwan, intercultural theatre resources cannot truly reflect the postcolonial Hakkaness of Hakka Contemporary Theatre in Taiwan. Therefore, I chose not to include interculturalism and intercultural theatre sources in the discussion.

The originality of my research lies in two aspects. Firstly, this thesis is the first English publication to systematically introduce the Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances of Taiwan. The content of this thesis contextualizes the relationship between Hakka culture and modern theatre. Currently, the study of Hakka theatre in the Taiwanese academic research field continues to emphasize traditional Hakka Tea-picking Opera and the exploration of traditional Hakka theatre troupes in different areas of Taiwan. However, Hakka Contemporary Theatre is discursively discussed by researchers, such as Wang Wan-Jung, who, in her doctoral thesis, focuses on the study of Reminiscence Theatre and includes a discussion of postcolonial Reminiscence

Theatre in Taiwan, in which she takes the Uhan Shii Theatre Group's *Taiwanese Confession Series* as examples and uses *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here* to illustrate the enactment of postcolonial feminism by Hakka women in the theatre. In this thesis, I refer not only to relevant documents of Hakka culture and modern theatre but also to female directors' performances in different periods to further portray the cultural diversity of Hakka Contemporary Theatre.

The second original aspect lies in the fact that this thesis is the first to combine post-colonial theories, third-world cultural studies, and post-colonial theatre study to discuss Hakka ethnic and cultural identity and Hakka female subjectivity. Although there are studies which focus on the subject of Hakka female identity - for example, Li Wen-Mei's doctoral thesis *Diaspora, Retrospect, and Rebirth: Three Hakka Women's Encounter and Articulation* (2011) which explores the encounter and connection with Hakka of three Hakka women as case studies, most of these studies are written in Mandarin and do not involve theatre studies. Therefore, my thesis, whether in terms of the research topic (choosing to portray the Hakka women associated with contemporary theatre in Taiwan) or the transdisciplinary research methodology, can fully show originality.

Outline of the Chapters

This thesis includes an introduction, three major chapters and a conclusion. The first Chapter explores processes and trends in Hakka Contemporary Theatre, which was influenced by Hakka culture, and further illustrates the connection between Hakka culture and modern theatre in Taiwan. I examine four periods - the Japanese colonial period (1920-1945), the post-war period and the period of the KMT government (1950s), the 1960s to the 1980s, and the 1990s. The purpose of conducting such an

extensive overview is not only to provide a picture of Hakka Contemporary Theatre, but to illustrate the unequal power relationships indicated by the employment of Hakka cultural elements during different periods of colonisation in Taiwan.

The second chapter, 'Alternative versions: hybrid culture in Wang Chi-Mei and Chiu Chuan-Chuan's Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances', first examines the fluidity of identity in different eras (from the original homeland, China, to the contemporary Taiwan) with-in the context of diaspora discourse and outlines possible meanings of hybridity in Hakka culture by adapting hybridity discourse to a post-colonial context. In the second section, I provide an in-depth analysis of Wang's *Mundane Orphan* and the revival 1992 *Mundane Orphan II*, arguing that the ways in which Hakka elements were used in both plays became a dramaturgical strategy for forming a pan-Taiwanese identity in the 1980s. In the third section, I define Chiu's *A Piece of New Bamboo* as an attempt to combine Hakka migration history and Chiu's family history and to form a hybrid space by employing Hakka culture as subject and using the hybridity of Hakka culture to construct a pan-Hakka ethnic imagination and identity. In addition, I discuss the hybrid form of another play, *The Story about Nei-Wan Lane*, which combines modern performance forms, traditional Hakka beliefs and Mandarin, to reflect the conflicts Chiu has had to face when using Hakka elements to present Hakka culture.

In chapter three, 'Representation of Hakka women from a post-colonial feminist perspective', I briefly refer to the development of feminism in Taiwan and then offer an examination of feminist theatre and productions relevant to problems of feminist praxis: theatrical adaptations of feminism tend to conform to ideologies of women in the first world but fail to address the exploitation and oppression of ordinary women (such as female labourers, Hakka women and indigenous women). I then provide

in-depth analysis of Peng Ya-Ling and Li Hsiu-Hsun's performances and explore how these encourage Hakka women to perform their life experiences and express their thoughts in ways that re-construct the subjectivity of subaltern women in post-colonial Taiwan. Peng and Li have also challenged simplistic impression of Hakka culture by exploring the rituals of Hakka people's daily lives and highlighting, thereby, the specific and multiple meanings of this culture.

The concluding chapter, '*ShiCha: Hakka Culture, Memory, and Identity*', draws attention to the practical application of the research topic. In analyzing my performance, I discuss various aspects of the embodiment of Hakka culture by critically examining hybrid subjectivity; meanwhile, I introduce the concept of hybrid stage language, to show the complexity of language as an identity strategy in Hakka culture and to express the diversity of cultural identities.

Theatre is an activity which brings people together and provides cohesion. It can represent multicultural and diverse ethnic groups. This dissertation will use systematic theatrical study and post-colonial theory to examine two relationships; firstly, that between Hakka Contemporary Theatre and Modern Theatre, and secondly, that between the Hakka ethnic group and other ethnic groups in Taiwan. The completion of this research project will help to display diverse perspectives in Taiwanese culture in response to issues of globalization in theatre field. The other contribution of this research is to continue exploring different fields of Hakka Theatre and to illustrate alternative influences between traditional and modern theatre in Taiwan. Chang Tien-Wan commented as follows on the images of Hakka women in Hakka Literature:

During their lives, Hakka women did not feel the honor of being a woman; instead they had to bear restrictions from their families, clan power and become rural laborers to match ethnical images and the symbol of male

reflections to offer Hakka males a way of releasing and relieving the burden of their history. (Chang Tien-Wan, 2004: 231)

Hakka people are a race that has always regarded the male as the center of clan power, and the relation between Hakka females and theatre have to date been ignored. The above quotation indicated that Hakka women were seen as strong labourers in rural areas; however, in the field of Hakka Contemporary Theatre, I analyze productions by female directors who display creative conceptions in public, firstly, to bring back the essential nature of Hakka women; and secondly, to encourage more Hakka women to rediscover their true identity and values. This thesis sets out to focus on the association between Hakka theatre and women, which may deliberately change the “male center” in the theatre, and may establish the concept of gender equality in performance art. Finally, through my two productions, thesis and performance, I hope to promote Hakka culture, Hakka theatre, and Hakka art and give the opportunity to communicate Hakka theatre to the world.

CHAPTER 1

Contexts of Hakka Contemporary Theatre in the History of Taiwanese Modern Theatre

Our ancestors lived in the past;
We live in the present and will live in the future.

--- Chang Wei-Hsien, *The Declaration of People's Beacon Theatre Group*

In Taiwan, Hakka theatre generally refers to the traditional Tea-picking Opera (Cai Cha Xi),³ which vividly depicts traditional Hakka culture and society and is categorized into the Mini Drama and the Grand Drama. According to Cheng Rom-Shing, the Mini Drama is also called the Three-character Tea-picking Drama or the Three-character Drama, and the Grand Drama is also called the 'Hakka Reformed Drama', 'Tea-picking Grand Drama', and 'Hakka Grand Drama' (2007:70). Tea-picking Opera gained the name for two reasons: firstly, the majority of Hakka groups lived in the mountainous areas in North Taiwan and the main work of the Hakka people was cultivating tea; the second reason is that the Tea-picking Opera's central position in Hakka theatre with its adaptation of Hakka mountain songs as vocal music, has influenced the shape of Hakka Grand Opera.⁴ Consequently, the name Hakka theatre is used to include Tea-picking Opera.

Hakka theatre was initiated in Hakka society at the end of the Qing dynasty (approximately 1850-1894) and was originally a kind of antiphonal singing of

³The Pinyin used in this thesis can be divided into the following categories: with the names of people, Wade-Giles system is used; with place names, the Chunghwa Post system is used; and with other names or titles of performance, Hanyu Pinyin system is used.

⁴ The Grand Opera is a new type of drama that took shape around 1921 under the influence of the social background and other dramas at the time. Actors and actresses started to learn and pick up Hakka mountain songs and the music, stories and performing styles of other dramas. Luntan and Siping Operas were the main force of traditional performances and they naturally became the subject of imitation.

mountain songs between a male clown and two females. It was very popular during the first period of Japanese colonization and developed to include commercial performances in the so-called 'indoor-stage' theatres in Taiwan. At that time, Hakka Tea-picking Opera was performed popularly throughout the northern and southern areas of Taiwan. Due to the flirtation and joking between the roles of the clown and the female performers, Tea-picking Opera, just like Taiwanese Opera (Ge Zai Xi) tended to be seen as 'pornographic opera' and the intellectuals of the time suggested that it should be forbidden (*Taiwan Everyday News*, 1910). Later, Hakka Tea-picking Opera was constrained and reformed, as Hakka Reformed Opera, under the Japanese Kominka Movement and further declined under the KMT government's dominant cultural policy. Su Hsiu-Ting study of the Hakka Reformed Opera over different periods and through different process of exchange, looked at the introduction of stagey new elements, such as using ordinary language and popular songs, in order to modernize the form during the KMT period. These kinds of aesthetic exchange introduced westernized performance forms from Japan as well as more traditional elements from China (1999: 24).

In the 1990s, the Executive Yuan's Council for Cultural Affairs invited the Hakka Theatre Academy⁵ to take part in the Council's Folk Arts Preservation and Training Program. The Rom-Shing Hakka Tea-picking Troupe, part of the Hakka Theatre Academy, took on the responsibility of training young performers in the Tea-picking Opera, as well as preserving the performance techniques of older Tea-picking Opera practitioners. Since the Council for Hakka Affairs was founded in 2001, it has

⁵The Hakka Theatre Academy was founded by Cheng Rom-Shing in 1996 to promote traditional Hakka theatre, train the younger generation of Hakka theatre performers and take responsibility for several cultural activities. The Hakka Theatre Academy was most recently composed of the Qing Mei Yuan Cultural and Educational Foundation, The Rom-Shing Hakka Tea-picking Troupe, and the Miaoli Chen Family Bei Guan Ba Yin Troupe. (Website: <http://hakkafans.myweb.hinet.net>)

officially preserved and supported troupes and universities, passing on Hakka traditional culture in every field. In brief, traditional Hakka theatre has developed its individual and specific route until the present. However, in the context of attempts to both preserve traditional Hakka theatre and allow it to develop, what was the role of Hakka Contemporary Theatre, and how did it develop its performance style? It may be possible to answer this question within the context of the development of modern theatre in Taiwan. This chapter will explore the connection between Hakka culture and the development of modern theatre in Taiwan.

The Origin of Taiwanese Modern Theatre (1920-1945)

The earliest modern theatre movement in Taiwan can be traced to the 1920s during the period of Japanese colonization from 1895 to 1945. At that time, the Japanese began translating Western drama texts, thirty years before the Chinese, and performed Western and Western-like plays, which developed as a kind of contemporary theatre named the Japanese New Theatre (Xin Pai Ju). During the Japanese colonial period, the contemporary theatre of Taiwan was translated from the Japanese New Theatre and was also influenced by the modern theatre performances (Wen Ming Xi) which were performed by Chinese theatre groups to Taiwan. The contemporary theatre of Taiwan, named New Theatre (Xin Ju), generally referred to theatre transferred from traditional opera to modern theatre:

New Theatre is a conceptual category, in Taiwan; it can refer to all kinds of non-traditional Taiwanese theatre forms. In addition, New Theatre may refer to different characteristics of performances in different periods. (Personal translation. Chiu Kun-Liang 1992:302)

New Theatre, as an umbrella term, included the Reformed Theatre (Gai Liang Xi), which was traditional Taiwanese theatre with the addition of some modern elements,

the Cultural Theatre (Wen Hua Ju), which appeared accompanied with the cultural movements of Taiwanese Cultural Association, the Emperor Theatre (Huang Min Ju) and the Youth Theatre (Qing Nian Ju), promoted by the Japanese colonizers to propagate Japanese imperialism. According to Yang To, New Theatre in this period referred to 'using language and movements as the major performing style, divided in scenes or acts as dramaturgy and applying realistic make-up, customs, stage design and lighting to portray people's lives and histories' (Personal translation. 1994:97). The stage languages of New Theatre were Hokkien and Japanese, and actors wore western suits and performed in a realistic style. Many intellectuals and students who graduated from Japan participated and performed in New Theatre in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the New Theatre movements of Taiwan, both the Cultural Theatre of the Taiwan Cultural Association and New Theatre, led by Chang Wei-Hsien, involved a strong cultural rebellion and social meanings in the 1920s. The difference of performances in the New Theatre Movements was that performers of the Cultural Theatre were members of the Taiwanese Cultural Association who used theatre as a medium for portraying social movements and these performances were usually performed during speeches and contained a strong political consciousness in order to actively influence the public. However, the New Theatre produced by Chang not only offered resistance to Japanese imperialism but also pursued a theatrical aesthetic to establish a professional Taiwanese New Theatre group to replace traditional Taiwanese Opera. As Chang claimed:

Without professional actors and instructors, previous amateur dramatics [of New Theatre] could not compare to the professional [Taiwanese Opera] theatre groups. If we do not cultivate ourselves, [New Theatre] is unable to replace either those old theatres or Taiwanese Opera theatre, which owned a

number of audiences, and to be supported by the intellectuals. (Personal translation. Chang Wei-Hsien, 1954:108)

As a result, in 1928 Chang went to Tokyo and studied modern theatre. In 1930, he returned to Taiwan and founded The People's Beacon Theatre Group (Min Feng Ju Tuan) as a training and performing institution. In 1933, The People's Beacon Theatre Group performed Hsu Kung-Mei's *Flying*, Haruo Sasaki's *The Dream of Primitive*, David Pinski's *A Dollar*, Ibsen's *En Folkefiende* at Taipei Yong Le Zuo theatre in a period of four days. Through performing these plays, Chang succeeded in expressing Western modern theatre techniques and the knowledge he had learned in Japan on the stage: 'In those performances, we prepared whole new lighting which even the Japanese do not have in their theatres. Besides, in order to perform around the island, we also prepared the power pen' (1954:110). With regard to Chang's achievements, Lin He-Yi claims, 'He employed professional designers and practitioners who were responsible for the crew. At that moment, the Taiwanese finally produced a production of professional standards' (2003:163). Chang was the only Taiwanese person to be invited to participate in the New Theatre Festival held by the Japanese in 1934. During that time, only Japanese theatre groups were qualified to join this festival and the majority of New Theatre was performed in Japanese since most audiences were Japanese. However, the People's Beacon Theatre Group was the only theatre group to perform New Theatre in the Hokkien language: 'At that time, there were far fewer Taiwanese who loved New Theatre than Japanese. If we performed in Japanese, actors of the People's Beacon Theatre Group might not act well; so, I decided to perform in Hokkien' (1954:110). Performances by the People's Beacon Theatre Group successfully attracted Japanese audiences and Chang became known as the top director of New Theatre. Afterwards, the People's Beacon Theatre Group planned to travel and perform around the island of Taiwan but was unable to do so due to lack of

funding.

At the onset of the war between Japan and China in 1937, the Japanese colonial government promoted the Kominka Movement, a kind of imperial civilization movement, and strictly prohibited any kind of Taiwanese customs as well as entertainment. Shi Wan-Shun wrote about the Kominka Movement: ‘Japanese were keen to find additional troops for the war [World War II] and initiated a cultural re-construction in the colony of Taiwan to bring the Taiwanese under the power of the Emperor of Japan and to dispatch Taiwanese soldiers to fight in the war. With this purpose, Taiwanese theatre became a tool for the Japanization movement of the colonizers’ (2008:113). In terms of theatre in Taiwan, the Japanese government prohibited traditional Taiwanese theatre (including Taiwanese Opera and Hakka Tea-picking Opera) and only permitted New Theatre and the Reformed Theatre to be performed. However, it was obligatory that the content of New Theatre and the Reformed Theatre performances should promote the Japanization movement and Japanese imperialism. As a result of the Kominka Movement, ‘Taiwanese traditional theatre troupes were forced to disband and approximately thirty Taiwanese Opera (Ge Zai Xi) troupes attempted to modify their performance style to combine Japanese culture as well as language in traditional Taiwanese theatres in order to survive’ (Chiu Kun-Liang 1992:331).

A Capon: First New Theatre Performance Including Hakka Elements

According to Shi Wan-Shun, the Emperor Theatre (Huang Min Ju) reached its peak in the year 1940. The Japanese government published a book entitled *The Introduction of the Emperor Theatre* with instructions on how to apply the experience of Japanese modern theatre and systematically demonstrate theories related to modern theatre,

script writing and performance practice to encourage Taiwanese to produce the Emperor Theatre. The colonial government further organized ‘Art Festival, New Theatre Competition’, as a radical cultural assimilation, to demonstrate how to perform the Emperor Theatre for professional theatre groups in Taiwan in order to promote the Japanese language and imperialism. Scripts of the Emperor Theatre in the Art Festival were written by both Japanese and Taiwanese in Japanese but performed in Hokkien (2008:161). Shi analyzed four scripts of the Emperor Theatre in depth and pointed out,

The concept of Kominka [Japanization] held a dominant position in the Emperor Theatre. The way to combine issues of modernization or modern consciousness into the concept of Kominka [Japanization] in theatre was an assimilation strategy of Japanese colonizers, which explains why the Taiwanese pursued modernization at the same time and pace as Japanization. (Personal translation, 2008:171)

The Emperor Theatre aimed to educate audiences to become ‘standard’ people of the Emperor of Japan and propagated the culture of Japanese royalty and criticized Taiwanese customs. In 1942, the Japanese government founded the Taiwan Theatre Association to unify theatre troupes, thus indicating that theatre in Taiwan was officially ruled by the nation of Japan: ‘all professional theatre groups had to be examined by the Taiwan Theatre Association to decide whether they could exist or not. Forty night theatre groups were passed at that time and the theatre groups that failed were enforced to disband’ (Personal translation. 2002:27). Meanwhile, New Theatre practitioners, who were eager to raise the level of Taiwanese culture and art, felt anxious about a number of the Emperor Theatre performances which appeared rapidly with the Kominka Movement. Some Taiwanese artists and musicians including Chan Wen-Huan, Lin Tuan-Chiu, Wang Ching-Chuan and Lu Chuan-Sheng, attempted to set up the Hou Sheng Theatrical Research Institution (Hou Sheng Yan Ju Hwei) to

oppose the Kominka Movement. In 1943, Lin Tuan-Chiu, who had studied and experienced theatrical activities in Tokyo, wrote a play based on a Taiwanese novel named *A Capon (Yan Ji)* and directed it at Yong Le Zuo theatre in Taipei from 3rd to 8th September.

A Capon drew on local material in Taiwan and portrayed ordinary Taiwanese people from different social backgrounds passing through a Han pharmacy and described how a woman expressed determination to fight against her real circumstances, in which she felt oppressed by traditional patriarchy and marriage. This play pitted itself against the Emperor Theatre led by the Japanese, and presented a strong Taiwanese consciousness and a spirit of revolt. In this play full of Taiwanese national consciousness, each stage from playwriting through directing, music to performance was the responsibility of the local Taiwanese. As a result, it was banned by the Japanese government because the actors sang Taiwanese folk songs that were enthusiastically received by the audience. At a time of war (World War II), this was unacceptable to the Japanese colonizers.

The remarkable characteristic of the play was its clever match between recomposed music from native folk songs and the plot. Furthermore, both during and between the scenes the musician, Lu Chuan-Sheng, led the orchestra in an instrumental performance of Taiwanese native folk songs, such as Spring Blooms (Bai Ja Chun), Field in June (Liu Yue Tian Shui), Diu Diu Tong Zai, Tea-picking Song (Cai Cha Ge)...etc, which he had collected during field work (Shi Wan-Shun, 1994:210). It is worth noticing that one Hakka Tea-picking song, as a Hakka cultural element, was involved and recomposed among these Taiwanese folk songs. Lu, who was the composer as well as the conductor of *A Capon*, mentioned the process of collecting the traditional Hakka folk songs with Wang Ching-Chuan:

He (Wang) and I (Lu) listened to a drug-seller singing Hakka folk songs in front of Zhongli market. We stood for one to two hours but he did not complain; instead he watched as I recorded the music score. (Shi Wan-Shun, 2002: 86)

This comment illustrates two points: firstly, traditional Hakka Tea-picking songs were seen as usable material at that time by contemporary theatrical practitioners; secondly, under the Kominka movement, the representation of traditional Taiwanese folk music by intellectuals and artists reflected their positive and active attitude towards the people and cultures of Taiwan in an attempt to construct a Taiwanese identity under the Japanese colonialism.

New Theatre versus Spoken Drama in Domination of the KMT Government

In 1945, by the time the Japanese had left, the political right of Taiwan moved to the National Republic of China (R.O.C.). New Theatre activities in every area began to flourish again returning to levels experienced before the war. From 1945 to the 1950s, there were approximately three hundred theatre groups including Taiwanese opera troupes, puppet theatre troupes, and around twenty to thirty professional New Theatre groups operating. On the other hand, many theatre troupes visited Taiwan from the Mainland with the main purpose of developing Chinese culture and promoting Mandarin. As Chiu Kun-Liang claims:

With regard to cultural workers and the Nationalist KMT (Kuomintang) government, Taiwan suffered the long term enslaving of education under the Japanese, so that they had to strengthen national concepts of the Taiwanese to 'sioncize' the populations. In order to achieve this aim, it was a necessary measure to advocate the use of the Mandarin language while forbidding the Japanese language. (Personal translation. 1997:176)

Thus, the first problem that Taiwanese theatrical practitioners had to address after the

Second World War was language. According to Hsiao A-chin, the KMT government promoted the National Language Movement to 'de-Japanize' and to 'Sinocize' the Taiwanese and encouraged Mandarin as a national language. However, the majority of Taiwanese could only speak Japanese and their dialects. The linguistic problem was an index of the nature of the early Mainlander-Taiwanese contacts. Other factors, such as the inefficiency of the understaffed bureaucracy, frequent corruption, military misbehavior and the continuing influx of refugees from the Mainland heightened the tensions between Mainlander and local Taiwanese (2000:50-56). Considering the adapting of language, Taiwanese theatre practitioners could only speak Hokkien (one of Taiwanese dialects) in theatre. In 1946, an important one-act New Theatre play, *The Wall (Bi)*, and a three-act comedy of the New Theatre, *Luohan Attends a Meeting (Luo Han Fu Huei)*, were performed by Sheng-Feng Theatrical Research Institution (Sheng-Feng Yan Ju Huei) at Zhong Shan Hall in Taipei. The lines of these two plays were in Hokkien language; in addition, these plays reflected several serious social problems resulting from improper political and economic policies from the time after the KMT government took over Taiwan.

Owing to the domination of the KMT government and the heightened tensions between Mainlanders and local Taiwanese, a highly significant incident happened on February 28th 1947(2-28 Incident),⁶ in which approximately ten thousand Taiwanese were killed by Nationalist troops, including leading intellectuals, journalists and artists (Diamond, 1994:7). After the 2-28 Incident, the Experiment Little Theatre

⁶ On the evening of February 27, when a group of official agents were violently confiscating the smuggled cigarettes owned by a Taiwanese woman peddler, a crowd was attracted by the argument between the investigators and the woman. In the confusion a Taiwanese man in the crowd was shot by one of the investigators, who tried to run away. The disturbance quickly provoked violent clashes with authorities throughout the island and lasted about two weeks. Crowds assaulted Mainlanders, killing many, occupied government buildings and radio stations, attacked police stations and looted arms. Eventually, a massacre of Taiwanese accompanied the arrival of reinforcements from Mainland. The 2-28 Incident resulted in constant hostility between the Mainlanders and the Taiwanese. (Hsiao A-Chin, 2000 :57)

Group (Shi Yan Xiao Ju Tuan) performed in November *The Scent of Bananas* (*Xiang Jao Xiang*) which was directed by Chen Ta-Yu, a theatrical practitioner from the Mainland. The plot of *The Scent of Bananas* addressed issues related to linguistic and cultural differences and misunderstandings between the Taiwanese and Mainlanders. The lines of this play combined the Taiwanese, Japanese and Mandarin language reflecting the reality at that time, while the audience of Mainlanders and native Taiwanese broke into fights before the play finished (Chiu, 1997:185). As a result, the performance was canceled next day.

In 20th May 1949, the Nationalist (KMT) government announced the Martial Law after losing a civil war in China. The whole Taiwan Island was in state of siege and went into a period of limited freedom of expression, during which the government attempted to control even what people thought. Thus, all theatrical activities were exclusively devoted to the Anti-Communist theatre or Spoken Drama (Hua Ju) under the policy of speaking Mandarin.

The movement to promote the speaking Mandarin not only killed the possibility of the development of native Taiwanese theatrical practitioners, but also led to a situation where the effort and practical experience of the New Theatre in the Japanese colonial period could not be developed. (Personal translation. Lin He-Yi, 2003:215)

Therefore, the contemporary theatrical circle was dominated by playwrights and actors who came from Mainland China and could speak Mandarin fluently. According to Chiu (1997: 184), most theatre groups of New Theatre, which during the period of Japanese colonization, had been highly critical of society vanished after the 2-28 Incident and became dominated by dramatists who came from China with the Nationalist troops. Many dramatists from the Mainland were extremely opposed to using Taiwanese dialect in theatre. They regarded Mandarin as the only language

which could demonstrate the Chinese Art; therefore, they implied that if theatrical practitioners used Taiwanese dialects that theatre would lose its artistic value. This approach reduced the value and level of activity of the New Theatre in Taiwan, as well as negating the traditions of the New Theatre which had been established in previous decades.

Thus, the majority of the theatre groups of New Theatre changed to a more commercial style and performed among the people in cities and towns. On the other hand, non-governmental controlled traditional theatre troupes were quite lively; they still performed Taiwanese opera, Hakka opera and the New Theatre alternately. These New Theatre performances mainly followed a line in realism; in addition, their language and expression of emotion reflected everyday aspects of life. The relationship between Hakka culture and New Theatre performance can be illustrated with the example of the Sheng Chun Yuan Theatre Troupe. Originally experts in Taiwanese Opera (Ge Zi Xi) troupe, which was well-received in Hokkien venues, they could also produce Tea-picking Opera for Hakka villages:

When the troupe performed all over the island, it was easy for them to meet up with New Theatre groups and adapt their performing style. Thus, when audiences were weary of traditional Taiwanese or Hakka Tea-picking Operas, the troupe would immediately add the New Theatre to appeal to the audience. The troupe used to perform for ten days in one place, usually performing the Tea-picking Opera (or Taiwanese opera) for seven days and the New Theatre for three days. They didn't engage a teacher to teach the New Theatre; therefore, the list of possible plays they could perform depended on the actors' experience. They just changed costumes from ancient to modern, songs from mountain songs to popular ones, using everyday life as a basis of the performance. (Personal translation. Chiu Kun-Liang, 2008: 143)

This comment suggests that, in this period, the New Theatre had a specific

intercultural quality and tended to combine the concept of realism in Modern theatre with the cultures and language of Taiwan. In addition, it adapted its productions to appeal to different audiences as a hybrid cultural strategy. However, the New Theatre which performed by traditional Hakka theatre troupes lost its critical consciousness but maintained its entertainment value.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, there was almost no anti-government theatre performed under the restrictive Martial Law state system in Taiwan. Theatre became a political tool for the authorities from 1950 to 1956. All Spoken Drama groups performed Anti-communist plays as propaganda for the KMT government's Anti-communist cultural policy. Chiao Tung points out, 'Anti-communist theatre was produced supporting the literary policy. Theatre was only a tool of propaganda under the strong controlled policy. When playwrights wrote scripts, they were restricted by chauvinism and the thoughts they had to obey' (1990: 62). The Spoken Dramas were mainly performed by military theatre troupes during this period.

The anxiety of identity from the 1960s to the 1980s in Taiwan

In the 1960s, although Li Man-Quei, a woman who served on the Chinese Spoken Drama Committee, promoted Western-style productions as the Little Theatre Movement held by student's clubs,⁷ she supported social education by the KMT government. Lin attempted to break out of the rigid theatrical forms of Spoken Drama by adapting Western theatre styles and indeed helped Spoken Drama to evolve more diverse Western theatrical forms, focusing on bodily movements and other postmodern compositional techniques such as pastiche and collage (Tuan Hsin-Chun,

⁷Li Man-Quei led The World Theatre Festival (Shi Jie Ju Zhan, 1967-1984) and The Youth Theatre Festival (Qian Nian Ju Zhan, 1968-1984) on campus. The former one performed foreign texts in English, French, Spanish, and Japanese; the later one performed texts in Mandarin by theatre clubs on campus. (Zhong Ming-De, 1999:70)

2007: 27). In contrast, the Little Theatre Movement that she led did not really break the restrictions on the Anti-communist thoughts; instead, it was similar to Spoken Drama but without artistic quality.

Owing to the inspiration of Westernization, theatrical practitioners attempted to break from the rigid style of Spoken Drama. Ma Sen points out that the 1960s and 1970s were the preparatory periods for the second Westernization of modern theatre which happened in 1980:

The Second Westernization refers to the introduction of modern western literature, arts and thinking to Taiwan after World War II, which moved Taiwanese intellectuals to create modern anti-realistic poems, modern anti-war novels and modern anti-realistic theatre. (Personal translation. Ma Sen, 2002:48)

Two important playwrights in this period were Yao Yi-Wei and Ma Sen. Yao, who wrote primarily historical dramas and realistic plays, such as *One Chest (Yi Kou Xiang Zi)*, branched out into the theatre of the Absurd. Ma's one-act play, *Frog Game (Wa Xi)*, was the favorite of students on campus. Two characteristics of Ma's plays were his use of modern poetry in dialogue and his experiment with magic-realism style in plays as an anti-realism theatre (Ma Sen, 2002:22).

From 1970 to 1980, owing to the influence of political events⁸ as well as the Native Literature Movement,⁹ intellectuals tended to re-examine the phenomena of

⁸ In 1971, the long-established authority of the Nationalist Government was brought into question due to a series of diplomatic difficulties. The United States issued a statement on 9th April in 1971 that they intended to return the ruling right of a group of islands, Southwest Islands, to Japanese power. One island included in this cluster, Diaoyutai Island, was ruled by the Taiwanese. Following this declaration, three thousand and five hundred Taiwan university students held meetings and demonstrations in defense of the Diaoyutai Island at National Taiwan University during April and June. Moreover, Taiwan withdrew from the United Nations in the same year. The series of events inspired Taiwanese intellectuals to reflect more deeply on their national identity as well as the issues of over Westernization within Taiwan. (Zhong Ming-De, 1999:18)

⁹ This national crisis not only encouraged young intellectuals to be more active in politics and social affairs; it also deflected literary concerns from Western thoughts to native concerns. As a result, the

over-Westernization and imperialism from the 1920s, and stressed that literature should concern itself with the society of Taiwan (Hsiau, 2000: 68-71). The range of Taiwan's Native Literature Movement was not limited to changes in literature and literary expression, but also brought about changes in the wider ideology of politics, society and culture in Taiwan. This influenced some artists to attempt to represent native Taiwanese culture in their creations, including some elements from Hakka culture. Such creations included *Legacy (Xing Chuan)* produced by Lin Hwai-Min, and *Mundane Orphan (Ren Jian Gu Er)* produced by Wang Chi-Mei.

Legacy in the 1970s

The organization of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre was formed at the beginning of 1970s. The organizer, Lin Hwai-Min, had participated in the movement of defending Diaoyutai Island and had experienced the attempts at diplomacy of the Nationalist government. After he finished his studies in modern dance in America, Lin founded Cloud Gate Dance Theatre in 1973 (Yang Meng-Yu, 1998: 43). At that time, Lin declared that 'Chinese' people should compose, choreograph and dance for 'Chinese' audiences. This declaration confirmed his focus on Chinese culture and his intention to form a Chinese cultural identity through dance.

However, in 1978, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre performed a piece of dance-theatre, *Legacy*, in which Hakka dancers presented the emigration history of their ancestors. (Yang, 1998: 139) During the rehearsal of *Legacy*, Lin asked his dancers to study the history of Taiwan and discussed their individual family trees in order to establish the connection between the history of immigration and individual families in Taiwan.

Native Literature Movement (Xiang Tu Wen Xue Yun Dong) occurred in the mid-1970s, instigated by Huang Chun-Ming and Wang Zhen-He, both local novelists. Furthermore, Hung Tung, a painter, portrayed the simple and unadorned lifestyle of rural Taiwan during this period. (Wang To, 1979: 27-35)

Some Hakka dancers were involved in this play, including He Hui-Chen, Wang Lien-Chih, Wu Su-Chun, and Liu Shao-Lu; thus, Lin emphasized the ‘Hakka spirit’ of *Legacy* and said, ‘The reason why *Legacy* became such an adventure is the great tenacity of these Hakka dancers’ (Yang, 1998:139). The ‘Hakka spirit’ of *Legacy* illustrated the influence of the native literature movement on Taiwanese artists, who deliberately employed the variety of Taiwanese cultures in the searching for a proper identity. Hakka dancer He Hui-Chen expressed her motivation:

I dance for my granny. Every time I encounter the difficulty of dancing, I think of my granny’s face, to encourage myself to keep dancing. My granny is a Hakka woman who worked on the mountains of Miaoli County and experienced the most difficult times in Taiwan’s history. (Yang, 1998:213)

The dance-theatre piece *Legacy* portrayed the migration history of the Han Chinese in Taiwan and included depictions of the Hakka ethnic group. Through the interpretations of Hakka dancers, the choreographer Lin tried to imply a correspondence between the Hakka spirit and native Taiwanese consciousness. Although it is worth noting that *Legacy* was a production that represented the multiculturalism of Taiwanese society, I argue that the Hakka spirit raised by the dance is bound to the internalized Chineseness of this period. According to Hsiao A-Chin, the majority of Taiwanese intellectuals in the 1970s internalized Chinese Nationalism through their education under the KMT government. In other words, their enthusiastic concern for their native land was based on a kind of consciousness of Chinese Nationalism. Therefore, consciousness of people and land in Taiwan gradually combined with Chinese Nationalism, giving rise to the term ‘native land’. Subsequently, this definition infiltrated Taiwan’s culture, literature and arts (Hsiao, 2000: 88-93).

Legacy's constituent pieces, titled 'Tangshan' (a Chinese city), 'Crossing the Sea', 'Cultivation', and 'Sowing' portrayed ancestors crossing the ocean from China to Taiwan and indicated the seeking of Chinese roots, expressing an idea found in imaginations of Chinese Nationalism. As Lin declared, 'The Chinese people should compose, choreograph and dance for Chinese people'. *Legacy* embodied not just the meaning of native Taiwan, but Taiwan's roots in China.

The Little Theatre Movement in the 1980s

In the early 1980s, a series of experimental productions by Lan Ling Theatre Workshop, organized originally as Gen Hsin Experimental Theatre Group in 1978, raised the public's awareness of the development of modern theatre. This group performed in The First Experimental Theatre Exhibition (Shi Yan Ju Zhan), *The New Marriage Match He Zhu* (He Zhu Xin Pei), which was generally regarded as the beginning of the Little Theatre Movement in Taiwan.¹⁰ The theatrical production from Lan Ling Theatre Workshop mainly aimed to mix the training methods from the West with traditional Chinese culture, such as Beijing Opera, rather than display native Taiwanese culture. Zhong Ming-De also claims:

The Modern Chinese and Taiwanese theatrical forms of the early 1980s were significantly different from the modern theatrical forms seen today. The experimental plays of the 1980s were a combination of both the Chinese theatrical tradition and the avant-garde theatre of Europe and America; these pieces were neither deeply redolent with avant-garde aesthetics, nor did they utilize the vivid theatrical materials of Taiwan. (1999: 126)

¹⁰ The leader of the Lan Ling Theatre Workshop, Jin Shi-Jie, invited the respected psychiatrist, Wu Jing-Ji, to join the group as artistic director to give participants both training methods and production methodology. Hence, the experimental play *The New Marriage Match of He Zhu*, which was adapted from a Peking Opera, *The Marriage Match of He Zhu* (He Zhu Pei), was performed in 1980 and received a great response from dramatists as well as literary circles and the public. (Zhong, 1999: 35-37)

However, the successful performance of *The New Marriage Match He Zhu* by Lan Ling influenced and inspired many Little Theatre practitioners. From 1980 to 1985, many theatre groups were founded during six annual festivals of Experimental Theatre (Shi Yan Ju Zhan) held in different universities, and The Little Theatre Movement initiated.

Based on the observations of Zhong, Experimental Theatre replaced Spoken Drama becoming the main form of modern theatre in Taiwan. He also notes that the most active scholars, such as Yao Yi-Wei, Stan Lai, Wang Chi-Mei, and Chen Lin-Lin, were full-time teachers in the Drama department of National University of the Arts (Taipei National University of the Arts) (1999: 69). These theatrical practitioners played an important role in promoting and leading Experimental Theatre on campus; moreover, the majority of teachers learned their professional theatrical knowledge and graduated from Western universities.¹¹ Therefore, they were courageous in showing concern for Taiwanese culture and in making theatre through theatrical education and performances.

Wang Chi-Mei, one of these scholars, developed theatrical education at universities and supervised the Deaf Theatre Group during this period. Wang's creations were usually performed by students that she had taught, and they expressed a great concern for the different ethnic groups. The play, *Mundane Orphan (Ren Jian Gu Er)*, which was produced by Wang and her students in 1987, used history and documentaries of Taiwan as materials to represent the concerns about the social environment (Lin, 2003: 269). It was composed of twenty-eight episodes, without a central event and major

¹¹ As Tuan Hsin-Chun points out that the practitioners of Taiwan theatres obtained their ideas from the critics and scholars who were acquainted with these Western theories. Directors (most of them are also teachers) like Wang Mo-Lin, Stan Lai, Liu Jing-Min, Wei Ying-Chuan and Chou Hui-Ling studied Western theories themselves. (2007: 51)

characters, but focusing on the theme of Taiwan. The whole play, which was performed by the drama students of the National University of the Arts, was a report representing important historical events and social comments on Taiwan. In addition, many Taiwanese folk songs, local operas, Hakka mountain song and indigenous traditional carols were used in the play. One Hakka mountain song was sung in a scene which filled the stage with mountains of trash to reflect the real damaged environment of Taiwan in the process of modernization and industrialization. In 1989, Wang and her students coproduced another play named as *Sons of the Land (Da Di Zhi Zi)* which was performed in the National University of the Arts on four occasions and throughout Taiwan during the following ten days. *Sons of the Land* showed the growth of Taiwanese children and families from different ethnic groups. This play also presented the problems of social environments and education and included the life of a Hakka family. Although *Sons of the Land* did not completely describe the Hakka culture as a whole, it attempted to portray topics from Hakka family life.

Overall, theatrical practitioners directly expressed their concerns for the people and land of Taiwan in the 1980s. During this period, there was no performance completely focusing on the Hakka issues or paying attention to embodying Hakka culture; however, artists of modern theatre started to attempt to bring Hakka elements into their production to re-think their cultural identity and to define Taiwanese culture. As Wang wrote in reference to *Mundane Orphan*, 'Facing every kind of strife in the world, Taiwan can only find its duration in transformation. I am speechless, and my anxiety cannot be expressed by language' (1992:4). During this period, Hakka music (such as traditional mountain songs) and Hakka elements (such as the family histories of Hakka people) became the materials that modern theatre practitioners intentionally applied in response to the social and cultural issues facing Taiwan at the

time.

Model of Hakka Contemporary Theatre in the 1990s

Hakka Contemporary Theatre took formal shape in the 1990s. Two factors influenced how it formed: first, due to the new openness in society and politics, some modern theatres started to address topics relevant to the Hakka. In addition, after the Little Theatre Movement, Drama students (including a few Hakka students) who had graduated from the National University of the Arts became the main force in the local development of modern theatre and the arts.

Key to the ability of modern theatre to address social and political issues was the lifting of Martial Law. In 1987, the former president, Chiang Ching-Kuo, announced the lifting of the 38-year Martial Law, and the political environment became more liberal: people were given more freedom to express their thoughts. Various changes from diplomacy to politics were experienced; people began to seek a proper identity for Taiwan. Therefore, when the opposition party (Democratic Progressive Party, DPP) was recognized and started a campaign of establishing a country of democratic Taiwan, an independent Taiwanese culture began to be advocated and theatres in Taiwan obtained more independence from the state.

Zhong Ming-De points out that 'all theatres were very political in the year 1989'. Almost all Little Theatre performances became political theatre, even so-called main stream theatre groups; for instance, the Performance Workshop, Ping-Fong Acting Troup, and Godot Theatre Company, performed 'topical political theatre' one after another (1999: 217-218). Among these plays, one example which included Hakka elements is *Play Hard* (Chang Qi Wan Ming) produced by Ping-Fong Acting Troup.

This play addresses the extensive diversity of multilingual issues within Taiwan by making use of the Hakka language, the language of a significant minority group: ‘*Play Hard* uses Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hakka, Japanese, Cantonese, Shanghainese, Sichuanese, and English, languages the actors may or may not already know’ (John. B. Weinstein, 2000: 273). Weinstein asserts that the usage of multilingual stage language reflects, first, the intention of the director Li Kuo-Hsiu to represent all backgrounds commonly found in Taipei and, second, to create a new kind of dramatic irony - a linguistic dramatic irony where only the audiences knows everything that is being said (2000: 274-275).

Furthermore, one documentary-style theatre performance, *Spring Memorial Ceremony* (*Chun Ji*), was related to Hakka concerns among these political theatre performances. This play was directed by Chung Chiao in 1994 and revealed the victims of the 2-28 Incident through report and monologue. The projection of victims’ photographs in the play was used to expose the facts of history. In the performance, the dead spirits of the 2-28 Incident reported the process of how their deaths were investigated. Two Hakka young people, Hsu Ching-Lan and Huang Feng-Kai directly addressed the audience of the play:

Hsu Ching-Lan: I am Hsu Ching-Lan. I was born in Tongluo town, Miaoli County. 8th August, 1952, I died with Huang Feng-Kai at Ma Chang Ting.

In May of last year, it was raining, and my younger brother, A Mei-Lan, finally found my grave. A few days later, A Mei-Lan and a group of comrades came to mow and look for graves that had been sitting on this barren ground for forty years. Finally, they found two hundred corpses who had never been home. (Personal translation. Chen Ying-Zeng, 1995 : 15-16)

The victim, Hsu Ching-Lan, can be identified by his birthplace as a Hakka activist. The play revealed part of Hakka history – the killing of Hakka activists by KMT

nationalists. Although performers did not speak the Hakka language, they performed the history of the Hakka people's political persecution in the 1950s. Scriptwriter Chen Ying-Zeng illustrated the purpose of writing a documentary-theatre script that utilized 'real, ignored, and powerless historical materials to develop a documentary-theatre that criticized the formalism and abstracts of the experimental performances produced in the Little Theatre Movement' (1995 : 70). Hsiao A-Chin has remarked on Chen's writings:

During the Native Literature Movement in the 1970s, Chen Ying-Zeng expressed a strong Chinese nationalism in his pursuit of the social and ethnic thoughts of Taiwanese literature. He has insisted on identifying himself as a Chinese from the Republic of China, so as to establish the history of Taiwan with the field Chinese literature, in which exists a Chinese socialism. (Personal translation. 2005 : 108)

In regard to the above quotation, the play's representation of the 2-28 Incident in Taiwan reflected Chen's intension to restore the 'truth' of history and to develop a performing aesthetic different from that of experimental theatre. However, the Hakka victims in the play just 'coincidentally' appeared or were found. The play concluded, 'Praise the justice of history, which witnessed the horrible crimes of forty years ago. Respect the judgment of history' (Personal translation. Chen Ying-Zeng, 1995 : 64). From my point of view, *Spring Memorial Ceremony* was a modern theatre practitioner's personal way of criticizing imperialists and restoring the justice of history, but it failed to deal profoundly with Hakka victims, as a partial telling of Taiwanese Hakka history, or the Hakka history of political issues in Taiwan.

Political liberalization also helped to bring out many social movements, one of which was the movement of Returning Our Mother Tongue in 1988 established by Hakka people. As Wang Fu-Chang recounts, the Association of Hakka Rights held a parade

under the banner of Returning our Mother Tongue on 28th December, 1988. There were three main purposes for this movement: firstly, to demand the permitting of Hakka broadcasting to the public; secondly, they asked for the establishment of an equal language policy; thirdly, it aimed to amend the constitution which limited the use of dialects. The implication of these requests was to protect the Hakka language and its culture (2003: 136).

This movement impelled Hakka issues into national policy, thereby Hakka language policy became the key point of a political campaign. The movement of Returning Our Mother Tongue encouraged Hakka people and graduates of Drama departments gradually redeveloped their own culture as well as in the Arts. For example, Chiu Chuan-Chuan, who founded Corn Field Experimental Theatre Group¹² in 1991, was a Hakka graduated from the Drama Department of the University of the Arts. Chiu not only founded Corn Field Experimental Theatre Group, but was the first female director who also produced a whole piece play of Hakka Contemporary Theatre. Her production, *A piece of new bamboo* presents how Hakka ancestors emigrated to settle in Hsinchu and also the specific experience of a director searching for her Hakka ethnic roots with other Hakka participants. I will provide an in-depth analysis of Chiu's Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances in the second chapter.

At this period, Hakka Contemporary Theatre took shape with performances that involved major Hakka elements, language, culture, and music in a modern performing style.

¹²Corn Field Experimental Theatre Group was founded in Hsinchu in 1991. It held theatrical workshop and performed *Identity Solo*, *Where will Train Go?*, *Identity Solo II* in 1991; *Which is the most Beautiful River?*, *A piece of new bamboo* in 1992 and won the funding of Promotion of Community Theatre Groups in the same year. Afterward, Corn Field Experimental Theatre Group assisted to establish local history and culture and performed theatres related to local culture, but disbanded in 1995. (Lin Wei-Yu, 2000: 225)

Hakka Contemporary Theatre after the 1990s

In the 1990s, the cultural consciousness of Taiwanese society showed a tendency to re-construct the cultural identity and subjectivity of Taiwan, such that these could be regarded as proceeding from post-modern to post-colonial examination: 'Postcolonial studies have become one of the mainstream discourses applied by intellectuals in Taiwan to various aspects of literature, cultural studies and historical studies since the 1990s' (Wang Wan-Jung, 2006b:21). Taiwanese scholars attempted to re-examine historical and cultural contexts from post-colonial perspectives and to use different kinds of decolonization movements to re-define Taiwanese history. Recently, postcolonial researchers have tended to consider Taiwan as having been colonized by several regimes or colonizers since the early seventeenth century, such as the Dutch (17th century), the Spanish (late 17th century), the Qing (from 1683 to 1895 when the regime ceded Taiwan to Japan after losing the Sino-Japanese war), the Japanese (1895-1945), and until recently the KMT (Nationalist) government (1945-1994) (Melissa J. Brown, 2001; Wang Wan-Jung, 2006a; Yang Che-Ming, 2009). It is worth noticing that most scholars of postcolonial study tend to consider the KMT regime (1945-1994) an internal colonizer of Taiwan:

Nevertheless, given the KMT's authoritarian Leninist-type and oppressive rule over Taiwan by treating the Taiwanese as subjects of a colony for about 50 years, I tend to treat the émigrés from China (the latest and largest group of immigrants in Taiwan's history), namely, the ruling party of Taiwan(1945-1994/2000) – the Kuomintang (KMT, or Nationalist) party-state – as one of colonizers in Taiwan's colonial history (ironically, they came from the same fatherland with most early Taiwanese settlers). The KMT's oppressive rule over Taiwan is a form of *interior colonization* [...]. (Yang Che-Ming, 2009: 50)

Yang criticizes the Chinese influence exerted by the KMT government in Taiwan,

contending that the regime internally colonized the country. He points out that, ‘the KMT has been elaborately practicing Chinese-oriented cultural policies in education, mass media control or censorship of all publications; meanwhile, highly valuing the Chinese traditions and artistic works (labeling them as “national” – e.g. Mandarin as the national language; Peking Opera, as the national opera) while discouraging the development of the nativist literature and attacking those works... and even tried to rewrite and distort the recent history of China’ (2009: 51). If we accept this premise, then the decline of New Theatre in the 1950s could be said to reflect the oppression by hegemonic Chinese culture of local Taiwanese theatre and marginalized Hakka theatre. In ‘The Postcolonial Theatre of Taiwan’, Wang Wan-Jung illustrates why post-colonial theatre studies appeared after the 1990s:

Although Taiwanese culture has been strongly influenced by these colonial powers and its theatre has reflected different strategies of resistance and syncretism to these powers, Taiwanese theatre research was not reviewed and examined in the light of post-colonialism until the 1990s. This is because the political restrictions of Martial Law were only lifted in 1987. (2006b:20)

The consolidated national identity of Chinese in the Republic of China and the orthodoxy of Chinese culture established by the KMT government not only frustrated the ethnic and cultural identity of the Taiwanese, but also resulted in the evasiveness of theatre studies in Taiwan. Until now, only Wang has systematically examined modern theatre performances in Taiwan from a post-colonial perspective and noted, “Postcolonial Taiwanese theatre offers a concrete example of ‘alternative modernity’ in the development of world history and enables us to understand the development of modernism in the non-western world” (2006:142). Within the context of Wang, I propose that Hakka culture has experienced different colonial periods and that modern theatre practitioners have significantly adapted their medium, making it a part of the

Taiwanese culture whose subjectivity it has helped to construct. Therefore, Hakka culture has again lost its subjectivity as it has been appropriated by ‘Taiwanese’ intellectuals, which helps explain the appearance of Hakka Contemporary Theatre in the 1990s. In addition, the marginalization of Hakka culture during Taiwan’s colonial periods also influenced Hakka theatre practitioners, who tended to choose modern theatre performances over Hakka Contemporary Theatre. Peng Ya-Ling, director of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group, is an example. I will offer a detailed analysis in Chapter 3 of how Peng culturally de-colonized Hakka culture in theatre.

The Hakka Movement of the late 1980s inspired the emergence of Hakka consciousness and the preservation of Hakka culture by some Hakka researchers. Theatre could be viewed as a way for Hakka theatre practitioners to transcend the inequality of their positions by re-presenting Hakka history through performance. Jia Li Shian Theatre Group, which founded in 1998 by a group of Hakka, has devoted its efforts to integrating local Hakka culture into theatrical productions. The most important achievement has been to set up Hakka Contemporary Theatre as a performing style. The participants of the theatre group have insisted on using the native Hakka language and modern theatre performing style to perform local stories of Miaoli. They attempted to find local sources and chose the Hakka language in Miaoli for the stage dialogue. In addition, they tend to represent relevant historical figures, publication, and native stories in Miaoli to reconstruct Hakka consciousness in Taiwan (Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005).

Entering the 21st century, globalization has fostered the rapid spread of knowledge and cultural transformation. On stage, Hakka culture, in part due to government cultural strategy, has become a cultural symbol of ‘local’ Taiwanese culture and a response to globalization. In 2001, the Council for Hakka Affairs of the Executive

Yuan (CHA) was founded to bring together the powers of both intellectuals and the government and to perpetuate Hakka culture, language and the arts.¹³ Politically, the establishment of the CHA shows that, 'Hakka people, who make up 15% of the Taiwanese population, are being recognized by governmental systems for the first time' (Shih Cheng-Feng, 2004 : 16). Therefore, more and more modern theatre groups received funds from the CHA and attempted to create Hakka Contemporary Theatre. For instance, the Hakka musical named *My Daughters' Wedding (Fu-Chun Jia Nu)* was founded by the CHA and produced in 2007 by Taipei National University of The Arts. This Hakka musical reflected the CHA's efforts to build and internationalize a 'new' Hakka culture.

My Daughters' Wedding was adapted from *The Taming of the Shrew* by Shakespeare. This Hakka musical used a lot Hakka elements from stage dialogue, dance, and music to stage design, such as Yi-Min Ceremony, traditional Hakka Mountain Songs, blue traditional Hakka blouses, and architectures, in a modern theatre style. It showed that Hakka culture was deemed as valuable material from which to create the 'new' performing aesthetics of musical theatre in Taiwan with commercial potential. However, there is a danger that this style may not be effective for demonstrating Hakka culture because of its over-reliance on Shakespeare's script. Tuan Hsin-Chun, in the essay, 'Shakespeare and the Hakka Musical *My Daughters' Wedding*', regards *My Daughters' Wedding* as a combination of a Broadway musical and Shakespearian script. According to Tuan, the play appropriated the Western musical and classical traditions and successfully transformed traditional Hakka theatre, to form a new

¹³ According to the organic law of the Council for Hakka Affairs, announced by the Executive Yuan in 2001, Article 3 states that the Council for Hakka Affairs is in charge of the following:
a) Planning, coordinating and studying of policies, systems and legal codes of Hakka affairs. b) Preservation and promotion of Hakka cultural heritage. c) Preservation and promotion of Hakka language, ethics, arts and crafts, and religion and etc.... (Website: <http://www.hakka.gov.tw>)

intercultural theatre adaptation (2009 : 160). Yu Shan-Lu, however, criticizes *My Daughters' Wedding* as a production of political policy: 'Hakka cultural symbols are deliberately inserted in the play, and it becomes product placement rather than Hakka cultural demonstration' (2007). In my opinion, this musical may offer Hakka people the chance to speak out on stage, but its content seems to abandon the liveliness of Hakka culture by narrowly adopting western theatrical elements (such as western musical styles) to attract a broader audience. From a post-colonial perspective, the Hakka elements in *My Daughters' Wedding* are a display of culture, rather than of anti-colonial resistance to the 'totalization' of globalization, an issue raised by Robert J.C. Young:

This decentred anti-colonial network, not just a Black Atlantic but a revolutionary Black, Asian and Hispanic globalization, with its own dynamic counter-modernity, was constructed in order to fight global imperialism, demonstrating in the process for own times that 'globalization' does not necessarily involve irresistible totalization. (2001:2)

I argue that performances based in Hakka culture or tradition should not become exploitative. Theatre practitioners who cannot explore the authenticity of Hakka culture without integrating it with western theatrical elements may easily fall into the trap of commercializing Hakka culture as product while losing its subjectivity and colluding with the global cultural industry. As Rustom Bharucha suggests, "To our 'traditional theatre', we must pay respect, not to sentimentalize its 'secrets' or out of false reverence, but to acknowledge that it has already absorbed our future in its presence' (1993:208).

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to offer a landscape of Hakka Contemporary Theatre

following the chronology of modern theatre development in Taiwan. Clearly there was a close relationship between the development of modern theatre and Hakka culture in Taiwan, and that before the 1990s Hakka Contemporary Theatre could not have taken its own shape. Through the review of relative documents, it can be concluded that many theatrical practitioners enthusiastically cultivated and created modern theatre concerned with social issues in contemporary Taiwan. In addition, with great originality, they infused Hakka material and songs in their performances, from the Hakka folk song used in *A Capon* during the 1920s to the adventurous spirit of Hakka dancers in the *Legacy* at the end of 1970s, a Hakka Mountain Song in the *Mundane Orphan* and the image of a Hakka family in *Sons of the Land* in the 1980s. These valuable modern plays involving Hakka elements were pregnant with the Hakka Contemporary Theatre. Since the Corn Field Experimental Theatre Group formed the shape of Hakka Contemporary Theatre in the 1990s, the Jia Li Shian Theatre Group and The Uhan Shii Theatre Group have systematically produced Hakka Contemporary Theatre. After 2000, due to the influence of globalization the whole Taiwan society there has been a return to Hakka language, culture and music as valuable materials to represent local Taiwanese culture. Therefore, Hakka Contemporary Theatre has reached a mature stage and has enriched its multicultural development. On the other hand, the Hakka ethnic group and its culture have experienced Taiwan's different colonial periods and the internal colonisation of the KMT regime. In the realm of theatre, the use of the Hakka language, culture and tradition to establish the Hakka Contemporary Theatre has led to a situation where Hakka culture has been in danger of deforming or misrepresenting Hakka traditions. This is why I have chosen to discuss four female directors' Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances from postcolonial perspectives. By critically examining the interaction between Hakka culture and contemporary theatre, I will draw attention to

the complexity of Hakka ethnic identity and the hybridity of Hakka culture in Chapters 2 and 3, offering multiple strategies for reading post-colonial Asian theatre.

CHAPTER 2

Alternative Versions: Hybrid Culture in Wang Chi-Mei and Chiu Chuan-Chuan's Hakka Contemporary Theatre Performances

Theatre is not a tool, theatre is theatre.

-Wang Chi-Mei, *Mundane Orphan*.

Theatre not only reflects people's lives on stage but is also a powerful representation of culture and society. In terms of Hakka Contemporary Theatre productions created by female directors, the play, *Mundane Orphan*, which was produced by Wang Chi-Mei in 1987 as well as 1992, and two theatrical works, *Sketch of A Piece of New Bamboo (Yi Gen Xin Zhu De Su Miao)* and *The Story about Nei-Wan Lane (Nei Wan Xian De Gu Shi)*, which were produced by Chiu Chuan-Chuan, portrayed different characteristics of cultural hybridity in the 1990s. In this Chapter, I will discuss theories related to hybridity and how it was applied in both directors' theatrical productions. Before the discussion, I attempt to examine issues around the Hakka ethnic group and studies of Hakka culture that will offer diverse perspectives on Hakka Contemporary Theatre.

The Hakka Ethnic group and Diaspora Discourse

Currently, when conducting research into Hakka ethnicity, scholars tend to use diaspora discourse, viewing the Hakka people in Taiwan as a Hakka diaspora. Wang Li-Jung (2007) attempts to justify her view of the Hakka as a diaspora by borrowing William Safran's (1991) definition of 'diaspora'. Safran extended and applied the concept of diaspora to expatriate minority communities and pointed out several

characteristics they shared.¹⁴ Wang regards the Hakka ethnic group as having experienced several major collective migrations, moving first from the central plains of China, and then leaving China as migrants to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other South East Asian countries, while still maintaining a strong nostalgia for their homeland. She concluded that, based on their long history of migration, the Hakkas should rightly be considered a Diaspora (2007:877). However, is the collective migration of the Hakka people to be regarded as a necessary requirement of defining them as a diaspora? According to Virinder S. Kalra and Raminder Kaur, the classical form of diaspora relates to forced movement, exile and a consequent sense of loss derived from an inability to return (2005:10). It is obvious that Wang's conception of diaspora corresponds considerably with this classical definition and views the Hakka people crossing national borders as a diasporic group in the world. This perspective places more emphasis on the migrant process of Hakka ancients but ignores the symbiotic relationship between Hakka people and the island of Taiwan.

More recently, scholars have viewed early Taiwan as a settlement society, which means this society took shape through groups of migrants who came from outside. At the time of the Qing dynasty, Taiwan formed as a settled society owing to the establishment by immigrants who then generally identified themselves as local people (Yang Chang-Cheng, 2007:392). Thus, it is questionable whether the Hakka people, who have settled down in Taiwan and engendered the identity of being 'Taiwanese', still maintain a strong motivation to return or to go back to their 'homelands'. The question also relates to what Kalra and Kaur consider a defining characteristic of

¹⁴ William Safran demonstrated that the 'diaspora community' shared several characteristics: 1) They, or their ancestors have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland- its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by the host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulted from it [...]. For more detailed discussion, please see the essay. (1991:83)

Diaspora in *Diaspora and Hybridity* - an inability to return:

In all of these cases, a defining characteristic is a blockage to 'return' – that there is a difficulty, if not an absolute bar, in returning to the place of migration. Forced exile becomes essential to heightened sense of longing for home and is central to this understanding of diaspora. (2005:10)

During the Qing period, the Hakka immigrants who came from different regions of China experienced interethnic conflicts with the Hokkien immigrants fighting for the natural resources and spaces.¹⁵ As a result, firstly, different ethnic groups gradually defined the space and their place in it as a whole; and secondly, the Hakka ethnic group, who came from different regions initially, finally emerged with an identity as the Hakka. Above all, the Hakka ethnic group who settled in Taiwan in the Qing period was more focused on survival than returning to the homelands.

The nostalgia of Hakka intellectuals became a kind of re-examination of their identity when they were confronted with colonialism and Imperialism during the period of Japanese colonization. When discussing the Hakka movement in Taiwan, Howard J. Martin writes as follows:

Having for decades lived under regimes (Japanese and Nationalist Chinese) whose strategic goals opposed vigorous displays of ethnic insularity, people in the movement are forced to consider alternate interpretations of what it means to be a Hakka in Taiwan. (1996:178)

Such a process of rethinking what it meant to be a Hakka in Taiwan is also displayed in Hakka literature. As Yang suggests, writers depicted the fluidity of identity of Hakka people, 'from imagined homeland to the reality of their situation in Taiwan;

¹⁵ According to Yang Chang-Cheng (2007), the immigrants were mainly distinguished by their place of origin in China. In the official documents, the majority of immigrants in Taiwan came from Zhang, Quan, and Yue areas, and Yue area could be divided into Hui and Chao districts. In this period, integration of groups of people was more complicated: sometimes they would connect through their place of birth; and sometimes the connection would be language.

from diasporic consciousness to a reconstruction of their Taiwanese consciousness and the identity of native lands in Taiwan' (Personal translation. 2007:405). Shih Cheng-Feng takes the Hakka people who lived in the Liu-Dui area as an example to illustrate that they became aware of the need to organize themselves in order to face the Japanese military, and from that moment, realized that "they were no longer the 'guests' on Taiwanese land but had established a fundamental identity" (2008:75).

The term 'Hakka Diaspora' may express another perspective: viewing the Hakka as the centre to establish an imagined transnational Hakka ethnic community and to develop the Hakka culture. Allen Chun suggests that discourses of Chinese diaspora could represent another China centered culture which, through diaspora discourse, inspires a sense of identity for those Chinese living overseas. It makes the transition from a former identification as dialect groups through blood relationship to a new imagined community which has been constructed on the basis of Chinese culture (1999:115-117). In Taiwan, the Hakka diasporic narrative became an inspired way to stimulate Hakka people to reconsider Hakka culture and ethnicity, and at the same time it gave a new coherence to what it meant to be Hakka. Shih, however, casts doubt on the validity of the transnational Hakka ethnic group, questioning whether the Hakka diaspora can be used as a political strategy to claim their collective Hakka identity in a world which uses 'nation' as a primary distinguishing unit. Shih sees identity as relating both to national – an 'upper' level structure - and ethnicity – a 'lower' level structure and, if Hakka people identify themselves as Taiwanese, on the higher level, this does not mean they have to lose their subject identity as Hakka, on the lower or ethnic level (2008:81).

Although we cannot exactly identify the Hakka ethnic group as Hakka diaspora in Taiwan, this definition may become a frame or a limitation. Stuart Hall uses diaspora

discourse to discuss specifically the cultural identity and diaspora experience of black Africans. He defines the term 'Diaspora' as "a conception of the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; a conception of identity which lives with and through hybridity" (1990:235). In terms of diaspora, he does not refer to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return. However, if we regard diaspora as a conception, a process of crossing borders of ethnic groups, then there is room for a discussion of the concept of hybridity, as a uniqueness of Hakka culture in Taiwan, which is represented in Hakka literature and Hakka Contemporary Theatre.

Hybridity in the Hakka culture

According to Robert J. C. Young, the word 'hybrid' was developed from biological and botanical origins, and was defined by Webster in 1828 as 'a mongrel or mule; an animal or plant, produced from the mixture of two species'. Young points out that hybridity have been used as a key issue for cultural debate in the nineteenth, as in the late twentieth century (1995:6). Currently, the conception of hybridity in diaspora discourse has been described as 'a state of culture mixture'. This state has been observed and illustrated by different points of view. Kalra and Kaur see hybridity as a cultural mixture where the diasporized meet the host in the scene of migration: "Hybridity has been a key part of this new modeling, and so it is logically entwined within the co-ordinates of migrant identity and difference, same or not same, host and guest" (2005:70). Understanding hybridity as a cultural mixture, it is easy to be confused by this new modeling but ignore the cultural difference *within* this mixture and the cultural identity that is based on this difference. Bhabha, through a post-colonial perspective, argues that cultural hybridity is a representation of cultural difference and cultural authority:

The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. (1994:2)

Bhabha explains that the hybrid culture is resourced by the power of tradition, 'to be re-inscribed through the condition of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are in the minority' (1994:2). In other words, the hybridity of culture allows cultural difference to appear and be present, and it opens up the 'in-between' space which, according to Bhabha, reveals the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority. What Bhabha always wanted to remind us is of the impurity and the ambivalence of hybridity "that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority-its rules of recognition" (1994:114).

Young suggested that Bhabha, who defined hybridity as 'a problematic of colonial representation', reversed the structures of domination in the colonial situation:

It [the hybridity of colonial discourse] describes a process in which the single voice of colonial authority undermines the operation of colonial power by inscribing and disclosing the trace of the other... (1995:23)

Young further referred to the notion of a new cultural hybridity in contemporary Britain as 'a transmutation of British culture into a compounded, composite mode. The condition of that transformation is held out to be the preservation of a degree of cultural and ethnic difference' (1995:23). This reveals postcolonial researchers' thoughts on the cultural hegemony of British imperialism and suggests the transformation of British culture through hybridity.

The effect of hybridity is ambivalent. However, it is this ambivalence that has implications for a potentially unstable power relationship. Hybrid cultures reflect the

fluidity of power relationships and cultural identity. As Young has pointed out, 'there is no single, correct concept of hybridity: it changes as it repeats, but it also repeats as it changes' (1995:27). In addition, Chen Kuan-Hsing suggests that 'Imperialism has indeed produced hybrid subjectivities, which made impossible a return to an uncontaminated self. And it has further pushed the world structure toward neoliberal globalization, deepening the hybridity of the already hybrid subject' (2010:100). Such changeability and fluidity, which are inherent in hybridity, are the focus of this chapter.

In relation to Hakka culture, the hybridity of this culture not only reflects the experience of the Hakka ethnic group, but also reveals the phenomenon of cultural interaction and the power relationship within colonial history and among the diverse ethnic groups in Taiwan. According to Wang Li-Jung, hybridity exists not only in the ethnic identity of Hakka people, but also within the Hakka culture:

Taiwanese Hakka identity is fluid and complex, reflecting an amalgam of different issues including national identity conflicts, the blurring of ethnic boundaries, and changing political conditions. Their identity remains diverse and multiple. (2007:886)

Wang discusses the multiple identities of Hakka people based on a number of aspects: village of origin in China, kinship and blood relationship, language, Pan-Hakka consciousness and transnational Hakka ethnic community. On the other hand, Wang takes the Hakka literature as an example to illustrate how Hakka culture has gradually become a part of hybrid Taiwanese culture:

The increasing hybridity of the Hakka has also been intentional; occurring as a natural part of Hakkas integrating into hybrid Taiwanese culture. Former Hakka writers displayed hybrid Chinese, Japanese, and Hakka culture in their productions; current Hakka writings have been affected by

Chinese consciousness, native consciousness, modernism, post-modernism and colonialism. The Hakka writers employ their cultural background and consciousness as part of Taiwanese culture. (Personal translation, 2004)

Hybridity in Hakka literature is comprehended as a process of combining the Hakka culture with the other multiple cultures existing in Taiwan; such a hybridity can also be observed in the Hakka Contemporary Theatre. However, when examining the hybridity of the Hakka literature or the Hakka Contemporary Theatre, we need to consider the ways in which such a hybrid Hakka culture has been presented: whether the Hakka ethnic group, facing the strong dominant mainstream culture, has chosen to open its arms to absorb that culture and to give up its 'pure' essence or as Bhabha claims, whether it has been empowered by traditions seeking to represent social difference in the moments of historical change. This will be discussed through examining the notion of hybridity and its representation in the Hakka Contemporary Theatre.

Hybridity in the Hakka Contemporary Theatre

If the Hakka literature displays a cultural mixture, then theatre may offer a broader stage and become the principal location for demonstrating hybrid culture. Wang Wan-Jung has referred to the hybridity of Taiwanese theatre as an integration of colonial history and post-colonial social circumstances in Taiwan: 'Taiwanese theatre history has been strongly influenced by different colonial powers and Taiwanese theatre has developed various traditional and modern forms and contents that resist, counter-balance, fuse and integrate with these colonial powers. Its unique style of hybridity is thus established' (2006b:21). Obviously, Hakka Contemporary Theatre not only transmits Hakka culture through performances to establish the cultural identity of different Hakka generations, but also becomes a part of Taiwanese hybrid

culture. Therefore, in the following section I would like to discuss how the Hakka Contemporary Theatre reflects both external and internal hybridity.

In my introduction I analyzed the connection between Taiwanese modern theatre and the Hakka culture. Following the process and thread of Taiwanese modern theatre, I have attempted to explore how the Hakka elements have been used in modern theatre form. In the process of examination, I argue that elements of the Hakka culture tend to be shaped as a part of Taiwanese hybrid culture from the period of Japanese colonization to political domination by the KMT government. For example, *A Capon (Yan Ji)* which was performed in 1943 combined Hokkien and Japanese languages and restyled music from native Hokkien folk songs and one Hakka tea-picking song. This play, based on a native Taiwanese story and combining Hakka, Hokkien, and Japanese culture, has shown that the Hakka culture was adopted by intellectuals to emphasize Taiwanese national consciousness and to offer resistance against the Emperor Theatre (Huang Min Ju) led by the Japanese.

The play, *Mundane Orphan*, which was produced by Wang Chi-Mei in 1987, is another example. Wang used a number of Taiwanese folk songs, local operas, Hakka and indigenous songs to represent concerns about the local historical and social environment issues. One remarkable characteristic is that Wang chose to use some elements of the Hakka culture to depict multiple Taiwanese cultures. As Liu Ji-Hui points out:

The strong historical consciousness and intentional focus on Taiwanese identity by Wang Chi-Mei have become the core aspects of the 'orphan' theatre productions. She wants to rewrite narratives which have Han-Chinese culture at the center and replace them with narratives based on multiple local voices. Taking *Mundane Orphan*, which was performed in 1992, as an example, the dialogues incorporating a mixture of Mandarin,

Hakka, Hokkien, indigenous languages, English, and Japanese were seen by the audiences as theatrical symbols of Taiwanese hybrid culture. (Personal translation. 2000:74)

Wang's *Mundane Orphan* reflected the attempts of modern theatrical practitioners to reconsider and reconstruct Taiwanese culture through employing certain Hakka elements. The Hakka language and mountain song combined to produce, and stand for, a diverse Taiwanese culture. This hybridity embodied what contemporary Taiwanese artists thought about cultural identity in Taiwan; at the same time it examined issues of cultural hegemony and became a medium for demonstrating cultural identity on stage. I will offer a further discussion in relation to the hybridity of Wang's *Mundane Orphan* in the following section.

On the other hand, the hybridity of ethnic identity has been reflected in Hakka Contemporary Theatre by 'Hakka' theatrical practitioners. In my introduction, I have illustrated that after the movement *Returning Our Mother Tongue* in 1988, the Hakka ethnic group attempted to extricate itself from the image of an invisible ethnic group in Taiwanese society. As a result, Hakka consciousness has continued to develop to the present day. Wang Li-Jung analyzes the changes in the way in which the Hakka people refer to themselves - from 'traditional Hakka' to 'new Hakka' to 'Taiwanese Hakka' –and suggests that by doing so, they have attempted to reconstruct their ethnic identity in order to gain a position in the new national discourse on 'Multicultural Taiwan' (2007:881). Since the 1990s, Hakka theatrical practitioners have consciously created plays which use the language, historical events and the ethnic experience of the Hakka people in Taiwan as their main content. These Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances are resourced by Hakka traditions but are given their shape through a specific performing style which combines traditional Hakka mountain songs and modern performance forms.

The majority of Hakka theatrical practitioners attempt to demonstrate that they have the right to illustrate Hakka history through representations of that history. These performances are characterized by a combination of languages used in the scripts and a hybrid performing style. For instance, Jia Li Shian Theatre Group performed *The Story of Wu Tang-Xin* in 2002 to portray a Hakka historical figure. This play showed how, in 1895, Wu organized a Hakka army to fight against the Japanese and was killed by Japanese soldiers on Ba Gua Mountain. The characters and stage language were a combination of mainly Hakka but also Hokkein and Japanese. Apart from the hybrid language, the music in this play also included modern music, together with Japanese military music and adopted Hakka mountain songs. The hybridity in *The Story of Wu Tang-Xin* demonstrates to audiences the intention of Hakka theatrical practitioners to create an imagined space in which to re-observe the position of the Hakka people in history and to establish collective Hakka ethnic consciousness.

In addition, Chiu Chuan-Chuan, a Hakka female director of Corn Field Experimental Theatre Group, also represented a hybrid Hakka culture in her theatrical productions in the 1990s. Chiu directed a play, *The Story of Neiwan Lane*, which depicted lives of Hakka people who live in a mining Neiwan town. Taking this play as an example, the characters, stage language and songs were a combination of mainly Hakka but also Mandarin and Hokkein which also reflected the hybridity of Hakka culture. The hybridity of Chiu's plays indicated how contemporary Hakka artists, affected by globalization and multiculturalism in Taiwan, attempted to show cultural characteristics of the Hakka. I will further analyze Chiu's two Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances, *Sketch of A Piece of New Bamboo* and *The Story of Neiwan Lane*, to illustrate the meaning of hybridity and hybrid culture in the final section of this chapter.

Mundane Orphan: a Construction of Pan-Taiwanese Identity

In this section, I will analyze Wang Chi-Mei's theatrical productions, the premiere *Mundane Orphan* and the revival *1992 Mundane Orphan II*, in two respects: how a hybrid dramaturgy was employed, and how the symbolic meaning of hybrid culture was embodied in her plays. Based on the discussion of the hybridity of *Mundane Orphan*, I will further analyze how Hakka culture was utilized under this hybrid strategy.

Wang was born in Beijing in China and grew up in Taipei in Taiwan. She graduated from the National Taiwan University in 1968 and finished her MA in Theatre Arts at the University of Oregon. After returning to Taiwan in 1976, she supervised the Deaf Theatre Group and developed theatrical education at universities to promote different kinds of traditional operas and modern theatre arts. In addition, she published several series of Taiwanese contemporary play scripts.

Like the second generation of the Mainlanders, Wang had similar personal characteristic to the artists of middle-generation in the 1980s, Lin Hwai-Min and Lai Sheng-Chuan; their parents were exiled from China through many places to Taiwan around the year 1949. According to local scholar Liu Ji-Hui, these artists on the one hand inherited or were educated in Chinese culture; on the other hand, they received an education overseas in western modern art. Thus, the question of how to integrate traditional Chinese culture and modern civilization had become a contradictory consciousness during the process of creating their performances. Moreover, they have also personally confronted the difficulty of establishing a national identity: during the initial stage of their growth, they undeniably identified themselves as 'Chinese' but when studying abroad, they were called 'Taiwanese' rather than 'Chinese'.

Nevertheless, after returning to Taiwan, when they readjusted themselves as 'Taiwanese', others doubted their ability to communicate fluently in Hokkien or Taiwanese Language. The 'Chinese' and 'Taiwanese' identities have become symbols on the stage for them to rethink cultural identity (2000:65-66).

Wang's early theatrical works expressed her re-thinking in terms of 'Taiwanese' cultural identity. Therefore, she deliberately employed material related to Taiwanese circumstances and strongly portrayed local Taiwanese colour. For example, her earlier plays, *Mundane Orphan* (1987), *Sons of the Land* (1989), and *1992 Mundane Orphan II* (1992), were regarded as maintaining a strong historical consciousness of Taiwanese culture as establishing a collective Taiwanese consciousness and identity. Analysis related to this opinion will be discussed later. More recently, Wang has changed her direction further to portray women's experiences in Taiwan in plays such as *The Bride and Her Double*(2000), *A Year, Three Seasons*(2000), *The Dancer A-Yueh*(2004), and *The Song is Young*(2007). In these plays, she vividly depicts history/her-stories intertwined with spatial experiences, constructing a multiple identity, unique spatial imagination and narrative perspectives (Lu Wei-Ying, 2007:162).

Analysis of Hybridity in *Mundane Orphan*

The play, *Mundane Orphan*, was produced by Wang Chi-Mei and performed by her students in 1987, an important year in Taiwanese history when the thirty-eight year Martial Law was lifted. As I have mentioned in Chapter 1, this political change was impelled by the lack of international diplomatic recognition as well as the movements of opposition groups and it raised the negotiation of national identity in Taiwan. According to Hsiao A-chin, 'The KMT had long relied on its version of Chinese

nationalism to justify its rule on the island, especially the claim that KMT-controlled ROC was the sole legitimate government of all China. It also had the ultimate goal of recovering the lost Mainland, and designated the island as a combat area for the duration of the communist rebellion' (2000:103). This political reform, lifting the Martial Law, illustrated that the legality of the KMT government had collapsed and it was no longer possible for the KMT government to establish a political regime in the lost China; this had been as the political propaganda since the KMT government had moved to Taiwan after 1949. Under such political circumstances, second generation mainlander artists sought to find a proper national identity for Taiwan through their performances.

I suggest that Wang responded to the political change in Taiwan from the 1970s to 1980s through producing *Mundane Orphan*. She showed her mainlander-Taiwanese national identity to a certain extent in the following extract from an interview about the play:

Many mainlanders who grow up here would not stay in Taiwan and always told me it is the problem of identity. Ten years ago, we overseas students had to face the question: which kind of 'Chinese' should we be? At that time, in 1971 Taiwan lost its seat in the United Nations to Communist China. Left behind and feudal, Taiwan was voiceless. It is simple for me: I wanted to come back to Taiwan, the place where I grew up. ... I think our generation of Taiwanese can make our effort. (Personal translation. Yang Xian-Hong, 1989:160)

In *Mundane Orphan*, Wang used hundreds of years of history and documentaries of Taiwan as material to satirize the serious environmental pollution resulting from industrialization as well as modernization, and to represent the writer's concerns about the Taiwanese social environment. This modern piece, which combined Taiwanese history, local Taiwanese music, many languages and folk theatre forms was

an endeavour to break out from the concept of singular national and cultural identity imposed under the 38 years of purely Chinese culture, history and Mandarin education of the KMT government. Therefore, she made an effort to portray the diversity of ethnic culture and languages in Taiwan to shape an art form which could represent the Taiwanese culture.

Hybridity Represented in the Structure

The culture hybridity of *Mundane Orphan* was represented in various aspects. The first and significant aspect related to the narrative structure: the dramaturgical use of a large number of Taiwanese historical documents, Taiwanese literature during the time of war (World War II), Taiwanese local performing forms, native popular or folk songs, and reports of common people's stories as collage. The number of references consulted by Wang exceeded twenty-five texts, including one crucial original preface of the *Comprehensive History of Taiwan*, written by author Lien Heng, and literature by other Taiwanese native writers.¹⁶

The play was composed of twenty-eight episodes. There was no uniform connection between each episode, but rather a mixture of links randomly representing the material mentioned above. The dramatic structure was without a central event and major characters, but was only connected by small pieces related to 'Taiwan'. For example, the first Episode included a Hokkien song, and the second Episode

¹⁶ In the published script of *Mundane Orphan*, Wang Chi-Mei expressed her gratitude in the Acknowledgement to those publishers and writers including the following: Journal of Chinese Ritual, Theatre and Folklore, Society of Renjian Investigative Report, New Environment Magazine, *Writing My Home Series* in the Times News Weekly Magazine, Zhuo-liu Wu's novel *Asia's Orphan*, and Qiao Li's novels *Cold Night I, II, III*. All these sources afforded her various knowledge to produce and direct the play. Other related sources involved were Jiang Wei-Shui's article, *Clinical Handout*, written in the Japanese colonial period; Guo He-Ming's report *Faint Jilong River*; A-sheng's prose, *Sh Dian Yan Jun* and *Travel to Lanyu*; Yang Xian-Hong's prose, *Walking by the Heart-broken Place*; Wu Sheng's poem, *Passing Traveler*; Hu Tai-Li's novel, *Flying Heart*; Li Xian-Zhuo's *Prevent the Recurrence of Indian Bhopal Event*; Li Wen-Ji's report, *Li Tian and Ye Mei-hui*. (Personal Translation.1989, p.7-8)

introduced the traffic and main river distribution throughout the country. Episodes three to six were composed of small pieces showing the popular culture in Taiwan. Episode eight represented part of *A Capon*, a play which drew on local material in Taiwan during the Japanese colonization as mentioned in the Chapter 1. Structurally, using fragmented pieces to compose a picture of Taiwan indicates the difficulty of showing an integrated Taiwanese culture, and represents the hybridity within it.

Hybridity Represented in the Narrative Content

The hybridity was shown in the content of *Mundane Orphan* in three aspects: firstly, the hybridity of historical events related to Taiwan; secondly, the hybrid culture of adaptations of Taiwanese writers; thirdly, the hybrid representation of Taiwanese theatre forms.

1. Using mixture and juxtaposition to display historical events

In the opening scene, the actors recited the content of *Comprehensive History of Taiwan* and reported critical Taiwanese historical events and dates, item by item, following the chronology. This was accompanied by the improvised beating of traditional Chinese instruments. Following to the script of *Mundane Orphan*, the actors read out the year and historical events; for instance, “in 1622 Spain occupied Dan Shui” (located in the north of Taiwan). This involved historical events which happened in Taiwan, then resistance to the Japanese occupation after 1895, and events which happened during the time of World War II (Wang Chi-Mei, 1989:13-23). The Taiwanese history represented in this play was selected and pieced together by Wang mixing Taiwanese, Chinese, and world history, as illustrated below:

Baogui: In 1987, the first elementary school was established in Taipei and

then schools in Taipei opened education for girls.

Zhihan: A Japanese style theatre, Lang Hua Tsuo, also opened.

Wang Qiu Shan: In 1911, James Joyce finished *Ulysses*.

In 1912, Romain Rolland finished *Jean Christophe*.

In 1913, Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Then, in 1915, Albert Einstein published the Theory of Relativity.

[...]

Limei: In 1913, the Luo Fu-Xing event happened. In 1915, the Jiao Ba Nian event happened in Taiwan. (Personal translation. 1989: 20-22)

In this scene, it is not difficult to perceive that Wang deliberately showed audiences a 'pruned' Taiwanese and world history on stage to encourage them to hear it and rethink. This hybrid history not only illustrated that most people who live in Taiwan still know little about the history of Taiwan, but also reflected the situation of Taiwanese culture juxtaposed with world history.

In addition, Wang was impatient to explore and present the history of Taiwan and intentionally chose to utilize the stage as a space to establish a collective Taiwanese historical consciousness. Such significant emphasis on the sense of Taiwanese historical representation was seen by Liu Ji-Hui as overwhelming to the audience:

Audiences unexpectedly watched the actors recite seventy-six historical events. Although this was mostly revised in *1992 Mundane Orphan II*, the actors still reported the chronicle of events in the same way from four to ten scenes. The chronological narratives in this play raised and fulfilled the collective historical consciousness on stage in order to give a definition of Taiwan. ...although these historical events were read by different actors, the 'speaker' on the stage was not the performer, the music, the lights, the space, even the director but history. (Personal translation, 2000: 76-77)

This comment lays particular stress on the criticism of strong historical responsibility in this play, which lessened the artistic quality of the performance. Chiu Kun-Liang also claimed the following about the historic character of *Mundane Orphan*:

Theatre is not history; *Mundane Orphan* is not historical theatre, but theatre can represent the origin of history and what the impact of history would be in the future. In terms of performance, there is no one absolute technique or shape. Whatever the content of the play, whether it evokes fear or sympathy, whether it establishes a connection to the audience or forces the audience to assess the situation, the most important thing is whether it can communicate the conception through the performers. (Personal translation. 1989: 149)

In the opening, Wang highlighted the history of Taiwan through narrating Taiwanese historical events in order to change its role on history from being subsidiary and colonized. Indeed, most spectators were greatly touched by the Taiwanese history presented in this play; even the organizer of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, Lin Huai-Min, felt 'relieved by the change of history' (1989: 168). However, I would like to point out that the hybrid history of the play re-emphasized the historical roots between China and Taiwan and how Taiwan became a place, over which powerful nations in the world fought. The narrative of hybrid Taiwanese history revealed the anxiety for a proper national identity of mainlander artists. The history of Hakka and indigenous people in Taiwan was ignored in the play; the director also did not mention the history of KMT government's after 1945 but replaced it with a celebration of recovering Taiwan, and then recited the content of *Comprehensive History of Taiwan* again. This narrow perspective on 'Taiwanese history' became for the director, a way of recalling the audience's collective identity:

This kind of collective historical consciousness and the recall of ritual identity had an effect similar to collective hypnosis on the stage. Nevertheless, the original attempt to move away from the Chinese narrative and expand it to include various native voices became instead another narrow perspective. (Personal translation. Liu Ji-Hui: 2000:79)

Overall, the compressed history in the opening scene became a process to recall the audience's identity through the narrow view of Taiwanese history which was chosen

by the director. In other words, the representation of hybrid Taiwanese history still indicated the viewpoint and potential power of a mainland artist. Although Wang intended to construct Taiwanese history on the stage, she did not really present a history of the multi-ethnic groups in Taiwan. I would further consider that *Mundane Orphan* revealed the Taiwanization of mainlanders in response to political change in the late 1980s. This might explain why this play was commissioned by the National Theatre for a revival in 1992. However, in the 1992 *Mundane Orphan II*, Wang was aware of the neglect of post-1945 history in the premiere and chose to include a number of Taiwanese family stories. Through depicting family experience from different ethnic groups, she intended to portray history covering the whole period from 1949 until the 1980s in Taiwan.

2. The hybrid culture revealed in adaptations

Another characteristic of the narrative content of *Mundane Orphan* was alternately utilizing adaptations which included Chinese classics, Taiwanese novels, poems, prose and reports. 'Taiwanese' language and literature were officially recognized by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which was set up in 1986 after a series of opposition movements:

The primary ideological guideline of these mass movements was based on Taiwanese nationalism. The major native language, Hoklo (Hokkien), became the dominant language of the mass movements. Hoklo (Hokkien) slang, music, folk songs, and the like, were typically used to heighten participants 'Taiwanese consciousness'. (Hsiao A-Chin, 2000:103)

These opposition movements were promoted by the DPP and legalized by it in 1987 and this resulted in a dramatic 'Taiwanization' of the ruling KMT government, but

also led to the promotion of Taiwanese literature in the late 1980s.¹⁷ These political circumstances may illustrate why Wang used Hokkien language, a range of Hokkien music, and a number of Taiwanese literary adaptations to symbolize Taiwanese consciousness. For example, the tenth scene of the play was adapted from a Chinese classic story telling about the seven apertures in the human head, namely the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and mouth; in this story people died after seven days as a result of digging out one aperture per day. This adaptation was performed between the ninth scene, *River Danshui and River Love (Danshui He Yu Ai He)*, and the eleventh scene, *Faint Jilong River (You You Jilong He)*, which was adapted from a report by the Taiwanese local writer Guo He-Ming. Such a hybrid representation of Chinese classics and Taiwanese reports satirizes the environmental pollution and destruction by industrialization and modernization and expresses Wang's attempt to patch different cultures of Taiwan as a personal dramaturgical style.

Ke Qing-Ming considered that traditional, modern and local elements contribute to cultural identity in the *Mundane Orphan*, especially when the director, Wang Chi-Mei, saw the point of 'culture' as self-examination and criticism. Ke considered that Wang reflected Taiwan's cultural situation in piecing different elements together, but not being able indeed to integrate them as a whole unity. He used the opening scene as an example: the idea of the play came from the YunTi classical academy which was the subject of the Taiwanese writer Wu Zhuo-Liu's novel *Asia's Orphan (Ya Xi Ya De Gu Er)*. In this scene, twelve children read the *Trimetric Classic (Sian Zi Jing)*, which

¹⁷ In February 1987, the Taiwan Pen Association was established and had about 130 members, including poets, fiction writers, essayists, literary critics, artists, and musicians. The Association claims that literature must make a contribution to political, social, and cultural reforms, calling on writers to play the role of "literary opposition". During the late 1980s, the Association issued a series of declarations protesting the KMT government's ban on the return of blacklisted overseas pro-independence activists, the imprisonment of political dissidents, the suppression of mass demonstrations, and the evasion of responsibilities for the massacre in the 2-28 Incident. (Hsiao A-Chin, 2000:106)

represented tradition, and then four performers appeared to recite the native 'Taiwanese' history about exploration and colonization, but followed by a girl wearing a tennis dress, representing 'the Western cultural civilization', and talked about current Western civilized achievement. These three elements are employed alternately to reflect the historical and cultural circumstance of Taiwan (2000:156). According to Ke, the combination of Taiwanese, Chinese and global historical events in the opening scene reflected the difficulty of forming a united cultural and historical identity in Taiwan. However, I argue that the hybrid history presented in the play was only an 'integration' of histories associated with Taiwan, rather than a critical 'representation' of Taiwanese history, which really positions Taiwan as the subject of an energetic hybridity of representation.

In *Mundane Orphan*, Wang attempted to adapt a number of literary works from Taiwanese writers and to construct Taiwanese consciousness through people in literature as well as the social scenery which was portrayed by the writers. Although she viewed Taiwan as narrative subject, we can discover her significant intention to combine native culture with the mainstream conventions of Chinese culture. For example, scene Twelve was adapted from the prose of A-Sheng, a Taiwanese writer, *Travel to Lanyu (Lanyu Xing Jiao)*, and was performed together with another short scene expanded from the popular Hokkien song, *Reluctant Seacoast (Xi Bie De Hai An)*. In this scene, the stage was divided into two, with two parts offering alternate performances; on the left stage the play was started by a female singer performing *Reluctant Seacoast*, and then presented a short act involving a conversation about environmental issues between an undergraduate girl and two ships carpenters in a local karaoke bar, which was a clear reflection of Taiwanese local color. Meanwhile, the right stage presented an adaptation of *Travel to Lanyu*, which showed a tourist

who visited the island of Lanyu, was contemptuous of the indigenous people and caused a dispute with the young indigenous inhabitants. As a result, the tourist was reprimanded by a primary school teacher from Lanyu.

The hybridity was not only apparent in the content of the performance, but was also reflected significantly in the dialogue. Both the undergraduate girl and the teacher who represented the mainstream Chinese culture in Taiwan spoke Mandarin, and opposed to the singer, ships' carpenters and visitor who sang as well as spoke the local Hokkien language, which represented the local Taiwanese culture. The hybrid dialogue and content in the twelfth scene suggest the unequal power relationship existing in the culture. The girl student, who studied in Taipei city, with a high educational background, and the primary school teacher, with a high level of intellect, symbolized the mainstream Chinese culture. By contrast, the singer, ships' carpenters and the visitor who lack appropriate moral as well as social behaviour are symbolized as local culture. I consider that, in the way the scene plays out, hybridity and integration still operate with the existing power structure. The director intended to break the boundary between the central and marginal cultures through using a hybrid approach to represent the cultures and to illustrate the 'goodwill' between the two. However, a potential power relationship still existed among the characters in this scene: the primary school teacher, who symbolized the power of the dominant culture, again represented a person of integrity who at the end of the scene reprimanded the visitor in fluent Mandarin and won the right to speak for the indigenous people.

Together with the narrative of power structure, the end of this scene reflected Wang's Mainlander-Taiwanese identity. For instance, the undergraduate girl, A-Ying, on the left stage spoke Hokkien language at the end:

Ming-Tai: You people who come from Taipei, can you sing this song (spoken in Mandarin)?

A-Ying: I like this song, very honest. Hey, do not forget although I stay in Taipei, I am also a 'Chu Wai Ren' (spoken in Hokkien language). (Personal translation. 1989:66)

In this dialogue, Taipei was the capital city located in the north part of Taiwan and also the central city of mainstream political and Chinese culture. The character, A-Ying, who came from Taipei, connoted the high intellectual standard of the dominant city; however, she showed her understanding of local/Taiwanese culture through speaking the Hokkien language and intended to express the similarity of her situation to 'Chu Wai Ren'. 'Chu Wai Ren', a term used only by Hokkien people, meant people who traveled or stayed in a place far away from their hometown. 'Chu Wai Ren' in this scene became a term which emphasized the social resonance to include the simple but rather vague notion of ethnic identity. The characters showed the same capacity as 'Chu Wai Ren' to establish an imaginary reunification for audiences. Thus, I consider that the director intended to reverse the over-strong trend of the dominating Chinese culture through using hybrid dialogue to show an understanding of local or subordinate culture. This also revealed that her mainlander-identity, which she really wanted to emphasize, was we understand the 'others' on the island.

Similarly, the twenty-third scene of the play was adapted from a Taiwanese poet Wu Sheng's poem, *Passing Traveler (Guo Ke)*, which is another example to show how hybrid culture was embodied and opened an imaginary reunification of the Taiwanese culture. In this scene, the performer was asked to play a 'knight' which represented a strong western traditional culture. While using movements of the knight (an application of western culture), the performer recited modern poetry written in

Mandarin accompanied with the piano concerto which was composed by the Taiwanese composer, Ma Shui-Long, to indicate a strong identity of the island of Taiwan:

The colonial period was over quite a long time ago.
In a dreamy, illusory fog, batch after batch of passing travelers
Unexpectedly forgot, this is our own land.....
And you are intoxicated, and forgot you are the youth of the island.
When you left far away for study in a foreign country, after wandering
many years, came back to the island.
It is my pleasure to welcome you back
And you even forgot this is our own land. (Personal translation.
1989:103-104)

This scene was mixed with westernized movements as well as music and modern poetry written in Mandarin; however, the music was conducted by a Taiwanese composer and the dramatic content satirized the unconcerned attitude of young generation in order to encourage the audience's concern for island of Taiwan. Narrative content involved hybrid material from western and mainstream Chinese culture to express a strong Mainlander-Taiwanese identity. Through representation of hybrid culture, Wang opened an imagined space for spectators and constructed a possible consciousness of and identity for Taiwan. On the other hand, this hybridity of the play also indicated the ambiguous articulation of power and difficulty of analyzing the power relationship. As Bhabha points out:

...the hybrid strategy or discourse opens up a space of negotiation where power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal. Such negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration. (1996:58)

The hybridity of *Mundane Orphan* might act in cooperation with the political strategy of 'Taiwanization' of the KMT mainlanders. This might explain why Wang Chi-Mei

attributed to integrate multi-ethnic culture in the dominant Chinese culture: Wang presented a hybrid performing style to create a utopia of multi-ethnic cultural integration on the stage and this indicated her formulation of her personal identity as mainlander-Taiwanese. In relation to diaspora discourse, Wang conveyed the transformation of national identity, from an exile to a settler. As a second generation mainlander artist, the hybrid culture of narrative content became the expression and construction of mainlander-Taiwanese cultural identity.

3. The integration of hybrid forms of theatre

Another characteristic of hybridity in *Mundane Orphan* is the presentation of hybrid theatrical forms. The hybridity involved in these different theatrical genres can be discussed in two ways. First, structurally, Wang Chi-Mei collected and mixed different theatrical forms which were used as narrative content, bringing them together created a 'Taiwanese' theatre. In *Mundane Orphan* performed in 1987, in the eighth scene, Wang chose to represent the play, *A Capon*, performed during the Japanese colonial time; she also put on a puppet performance during the intermission, and included, in the seventeenth scene, a performance of Taiwanese Che Gu. Again, Wang used a mixed theatrical form which showed her implication that 'Taiwanese' theatre itself was defined by its 'mixture'.

On the other hand, the 1992 *Mundane Orphan II*, which was commissioned by the National Theatre in 1992 included again *A Capon* in the tenth scene, forming a link with the history of Taiwan from the Japanese colonial period, and the puppet performance, but deleted the Taiwanese Che Gu performance so as to include a performance indicating the popular Taiwanese opera (*Ge Zai Xi*), performed in Hokkien dialogue. Both visions of *Mundane Orphan* are mainly based on modern

theatre forms, and brought together different kinds of theatrical forms representing local Taiwanese culture, such as puppet theatre, Taiwanese opera, and Taiwanese Che Gu performance. As a whole, the director intended to use a hybrid theatrical form to break out from the singular western modern theatre form.

Ke Qing-Ming pointed out that Wang's expression of theatrical hybridity in *Mundane Orphan* contributed to the re-establishment of traditional Chinese cultural identity:

The dialogue of the play was spoken in Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, and English and employed all kinds of popular songs, folk songs, folk theatre arts and genres which can represent 'native' social voices and cultural inheritance. This was intentional to show a recurrence of our Bai Xi and Za Ju¹⁸ tradition on the 'modern' stage to re-establish the focus on cultural tradition. (Personal translation. 2000: 158)

However, I argue that the hybrid theatrical forms used in the play were not narrowly focused the reconstruction of Chinese cultural traditions, but rather on showing the integrated multicultural forms of Taiwan culture through learning and displaying different kinds of theatre on stage. This cultural identity is premised on an understanding of the cultures of different ethnic groups in Taiwan, just as Wang identified her cultural identity in the following interview extract:

I am not willing to admit that I am from Anhui (a province in China); in other words, I do not regard myself as of the Anhui people; I am a Taiwanese. On the other hand, these are labels and distinguish you: you are the Mainlander. I was born in Beijing and grew up in Taiwan; for me, the identity I have from latter decades is more important than my birthplace. The cultural connection of my birthplace is not strong, whereas the identity of the place I grew up is much stronger. (Personal translation. 27th, August, 2008)

Although Wang identified herself culturally as Taiwanese and saw the 'Mainlander' as

¹⁸ Za Ju (Variety plays) is a kind of traditional Chinese opera appeared in Yuan Dynasty in China.

a classification of ethnicity, she still chose a settler perspective to construct a place-bound Taiwanese national identity through employing hybrid theatrical forms. This selective utilization identified her as a member of the second generation of Mainlander artists.

In the second aspect, the hybrid culture of *A Capon*, the play within a play, in the *Mundane Orphan* indicated the flow of cultural identity. In the eighth scene, the director showed some partial content of *A Capon* here; ¹⁹ performers were both the teller and character of *A Capon*. They briefly introduced the background and ideas of *A Capon*, and then performed part of the play. It is worth pointing out that, before the play within the play ended, Wang represented the black-out accident which really happened during the premiere in 1943, when the audience raised their torches to give lighting to performers on stage so the play could finish. The actors in *A Capon* of *Mundane Orphan* performed both as the audiences members who raised torches and as the characters together; they comforted and encouraged each other with lines, 'Try again, it is alright, trying again' to finish the play within the play. (1989:44)

Further exploring the meaning of *A Capon* represented in the *Mundane Orphan*, it becomes clear that Wang intentionally chose to express the phenomenon of how Taiwanese people during Japanese colonization valued their own music and culture, and recalled the audiences' 'Pan'-Taiwanese cultural identity. In the premiere of *A Capon* in 1943, Japanese language was used for the dialogue but recomposed music from Taiwanese Hokkein and Hakka folk songs was used to reflect people's independent spirit and cultural identity. This illustrates the strategy of Taiwanese

¹⁹ I have discussed the play, *A Capon*, performed in the year 1943 in Chapter 1. One of the most crucial achievements of this play was implying the use of Taiwanese folk songs performed by the orchestra to present a strong Taiwanese consciousness and spirit of revolt against the Emperor Theatre (Huang Min Ju) led by the Japanese.

artists at that time confronted with Japanese colonialism. However, *A Capon* as represented in the *Mundane Orphan* mainly used Mandarin to explain the theatrical background, and introduced the Hokkien language in dialogues between the characters. In addition, the black-out scene further stimulated the audience's collective Taiwanese consciousness. The content of *A Capon* indicated that Wang still had a Mainlander-Taiwanese narrative perspective: a number of Mandarin narratives highlighted her standpoint as a Mainlander intellectual, who displayed her knowledge of theatrical events during the Japanese colonization of Taiwan, and who attempted a re-imagination of Taiwanese culture.

In 1992 *Mundane Orphan II*, Wang added puppet performance, including a small amount of Japanese language, before *A Capon* as a play within a play, as a hybrid dialogue strategy to break away from the singular theatre language of Mandarin. Wei Shu-Mei discussed the hybridity of stage dialogues in her dissertation, *Unpacking Identities: Performing Diasporic Space in Contemporary Taiwanese Theatre* as follows:

Episode Ten delineated the manner in which traditional folk theatres, such as the puppet theatre, coped with the cultural oppression as the Japanese prohibited the performances of folk theatres. For example, one puppet master who began a performance in Taiwanese immediately switched to Japanese once the Japanese policemen were in sight. This episode illustrated a Taiwanese identity was cohered by the common experience of colonial oppression. (2003:163)

Such hybrid dialogues, mixing Mandarin, Hokkien, Japanese languages, shown by the puppets performing the plot of the traditional Chinese novel, *Three Kingdoms*, not only reflected the common Taiwanese experience of colonial oppression as Wei claimed, but elided the potential Chineseness within Taiwanese culture, in which the

Chineseness became an unquestioned part of Taiwanese culture. Through representing Taiwanese folk puppet theatre and *A Capon* during the Japanese period, the director significantly emphasized how colonial Taiwanese people used native Taiwanese theatre as a way to resist Japanese oppression, to establish an imagined re-unification of 'Taiwanese' cultural identity.

Hakka culture contained in the Hybrid Strategy

The only Hakka element used in *Mundane Orphan* performed in 1987 was one Hakka mountain song, which can be heard from the back of the stage filled with mountains of trash. It was sung antiphonally in the fourteenth scene, connected to the thirteenth scene, *Diagnosis of Taiwan*, in which a drunk, who fell amongst all this trash, delivered a diagnosis of Taiwan. In the fourteenth scene, audiences could only see a messy, dirty stage and hear the Hakka mountain song antiphonally sung behind curtains:

Yi-gang: boy (ah) has a mind; girl has a heart (ah);
- An Iron ruler (la) could be ground (ah) down to a darning needle (ya).
Gang-hui: boy (ah) is like a needle (ah), girl is like a thread (ya);
Needle takes (lai) three steps (ya), thread comes to find it (ya). (Personal translation. Wang Chi-Mei, 1993:71)

It is significant that Wang formed an alienated space through employing traditional Hakka music. The inclusion of the Hakka mountain song here became a part of the hybrid strategy and advanced the creation of a singular re-imagination of Taiwanese culture. The same song was rearranged in the 1992 *Mundane Orphan II* to end the second scene which portrayed children who read the *Trimetric Classic* in YunTi classical academy. It was noticeable that actors recited Chinese *Trimetric Classic* in the Hokkien language and then changed to the Hakka language; performed by a

Hakka father, daughter and grandmother ended with the Hakka mountain songs. Both the Hokkien and Hakka language symbolized Taiwanese culture but the *Trimetric Classic* symbolized Chinese cultural roots. It is questionable whether Wang intentionally uses stage language as a way to subvert Chinese cultural hegemony or to deepen the orthodoxy of Chinese culture in Taiwan.

Kalra and Kaur used Hall's discussion of the term 'hybridization', which was used to describe the confluence of black style and the market in Britain, to question the function of hybridization, which was seen by Hall as 'the racial and ethnic pluralisation of British culture and social life':

The question that should be put here has to do not with the evaluation of this diversity, but with the ways its advent leads either to new possibilities in a diasporized polity or, as seems just as likely, to the increasing incorporation of mobile-phoned youth into the 'host' society, the culture industry, and more generally into a hybridized mode of capitalism. (2005:82)

In reference to Kalra and Kaur's query, modes of hybridization may be used to serve the cultural industry of capitalism; similarly, in *1992 Mundane Orphan II*, the hybrid ceremonial chorus of the Taiwanese indigenous groups Atayal, Tsou and Puyuma was combined with traditional Chinese poems but were recited in Hokkien and Hakka. Although this hybridization may open up the audience's imagination of what Taiwanese culture might include, it may remain a rather narrow, flat interpretation. The play's homogenous cultural integration may have served as an example of the assimilation of Taiwanese culture.

In addition, some new Hakka elements were addressed in the *1992 Mundane Orphan II*. In the eleventh scene of the play, actors either performed or narrated alternately

their personal family stories under the subject of ‘Recovering Taiwan in 1945’ to link the different culture backgrounds of families. Among numerous family stories of Hokkien and Mainlander people, the director also showed family stories of one Atayal grandmother and two Hakka families. These Hakka family stories included, firstly, the experience of a mainlander who lived in a Hakka village, and, secondly, the childhood memory related to life in Hakka village during the period of Recovering Taiwan. Both stories were narrated in Mandarin and the second one added a Hakka nursery rhyme in the Hakka language.

Among these family stories, the first Hakka story related to the childhood experience of one actor’s father. The actor briefly referred to the experience of his father who came from mainland China and settled in a small town, Zhudong, a place where most Hakka people live:

Shu-Mei: He mentioned his first night living in Zhudong. He listened to the sound of the river and the siren of a ship, and regarded the Touqian River as a sea. Children around the town named my father ‘Chang Shan Zai’ (spoke in Hakka), they stopped calling him this after my father learned Hakka and made many Hakkanese friends. [...] Whenever he talked about the Touqian River, his eyes would shine at the memory of his enjoyable childhood. (Personal translation. Wang Chi-Mei, 1993: 82-83)

The short story told by the actor reflected the diasporic experience of the mainlanders in Taiwan and the cultural interchange which happened among Hakka ethnic group and others. Wang converted the status of Hakka culture from a marginal to a main subject, and through doing so, she emphasized her idea that ‘ethnic integration’ (Zu Qun Rong He) should be accomplished through learning from each other:

We learned cultures from each other’s families. My personal idea in terms of ethnic integration is this: ethnic integration does not function without identity. Each person has strong characteristics but these need to be learned.

In the *1992 Mundane Orphan II*, I hoped to further depict Hakka families, the image of a Hakka grandmother (washing clothes in a wooden bucket). As for my own progress, I want to go deep into each family's culture and songs. (Personal translation. 27th, Aug, 2008)

However, I question why Taiwan's different ethnic groups need to be integrated. I propose that the hybrid culture in *1992 Mundane Orphan II* has become a narrative strategy for presenting 'Taiwanese' culture, indicating Wang's intention to integrate different ethnic groups into a big 'Taiwanese' category. Therefore, the idea of ethnic integration is again seen as reflective the Taiwanization of mainland intellectuals. The subjectivity of each ethnic group (including the Hokkien, Hakka and aboriginal people) has been blurred into a Taiwanese identity by pan-Taiwanese consciousness.

The play, which was produced by Wang and her students, showed another small piece related to the life story of a Hakka family. Through narrating the story, the performer intended to highlight the specificity of traditional Hakka culture:

En-Ya: My parents live in Shanlin, a town which can be seen as a Hakka village. Both my grandfather and mother are good at telling stories and reading Hakka nursery rhymes to us (spoken in Mandarin). My brother's favorite is 'Brown sky, brown ground, there is a cry boy in my home (spoken in Hakka)'. (Personal translation. 1993: 87)

The hybridity of the extracts above, mixing Mandarin and with Hakka, not only depicted the partial experience and memory of life in Hakka villages in Taiwan, but implied the fluid relationship between the dominant Chinese culture and Hakka culture. As Wei Shu-Mei points out, 'The juxtaposition of the places that accommodated the ethnic minorities —like the Hakka and the aborigines— though it highlighted the image of a melting pot, nevertheless also illustrated cultural differences which fractured the homogeneity of the totalizing space of nature, home

and nation' (2003:169). In *1992 Mundane Orphan II*, the juxtaposition of these two Hakka family stories and other Hokkien family stories formed the shape of Taiwanese culture through displaying the cultural difference of families from different ethnic groups.

In conclusion, the hybrid Taiwanese culture which was shown and constructed in *Mundane Orphan* is a narrow pan-Taiwanese identity. As Hall points out, 'Cultural Identity, in the second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past....Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found... Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past' (1990: 225).

The way that the director, Wang Chi-Mei, narrated history as well as family stories of Taiwan and collected cultures, music, theatrical forms of the Hakka, Hokkien, and indigenous people and Chinese classics, illustrates her position of Taiwanese mainlander. As a second generation Mainlander artist, Wang consciously attempted to homogenise the cultures of multi-ethnic groups to break out of the long term one-race Chinese culture on stage. However, the presentation of partial culture seems to create a collage of Taiwanese culture rather than showing in depth the subjectivity of each ethnic group. The hybridity of the narrative content of *Mundane Orphan* illustrates that Wang still stands in a powerful position in that she is able to choose which elements are represented as Taiwanese from the various cultures. The partial Hakka culture in the play became a part of pan-Taiwanese culture, which Wang tried to construct but did not fully succeed, because, as Bhabha points out, 'The discourse of minorities, spoken for and against in the multicultural wars, proposes a social subject constituted through cultural hybridization, the over-determination of communal or

group differences, the articulation of baffling likeness and banal divergence' (1996: 54).

Hybridity in Chiu Chuan-Chuan's Hakka Contemporary Theatre Performances

After the lifting of Martial Law in 1987, political liberalization resulted in the rise of oppositional political movements and airing of issues related to the national identity of Taiwan. According to Wang Li-Jung, the local cultural movements of the 1970s and the aboriginal movements of the 1980s stimulated Hakkas to reflect on their loss of culture, tradition and language over the previous forty years, and to become involved in the ongoing process of democratization and localization and establish a proper role for themselves in Taiwan (2007:880). In 1987, some young Hakka intellectuals established the magazine *The Hakka Storm (Ke Jia Feng Yun)* and began to fight for their rights. The social movement named Returning our Mother Tongue in 1988 was initiated by the Hakka people, placed Hakka issues within national policy. Howard J. Martin points out that 'the Taiwan Hakka movement is broadly similar to ethnic movements in other countries. It is about issues connected to ideas of the self as a member of a group different from others in society' (1996:179). Martin draws the following conclusion about the Taiwan Hakka movements: 'it is not unified; no centre of authority or symbolic significance exists. The structure of the movements reflects the national debate, and a fundamental question dividing Hakka from Hakka is over the fate of Taiwan' (1996:195). This explains that the way Hakka people identified themselves ethnically in order to face the political and social transformation of Taiwan in the 1990s is a crucial issue within the Hakka movement.

The Hakka movement in terms of political strategy was fighting for the legal guarantees to protect Hakka interests. In another aspect, the Hakka movement has

brought out the ethnic identity issue which became the first question that Hakka people had to answer in the 1990s. Yang Chang-Cheng regards the KMT government's one-race and high-handed policy as colonial assimilation. Based on this point of view, Yang further analyzes how the KMT government's dominant Chinese policy affected Hakka people's ethnic identity and the fluidity of this identity in the late 1980s:

In the colonial assimilation after the World War II, many Hakka received the ethnic discourse deriving from the central plains of China and defined themselves as 'legitimate Chinese'; therefore, the Hakka connected firmly to the colonialism of KMT's nationalism. However, the democracy in the late 1980s challenged the KMT's national imagination and caused the shock and anxiety about Hakka identity. A new national imagination focused on 'nativism' ... Hakka people had not only to demonstrate the specificity of their language and culture, but also to further answer the correct political question of the localization of ethnic history. (Personal translation. 2007:405-406)

This illustrates that the Hakka ethnic identity, which was raised by the Hakka movement, transformed from a conventional singular Chinese identity to an ethnic multi-identity, based on the democracy and localization of Taiwan, which includes Hakka-Hokkien, Hokkien-Hakka, Taiwanese-Hakka, Hakka-Taiwanese, and Mainlander-Hakka identities until nowadays.

Under such political and social circumstances, a relevant contribution to the identity was made by Chiu Chuan-Chuan, who was a Hakka graduated from the Drama Department of the University of the Arts in 1988. After graduation, she served as assistant director of modern theatre groups and was the artistic director of many plays and films in Taipei. This led to her decision to contribute what she learned to her hometown and to return to Hsinchu. As a theatre practitioner, she hoped her theatrical

profession could narrow the gap relating to cultural resources as well as artistic development between Taipei city and other cities like Hsinchu at that time (Chiu, 1995:3). In 1991, Chiu founded the first modern theatre group, Corn Field Experimental Theatre Group, in Hsinchu. She initially attempted to produce a whole play of Hakka Contemporary Theatre in 1992, *Sketch of a Piece of New Bamboo*(*Yi Gen Xin Zhu De Su Miao*), portraying a story about the development and transformation of Hsinchu based on the immigration of Hakka people who settled and lived there for around 300 years.

After being awarded the three year grant ‘Community Theatre Activities Promotional Project’, offered by the Council for Cultural Planning and Development of the Executive Yuan, Chiu received two million Taiwanese dollars per year and produced the play, *The Story of Neiwan Lane* (*Nei Wan Xian De Gu Shi*), in 1994 (Chiu Chuan-Chuan, 1992:115). The play depicted a mountain town, Neiwan, in which Hakka people formed the majority of the population, and told a story related to the development of the mining industry, and the establishment of the railway in the 1950s. I will discuss these two Hakka contemporary performances in the following section, firstly, to explore the characteristic of hybrid culture; secondly, to analyze how this hybrid performance space can bring together the spectators’ Hakka ethnic consciousness through the power of representing Hakka culture and history.

Sketch of a Piece of New Bamboo: the Imagination of Pan-Hakka Identity

Chiu was motivated to create her first Hakka Contemporary Theatre play by the Hakka ethnic debates involved in the Taiwanese Hakka movement and her own personal working experience. She narrated the experience of working in China in 1990 when she was asked by the local Chinese whether she had visited her hometown

because they thought she was a mainlander who had been forced into exile to Taiwan after 1949. When she identified herself as a Hakka, descendent from the migrants to Taiwan around three hundred years before, again, they asked her questions about her family pedigree. These questions became the main motivation to explore her Hakka family immigrant history, as she writes: ‘Suddenly, (these questions) made me anxious, like suffering from amnesia, lost memory of history. I only know the Taiwanese history after 1949; before this year, I just know it was ruled by Japan for fifty years’ (Personal translation. Chiu Chuan-Chuan, 1995:34).

The political social atmosphere in the 1990s and personal working experience stimulated Chiu’s Hakka ethnic identity; therefore, she consciously started to collect documents related to the Hakka culture and history and directed *Sketch of A Piece of New Bamboo* in 1992:

The greater number of Hakka residents than Hokkien residents is a feature of the ethnic composition among the Taoyuan, Hsinchu, Miaoli areas. I am a Hakka; when I first had contact with some Hakka literature, it initiated my interest to collect the Hakka written works. These works included some nursery rhymes, poems for children, and Hakka folk custom books; among these, the book, *An Elegy of Sea Crossing to Taiwan (Du Tai Bei Ge)*, is most touching to me. This book written in Hakka contains a long historical poem, which depicted the situation of our ancestors who crossed the sea to Taiwan. Based on these documents, I wrote the play *Sketch of a Piece of New Bamboo*. (Personal translation.1995:33-34)

This play, as an example of modern theatre, told the Hakka family history in Hsinchu, through portraying family stories and reflecting the history of Taiwan. Female director Chiu saw her ‘Hakka identity’ as an advantage in creating the performance; thus, she chose to combine her Hakka family history with modern theatrical form as a creative strategy. As Chiu claims in the following interview extract, ‘I adopted familiar

materials to produce works which could develop an emotional connection to this place. It was easier for me to use my Hakka culture background and tell my family story as a starting point. Using modern theatre forms was the only thing I knew at that time; I did not know about traditional Hakka Theatre or other theatrical performing styles. By using contemporary language to perform plays, I hoped that I could bring people into theatre' (Personal translation.4th August, 2008).

Sketch of A Piece of New Bamboo portrayed an old Hakka painter who explained the stories behind his paintings to his grandson in a garret painting room. Through explaining the stories involved in the paintings, the director illustrated pictures of original inhabitants who settled in Hsinchu, historical conflicts among the Hakka, Hokkien, and aboriginal people, and the love story between a Hakka boy and a Japanese girl during the Japanese colonial period, and the memory of 'recovering Taiwan' in 1945. This play combined Hakka, Hokkien and Taiwanese aborigines' conventions and cultures, and Japanese culture to reflect the cultural hybridity of the Hsinchu city. The autobiographical experience of the Hakka grandfather became the partial history of Taiwan. Performing the past experience of the Hakka grandfather reflected the hybridity of Taiwanese ethnicity, language and culture. Based on the script, *Sketch of a Piece of New Bamboo*, and photographs which were offered by Chiu, I will further analyze how this play formed the space of hybrid culture and how this cultural hybridity displayed on stage constructed a pan-Hakka ethnic imagination and identity.

The opening of hybrid cultural space through objects

In the play, *Sketch of a Piece of New Bamboo*, a Hakka grandfather and his grandson are the main characters; through their discussion of the grandfather's paintings on the

wall the director shifted time and space on the stage to portray historical events which Hakka people have experienced in Taiwan. Structurally, the play included several scenes; these plots were connected by the main scene which happened in the garret painting room. The paintings which were hung on the wall stimulated the Hakka grandfather's memory and opened an imagined space where actors performed Hakka family stories (see Figure 1).



The objects, paintings, portraits and painted

doors, which were preset on the stage, became critical in the play. In the first scene of the play,

Figure 1 The Garret Painting Room in the First Scene in *Sketch of a Piece of New Bamboo*, 1992.
Source: Chiu Chuan-Chuan

paintings as stage objects, which were not only hung on the back stage wall, as preset objects, but also brought into the presentational space, can be touched and sensed by the actors as a material presence. McAuley analyzed the function of objects in the performance space as follows:

...the object is used intensively in rehearsal and in performance to bring together words, bodies, and space, to place words meaningfully within place, and make manifest the interpersonal relations in force in a given physical space. (2000:186)

These preset paintings were not only objects to be discussed by the Hakka grandfather and his grandson, but also an important medium which evoked the Hakka grandfather's memory related to the immigration of Hakka ancestors to Taiwan.

The painting of a boat crossing the sea is the crucial object which connects the actor's movements, words and space in the play. When the Hakka grandfather looked at this painting and recited the partial content of the poem, *An Elegy of Sea Crossing to*

Taiwan,²⁰ actors on the left stage presented a version of the Hakka ancestors' cultivation in the Hsinchu area. In this scene, the painting on the wall was a real object; however, its content- the Hakka grandfather's memory of immigration- opened another non-real historical space. This abstract space appeared on the left stage and ended with the end of the poem. McAuley analyzes the reality and non-reality of the stage object thus:

The object is able to function in this way because it is both real and, subject to the theatre's law of denegation, not real...it is a mere sign, able to be transformed into something else through the intervention of actor.
(2000:179)

This illustrates that the reality of stage objects can be manipulated by the actor's intervention in performance; meanwhile it is unreal because of the denegation of theatre (which means performance itself is not real). I propose that the actor's intervention in the painting in this scene transformed the meaning of the painting (from an object to a medium for recalling memories) and enabled the director to create a parallel imaginary space a hybrid cultural space that reflected the ethnic hybridity of Taiwan.

In the play, the Hakka grandfather wiped his mother's portrait and told a story about her: when she suffered aggression from the indigenous people who were hunting for people's heads, when she worked in the tea-tree fields with her father. At that time, her father was killed and she was injured by falling on a piece of sharp bamboo,

²⁰ *An Elegy of Sea Crossing to Taiwan (Du Tai Bei Ge)* is a long historical poem written in Hakka and composed of sentences of seven words. The content of this poem tells of the difficult and risky processes when Hakka people crossed the sea to Taiwan during the Qing dynasty. For example, it describes the seasickness of these migrants when they slept on the boat. The journey on the boat to Taiwan took them three days. It also depicts the hard times of these Hakka pioneers of Taiwan, for example, using hands and feet to plough fields and kneeling down on the ground from morning to sunset. The purpose of the poem is to advise people not to come to Taiwan without careful thought. (Script of *Sketch of a Piece of New Bamboo*, 1992)

which left a scar on her face. According to the stage instruction of the script, the door painted with a picture of ethnic groups fighting was opened by the actress, who performed the part of the Hakka grandfather's mother, after the grandfather completed his story (See Figure 2):

Grandfather cleaned the portrait and put it back on the wall; simultaneously, a door on which was painted a picture of ethnic conflicts was slowly opened. Behind the door, a young grandmother stood there, her face was bleeding.... A dead Atayal indigenous man was carried on stage by Hakka residents. (Personal translation. Chiu Chuan-Chuan, 1992)



Figure 2 The Hakka Grandmother in Sketch of a Piece of New Bamboo, 1992. Source: Chiu Chuan-Chuan

The door here is a preset real object; however, it transferred to the medium, which created another space by the movement of the actress who performed Hakka grandfather's mother. In this imagined and historical space, it represented a hybrid culture involving Hakka, Hokkien, and indigenous people's language and customs in Taiwan. This hybrid cultural space contained the Hakka people's tea-picking daily life, the indigenous people's head hunting custom, and ethnic conflicts arising from language,

Hokkien people: Fuck! You stopped our water. Do you want to kill us?
(Spoken in Hokkien)

Hakka people: We do not understand what you are talking about! Come and fight if you are not convinced (Spoken in Hakka).

Hokkien people: Do not talk too much! Let's fight! (Spoken in Hokkien)
(A Hokkien rushed out and then two ethnic groups fought together. The stage was a mess; the young grandmother joined the fighting. Red light faded in.). (Personal translation. Chiu Chuan-Chuan, 1992)

Two spaces existed on stage: the right one was a painting room in the 1980s, the left one was the space which showed heterogeneous culture during the Qing period. The

fictional space reflected the hybridity of ethnic groups, language, and culture around 300 years ago. Furthermore, Chiu depicted another specific hybrid cultural space where Hakka culture and Japanese culture were juxtaposed during the Japanese colonial period. This hybrid cultural space appeared when the door which was painted with a Japanese girl's portrait was opened (see Figure 3),

Hakka grandfather: Right! When I knew her, Taiwan was ruled by Japan for around thirty years. I was educated under Japanese, had a Japanese name and spoke Japanese....This Japanese girl was my Japanese teacher's daughter.

... (The Japanese girl portrait door was opened and a Japanese girl walked in). (Personal translation. Chiu Chuan-Chuan, 1992)



Figure 3 The Japanese Girl in *Sketch of a Piece of New Bamboo*, 1992.

Source: Chiu Chuan-Chuan

Chiu used the second door to open another hybrid cultural space, in which she showed a love story in Hsinchu in the Japanese colonial period. The romance which happened between the young Hakka grandfather and the Japanese girl was performed in both Japanese and Hakka languages to form a hybrid stage language of the play. The use of the hybrid stage language reflected, firstly, the class consciousness of colonialism, according to which it was forbidden for Hakka people to marry Japanese people. This Hakka-Japanese love was ended by class consciousness, when the Japanese girl married a Japanese man and went back to Japan. Secondly, it narrated the fight of the Taiwanese against the Japanese during the colonial period.

Chiu intentionally portrayed through two painted doors how Hakka people experienced different colonial periods of Taiwan and created two hybrid cultural spaces. In the play, paintings and portrait doors had specific meanings, as McAuley said:

The object has become an important means whereby theatre artists can go beyond the visual, extend the auditory beyond the spoken word, and engage the spectator in a bodily experience. (2000:177)

These two imagined spaces became the location for Chiu to display this heterogeneous culture and formed a hybrid Hakka cultural space which audiences could sense and experience. The hybridity of this space positioned Hakka culture as subject (by portraying the history of a Hakka family) and combined cultural elements (such as those of the aboriginal people's culture and the culture of Japanese colonizer). I argue that the director wanted to present the audience with this hybrid Hakka culture of Taiwanese history to establish for the audience a pan-Hakka consciousness. This concept was referred to by Wang Li-Jung as follows,

Local culture movements in Taiwan have given Hakkas an awareness of the need for their own distinctive culture. Despite the existence of numerous Hakka dialects and culture differences between Hakka villages, acceptance of a common Hakka identity is gaining strength. (2007:886)

This common Hakka identity is similar to the concept of pan-Hakka consciousness of Taiwan. According to Wang Fu-Chang, the Taiwanese pan-Hakka consciousness appeared after the Hakka movements in the 1980s and combined the imagination and identity of Hakka ethnic groups. This Hakka ethnic imagination was developed by the descendents of Hakka immigrants three hundred years ago, in response to their specific historical experiences in Taiwan from the Chinese occupation in the Qing period, Japanese colonization, the KMT regime, up to contemporary society (2003:121-122). Although this pan-Hakka consciousness may ignore the internal cultural and linguistic difference within the Hakka ethnic group (Hakka people in Taiwan were immigrants from different areas of China and spoke Hakka in different accents), the similar living experience in Taiwan made the pan-Hakka consciousness

an important factor to form a united Hakka identity. Through the construction of Hakka pan-consciousness, Hakka people were able to fight against the dominant Chinese cultural policy of the KMT government and opposed to the Hokkien people who defined the Hokkien language as Taiwanese. The *Sketch of A Piece of New Bamboo* was an example to illustrate how a theatre practitioner intended to use a hybrid narrative strategy to construct a representation of pan-Hakka identity for an audience; firstly, to rethink the internal ethnic and cultural differences within Taiwan, and secondly, to embody the specificity of Hakka culture. Afterwards, Chiu tried to make this pan-Hakka identity a cross-border practice and expanded to Hakka towns around Hsinchu, and she directed the second play of Hakka Contemporary Theatre, *The Story of Neiwan Lane*.

The Story of Neiwan Lane: the Hybridity of Hakka Culture under Localization

The Story of Neiwan Lane used a small mountain town, Neiwan, which was rich in mineral resources as the main site to describe how the Neiwan railway was completed and became an important means of transport between Hsinchu and Neiwan. The play comprised six scenes: each scene showed the Yimin belief²¹ and native culture of the

²¹ Yimin belief has been formed and developed as a specific belief of the Hakka ethnic group in Taiwan. According to the documents, the term 'Yimin' which now means righteous people, was derived from the event of Zhu Yi-Gui which happened in 1721 in the Qing dynasty. Zhu Yi-Gui was a Hokkien person who launched a revolt against the Qing government. Zhu cooperated with a Hakka leader, Du Jun-Ying, at the beginning of the revolt; however, when both of them occupied the south capital city, they clashed about leadership and benefits. As a result, most Hakka people who lived in the Kaohsiung and Pingtung area chose to form a united military organization and assist the Qing government to suppress the revolt. Therefore, these people who helped the Qing government and died in the revolt were referred to the Qing government as 'Yimin'. The issue related to the Zhu Yi-Gui event raised by scholars was, firstly, the people who joined the suppression were not all Hakka, yet the Yimin belief has become the important characteristic of Hakka culture and religion. Wu Mi-Cha points out that because Hakka people lacked the legal right to settle in the Pingtung plain, they had to strengthen their relationship with the Qing government by developing this special Yimin belief. In addition, many Yimin temples were built in different areas of Taiwan during that period; however, the ZhongYi pavilion, which was built on the Pingtung plain, only allocated the imperial edict of the Qing emperor to display the legitimism of cultural symbolization but did not commemorate the Hakka people who died in that event. On the other hand, Yimin temples located in the north Hakka areas of Taiwan gradually developed a folk religion which included statues and memorial ceremonies. Wang Fu-Chang regards the Yimin belief as a crucial Hakka cultural element in which can be seen the specific historical

Hakka people together with the rise and decline of the mining industry during the 1950s to 1980s in Neiwan. Structurally, the play followed a modern theatrical form with a storyteller and chorus who symbolized the western culture, to introduce the development and industrialization of the town, and combined this with Hakka traditions and native elements.

The director, Chiu Chuan-Chuan, showed audiences in the first scene that, because of the rich mineral resources and train transportation, many Mainlander miners arrived in Neiwan. This contrasted with the final scene, in which the town declined owing to the depletion of mineral resources. It is worth pointing out that Chiu portrayed the Yimin belief ceremony, which was held in Neiwan in the years 1960 and 1989, as the opening scene and the ending scene to highlight the local culture of Neiwan. Chiu wrote as follows: “Taiwan has lost its ‘own’ features today. If we seek to look for the local characteristics or individual specifics, we would realize what we originally owned. Memories which were lost should be searched for hard and be preserved to offer to our descendants” (Personal translation. Chiu Chuan-Chuan, 1995:44).

In her aim to express the local features, the director re-arranged all the data collected from her field research. She described this as the follows: “there are few Hokkien people working in Neiwan mountain area. Except for the indigenous people, Mainlanders and elderly homeless people, only Hakka people would work in the mountains. Therefore, Neiwan became a Hakka village. It was difficult to make a living in mountain areas, most of the miners were native Hakka people or homeless Mainlanders. This is the true situation” (Personal translation. 4th August 2008). The second and fifth scenes revealed a more unusual situation, with a Mainlander family

experience of Hakka people who immigrated to Taiwan three hundred years ago. (Wang Fu-Chang:2003 ; Wu Mi-Cha: 2006)

settled in the mining area and their interactions with other local Hakka people. This mixed living situation of Hakka people and Mainlanders constructed the hybridity of language and culture presented in this play. In addition, a very strong characteristic of localization was also presented because of the mining factory in Neiwan, as a local town of Taiwan. In the following paragraphs, I would like to focus on the discussion of the hybrid Hakka cultural scenes and further analyze the meaning of the hybridity in this play.

Hybrid narrative strategies of the play

Veronica Kelly examined the concept of hybridity of the play, *The Currency Lass*, as an example of Colonial Australian Theatre in the eighteenth century:

[The Currency Lass's] treatment of hybrid identities, and its complex attempts to simultaneously commandeer and disavow the ascription of the 'native', make instructive reading in the light of the importance given to concepts of hybridity within postcolonial theorizing, and propose a model of settler-country 'hybridity' stripped of some of the teleological and salvational values often accrued to this term in postcolonial theatre historiography. (1999:41)

According to Kelly, "hybridity itself is, however, heterogeneous and historically dependent, and in settler theatre it performs ideological functions simultaneously regressive and progressive. [...] For settler cultures, hybridity comes, in every sense, with the territory" (1999:43). Kelly mentioned a number of characteristics of hybridity in the colonial theatre; however, in terms of post-colonial hybridity, I have discussed the social and political colonialism which was constructed under traditional Chinese discourses (which means narrowly regarding all Taiwanese as a single Chinese ethnic group) by the KMT government after 1949 in Taiwan. Therefore, the political and cultural movements launched by Hokkien, Hakka, and aboriginal people

in the 1980s and 1990s can be seen as de-colonial movements. As Kelly suggests that hybridity definitely exists in every scene of colonial theatre, I would propose that hybridity is also involved in the scenes of Hakka Contemporary Theatre, as a form of cultural de-colonization, to show the identity of Hakka culture in postcolonial Taiwanese theatre.

The localization of Taiwan, which can be seen as an effect of the globalization and which is represented in the hybridity of *The Story of Neiwan Lane*, offered a model of Hakka cultural identity. Chen Kuan-Hsing has characterized globalization as ‘capital-driven forces which seek to penetrate and colonize all spaces on the earth with unchecked freedom, and that in so doing have eroded national frontiers and integrated previously unconnected zones’ (2010:4). I agree with Chen’s further contention that in the process of globalization, ‘unequal power relations become intensified and imperialism expresses itself in a new form’ (2010:4). To theatrical practitioners in Taiwan, modern performance styles have produced new forms of cultural capitalism. When Hakka theatrical practitioners tried to portray Hakka culture, they came to employ modern theatrical forms as a narrative strategy. The hybridity of Hakka culture in *The Story of Neiwan Lane* reflected the influence of multiple colonizations on Taiwanese Hakka theatre. Its hybrid performance form inevitably combined with western modern elements (as a neo-colonisation), which are the consequence of global cultural capitalism; thus, the play formed a hybrid identity of western modern civilization, traditional Hakka culture, and the dominant Chinese language (as a result of internal-colonization of the KMT regime).

To use the opening scene as an example, the director chose to represent the Hakka Yimin ceremony through adapting a western theatre form: using a storyteller and a chorus performing the roles of Hakka believers; some of them held bamboo poles

with different colored lanterns, some of them carried huge pigs as sacrificial offerings; some of them held incense and narrated sacrificial rites (see Figure 4) (1995: 53-55). This opening scene illustrates that the hybridity of the play is a form of cultural mixture. Chiu combined the dominant Chinese language and western theatrical style to embody traditional Hakka culture. Chen discussed the conflict of de-colonial nativist movements in *Towards De-Imperialization: Asia as Method*:



Figure 4 The Opening Scene in *The Story of Neiwan Lane*, 1995. Source: Chiu Chuan-Chuan

Nativist self-rediscovery movements were called upon to replace cultural imaginations deeply contaminated by colonialism with authentic tradition and a pure self. [...] The irreducible difficulty is that the colonial imagination has always been part of the native activist's body, thought, and desire. (2010: 84-85)

The above quotation does not view Hakka female director Chiu as a nativist or emphasize the authenticity or pureness of Hakka culture, in order to make the play *The Story of Neiwan Lane* the embodiment of an anti-globalization movement. However, my concern is that Chiu depicted the specifics of Hakka culture by representing the Hakka Yimin ceremony, in a move that could be considered as an act of self-rediscovery. The hybrid identity of the play, however, proved Chen's point that colonial imagination has always been part of colonized people's thoughts and desires. This may explain why, even though the director wanted to represent Hakka traditional culture in this play, she still was not able to avoid choosing western civilization, as a more-'advanced' practice, to interpret Hakka traditions.

On the other hand, through a localizing strategy, Chiu employed the culture, which belonged to local Hakka people in Neiwan, and was meaningful to her Hakka

identification. In this play, hybridity became a dynamic metaphor but was not easy to recognize. In the third scene, the special conditions in Neiwan were portrayed showing a Hakka tea-house which offered local miners entertainments at night. Tea-house girls stood in front of the tea-house to canvass business, the hybrid stage language was involved in the dialogues of tea-house girls' flirtation to the miner, Lao-Sun:

Boss: Lao-Sun, if you do not come, our Chun-Hua cannot sleep tonight (spoken in Mandarin)

Chun-Hua: Hey, he pretends he is somebody. I am helping him to save face and don't want Lao-Zhang take advantage of him (spoken in Hokkien). I hate to see Lao-Zhang has a girlfriend, A-Ju, and became so cocky, just like other people cannot find a wife (spoken in Hakka).

Tea-house girls: She is telling you marry her quickly! (Spoken in Mandarin)

Chun-Hua: I don't want to (spoken in Mandarin)! He is a person who owned no farms and no house, but has a whole black body. If I marry him and have his baby, my baby will grow up like a black-white cat. I would rather stay in tea-house with our boss, drinking tea and singing all day... (Spoken in Hakka). (Personal translation. Chiu Chuan-Chuan, 1995:73)

Mandarin lines function to help the audience to understand the content, while Hakka lines emphasized the character of roles. The hybrid dialogues reflect the contradiction that Chiu encountered when Hakka elements were embodied in the play: Hakka language, which was regarded as a dialect of minority in Taiwan, is not easily understood by the audience, in a society where Mandarin functioned as the official, powerful language. Chiu comprehended this social condition:

My intension in theatre is stereo-presentation rather than in plane. I do not agree the language would become obstruction. Therefore, I do not stop using Hakka language because the audience might not understand it. I must truly show this circumstance, society, which is a multilingual place. These dialogues could be heard in our everyday life. (Personal translation. 4th August 2008)

Hakka dialogues which ‘could be heard’ did not mean it ‘could be understood’; therefore, actors in the play inevitably spoke key lines in Mandarin in order to explain the plot to the audiences. The hybrid stage language here showed that even though Chiu tried to represent the subjectivity of Hakka culture through localization, this cultural identity still inevitably had to be constructed within the dominant systems. This contradiction also explains why the storyteller in the play only spoke Chinese to explain the plots, the ending of the third scene was a combination of a Hakka folk song, *Peach Blooms Ferry Crossing (Tao Hua Guo Du)*, and a Mandarin monologue of storyteller:

(Lao-Sun and Chun-Hua sing the song together in the hubbub.)

Peach flowers are in bloom, Chrysanthemums are yellow; the boy misses the girl in mind. (Lyric in Hakka)

Firstly, loving girl like galericulata pillows; secondly, missing girl and where the ivory bed is? (Lyric in Hakka)

Storyteller:Death is a huge pressure in their life here. Whoever cannot make sure of it sings happily tonight, and comes back safely tomorrow. Every time miners go out of mines and see the sky again, it is as if they are reborn again (spoken in Mandarin). (Personal translation. Chiu Chuan-Chuan, 1995:80)

The extract illustrates the hybridity of *The Story of Neiwan Lane* which recalled spectators’ Hakka cultural identity which was still constructed in the mainstream, dominant Mandarin language and social systems. Hakka culture in the play can be seen as a partial culture which was displayed through Taiwanese localization to resist the dominant social systems and Chinese cultural hegemony formed by the KMT government. Bhabha used the concept of hybridity in post-colonial theory to emphasize how the hybrid subject displayed the power of ‘partial culture’: ‘Hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialectic that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty. They deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct

visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy; the outside of inside: the part in whole' (1996: 58). The depiction of life-threatening local living situations (such as those of the Tea-house girls and Hakka miners) made Neiwan, a local Taiwanese town, appear to suffer from the industrialization that accompanies global capitalism and also indirectly criticized the exploitation of local Hakka labourers. Hakka culture, as part of the hybrid culture of Neiwan, was portrayed as occupying a minority position but possessing critical energy.

Through the Hakka folk song discussed above or Hakka nursery rhymes which will be discussed later, employed to represent Hakka culture as a local partial culture of hybrid Taiwanese culture in the play, the director showed her intention to collect spectators' Hakka consciousness. In the fourth scene, the director introduced the chorus performing the roles of Hakka children; they recited Hakka nursery rhymes during the playing of a marriage game and helped the mainlander miner, Lao-Sun, to marry the Hakka dancer, A-Ju (see Figure 5):



*Figure 5 A Hakka Wedding Scene in The Story of Neiwan Lane, 1995.
Source: Chiu Chuan-Chuan*

Shining moonlights, girl boils tea; boy places stools, customers drink tea...
In the age seventeen, eighteen, girl should get marry, where will she marry to? To the back of farms, grow fragrant-flowered garlic and flowers of fragrant-flowered garlic would connect both families. (Spoken in Hakka)
(Personal translation. Chiu Chuan-Chuan, 1995: 82)

The content of the Hakka nursery rhyme above not only explained the cultural relationship between Hakka people and tea-cultivating life, but also showed the relationship between male and female in Hakka ethnic groups. Furthermore, the

pronunciation of 'fragrant-flowered garlic' was homonymic to the word 'long' in Hakka to symbolize the wish for long marriage. The combination of a Hakka children game and a mainlander-Hakka marriage through Hakka nursery rhyme reflected the subjective position of Hakka culture during the cultural interaction process of Taiwan.

Hakka culture was a part of hybrid culture in *The Story of Neiwan Lane*, during the process of combination with western civilization and dominant Mandarin language; the hybridity of the play implied that the Hakka culture itself was impure and dependent on the mainstream cultural systems. However, I still want to emphasize the subjectivity and positivity during the process when Chiu attempted to represent Hakka culture in the play. When Bhabha discussed cultures of a postcolonial contra-modernity, he pointed out that cultural hybridity was deployed to 'translate' the borderline conditions and re-inscribe the social imaginary of both metropolis and modernity. He further explained such borderline work of culture creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation (1994:6-7). I agree with the perspective of viewing cultural hybridity as a way to translate the borderline conditions. The hybridity of the play indeed reflected the local specificity of Neiwan through localization, and attempted to gain a narrative place for marginal Hakka culture through combining it with modernity, but most importantly, Chiu attempted to find a narrative way for Hakka culture and constructed Hakka consciousness through the hybrid identity to break out of the colonial assimilation of the KMT government. In addition, I argue that the hybridity of the *The Story of Neiwan Lane* did not form a pan-Hakka consciousness but focused, instead, on the localness of Hakka culture by adopting a localizing strategy that deepened the audience's awareness of the Hakka cultural identity of Neiwan. This hybrid cultural identity viewed Hakka culture as subject to the expression of local characteristics. A review of the performance reflects

this. Entitled ‘*The Story of Neiwan Lane*, Zhudong residents have deep feeling’, the reviewer noted:

After *The Story of Neiwan Lane* was performed yesterday, many people went to see it; especially the elders who grew up with the railway and shared the same feeling about the content of the play. (Liu Rui-Qi, 1994)

In the 1990s, the hybrid strategy of Chiu’s two plays, whether through the hybrid space opened in the *Sketch of A Piece of New Bamboo* or hybrid culture involved in *The Story of Neiwan Lane*, opened a path for her to construct the spectators’ identification with Hakka culture. The former fostered a pan-Hakka consciousness by creating a hybrid space that discursively included Hakka people from different areas of China and Taiwan, and represented these as a generalized Hakka ethnic group, creating continuity in the history of Hakka migration and colonization. Yet, it ignored internal differences of this generalized group (for example, the different Hakka accents spoken by Hakka peoples in Taiwan) and constructed a collective Hakka ethnic consciousness and cultural identity. The latter emphasized the hybridity of Hakka culture in the town of Neiwan, positioning Hakka culture as a subject and thereby showing the interaction between it and other cultures in local Taiwan and subverting the totalization of globalization.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I first utilized the concept of hybridity, from a post-colonial perspective, to illustrate how Hakka culture in Taiwan experienced different colonial periods and was affected by the enforced assimilation of colonization (especially assimilation to Japanese culture and, separately, to Chinese culture under the KMT regime). This discussion revealed how Hakka culture responded to colonial and

post-colonial social circumstances in Taiwan. The hybridity of Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances differed from the hybridity of global diaspora, which was defined by Hall as a recognition of heterogeneity; but a minority culture fought against cultural hegemony in Taiwan. Wang's *Mundane Orphan*, in the 1980s included a variety of Taiwanese cultural elements (Hokkien, Hakka and aboriginal), so as to subvert the singular Chinese cultural identity formed during the internal colonization of the KMT regime. However, Hakka culture, in the play, was a partial culture of hybrid Taiwanese culture, serving to construct a pan-Taiwanese identity and lost its cultural subjectivity. In the 1990s, Hakka female director Chiu produced *Sketch of a piece of new bamboo*, which combined her family's immigrant and colonial experiences, to form a collective Hakka consciousness but ignored the inner differences of Hakka culture. However, her second Hakka Contemporary Theatre performance, *The Story of Neiwan Lane*, used a localizing strategy to highlight the hybridity of Hakka culture, criticizing not only the oppression of global capitalism but constructing the subjectivity of Hakka culture in Neiwan. Both female directors' performances reflected the interaction between Hakka culture and modern Taiwanese theatre after the lifting of Martial Law in 1987. They came from a part of Taiwanese culture that was seeking for the subjectivity of Hakka culture in contemporary theatre.

CHAPTER 3

Representation of Hakka Women from a Post-colonial Feminist Perspective

Section 1: Toward Postcolonial Feminism and Theatre of Taiwan

The term 'Feminism' has its various categories and complicated meanings, and, more recently, European and Western feminism has been disputed theoretically and practically by feminist scholars. In this chapter, my focus is not related to the development and critiques of feminism in Taiwan, but rather I would like to draw attention to the discourses and concepts which are related to third world women and post-colonialism theories as an important foundation for what follows in this chapter. Firstly, I will briefly refer to the development of feminism in Taiwan and discuss the achievements and influence of applying feminism through a post-colonial perspective. Secondly, I will examine feminist theatre and relevant productions of female directors in Taiwan and question certain problems of their feminist praxis. In the third part, I attempt to discuss the application of postcolonial feminism in the theatre of Taiwan and this will also relate to two female directors of Hakka Contemporary Theatre who are the focus of my research.

Development of Feminism in Taiwan

In 1987, the lifting of Martial Law had a crucial influence on Taiwanese society: the political environment became more liberal and the people were given more freedom to express their ideologies. In the 1980s, scholars and researchers were able to introduce and translate theories of Western Feminism to Taiwan. The 'Awakening Journal' was founded in 1982 by a group of academics; this journal issued a monthly

newsletter and was considered the most important periodical in the field of women's liberation and the feminist movement. The term Feminism began to appear in articles and newsletters in 1986; examples were the Feminism Literature Column of Chung-Wai Literary Journal, the Feminism Study Column of the Con-Temporary Magazine, and the Female and Literature Study Column of the Unitas Magazine (Chiu Chen-Wan, 2006:129).

'Feminism', the most important aim of which was to liberate women from oppression over different period of times, is a 'translated' term for Taiwanese society. Through the process of translation, the Taiwanese feminists chose to comprehend feminism as efforts to end the subordinate position of women in society and can be seen as an active approach to deconstruct the unequal positions in the traditional patriarchal cultures. For example, the book *Feminism and Classification (Nu Xing Zhu Yi Li Lun Yu Liu Pai)*, written by Ku Yen-Ling and other scholars regarded theories of feminism as: 'Firstly, the description of the unequal phenomenon in gender relationships; secondly, using women's perspectives to explain reasons for the phenomenon; thirdly, exploring solutions; and fourthly, inquiring into how to eliminate women's subordinate roles and establish equality between the two sexes' (1996: viii). Through the introduction and discussion of feminism in Taiwanese society, these feminists tend to apply feminism to practical activities; for example, the Awakening Journal changed to the Awakening Foundation to promote women's movements in Taiwan. In the 1990s, the number of women's movements expanded significantly and feminism study groups were established in many universities. Women's groups actively launched social movements to raise female issues within politics and attempted to effect national policies and laws in Taiwan (Ku Yen-Ling, 2001: 22).

Female social activists led the women's movements in Taiwan to raise women's

consciousness in the public domain. These social feminists were not only participating in public demonstrations, but were also engaged in policy reform projects through holding women's rights and liberation activities. Women's movements in Taiwan involved participation of female politicians and legislative activists. Apart from raising issues of gender inequality to social policy, women groups and social feminists were actively promoting gender equality into the law. During the 1990s, many sexism regulations were abrogated due to the Awakening Foundation, Women's Alliance and other related women's groups devoted to expedite Family Law revision by the legislative Yuan in Taiwan.

As mentioned above, the trend of feminism in the 1990s became a social and political strategy to utilize theories of western feminism: on the one hand, to subvert women's unequal status in Taiwan; on the other hand, to raise women's consciousness and power. Feminism was widely applied in all academic fields including literature, law, politics, art, history, music and education. In 'Feminism and Female Fictions'(Nu Xing Zhu Yi Yu Nu Xing Xiao Shuo), Ho Chuen-Juei (1994) observed the historical and social factors of the emerging debates of feminism literature. She analyzed the social transition before and after the 1980s: firstly, the KMT government faced public questioning of the legality of its management after the lifting of Martial Law and as a result, more men took the political opportunities to enter the political arena; at the same time, during the process of rapid industrial and commercial development, more opportunities became available to enter the financial field and many men took advantage of these. The result was many male intellectuals withdrew from the field of literature. Ho further analyzed the social situation of men withdrawing from the literature field as follows:

During the period of cold war and anti-communism in the 1930s, the

ambitious young men could only devote themselves to the literature field. Thus, the Chinese-Western literature debate in the 1960s and the modern poetry debate in the 1970s as well as the native literature debate later were full of political intentions. Among these debates, the issue of the male position in the public field was the main concern. In the late 1970s, Taiwan experienced a financial petroleum crisis and lost American support politically. The new generation made political statements through magazines; many young men abandoned literature to write political comments and to intervene in society in a more direct way. (Personal translation. 1994:7-8)

Ho's discussion illustrates the historical and social factors of the formation of female fiction in Taiwan and outlines the cultural and social context of feminism in Taiwan. Secondly, the society afforded women vacancies to work during the process of modernization; furthermore, many female cultural workers and female readers were created by the culture industry in the 1980s. Thirdly, feminist critics became the crucial intermediaries between fictions and feminism; through their analysis, most productions were presented as 'female':

These critiques from female perspectives appeared in the mid 1980s, followed by the returning female students who had been educated in the literature critiques of western feminism. Their professional status as well as structured academic analysis had a considerable effect on the local Taiwanese academic circle, and created a professional field of feminist critique in universities. (Personal translation. Ho Chuen-Juei, 1994:9)

I argue that the academic feminists and female socialists, who were educated in western feminism, translated theories of feminism to Taiwan which formed an important phenomenon: the purposive and strategic application of feminism to rationalize local Taiwanese academic study or to promote political policies. However, Taiwanese feminists may have been limited by the ideology of western feminism and, therefore, may have ignored women's multiple colonized circumstances in Taiwan.

The majority of Taiwanese women, as women in a developing country, experienced the Japanese colonization (1895-1945), the high-handed internal-colonization by the KMT regime (1949-1994), and even the neo-colonization of global transnational companies. Ho also pointed out the limitation of using feminism as a literary critical strategy by Taiwanese feminists:

When critics search for feminist elements in fictions, they may be limited to the vision or ideology of the moment and become formulaically focused on certain images or living circumstances of these women, such as traditional women's sadness, independent women's marriage difficulties, and career women's dilemma etc, using a simple binary categorisation to easily define these female fictions as either advanced, corresponding to the spirit of feminism, or conventional, still bound by the burden of traditions. (Personal translation. Ho Chuen-Juei, 1994:10)

Ho further pointed out that, although the critics deliberately link the ideology of western feminism with literature, this exposed the limitations and the oppression of the patriarchal system, but, at the same time, this may again repeat the predomination of patriarchy. Moreover, the singular analytic strategy which stressed moving from the (mainstream) traditional women's position toward the (mainstream) first-world women's position may lack the understanding of Taiwan's social structure and class differences.

Ho's analysis supports my point of view: in one aspect, feminist critics indeed challenged the stereotypes of women under patriarchy in Taiwan, but the formulaic application of feminism may consolidate those relevant systems which support patriarchy, such as the production model and working morality of capitalism, and the restriction on the types of female work in the cultural industry. In addition, the over-emphasis on the modern women's position of first-world countries may have resulted in the internal oppression of Taiwanese women in general (in that women

with a modern independent consciousness may be seen as better than the average or traditional woman).

Similarly, the above mentioned conditions also existed in the women's movements after the year 1987, when female socialists employed concepts of western feminism (such as, gender equality, anti-patriarchal oppression and the objectification of women) to promote social as well as political revolution and fight for women's equal status in the public and private field. They may continue today to apply western feminism mechanically to achieve their aims. For instance, the movement 'Rescuing Adolescent Prostitutes' was one of the most important social movements led by Taiwanese feminists during the period. In 1987, women's groups and many other social organizations began agitating to force the government to crack down on child trafficking. Feminists of the Women's Alliance in Taiwan sought to protect young girls from being sold into prostitution by pushing for a law against the traffic in sex. This movement involved protesting with a march on Huaxi Street, and 'sit-ins' and holding a conference. In response, the National Police Administration set up a project called "Correcting Vice" and subsequently rescued 842 girls from trafficking, most of whom had been indentured by their parents. According to Gu, 'It was first women's street protest in Taiwan and demanded women's rights through publicly stating that women should not be seen as subordinate objects in the traditional patriarchal society' (2001: 25). Here, Gu re-emphasized that the reason why the movement 'Rescuing Adolescent Prostitutes' succeeded was because women publically accused men of treating women as objects; this may again have strengthened the ideology of western feminism.

In 1995, the 'Rescuing Adolescent Prostitutes' movement expanded to include a series of activities - 'Chrysanthemum Action' - held by The Garden of Hope Foundation to

lobby the legislators into enacting The Child and Teenage Sex Trade Prevention Law and also to press the government for law enforcement. The *Chrysanthemum Action* combined environmental assemblage, dance, game, street demonstration, and camp-in. In addition, the theatrical event of *Chrysanthemum Action*, produced by Xiao Wuo-Ting combined a two-week-long environmental theatre, ritual, public forum, and games. In *Remapping Memories and Public Space: Taiwan's Theatre of Action in the Opposition Movement and Social Movements from 1986 to 1997*(1998), Chang I-Chu analyzed how the women's movement, *Chrysanthemum Action*, cooperated with a dancer, Xiao Wuo-Ting, to raise the attention of the mass media and the government through environmental theatre to speed up the enforcement of The Child and Teenage Sex Trade Prevention Law.²² According to Chang, the content of the performance, *Chrysanthemum Night Watch*, was 'a group of female dancers sitting on red chairs in a line, repeatedly licking cotton candy to present the teen's being trapped into becoming material girls. They then mechanically stuffed Chinese buns into their own wide-open mouths and repeatedly chewed the buns to exhaustion, implying the teen prostitutes' overwork as sex machines, receiving forty patrons a day' (1998: 242). In addition to illustrating the content of Xiao Wuo-Ting's environmental theatre, Chang also applied theories of European feminists, such as some of the approaches from French feminism proposed by Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous:

The non-realistic representation of women's collective pain and horror coincided with the strategies of those feminist theorists who proposed non-realistic representation that haunted the male-dominated symbolic realm from its boundary with the non-linguistic, and uncontainable "impossible Real"—women's rage, desire, pain and resentment. (1998: 238)

²²More details of the *Chrysanthemum Action* can be found in the book, *Remapping Memories and Public Space: Taiwan's Theatre of Action in the Opposition Movement and Social Movements from 1986 to 1997*. (1998:241-244)

According to Chang, Xiao's *Chrysanthemum Action* had feminist overtones: The performers' hysterical body movements expressed Cixous's feminist discourse. 'Cixous regarded hysteria, and, discursively, the speaking body, as defying the grammar of the patriarchal symbolic, and hence hysteria in feminist discourse has become meaningful precisely as a disruption of categories and systems of meaning' (1998: 239). Such hysteria manifested itself in scene like the following: 'Lying down, they lifted their pelvises, opened their thighs wide, and turned their legs from left to right repeatedly, until they went from spasm to collective hysteria, and then deadly stiffness' (1998: 243). According to Chang, this type of behavior was a feminist enactment of the oppression and objectification of adolescent prostitutes, forcing spectators to face the prostitution of Taiwanese adolescents and to question the patriarchal systems of the time. From my point of view, the content of Chang's analysis of *Chrysanthemum Action* was an example of how academic feminists applied the theories of feminism: firstly, to address Taiwanese female social activities and performance as coinciding with perspectives of feminism, and, secondly, to establish an academic paradigm in feminism discourses in Taiwan. Indeed, the legislation of The Child and Teenage Sex Trade Prevention Law, promulgated in 1995, increased the punishment for parents indenturing their children and reflected the government's determination to ensure implementation of the law (Hwang Shu-Ling, 2003: 201).

I argue that the Taiwanese academic critics absorbed the western feminism in a rapid way during the 1990s to apply efficiently the perspectives of feminism into every field in order to oppose the long term oppression of women under traditional patriarchy. Indeed, it succeeded as a political strategy. According to Wang Hsiao-Tan, from 1995 to the present day, a number of gender equality regulations were enforced,

including the Prevention of Sexual Assault in 1997, the Domestic Violence Prevention Act in 1998, the Gender Equality in Employment Law in 2001, the Gender Equality Education Law in 2004, and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in 2005 (2007: 55-56). These revised regulations show that female politicians and women's groups successfully redefined in the eyes of the law the implications of 'gender equality' through their actions and their practice of women's rights against patriarchal structures.

However, during the process of transforming western or European feminism, both feminist social activists and academic activists in Taiwan may have been limited by the consciousness of first world feminists and may have ignored the fact that most Taiwanese women have experienced colonization and the multi-oppression and exploitations by colonizers, the KMT government and colonized patriarchy. For instance, the same issue of adolescent prostitutes mentioned above cannot be solved using a simple feminist formula to address the multi-oppression of internal ethnic agendas, commercial interests and gender perspectives in the society of Taiwan. As Hwang Shu-Ling and Olwen Bedford point out: 'In the late 1950s and 1960s when Taiwan was just launching into industrialization, it was still common for Han families to send away their daughters for adoption and indenture. From the 1960s to the early 1990s, the percentage of aborigines, especially from the Atayal tribe, among indentured girls in Taiwan continually increased. In the early 1990s it was estimated to be as high as 70%. Aborigines comprise merely 1.81% of the total population of Taiwan' (2003: 201).

Even though most academic feminists understood that the majority of the adolescent prostitutes were from the minority aborigines, they could analyze these relevant activities only within feminism rather than from the point of view of Taiwanese

colonial history, culture, and business structure: ‘because of the high percentage of aboriginal prostitutes among the adolescent prostitutes, [...] the women publicly stated that the traditional patriarchal society saw women as property or objects of the male’ (Personal translation. Ku Yen-Ling, 2001:25). The post-colonial scholar Chiu Kuei-Fen was also aware of the weakness of placing the gender issue under the narrative of postcolonial Taiwan. Therefore, she attempted to show the complexity of aboriginal prostitutes through a post-colonial feminist perspective,

The issue of aboriginal prostitutes was not only related to the history of the Taiwanese pornography industry, but also intertwined with the marginal, exploited position of aborigines in Taiwanese business structure. Intervening from the level of gender does not account for the crucial reasons for the aboriginal prostitute issue. This issue involved the historical and international colonial position of Taiwan; on the other hand, it reflected the ‘internal colonization’ among different ethnic groups in Taiwan society. (Personal translation. 1996:367)

Not only should the prostitute issue be located within the post-colonial and internal-colonial narratives, but also other female issues and theatrical productions related to different ethnic groups of Taiwan should be discussed within the concern of colonial history, race, and power relationships.

In *Feminist Review*, Spivak showed her understanding of the term feminism as ‘the word that best describes the situation of women’s struggle in the language of the country’ (2000:115). According to Spivak, ‘Feminism as a term can be useful if it is not invariably located in (metropolitan) academic formations. By the same token, we must be prepared to give it up if there is reasonable resistance to it from groups we respect’ (2000:115). To her, feminism should be deeply concerned with women’s diversity of location rather than being located in academic usage. Similarly, when Chandra Talpade Mohanty gave her definition of the third world feminism, she

emphasized that ‘third world women have always engaged with feminism’ (as is the case in Taiwan); therefore, Mohanty reminded feminists in the third world that they should ‘have argued for rewriting of history based on specific locations and histories of struggle of people of colour and postcolonial peoples, and on the day-to-day strategies of survival utilized by such people’ (1991:11).

If the ultimate idea of feminism is to truly liberate women in different locations, through understanding the perspectives of post-colonial feminism, this understanding needed to reflect the intersecting specificities of Taiwanese literature and theatre which portrayed the women’s conflict with the colonial, patriarchal oppression. As Helen Gilbert and Joanna Tompkins suggested in *Post-colonial Drama, Theory, Practice, Politics*, ‘the ways in which women are written back into history varies greatly from country to country, and that the intersecting specificities of race, gender, and class necessarily complicate a concept/ practice such as feminisms ’ (1996:118). In the following sections I will discuss how feminist theatre in Taiwan was engaged by feminism and how it practiced ‘western’ feminism in theatre but failed to address most ‘subaltern’ women’s colonial experience and its effects.

Feminist theatre in Taiwan

During the 1990s, academic feminists started to introduce Western feminist theatre in Taiwan. Chang, Hsiao-Hung (1994) was awarded research funding from a Taiwanese governmental institution, the National Science Council, and presented an essay titled *Gender, Body and Ideology: Contemporary Western Feminism Theatre and Social Transformation*. In this essay, she referred to theatre groups and their productions inspired by different kinds of feminism such as cultural feminism, Marxist feminism, and lesbian feminism, from 1970s to 1990s in America. Chang introduced the It’s All

Right to be Women Theatre, founded in the 1970s and influenced by cultural feminism, and its productions. Through referring to this feminist theatre group in the essay, Chang emphasized their creative ideas, concerning specific female experience and presenting women's bodies as subjects. Moreover, Chang quoted from *Feminism and Theatre* written by Sue-Ellen Case and referred to the production of Split Britches theatre group, *The Beauty and the Beast* (1983), to illustrate the positive way in which lesbian feminism theatre portrayed the lesbian experience and emphasized the anti-patriarch, anti-realism concepts to establish female sexuality as subjectivity. This essay not only illustrated how the whole Taiwanese society accelerated the grafting of Western culture onto Taiwanese culture in the 1990s, but also evidenced how feminism has been applied to fertilise Taiwanese theatre and to provide a new creative direction.

Influenced by feminism and feminist movements in the 1990s, several female directors attempted to express women's perspectives through performance. For instance, the play, *1996 Bye the Little Red Riding Hood*, directed by Lang Ya-Ling in 1996 used the awareness of female identity as the theme. This play showed a girl who witnesses the violent marriage of her parents and decides to join a women's group named 'Women save themselves Alliance', which responded to violence by attacking men secretly at night. In addition, another female director, Chen Tsu-Yang, who leads the Spring Wind Art Theatre group in Kaohsiung, produced a play titled *Wacoal ABC*, which illustrated women's strong consciousness. The title of this play is taken from the famous brand name of the Wacoal bra company in Taiwan and the different sizes of bra available in order to criticize the consistent standard of beauty set by society and to illustrate how women lose themselves living in a patriarchal society. Actresses in this play all wore masks to symbolize women who have lost their true faces as a

result of living in a society dominated by patriarchal standards. Thus, women have to conform in appearance to what society demands. In 1998, the female director of Taitung Theatre group, Liu Mei-Yin, produced a play named *Departure of Vagina Train* to question and protest against the fact that women were deprived of their subjective rights over their own body. In the play, female characters wore white wedding dresses and discussed marriage to express the oppression and limitations of traditional principles. Moreover, the actresses took off their wedding dresses and portrayed courageously the specific sexual parts of the female body through their own bodies and movements (Lin Wei-Yu, 2000). In this period, it is not difficult to see that the three above mentioned female directors specifically focused on social issues which affected women in reality (such as marital violence and the beauty standards determined by the patriarchal system), through presenting performances to reflect oppression and objectification in patriarchal culture and to protest against the predominating social canons; therefore, in their plays they presented women as subject.

After the Little Theatre Movement in the 1980s, female directors in the 1990s' Little Theatre, such as Chou Hui-Ling and Wei Ying-Chuan were influenced directly by Western feminist theories.²³ Unlike the above-mentioned female directors, who were inspired by the Taiwanese women's movements or indirectly affected by the importation of feminism, both Chou and Wei studied Western theories at New York University and were educated in feminism and performance studies. Chou received her PhD degree supervised by Richard Schechner. After returning to Taiwan, both in

²³ Chou Hui-Ling received her PhD degree from New York University in 1997; she teaches in Department of English in National Central University now and specifically researches culture and gender transgression, and performance studies. Chou used to cooperate with the Creative Society theatre group and directed several productions. Wei Ying-Chuan received her Masters degree from the Educational Theatre Department of New York University.

their academic work and in their theatrical creations they combined Western feminism and post-modern performance style in order to establish an individual 'new' female directing style. Their productions, through the performance of aesthetics and transgression of gender identities, not only applied perspectives of feminism, but stressed the concept of post-modernism.

Tuan Hsin-Chun raised a crucial query of feminist theatre in the chapter 'Feminist Theatre in Taiwan' as follows,

After learning about Western feminisms, will Feminist Theatres adopt Western first-world ideology, or negotiate between the discourses of Western and the third feminisms? (2007: 58)

It is a pity that she chose to adopt Western feminism theories to discuss the direction of Chou and Wei and to highlight how their performances expressed feminist perspectives as a new theatrical form but failed to answer this question in the conclusion. In addition, although Tuan analyzed the Westernizing phenomenon in Taiwan²⁴ and demonstrated that, under the second generation of the Little Theatre Movement, the embodiment of feminism in Taiwanese feminist theatre was part of the Westernization in Taiwan, she could not proceed from the objective position to evaluate whether their productions were the appropriation of the first world women's ideology or not. I will illustrate how Tuan re-emphasized western female identity through her performance analysis and formed an ideology of women in the first world.

Firstly, I will discuss Chou's production *I Want You before Sunrise* (2000) as an

²⁴ Tuan Hsin-Chun wrote: ' Since the 1990s, Taiwan has experienced growing Westernization as scholars and theatre practitioners from Taiwan brought home the issues and strategies related to Western Feminism learnt during their time abroad. Upon their return, they applied Western theories to the Taiwanese context'. (2007:57)

example. This play depicts the issue of multiple gender identities through portraying different gender identities and relationships among four characters (all Taiwanese intellectuals living in New York including one gay fashion designer, one bisexual painter, one lesbian photographer, and one heterosexual female film director). Chou sets the scene in New York and rejects conservative images of women. She uses the character of the film director to explore the diverse sexualities of women. In the performance, the film director is not satisfied with her life as a faithful wife, always waiting for her husband; instead she sets herself free to experience different forms of sexuality including having sex with a gay man and developing an ambiguous homosexual relationship with a lesbian. Through the role of the female film director, Chou attempts to break through the construction of morality and social customs, and gender binaries and achieves her idea of presuming open and various gender identities.

In her analysis of *I Want You before Sunrise*, Tuan suggests that ‘Chou presents Judith Butler’s notion of the gendered body as a performative act by setting this performance in New York’ (2007:71). She further explained as follows:

Setting this story in New York makes it easier for Chou’s play to be staged without being constrained by artistic censorship or criticism by the conservative structures of traditional Confucian morality. In doing so, the audience in Taiwan can accept that such blatantly erotic acts can happen, since in their cultural imagination the United States is seen as very open, and full of variety and possibility. (2007:75)

The most arguable point about the above extract is that Tuan was not objectively considering Chou’s representation of multiple sexual identities, as considered by Western feminism, as an appropriation of the ideology of first world women to form a so-called ‘new’ women consciousness (open sexual behavior and multiple sexual

identities) amongst Taiwanese audiences. However, through her analysis she unconsciously distinguished the binary opposition in sexual behaviour between the first world (America) and the non-first world (Taiwan); that the sexual identity of the first world (America) is open and diverse; in comparison, the sexual identity of the non-first world (Taiwan) is conservative and constrained.

In addition, the application of Western feminism by Tuan re-strengthened the first world women's ideology, as she emphasized that modern women, as represented in Chou's play, 'threw away traditional ideas about binary opposition between heterosexuality and homosexuality and subverted the gender binary of man-aggressive and woman-passive' (Tuan, 2007: 67-78). Tuan considered that Chou inspired the spectator's consciousness about women and constructed in the play multiple and cross-gender identities. However, she failed to comment that this multiple gender identity is still part of Western feminism; furthermore, the image of the 'new' Taiwanese woman becomes a potential pressure for Taiwanese women in general, in that it means that women in Taiwan would be seen as 'traditional' if they did not assume a cross-gender single or heterosexual identity. Therefore, I argue that the image of the new modern woman (displaying the multiple gender identities and sexual autonomy of feminist discourse) in Chou's play and Tuan's feminist critiques related to it may correspond to one of particular problematic directions within U.S. based feminisms raised by Mohanty; 'Feminism becomes a way to advance academic careers rather than a call for fundamental and collective social and economic transformation' (2003:6). Feminism in Taiwan may be reformulated to serve the academic field or female artists but it becomes difficult to relate it in depth to the concerns of ordinary women in society.

The lesbian discourse of feminism also resulted in a new creative direction in the

artistic field in Taiwan. Fu Yu-Hui observed gender issues involved in Taiwanese contemporary theatre and suggested that ‘the introduction of Western culture had had an irresistible impact not only on the business and industry but also in theatre and psychosocial aspects of social life. Homosexual culture was liberated and increased over time; there is no limitation with regards to body representation but there exists the intension of gender politics’ (Personal translation. 2005:20). The intension of gender politics noticed by Fu could be found in Wei Ying-Chuan’s plays. Wei is the founder and director of The Shakespeare’s Wild Sisters Group and started theatre productions in 1985.²⁵ Wei’s productions concentrate on discussing gender, sexual and lesbian issues to concretise her own theatrical aesthetic in presenting a new theatre experience. She employs different theatrical elements such as action, diction, plot, movement, set, props, and customs and tends to be more interested in experimenting with performers’ movements. The particular performing body movement of Wei’s productions was given the term ‘non-narrative body performance’ by Chou. Wei does not provide concrete storytelling; instead, she envisages a large number of body movements as her self-styled dramaturgical method to replace the conventional verbal delivery of an actor in performance (Tuan Hsin-Chun, 2007; Sue Pei-Kai, 2003).

Wei is the second feminist director considered by Tuan in discussing Taiwanese feminist theatre (2007: 78-98). As a feminist director, Wei presents speeches written by the Italian novelist Italo Calvino (1923-1985) in her production of *Six Memos for*

²⁵ The Shakespeare’s Wild Sisters Group founded by Wei Ying-chuan in 1995 and owned its name to the fictional character in Virginia Woolf’s novel *A Room of One’s Own*, meaning to liberate women’s talents from the oppression of patriarchy. Wei Ying-Chuan’s works include *Emily Dickinson* (Hong Kong, Taipei,2003), *Your Madness, Mr. Shakespeare—from 4 Tragedies, 100% Concentrated* (Taipei,2002), *Six Memos for the Next Millennium—Movements* (Paris,2004; Kobe,Beijing,2003; Taipei, Tokyo, Busan, Hong Kong, Shanghai, 2001), *Chronicles of Women: Illness as Metaphor* (Hong Kong, 2001) *Lecture on Nothing* (Hong Kong, Berlin,2000), *Unbalance* (Hong Kong, Berlin,2000; Hong Kong, Macao,1999), *Angel Dust*(Philadelphia, 2000; Taipei,1999), nearly thirty directing productions.

the Next Millennium—Movements (2001), through female body movements and employing the all-female cast's body language to challenge the canon of men. The play is another note to help women become aware of their situation and give them prospects. Furthermore, as a bisexual artist, Wei's productions focus on discussing gender, homosexuality, social and cultural issues and exploring theatrical aesthetics. One example is *Dance upon the Broom*, which was first performed at the First Women's Theatre Festival²⁶ in 1996. This production has no dialogue but clearly displays jealousy in lesbian love through simple body movements. Wei's production *Le Testament de Montmartre* (2000) is a theatrical revision adopted from the testament of a Taiwanese lesbian writer, Chiu Miao-Jin, who committed suicide in Montmartre in France.

Through the theatrical space, Wei expressed homosexuality as well as positive images of lesbian desire and queried the absolute priority of dominant heterosexuality in society. However, I do not intend to provide a detailed analysis related to Wei's productions here but merely observe the tendency of feminist practitioners applying the perspectives of feminism. Therefore, I would like to presume that Wei used gender politics as a creative strategy in order to further achieve her aesthetic experiment after the Little Theatre Movement in the 1990s. Chiu Kuei-Fen read Taiwanese literature through a post-colonial feminism perspective and compared two novels, *Aphonic Thrush* (*Shi Sheng Hua Mei*) and *Notes of a Desolate Man* (*Huang Ren Shou Ji*); both won the Million Novel Prizes but received extremely different reviews:

Aphonic Thrush was written in a traditional local realism style and was unlikely to please the Taiwanese literature critics, who mainly prefer bourgeois tastes. Comparatively, the post-modernism narrative style of

²⁶ Since 1996, Women's Theatre Festival has been held once every four years. In this festival, female administrators and performers have chances to work together for a common issue by watching and exchanging their different styles. (Tuan Hsin-Chun, 2007:107)

Notes of a Desolate Man, responds to the contemporary cultural trends, and the narrative strategy was chosen to give voice to those from marginal positions (non-mainstream identity such as homosexuality, politics and ethnicity) and therefore seems more sophisticated to the critics. (1997:90)

This extract illustrates that the marginal nature of homosexual topics may be a better choice for Wei to win the audience and theatrical practitioners' favor with regard to bourgeois taste.

Through the above discussion, I put forward my own opinion related to Taiwanese feminist theatre: rushing into applying and embodying Western feminism, most female activists and theatrical practitioners seemed to indulge in interpreting concepts of the first world feminism, for example female subjectivity, patriarchal oppression, female sexual freedom, and homosexual issues, in order to get audiences' agreement; however, they failed to concern themselves with or to offer a real portrait of the general 'subaltern' women in Taiwan.

Figures of Hakka women

As concerns Hakka women in Taiwan, whose situation was similar to that of women generally in the third world, their circumstances can be understood in the context of postcolonial feminist Spivak's concept of subaltern women. Spivak, in her essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, queried whether, under the western dominant system within post-colonial Indian society 'the international division of labor from socialized capital, inside and outside the circuit of the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education... can the subaltern speak?' (1995:25). The term 'subaltern', as used by Spivak, refers to people who live under the dominant foreign groups and dominant indigenous group as subaltern classes; their identity is their difference and there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself.

Hakka women, the main focus in this Chapter, live mostly in the rural areas of Taiwan. If we observe these women through a subaltern perspective, it will be asked how can their images truly be depicted and by whom? After studying the female images of Hakka literature, Chang Tien-Wan points out those Hakka women consistently were depicted as victims or vulnerable people, such as concubines, adopted daughters, long-term working peasants, and widows:

The standard of morality formed by the patriarchy of Hakka males has resulted in the image of Hakka females, with large hands and feet, working hard in their mountain setting. In Hakka novels and mountain songs, Hakka women were represented as mothers of the land and played strong, persevering, manlike roles. However, most of these representations usually ignored their original emotions, sexualities, dignities and social status as women. (2004:54)

It can be seen that the laboring figures of Hakka women have always been the typical model in male narratives. This corresponds to what Spivak considered the image of women in the third world, 'A figure of 'women' is at issue, one whose minimal predication as indeterminate is already available to the phallogocentric tradition.' She believes that 'the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant' and argues that 'If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow' (1995:28).

Taking into consideration Spivak's perspective related to the subaltern as female, Hakka women who live in the male dominated ethnic group and have experienced political change from Qing imperialism through Japanese colonization to the KMT regime, suffered and struggled under the double oppression and exploitation as family laborers and members of the lower social classes; these women are more 'silent' than the subaltern male. How can the voice of these Hakka women be heard in theatre? In

response to this, Spivak suggests that 'the relationship between woman and silence can be plotted by women themselves; race and class differences are subsumed under that charge' (1995:28).

In addition, Gilbert re-examined the influence of misapplying Western feminism to the third world through a post-colonial feminist perspective:

Western ideals of wages equality, access to the workplace, and sexual freedom are not necessarily what all women want. Moreover, the Western tendency to group women from various so-called 'third world' cultures together (in a false opposition to the 'first world') collapses their differences and produce a false homogeneity that limits opportunities for self-determination. (1996:119)

Gilbert claimed that in postcolonial theatre, the multiple locations and subjectivities which women occupied must be critically repositioned to prevent the subsuming of one category of difference and identity by another. Simultaneously, she attempted to de-centralize Western feminism in terms of considering the concept of gender and suggested that gender should be delineated as one category of difference for designating the relationship between colonizers and colonized, rather than merged with race or class under the general concept of marginality. Gilbert points out that women in the third world who suffered colonial oppression and ethnic or class exploitation reflected on the complexity of gender. She further illustrates how women of the third world use theatre space as a place for representing their subjectivities and 'refiguring the gender roles or identities in various ways: by critiquing the gender-specific construction endorsed by imperial history, by mapping out areas of women's subjugation and invisibility in the colonial situation, by redressing gender-related gaps in the official record, ...by staging self-reflexive interventions into theatrical representation itself (1996:120).

Considering the discussion of post-colonial feminism in the third world, would Hakka women in Taiwan, similar to the concept of subaltern as female, own their opportunities to speak for themselves? In responding to this question, I will focus in the following section on the performances of two Hakka female directors who devoted themselves to presenting an image of ordinary Hakka women on the stage. One is Peng Ya-Ling, who used oral history as the mode of The Uhan Shii Theatre Group; the other is Li Hsiu-Hsun, who organized the Shigang Mama Theatre Group with Chung Chiao in the Hakka village, Shigang, in response to a 1999 earthquake.

The founder as well as director of The Uhan Shii Theatre Group, Peng Ya-Ling, collected oral history stories of elders from Hokkien, Mainlander and Hakka ethnic groups in Taiwan. Through training and guiding these elders she encouraged them to tell their life stories and perform their personal memories and experiences on the stage. Peng completed her *Taiwanese Confession Series I-X* with the elder performers from different ethnic groups of Taiwan who experienced Japanese colonization and the KMT regime. Through recovering and representing these elders' life stories and buried memories during different periods, Peng has actively reconstructed a multi-colonial history of Taiwan to give a voice to the subaltern people and formed a sense of their own post-colonial subjectivity to communicate with audiences.

The post-colonialism scholar, Wang Wan-Jung, regards the *Taiwanese Confession Series* as 'a concretized representation in the process of pursuing the Taiwanese cultural identities and subjectivities in the 1990s theatre. Considering its content and form, which used the oral histories of local elders as theatrical text, and the languages, bodies and sounds of folk cultures and traditions as presenting style, it can be interpreted as a kind of resistance against the neo-colonial influence on the 1980s little theatre, which was deeply affected by Western modernism and postmodernism.

It is a concretized ‘de-colonisation’ and ‘de-westernization’ movement’ (2004:79).

As a Hakka female director, Peng collaborated with Hakka female elders and the resulting productions not only expressed their complex situation and personal stories but also used theatre to demonstrate how they survived different periods of colonisation and the KMT regime and the patriarchy associated with them. As members of the subaltern class of Taiwanese society, these Hakka female elders performed their own life stories in the *Taiwanese Confession Series*, which break away from what Spivak described as the silence of the subaltern as women. Therefore, Wang viewed their acting as corresponding to post-colonial feminist discourse: ‘By disentangling the complex relations among colonialism, nationalism, post-colonialism and feminism, their personal and collective stories represent a significant aspect of post-colonial feminist discourse’ (2006:82).

In the next section, I will discuss the images of Hakka women in the plays of both The Uhan Shii Theatre Group and the Shigang Mamas theatre group to illustrate how Hakka women reflected on their silent and invisible positions under the colonial and patriarchal oppressions as well as their presentation of how they resist the potential epistemic violence of Western intellectual feminism and the narrow image of the new woman in feminist theatre. Furthermore, through analyzing both directors’ productions I will offer a post-colonial critical perspective on the specific history and life experiences of Taiwanese Hakka women as a unique contribution to global post-colonial feminist theatre.

Section 2: The Uhan Shii Theatre Group and Hakka Women

The Context of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group

As one of the first generation pioneers of the Little Theatre Movement, Peng Ya-Ling, who graduated from the English Department of Tamkang University, was one of the participants of the experimental theatre group called Square and Circle Theatre Company in the 1980s. She absorbed the experimental spirit of western avant-garde theatre and adapted western drama and literature such as *Oedipus the King* and *Steppenwolf*.

After applying every 'ism' of western text, forms and styles into theatre, Peng eventually found that her directing pieces touched neither her soul nor heart. Therefore, she went to the United Kingdom and studied at the London School of Mime and Movement from 1988 to 1991. During her studies in London, she received rigorous training in Etienne Decroux's form of corporeal mime and her performance was often praised by her British teacher as having a unique Taiwanese quality. This became the motivation for her when she returned to Taiwan in the 1990s; she determined to explore this 'unique Taiwanese quality' in herself but she herself was unaware of it at that time:

Ten years before I applied oral history in theatre performances that I produced from 1981 to 1991, I did not view things through a Taiwanese cultural perspective. So, I wanted to change, to look at things from Taiwanese cultures, which can become the subject themselves, rather than to produce theatre in a western theatrical structure, with western dramaturgy, forms, and aesthetics. (Personal Interview with Peng Ya-Ling cited by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005)

Pursuing the Taiwanese cultural quality of theatre in connection with performers and spectators and further re-defining performance has become Peng's ideal since her return. Starting in 1991, she relearned Taiwanese folk art from folklore, interviewed older performing artists and listened to their stories. Since Peng was young, she

enjoyed hearing stories of the elders. This unusual habit led her to conduct fieldwork and collect oral histories from the elderly all over Taiwan. Through listening to their life stories, Peng attempted to search for this unique quality that she herself was not aware of: It is the nostalgia of intellectuals, looking for the home of the soul and it could be identified only after being discovered; this is the thing that has enabled me to become a Taiwanese, the present Peng Ya-Ling, fragrant with such beauty. 'To find this I might be blinded, thus I need to find that through understanding the life, rhythm, and the events the old people are familiar with' (Personal translation. Chen Yu-Chen, 2002:92).

Her personal experience of oral history theatre in London is another crucial factor which influenced Peng. In 1993, she visited Pam Schweitzer, the founder of the Age Exchange Reminiscence Centre in the United Kingdom, and was deeply inspired by her creative direction. Peng writes: 'from 1948, Pam Schweitzer, the founder of the Age Exchange Reminiscence Centre, has collected a group of young actors to visit the old people and record their life stories and perform them in the theatre. Until 1993, they found that these old people could tell wonderful stories and the authenticity of their performance is deeply touching and resulted in the foundation of the Reminiscence theatre group' (Personal translation. Peng, 1996a: 31). Inspired by Schweitzer, Peng founded the Uhan Shii Theatre Group in 1995 and was determined to direct and create productions using oral histories of the old people all over Taiwan. Starting from the personal quest for the 'Taiwaneseness' of acting and performing aesthetics, Peng searched for her cultural roots. The oral history of these old people filled Peng's historical gap and the performing style of traditional Taiwanese artists enriched her natural theatrical expression (Wang Wan-Jung, 2006b:18). As Peng claimed, 'the work of oral history teaches me that although one's life is limited, the

review of one's past tracks expands one's life in an unlimited way'(Personal translation. Peng, 1996a: 33). I will briefly discuss the creating characteristics and styles of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group in the following section.

1. Applying oral history as creative direction

Oral history is similar to the voice archives which record personal life histories as their main content. Nowadays, such voice archives form popular collections around the world. Paul Thompson in his *The Voice of the Past* argues that oral history has challenged the essential social purpose of history:

Nevertheless, oral history certainly can be a means for transforming both the content and the purpose of history. It can be used to change the focus of history itself, and open up new areas of inquiry; it can break down barriers between teachers and students, between generations...it can give back to people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place. (1998:22)

One of the most important functions of oral history is giving voice to people who are 'silent'. Through recalling their memories, oral history can not only represent the neglected part of history of official documentation, but also frequently is used to offer the perspective of the lower classes. Oral history can be not only a methodological challenge to history which is dominated by authority, but, as raw material, it can be used to decentralise the perspectives of a restricted group of political, social, and intellectual leaders: 'In the most general sense, once the life experience of people of all kinds can be used as its raw materials, a new dimension is given to history' (1998:24). Theatre performances based on oral history offer accounts from women, from minorities, from the subaltern classes, from the undocumented events of the hidden history.

According to Schweitzer (1998), the Age Exchange Centre attempts to give voice to various elders of different ethnicities, regions and classes, who are often marginalised in British society. Schweitzer worked with interviewers from different generations and used the reminiscences of ethnic minority older people as an alternative way to represent personal history in performances. For example, the oral history performance produced by Schweitzer, *We Want to Speak of Old Times*, was an oral history and theatre project about migration from the Caribbean to England in the 1950s and 1960s. Caribbean elders who participated in the project were storytellers and performers in the play; they recalled their first experience of coming to England from the colonial Caribbean, beginning in 1948. As people from colonies of Britain, these black immigrants represented their imagination of Britain as their 'Mother Country' and the difficulties in their daily life. This play was presented by colonized people, through positioning the black immigrants as the subject, to represent their experiences and life history.²⁷ Oral history theatre became a platform to represent different perspectives of individual history and personal memories to subvert the dominant mainstream point of views.

Peng described her own experience when she watched the play, *My First Job* produced by Age Exchange Theatre and Reminiscence Centre, 'Through watching these small pieces, we could glimpse the economic and social situation of the United Kingdom in those years. Through their true stories performed by themselves, we could sense a clear comprehension. Their natural acting was connected by old songs; even the German audiences who do not understand English were in tears of laughter and applauded loudly at the end' (Personal translation. Peng, 1996a: 33). Influenced

²⁷Schweitzer writes, 'The initial reception of these black immigrants in British communities was not always warm and welcoming. While jobs were easy to come by, wages were low and work often offered fewer opportunities than expected. It was difficult for the black immigrants to find good housing and child care. Relations with white people were frequently strained'. (1998:89)

by the oral history theatre of the Age Exchange Centre, the Uhan Shii Theatre Group was clearly defined as ‘the elders’ oral history theatre group’ when it was founded, and recruited elders aged 60 and above as the main group members. Under the leadership of Peng, today the group finds its own creating and working strategy to perform oral history stories of elders from Hokkian, Mainlander and Hakka ethnic groups in Taiwan. Through telling their life stories and representing their personal memories and experiences on the stage, these elders make a specific effort to express their ‘triviality and truth in life’ (Peng, 1996a: 33).

In 1995, Peng started to interview traditional Taiwanese artists such as Ge Zi Xi²⁸ artist, Xu Yuan, who was commonly called ‘Black Cat Cloud’, Zhentou Master, Wu Tien-Lo, and blind Nakasi singer, Li Bing-Hui, and encouraged them to perform their life stories to create the play, *Taiwanese Confession I--Fifty Years Go by*. In the play, these older artists reviewed their past times by telling stories about how they suffered mental oppression, economic exploitation and life threatening situations in the Second World War under the Japanese colonisation and the KMT’s nationalism. The *Taiwanese Confession II--The Black Dog Brother and Black Cat Sister Touring in Taiwan* was a play based on Wu Tien-Lo’s life stories to reflect the economic transformation in the decades of Taiwanese society through portraying his life with Zhentou performance troupes for 60 years. Peng emphasized the importance of offering these elders the chance to restore their subjectivity:

Oral history is one of the steps; it only presents live people as the subject. They use their life experiences as performance context, and then use their own eyes to see themselves though my editing to present their stories as a

²⁸ According to Wang Wan-Jung, Ge Zi Xi is a traditional Taiwanese Opera which contains a lot of stylized movement, gestures, postures and singing developed from traditional Chinese Opera. However, it is spoken and sung in Hokkien dialect and music and originated in Fukien Province as a local and provincial opera in Southeastern China. It was introduced by early immigrants from Fukien to Taiwan and developed to one of the most popular form of traditional performance in Taiwan. (2006b:16)

theatre form. It is a kind of theatre which is about looking at oneself, from one's point of departure, and viewing one's life as the subject. (Personal Interview with Peng Ya-Ling cited by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005)

Oral history performance of the elders embraced the real life history of people in Taiwan. For Peng, this truth 'should not be the great history, should not be the new stories, it is just the triviality of life and it is true to life' (Personal translation. Peng, 1996a:33). Wang Wan-Jung examined the *Taiwanese Confession I, II* from a post-colonial theory perspective and suggested that, 'This is Taiwanese theatre which faces and explores the history of oppression by Japanese colonisation from personal experiences' (2004:82). In her opinion, productions of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group represented memories of ordinary people through oral history and attempted to re-establish the collective history of Taiwanese society to fight against the forgotten history during the colonisation period and to establish the cultural subjectivity of Taiwan.

Starting from telling life stories, the Uhan Shii Theatre Group continues to use oral history as a working strategy to combine traditional performance and modern theatre.

Peng illustrates her working processes:

In the process of interviewing, unless this person really cultivates his/her energy, I would not ask him/her to entertain me or to feel that he/she has to tell a touching story. I have no anticipation that this working method has to attain some effects. Because oral history is simply a final edit by me. About picking up the story, I always chose the initial power of life which could move me. If it can move me it can also move the audience in the same way. (Personal Interview with Peng Ya-Ling cited by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005)

Selecting life stories and experiences which can really touch her soul is the editing work for Peng after listening to oral histories of the group members. Since 1995, the Uhan Shii Theatre Group has performed the *Taiwanese Confession series* in Taiwan

and overseas. After performing internationally again and again, Peng profoundly feels the power of oral history theatre:

As for me, their one simple sentence might be the accumulation of more than fifty, seventy years in their life history; it is precious and touching. This kind of theatre possesses great power, which is derived from everyone's deep engagement with the life and willingness to exchange it with others. (Interview with Peng Ya-Ling, cited by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005)

For Peng, the key point of oral history performance is not whether it is touching or not; the most important thing is that the performers, the elders, gradually learn to face and rethink their own experience honestly during the process of rehearsals. Eventually, they choose to truly 'be themselves'.

2. Experience exchange: The concept of the Odin Teatret's 'barter'

Another important creative concept of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group is the idea of experience exchange, which is derived from the concept of the Odin Teatret's 'barter'. Eugenio Barba (1986), the founder and director of the Odin Teatret, his investigation and demonstration of ISTA (the International School of Theatre Anthropology) and his theatrical barter in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia have influenced a number of practitioners and audiences. The term 'barter' was applied by Barba to the theatre in the early 1970s when he first visited the isolated village of Carpignano, in the heel of the Italian peninsula, with the Odin Teatret:

Our stay here is built up around the idea of the barter.... The goods we trade are cultural. We began with simple situation where we sang Scandinavian songs and where the local songs were a natural and organic response. We then widened the barter with fragments of our training which looked like dances, and the people responded with some of their own. (1986:159)

Barba regards the barter as a judgment when two different cultures meet. Through the barter, different cultures exchange types of performance; thus, he emphasized that the 'difference' and 'otherness' of cultures involved in the performance are the points of departure. Barba points out that, 'in the barter, we did not give our goods away, nor did they give theirs. Both parts went away with more than they brought, and in spite of our diversity, we confronted each other, defining ourselves through our own cultural backgrounds' (1986:159). Through the barter, actor and spectator could reflect further on their own cultural roots; therefore, the exchange is valuable itself. Rustom Bharucha (1993), an Indian theatre researcher, discussed the concept of Barba's barter as follows:

This radical conception of 'theatre as barter' could be meaningfully adapted, to my mind, in countries like India, where some of our rural performers are still paid through donations of rice and grain by the spectators. What needs to be explored is the concept of performers from distinct social and linguistic groups performing for each other in the spirit of a 'barter'. Most dynamic of all would be the possibility of spectators. (1993:62)

Bharucha drew attention to the dynamic possibility of the spectators who participated in the 'barter' and to Barba's question concerning the further transformation of the 'barter' from a cultural phenomenon into something that will leave a mark on the political and social situation of the place, through action. For example, in Monteiasi, Barba asked his audience to pay for Odin's dances by donating a book in order to start a public library for the residents there. Although Bharucha agreed with Barba's responding to social needs on the most creative levels of exchange, he also cast doubt on barter: "Just when one imagines that it is in a position to deepen its social significance, it falls back on its 'asociality' " (1993:64). Phillip Zarrilli attended the 1986 ISTA Congress and questioned 'barter' and the fact that it revealed how, in one context, Barba had been concerned with some of the same political and ideological

questions raised by those critical of the ISTA (1988:97). According to the above discussion, my opinion is that Barba noticed that 'difference' has become a judgment when people meet with each other and he intervened in the social or political situation of a place through the barter; however, the social, historical, and cultural differences of each 'place' cannot be treated by 'barter', alone. Bharucha rethinks the situation of India and points out that their differences of history cannot be subsumed in a 'tradition of traditions' that cuts across all national, temporal and spatial barriers (1993:62).

In 2001, Peng went to the Odin Teatret in Denmark to join the Third Transit Festival, Theatre - Women - Generations, and wrote about her understanding of 'barter':

In the 1970s, barter was an important activity to establish a ritual relationship when the Odin Teatret meets and works with other communities. What they want to exchange is the culture. The Odin actors bring the training techniques, street performances, and improvisations with them to exchange the dances, songs, music, oral literatures, even religion ceremony with communities. (Personal translation. 2006:18-22)

Peng's experience of the Odin Teatret and 'barter' had an influence on her: the concept of 'barter' gave her the meaning of performance to present the subjectivity of Taiwanese culture. However, I propose that the Uhan Shii Theatre Group did not practice 'barter' (as a way of exchanging cultures) in Taiwanese theatre, but interpreted 'barter', rather, as 'experience exchange', in order to create a path between traditional elder performers and audiences in Taiwan:

We started finding many traditional actors, such as 'Black Cat Cloud', Wu Tien-Lo, and Li Bing-Hui to produce a performance. They were the king or queen in their professional field; but the truth is there are very few audiences appreciate their traditional performing skills. The traditional artists' performing skills are no problem, but in terms of the content, and

communication to the audiences, they cannot exchange their skills with the audience. Therefore, I hope their extraordinary skills could be communicated with the audience. (Interview with Peng Ya-Ling, cited by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005)

As for Peng, these traditional artists that she cooperated with had specific traditional performing skills, such as Taiwanese Opera, Zhentou performance, Nakasi singing; these were the accumulation of decades of experience performing in Taiwanese folk culture. Nevertheless, their traditional performing style was difficult to communicate to Taiwanese audiences:

So, I hope to exchange their wonderful skills with contemporary audiences. This is a difficult task: not only to keep their unique characteristics but to enable the others to accept them and to make the exchange in a new vision or a mood that reflects those of the people nowadays. (Interview with Peng Ya-Ling, cited by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005)

The above indicates Peng's 'misunderstanding' of barter: The audience did not respond to its own culture with traditional artists. Hence, the 'action' of bartering did not occur between traditional artists and the *audience*. Instead, I argue that the idea of 'experience exchange', expanded from the idea of barter, offered Peng a performance creating strategy that relied on combining the oral history and 'barter' to make possible working with elders, engaging them to tell their life stories and communicate their experiences with contemporary audiences. On the other hand, theatre as barter was a reality for Peng and the Uhan Shii Theatre Group: Peng used her place in the profession of oral history theatre to garner life experiences and traditional performing skills from the elder members of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group and to create the *Taiwanese Confession Series*. This performance series presents the internal differences of Taiwanese culture in order to challenge the racial, geographical and linguistic limitations of the spectators' ethnic background and communicate the oral history

performance of the elders with audiences of different ethnic groups in Taiwan, and even with foreigners: ‘every point and moment of the performance could hit the audience a part in the heart’ (Interview with Peng Ya-Ling, cited by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005). The *Taiwanese Confession series* produced by the Uhan Shii Theatre Group joined the Old People Theatre Festival which was hosted by the Age Exchange Centre in 1995 and 1998, and they performed overseas in Europe, America, and The Philippines, and went to Australia to participate in the Magdalena Project. Like the Odin, the Uhan Shii Theatre Group has contributed to presenting the oral history performance of Taiwanese elders to audiences around the world. In the next section I will focus on discussing performances related to Hakka women’s oral histories to understand the interactive relationship among Hakka women, the ethnic background, colonial experiences and theatre.

Analysis of Peng Ya-Ling’s Hakka Contemporary Theatre Performances

Since 1995, The Uhan Shii Theatre Group has spent six years to prepare the first Hakka oral history performance, *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here (Tai Wan Gao Bai Liu: Wo Men Zai Zhe Li)*, and premiered in 2000. To date, the Uhan Shii Theatre Group has produced another four Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances, namely *Taiwanese Confession X: When Spring Comes (Tai Wan Gao Bai Shi: Chun Tain Lai De Shi Hou)* in 2003; two Hakka musicals, *The Smell in The Kitchen (Chu Fang De Qi Wei)* in 2005 and *Mother Duck is Tumbling (Ya Ma Da Kong Qiao)* in 2007 and *Cat Walk Awakening (Mao Zai Zou Xing)* in 2009. The identification of Peng Ya-Ling as a Hakka was a motivating factor for her to create her first Hakka oral history performance:

My grandparents are Hakka people who lived in a Hakka village, while we have no idea why they moved to that Hakka village. Twenty years after my

grandfather died, we discovered that his father was a Xiucan (scholar) during the Qing dynasty. When the Japanese invaded Taiwan, they gave up their farms and home and escaped. Although my grandparents moved to remote Hakka village in the East of the country, after I was born they stopped using the Hakka language. Hakka people became invisible people in the cities and this is more and more common in our generation. (Script offered by Peng Ya-Ling)

Peng has profoundly experienced this situation of invisibility as a Hakka and lost the ability to speak her mother tongue. She published an announcement in a newspaper to invite Hakka elders who live in Taipei city to meet the Uhan Shii Theatre Group and to share their oral history stories. Peng was eager to know the process which led to Hakka people leaving Hakka villages. *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here* was based on the personal experiences of Hakka female elders who explained their reasons for leaving their Hakka villages to go to Taipei city and gradually, over time, they have become invisible. Through employing oral history as a creative method, Peng was searching for the characteristics of the Hakka groups which could be communicated to contemporary audiences:

In fact, Hakka people may no longer cherish the things we value most. If Hakka people do not like them, those Hakka people who do not understand Hakka language or people who are not Hakkas, how can they appreciate the specificity of Hakka culture?. (Interview with Peng Ya-Ling, cited by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005)

Historically, after going through the Japanese colonization and the KMT nationalism, the Hakka culture, language, and traditional performing arts were forbidden by the government until 1987. Furthermore, accompanying modernization, the Hakka ethnic group was gradually marginalised in Taiwanese society and chose to hide their Hakka identity in order to survive. One of the tasks for current Taiwanese Hakka practitioners is how to encourage the Hakka people not to hide their identity and to

accept their Hakka culture, music, and theatre. Thus, the Hakka Contemporary Theatre productions of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group reaffirmed traditional Hakka elements and harmonised these with a modern performing style, through Hakka women telling their life stories to actively restore the lifestyle of Hakka ‘subordinate’ people:

In the process of rehearsal, I want to look at that part (of Hakka culture) which everyone, either does not speak of, is contemptuous of, or disregards. But I want to re-examine its value and offer it as an affirmation of time. Certainly, I have the intention of reversing the stereotyping of people and of trying treat them in a positive way. Originally, there was no so-called high and low between cultures; however, there must be a reason when a culture is discriminated against. People should look at it from its angle. So when you restore its meaning, rather than comparing it with others, the culture itself is its meaning. (Personal Interview with Peng, 2008)

The content of *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here* expressed respect for labouring experience and explored the reasons for Hakka people’s leaving the Hakka villages; on the other hand, it revealed the hidden tradition of ‘adopted daughters’ in the Hakka history. In the play *Taiwanese Confession X: When Spring Comes*, Peng portrayed the inherited problems of Hakka language and culture and attempted to find the Hakka identity for a younger generation. *The Smell in the Kitchen* tried to break out of the stereotype of Hakka food and re-examined the images of working Hakka women in the kitchen. In addition, Peng constructed the cultural symbols which represent Hakka people’s daily life (such as drying Mooli slices on the ground) and formed a Hakka identity through ritualizing these actions. The last production, *Cat Walk Awakening*, significantly subverted the depreciated and subordinated images portrayed in the mountain songs and traditional Hakka operas of subaltern women’s sexuality. In the following part, I will discuss the above mentioned performances in two categories; the cultural hybridity of post-colonialism and post-colonial feminist theatre practice.

Critical Hybridity to Represent the Hakka Cultural Subjectivity

In Chapter two, I illustrated that the historical colonial circumstance of Taiwan formed its specific hybrid culture and I have used the concept of hybridity to explore the way that Hakka culture was employed in the Hakka Contemporary Theatre productions of female directors in the 1980s and 1990s. In this section, I will expand the concept of hybridity while critically analyzing the hybrid subjectivity of Hakka culture found in Peng's Hakka oral history performances. I will also explore how Hakka culture interacted with other cultures in Taiwan. Through considering the postcolonial situation of Taiwan, Chen Kuan-Hsing pointed out that, 'Imperialism has indeed produced hybrid subjectivities, which made impossible a return to an uncontaminated self. And it has further pushed the world structure toward neoliberal globalization, deepening the hybridity of already hybrid subject' (2010: 100). He then offered the concept of 'critical syncretism', which can be interpreted as the cultural strategy of identification for different colonized oppressed subjectivities:

to actively interiorize elements of others into the subjectivity of the self so as to move beyond the boundaries and divisive positions historically constructed by colonial power relations in the form of patriarchy, capitalism, racism, and heterosexism. Becoming others is to become female, aboriginal, homosexual working class and the poor. Critical syncretism is a cultural strategy of identification for subaltern subject groups'. (Chen Kuan-Hsing, 2010: 99)

According to Chen, 'becoming others' is never to identify oneself with the privileged powerful class but rather with the subalterns or marginal minorities. Chen's concept of critical syncretism concerned subaltern subject groups' formation of a critical cultural minority hybridity rather than a binding of colonial cultural elements.

The Uhan Shii Theatre Group's oral history performances involve a combination of

traditional culture elements from different ethnic groups and modern theatrical forms to present a unique 'subaltern' performing aesthetic. Their performances fully reflect the hybrid character of postcolonial Taiwan. Wang Wan-Jung analyzed the Uhan Shii Theatre Group's production *Taiwanese Confession III—The Story of Taiwanese Men* and suggests that it demonstrates the cultural hybridity of Taiwanese men and women under Japanese colonialism and KMT's nationalism:

Her (Peng Ya-Ling) 'unique Taiwanese' quality is especially reflected in the hybridity of her acting training and directing style. It is fused with indigenous Taiwanese theatre aesthetics, Chinese traditional theatre concepts and Western experimental theatre forms. Nevertheless, this hybridity reflected in her theatre works also contains a strong awareness of the need to seek and sustain her cultural subjectivity. (2006 a: 80)

Wang regarded Peng's oral history performances as the result of the hybridity of Taiwanese culture. I argue that Peng not only utilized this cultural hybridity, but extended it in line with the concept of critical syncretism to emphasize oppressed, silent, marginal aspects of Taiwanese society. The Hakka ethnic group was forced into a marginalised position during the colonial period as a minority and the Hakka people unavoidably are still facing the crisis of losing their culture, language, and even ethnic identity nowadays:

Hakka people consider themselves a minority in the linguistic, historical, political and economical aspect. On the one hand, this is because Hakka people from the smallest population group in Taiwan; on the other hand, Hakka people in the past suffered similar unfair cultural and political treatment under the KMT regime as the Hokkien people. (Wang Fu-Chang, 2003:140)

Confronting both the linguistic and cultural minority situation of the Hakka ethnic group (Hsiao A-Chin, 2000:4; Shih Cheng-Feng, 2008:77; Yang Chang-Cheng,

2007:406), The Uhan Shii Theatre Group's *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here* utilized Hakka elements to break their silence and to actively conduct a cultural de-colonization movement for Hakka people in Taiwan.

In the opinion of Wang, the Uhan Shii Theatre Group used Hakka actors to tell their life stories in Hakka language and to sing a number of Hakka mountain songs as a concrete representation in theatrical form 'to balance the oppression of the minority during the nationalist period, to re-write history through body, voice, and language, and to reverse the marginal position they held in the eyes of the colonial authorities. This can also be viewed as a positive intervention of contemporary social reconstruction through theatre practice' (Personal translation. 2004:84).

On the other hand, I would like to emphasize that Peng critically combined different performing styles and Hakka elements with the oral history performances and Hakka music to form a hybrid performance. This hybrid Hakka culture she displayed truly reflected the post-colonial Hakkaness of Hakka culture in Taiwan. Firstly, taking the hybridity of performers' ethnic background as an example, 80% of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group's performers are community-based Hakka female elders, but mixed with Hokkien participants. In *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here*, actors related their experiences as adopted daughters; however, two group members, Pi-Chu and Hsi-Yen, are not Hakkas but they shared relevant adoptive experiences. They both confessed their adoptive experiences in Hakka language to represent a collective memory of Taiwanese women. (Appendix of script offered by Peng Ya-Ling) In addition, *The Smell in the Kitchen* also combined performers from different ethnic backgrounds:

In *The Smell in the Kitchen*, some of the performers are married into Hakka families, some are Hokkien people who cannot speak any Hakka language,

and some are Hakka members from different Hakka villages. For instance, the word 'ice bar' is pronounced in different accents in Hakka language. Even people who speak Sixian accent, who live in different areas or come from different families, would speak in a different way. (Tu Shu-Fang, 2005)

The above extract illustrates that the ethnic hybridity of the performers not only put an end to the identification of oneself as a member of a singular ethnic identity (namely Japanese or Chinese) in the eyes of the colonizer but equally accepted group members from different ethnic backgrounds to promote the acceptance of a heterogeneous culture.

Secondly, the language used on stage in Hakka oral history performances is another example of hybridity. In terms of proportion of stage language in *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here*, the main language was Hakka but the dialogue was critically combined with a little (20% approximately) Mandarin and Hokkien. Related to this Peng said, 'I regret that the language of Taiwanese theatre is either translated or fragmented; the Mandarin or mother tongue of my generation is not spoken fluently enough to profoundly express our emotions' (1996b). I argue that the hybrid language in Peng's productions was used as a narrative strategy to reflect the post-coloniality of the Hakka culture. In the play *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here*, Peng arranged a Mandarin narrator to introduce the history of Hakka and the background of each performer as a bridge between the Hakka cast and their non-Hakka-speaking audience. She explained that the usage of this Mandarin narrator was to 'create the space for Hakka to communicate with other non-Hakka people in society so that they can somehow break the closed nature within their communities in Taiwan' (Peng cited in Wang, 2006b: 59). Wang regarded Peng's strategy as an effective way to destabilise the fixed and essentialized Hakka identity in the present as well as to open up and

increase communications in public between different ethnic communities in Taiwan (2006b:59). In my opinion, the narrative strategy of speaking Mandarin not only de-essentialized the Hakka culture but also indicated the post-coloniality of contemporary Hakka theatre. Strategically using the powerful official language, Mandarin, Peng enabled the Hakka culture to cross the boundaries of identity and to eliminate the limitation on identity enforced by the colonial authorities.

Similarly, in the play *Taiwanese Confession X: When Spring Comes*, the Hakka elders again not only spoke Hakka language to represent heavy farming, the household tasks of daily life, and the experiences of adopted daughters, but combined it with Mandarin when they discussed the issue of 'speaking Hakka language'. Again, Peng critically used a hybrid language to draw attention to the phenomenon that most of the Hakka young generation has lost the ability to speak Hakka during the single linguistic education policy of colonialism (the use of Japanese only during the period of colonization by Japan and Mandarin only during the KMT regime) and the tendency to speak English under neo-colonisation. In the scene 'Is my child a Hakka?', five Hakka mothers appeared from left stage and gathered around a basket which was filled with longan fruit; each of them picked up one longan and said lines about the situation that their sons or daughters can speak fluent Mandarin or English but cannot speak Hakka. The longan symbolized the mother tongue or culture which failed to pass to the younger generation. After this scene, the stage went black and then, the whole cast slowly stepped in and formed a line diagonally across the stage, and passed along sections of bamboo. When every actor received the tube-shaped bamboo, the first Hakka woman started to pull a red string from a ball of wool and twined the red string on the bamboo in her hand, uttering a short monologue about speaking Hakka; then, the rest of the actors repeated her action and shared their individual

experiences one by one. As a result, every section of bamboo was intertwined by the red string. In this scene, most of the Hakka actors spoke Hakka, while two performers spoke Mandarin to share their experience about speaking Hakka:

Wen-Rui: Taiwan was colonized by Japan in my childhood, I have to speak Japanese and can only speak very few Hakka words with my mother at home (spoken in Mandarin), such as 'eat' or 'washing' (spoken in Hakka).

.....

Xiao-Jian: My parents usually speak Hakka and it is a pity that I can only listen to Hakka but cannot speak. This is because people around me usually talk in Mandarin. But I feel grateful that I can listen and understand Hakka language (Spoken in Mandarin). (DVD of *When Spring Comes*)

In the above extract, the seventy-year-old Wen-Rui spoke rather broken Mandarin combined with Hakka terms to share his language experience; the hybridity of his spoken language indicated the oppressed, colonized position of the Hakka ethnic group in Taiwanese history. In addition, the director consciously arranged for the young Hakka man, Xiao-Jian, to speak Mandarin to express his mother-tongue experience: he could understand but not speak Hakka, but he still showed confidence in his ability to listen to Hakka rather than regretting his inability to speak it. I argue that the hybrid language, in one aspect, reflected the new dynamic energy of post-colonial Hakka culture which corresponds with what Homi. K. Bhabha's comments that, 'hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialect that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty' (1996:58). In another aspect, the director did not ask the Hakka performer, Xiao-Jian, to say his lines in Hakka; however, she deliberately asked him to use the dominant language, Mandarin, to affirm his ability to understand Hakka. The operation of hybrid language here crosses the narrow, essentialized definition of Hakka identity (which means only Hakka people who can speak Hakka language can be identified as Hakka). The director Peng explains as

follows:

We always believe that the single identifying feature of the Hakka ethnic group is language. Without the Hakka language, the Hakka people are no longer Hakkas. The language is the only connection between Hakka people. However, in my point of view, I cannot speak Hakka but I seriously identify myself as a Hakka. So, what I want to see at the end of *Taiwanese Confession X: When Spring Comes*, is that, when actors return to their hometowns, they might discover their heritage of 'Hakka', which might not only be the language, but could be something more. (Personal Interview with Peng Ya-Ling, cited by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005)

Moreover, the action of twining the red string on the bamboo sections can be seen as a healing ritual which comforts for the loss of Hakka and re-connects the younger generation with their cultural heritage - that Hakka identity could be the Hakka language, culture, or spirit.

Finally, I would like to point out that the most noticeable hybridity of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group's Hakka oral history performances and musicals is the hybrid accent of Hakka. The members of the Hakka cast are migrants from different villages all over Taiwan to Taipei city. Therefore, the Hakka accents they speak are different.²⁹ The quotation mentioned above (see p.152) suggests that, even though people may speak the same Hakka accent, those who live in different areas or come from different families would speak in a different way. In the play *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here*, performers' Hakka language used on stage combined Sixian and Hailu accents; in addition all the Uhan Shii Theatre Group's productions displayed a hybridity of Hakka accents. The Hakka elders were encouraged to speak the accent they were

²⁹ According to Ku Kuo-Shun, the Hakka language of Taiwan is used in the north areas such as Taoyuan, Hsinchu, Miaoli and the south areas, Liudui, Pingtung and Meinung, part of Ilan, Hualien, and Taitung. There are four main accents of the Hakka language in Taiwan: the Sixian accent, spoken by people in Miaoli and Pingtung Liudui; the Hailu accent, spoken in Hsinchu; the Raoping accent, spoken in Jungli city, Taoyuan County and Jhuolan city, Miaoli County; and finally, the Shaoan accent, spoken in Yunlin. (My personal translation, 2005:43)

familiar with and did not need to speak a common accent. I argue that the usage of hybrid Hakka accents might illustrate Peng's strategy of Hakka identity: to equally treat and accept their differences from each other and to show their differences as neither high nor low. As a result, the hybridity of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group's Hakka Contemporary Theatre did not pursue an original 'pure' Hakka culture but rather consciously applied traditional Hakka elements and reflectively internalized the 'others' to critically display the hybrid Hakkaness. Such hybrid Hakkaness might present the current cultural subjectivity of the Hakka ethnic group under the post-colonial circumstance of Taiwan. In addition, it may also correspond to Chen Kuan-Hsing's comment which reminds us that: 'the meaning of de-colonisation is not seeking for a pure, uncontaminated subjectivity but 'removing' (Quchu) the narrow, singular, enforced thinking structure in the process of colonization to release the emotional reactionary in the history' (Personal translation. 2006:176).

The Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group presented a creative strategy to offer a voice to the people in a marginal position and to identify with the minorities. The hybrid subjectivity of the Hakka culture they presented broke through the boundaries of language, Hakka accent and region, and critically used contemporary performing style and the dominant official language, Mandarin, to subvert the long term oppression which forced the Hakka ethnic group to become invisible. Through representing the hybridity of Hakka culture, the Uhan Shii Theatre Group enabled Hakka people to express its cultural subjectivity.

Practice of Post-colonial Feminism

In the last section, I discussed Hakka women's circumstance in Taiwan through a postcolonial perspective: As members of the Hakka ethnic group, Hakka women have

experienced imperialism and colonial periods and gradually became the silent subaltern women under the oppression of patriarchy and colonisation. In addition, I have drawn attention to the postcolonial feminist criticisms that gender should be understood as operating in tandem with the pressures of race (especially the relationship between colonizer and colonized), class, location, and cultural specificities.

Before examining the relationship between postcolonial feminism and the Uhan Shii Theatre Group's Hakka female oral history performances, I would like to briefly discuss the employment of postcolonial feminism by Spivak: seeking to develop a strategy of reading through re-examining the text of Sati (widow sacrifice) that will speak to the non-elite or subaltern women in India. Spivak, in her book, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of The Vanishing Present* (1999), attempted to offer the subaltern rewriting of the social text of Sati-suicide to explore how the Hindu patriarchal code converged with colonialism's narratives of Indian culture to efface all women's voices. She commented that, in the discourse of the reformers, Sati was perceived as heathen ritual or superstition and was recorded as crime. In the case of widow self-immolation, ritual is not being redefined as patriarchy but as crime. Spivak demonstrated how the concept of female freedom of choice was manipulated by both colonial authorities and the indigenous colonial elites and concluded the subaltern woman's situation in India is situated between patriarchy and development (1999:295-296). However, Benita Parry pointed out that 'From the discourse of *Sati* Spivak derives large, general statements on woman's subject constitution/ object formation in which the subaltern woman is conceived as a homogenous and coherent category, and which culminate in a declaration on the success of her planned disarticulation' (1995:37). The above discussion of references to postcolonial

feminism in literature may assume that even postcolonial women intellectuals attempts to rewrite subaltern women as subjects, so as to give them a voice in history may have fallen into the trap of interpreting such women as a 'homogenous category', whose conceptualization was seen by Parry as another form of epistemic violence or exploitation. Young responded to Parry's query with a discussion of the historical strategies of post-colonial Indian theorists,

Hostile commentators on Spivak's and, particularly, Bhabha's work have typically complained of their abstractness or lack of historical and material grounding (Parry 1994b). Such commentaries themselves tend to present such work as if it operated in a historical void and arrived fully formed from the clouds, paying scant attention to its Indian context. Spivak's and Bhabha's work is best understood, like that of the subaltern Studies group, in relation to problematics of Indian intellectual culture and its political history. (2001:350)

Based on the above discussion, in the following I will discuss, firstly, whether Hakka women's oral history performances could avoid the epistemic violence illustrated in the works of either local Taiwanese postcolonial intellectuals or western feminists and truly represent Hakka women themselves as subject and, secondly, the postcolonial characteristics involved in Peng's productions.

In the section 'Uhan Shii Theatre Group's Theatre Enactment of Postcolonial Feminism', Wang Wan-Jung (2006b) comprehended postcolonial feminist criticism as dismantling the intertwined relations between imperialism, colonialism and patriarchy to reveal multiple oppressions and to differentiate the multiple voices of women in feminism. Thus, she pointed out that Uhan Shii's female representation of female oral history can be considered in Spivak's terms, the subalterns speaking for themselves, which 'foregrounds a uniquely Taiwanese voice of postcolonial feminism and thus avoids the western feminists' epistemic supremacy imposed and assumed by race'

(2006:68). Wang further analyzed the female oral history of *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here* in three aspects: firstly, this play reveals the hidden tradition of adopted daughters in Hakka history for the first time; secondly, the production portrays the process of how Hakka women break free from their domestic constraints and economic dependency and become the main working force in their family; thirdly, the circling parade in the last scene projects these Hakka women's memories into the auditorium. She thought these aspects not only transformed the fixed stereotype of Hakka women and disrupted the patriarchal narratives to recreate their modern identity, but reflected again Taiwanese women's unique strategy of combining resistance and negotiation against patriarchy (2006:75-76, 116-118). I argue that Hakka women's oral history as performed by themselves can be seen as a strategy employed by Peng to avoid what Parry refers to as the exploitation by the native intellectuals or artists: Hakka women, non-elites in Taiwan, appeared in theatre to tell their life stories to prevent epistemic violence by native intellectuals.

In the scene 'The adopted People', the seventy-three-year-old Jiao-Mei sat in the middle stage and told the audience her experience of witnessing the adoption of her four sisters:

In my family, I have a total of ten brothers and sisters. My eldest sister was sent to others as a child-adopted wife; if she was alive she would be eighty-six year old now. My second sister was also sent to others as wife in her childhood and she would be seventy-eight years old now. The third sister was taken by others when she was one year old; she would be seventy-six years old if she was alive. My fourth sister was also taken in her childhood and still lives well in Hsinchu. She is seventy-four year old now. I was going to be sent away when I was a child but fortunately my father came back home and stopped this. These adopted girls are blamed, abused, disrespected and they suffered their whole lives. (DVD19:59-21:45)

In the meanwhile, when Jiao-Mei was talking, four Hakka women performed adopted mothers and took away the infants she held in her arms and then they stood in different areas of the stage and shouted at the infants. The representation of adopted daughters in the play revealed the objectification of Hakka women by the colonial economic structure of Taiwan and patriarchal exploitation: which means Hakka women were treated as objects to be exchanged and traded. By contrast, Hakka males (such as Jiao-Mei's brothers) would not be sent away.

On the other hand, the play showed the silent position of Hakka women under the patriarchal hegemony. After Jiao-Mei's monologue, the other Hakka female actresses held the infants individually and stood on different areas to share the similar experiences about how their own mothers or relatives were adopted. Then, all the female cast exchanged infants in silence on stage and raised their left hands together and then slowly pressed the left palm on the infants' face and all turned their face to the left to avoid facing the infants. Finally, they all turned their back on the audience while holding the infants tight (DVD 24:10-25:46). Gilbert and Tompkins suggested that 'by mapping out the areas of women's subjugation and invisibility in the colonial situation', postcolonial feminist theatre attempts to accomplish their refiguring of gender roles/ identities (1996:120). The silent representation of the daughters' adoption could be regarded as an indirect way of criticizing Hakka women's invisible status under 'colonized patriarchy' or patriarchy adopted from the colonizer by the Hakka men. After the silent scene, one Hakka female elder started to sing the mountain song, 'Adopted Daughters Song', with the lyrics written by her, to break the silence and express her thoughts, advising all parents to be concerned about their children. At the end of this scene, the director deliberately directed the Hakka women to pass a long white strip of cloth to each other and then to Jiao-Mei to wrap a little

girl, who symbolized the adopted daughters, as a healing ritual to comfort the collective traumas of Taiwanese adopted daughters. I argue that although Hakka women restored their status by telling their life-story, it is pity that they were unable to reflect on the theatrical representation of their adopted-daughter history and to further re-examine the unequal power relationship between their adopted-daughter experiences and colonized patriarchy. In other words, the performers lost the opportunity to hold a position of considerable colonial power in Hakka culture.

Gilbert and Tompkins analyzed Nigerian and South African feminist theatre and suggested the following as characteristics of postcolonial feminist theatre: mapping out the area of women's subjugation and invisibility in the colonial situation, positioning women in power, centralizing women, representing memories and rejecting existing gender-stereotypes (1996:120-123). In Peng's female oral history performances one may notice her centralizing women as narrative strategy: Hakka women speak for themselves as subject. For instance, in the play *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here*, these Hakka women narrated experiences of adopted daughters, farming difficulties and poor living condition by themselves; and in the play *Taiwanese Confession X: When Spring Comes* they represented the heavy domestic tasks of Hakka women's daily lives and the difficulty of borrowing money for education.

Chiu Kuei-Fen studied the novel *Mystery Garden* (2006), written by a feminist novelist Li Ang, through a postcolonial perspective and pointed out the negotiation between female native experience and political colonial relationship in Taiwan involved in the novel. Chiu illustrated the ways in which the novel depicted how the process of the construction of gender identity was influenced by the specific ethnic, historical experience:

During the dominant colonisation, Hokkien women frequently witnessed their closest men (father, husband, son or lover) were symbolically castrated; thus, 're-forming Taiwanese men's dignity' became a way for the Hokkien women to sub-consciously get rid of the burden of the historical memories which influenced the construction of their gender identities. The female role of the novel, *Zhu Ying-Hong*, carried a heavy burden of historical memory and was keen to find an ideal masculine 'Taiwanese man'. (Personal translation. Chiu Kuei-Fen, 1997: 95)

The above text-study explains how the colonial politics and histories influenced the construction of Hokkien women's gender identity. I propose that the representation of Hakka women's experiences in Peng's productions indicated the unequal power relationship in the Hakka ethnic group; however, it does not further portray the interactions between the patriarchy and Taiwanese colonisation Hakka women undertaken.

Taking the play *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here* as an example, the director criticized and subverted Hakka women's unconscious adherence to the concept of marriage of Hakka men that Hakka women should marry Hakka men: this served to re-emphasise Hakka male-centered thinking. In a scene related to this topic of marriage, five Hakka women surrounded a Hakka man who held a bouquet. Firstly, each of them walked up to him and said lines about their mother's reminders to them, such as 'mother said that, speaking Hakka, marrying a Hakka man will be easier' or 'my mother said I cannot marry a Mainlander or a Hokkien men, but I have to marry a Hakka man'. Then, a second time they walked toward the man but this time with lines such as 'if he is a Hakka I would not consider marriage' or 'I do not like Hakka men'. Afterwards, one of the Hakka women accepted the Hakka man's bouquet and stood by him. At the same time, the rest of the Hakka women again surrounded them and repeated their unwillingness to marry a Hakka man (DVD 31:03-32:43). I argue that,

although the female performers were portraying women empowered to refuse the traditional marriage concept, that it is best for Hakka women marry Hakka men, these women failed to reveal the power relationship between colonisation and ‘colonized patriarchy’ behind this concept.

The colonized experience of the Hakka ethnic group in Taiwan has influenced Hakka males: they reproduced the power relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in their marriage to consolidate their status in the family. Chang Tien-Wan studied the Hakka literature and pointed out that the Hakka male writers portrayed the power clash during the process of colonization, when Hakka men had to face political and economic marginalization and had to lead the family, to emphasize the difficult position of men and to enhance their self-esteem (2004:100). Similarly, when Hakka men were in competition with mainlander men (who usually had the advantage of leadership) or Hokkien men (who usually had the advantage of number), they forced Hakka women to marry Hakka men to strengthen their Hakka male status and this reinforced the dominant power relationship during colonization. In the play, although Hakka women directly refused to do this, they failed to portray how Hakka women suffered from both colonial domination and colonized patriarchal exploitation in marriage.

I propose that the current production of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group, *Cat Walk Awakening* (2009), intended to challenge the subordinate status of Hakka women explicated through labor by the colonizer and the patriarchal perspective of the colonized, and to represent Hakka women’s sexual liberty in order to challenge the Hakka female stereotypes found in traditional Hakka mountain songs or Tea-picking Operas. Peng demonstrated her creative concept, as follows:

The term ‘cat walk awakening’ in Hakka language means the sexual sound in the period of cats’ estrus. We want to subvert the vulgar impression of the Hakka mountain songs and reverse the imagined view of women as objects in the male gaze and make it a view of the liberation of female sexuality to explore women’s bodily sensations. (Personal translation. Peng Ya-Ling, 2009)

Cat Walk Awakening was different from Peng’s previous productions. It did not use oral history as main creative direction. The dramatic structure of the play did not have a central story and major characters, but was only composed of a number of extracts: from Hakka literature written by a Hakka male writer during the period of colonization by Japan, modern poems by Hakka female poets, oral histories of the sexual experience of the Hakka female cast members and traditional Hakka mountain songs sung by Hakka female singers. In addition, Peng intentionally used modern dress, modern stage design (three rectangular frames approximately 170cm high), and stylized body movements to reinterpret traditional Hakka mountain songs and literature and to display Hakka female’s private sexual sensations and experience. I will analyze the post-colonial characteristics of *Cat Walk Awakening* in three aspects: her criticism of the Hakka female model constructed in male-centered Hakka literature, her subversion of the flirtatious images of Hakka women depicted in mountain songs, and her construction of the positive sexuality and gender identities of subaltern women.

1. Peng’s criticism of the Hakka female model constructed in male-centered Hakka literature

In the discussion of women in theatre in contemporary Ireland, Rebecca Pelan demonstrated that, ‘it has been the crucial work undertaken in recent years within both feminist and post-colonial studies, in particular, that has irrevocably exposed the

processes by which the marginality of women and minority cultures is maintained' (1999:244). Pelan suggested that 'the antagonisms between the various strands of feminism and post-colonialism hold particular importance for the critical discussion of Irish women's writing' (1999:244). I agree with Pelan's insistence on re-examining Irish women's writings on strands of feminism and post-colonialism. Similarly, combing critical discussions of feminism and post-colonialism could lead to profound insight into the marginalized situation of Hakka women and their double oppression. Therefore, I propose that the play *Cat Walk Awakening* showed the attempt to explore the marginality of Hakka women in Taiwanese society and change their subaltern position. For example, in the first scene, *Hakka Women*, three actresses individually interacted with three rectangular frames through stylized movements to express the marginal position of Hakka women in the past:

Ding-Fan: Hakka women did not have the right to make decisions in love or marriage, despite the sexual liberation described in the Hakka mountain songs. The relationship between Hakka men and women was still unequal. Hakka women's whole life was still restricted by their family.

Qing-Mei: 'A-mei' (sister) had her name in the daily life but she lost it after death and was named 'Ru-ren'. (Script and DVD offered by the Uhan Shii Theatre Group)

In the above scene, Qing-Mei stood in front of the frame and spoke her lines, and the other two female performers stood in the middle of their frames, raised their right hand and held the right side of each frame to symbolize the limited circumstance of Hakka women. According to Chang Tien-Wan, in historical documents Ru-ren was a title for government officials' wives. All Hakka women were given the title Ru-ren after they died to show they were honest women; in contrast, the title 'Ru-ren' also assimilated all Hakka women in one category at the same time deprived them of their

female subjectivity (2004:64-65). In the play, the female cast members drew attention to this loss of identity by rotating the three rectangular frames 180 degrees (only showing audiences the sides of the frames) and then stepping outside the frames to symbolize their breaking out of this social restriction.

In addition, the director critically applied extracts of Hakka literatures written by a male Hakka author, Chung Li-He, during the Japanese period of colonisation, to expose Hakka women's double exploitation by the colonizer and the patriarchal perspective of the colonized. At the end of the first scene, one female performer, wearing a pink dress, went on stage and recited a piece of Chung's novel in the Hakka language as a short monologue. The excerpt depicted a female Hakka peasant who returned home after finishing her daily farming tasks, her body sweaty, hair disheveled, and face dirty-fierce. She smiled at her husband when she saw him; the husband (indicates the writer himself) could not bear to see her smile and turned his head. While the actress narrated, three female performers stood behind her, in front of three rectangular frames, and looked at their right palms, gathering together (DVD obtained from the Uhan Shii Theatre Group).

Gilbert and Tompkins have pointed out the double oppression of woman's bodies in postcolonial feminist theatre: 'In some instances, women's bodies are not only exploited by the colonizer but also reappropriated by the colonized patriarchy as part of a political agenda...' (1996:213). Similarly, Hakka women's bodies are not only exploited by the colonizer as labor resources; their 'labor images' have been depicted by Hakka writers as a narrative strategy to oppose colonialism. In terms of the representation of Hakka literature in this scene, the female cast wore modern dress, to challenge the image of Hakka women as labourers, and, by staring at their palms, they tried to subvert the invisible political image recorded by the colonized writer as part

of a political agenda. Furthermore, after the female actress finished her monologue, the other three actresses looked at each other and repeated the last line, 'I cannot bear to see and bear to ask' three times. The fourth time, they walked toward the audience and repeated in a whisper. In contrast to the line, 'I cannot bear to see and bear to ask', the female actresses 'look at' and 'speak' to each other, and the audience, in the last time challenges the male gaze of male Hakka writers and the stereotypical images of Hakka women labourers, which could be interpreted as the act of regaining Hakka women's right to speak.

2. Peng's subversion of the flirtatious images of Hakka women described in Hakka mountain songs

In *Cat Walk Awakening*, Peng employed a modern performing style to re-interpret traditional Hakka mountain songs and break with negative impressions of Hakka mountain songs, which were categorized as 'evil' by colonizers and the colonized patriarchy. On this note, Peng has explained her avoidance of defining Hakka mountain songs according to standard male construct, 'In the Hakka mountain songs, these people want to liberate their bodies from tongues, release their sexuality and create energy apart from doing farm tasks' (Personal Interview with Peng, 2008).

The play's female cast not only wore modern dresses (rather than traditional Hakka blue customs) and sang Hakka mountain songs accompanied by live music by Erhu, but also performed stylized body movements. By representing Hakka mountain songs using a modern performing style, the director attempted to distort negative, flirtatious images of Hakka women and reflect emotions between lovers in more positive ways. In the ninth scene, three female actors sat at the front of the right stage and recited lyrics from two mountain songs. The first song depicted a boat floating freely in the

lake, indicating a sex scene, in which the boat became an analogy for Hakka men, and water became an analogy for Hakka women. The second song recalled the process of sex, portraying it as a chess game. I propose that the representation of Hakka mountain songs through modern performing styles (in contrast to traditional Hakka theatre) and theatrical body movement be seen from a postcolonial feminist theatre perspective as a challenge to women's body politics:

The challenge for postcolonial dramatists - both male and female - is to refuse such body politics (the idea that she is her body) while re-inscribing all theatricalised bodies with more enabling markers of gender. (Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, 1996:221)

As the lyrics were recited, three pairs of performers stood in three rectangular frames. First, they held the sides of the frames together and looked at each other, and then they lightly shook the frames up and down, to form harmonious pictures of boats being rowed. Utilizing movements of modern theatre to positively portray the love scene of traditional Hakka mountain songs, the theatrical bodies of women in this scene distorted the flirtatious image of Hakka women in Hakka mountain songs.

3. Peng's construction of female sexuality and the gender identities of Hakka women

The actresses in *Cat Walk Awakening* not only re-interpreted Hakka mountain songs, but also restored the subjectivity of Hakka women by liberating and showing their sexuality. Peng discovered during rehearsals with Hakka female cast members, 'If Hakka women want to be capable of everything, they have to imitate Hakka men, rather than keeping Hakka women characteristics' (Personal Interview with Peng, 2008). Therefore, Peng attempted to portray Hakka women's sexuality in a way that further explored the female qualities of Hakka women. In the scene 'Things Around', three women shared their experience of sexual pleasure in the daily life by interacting

with three rectangular frames. Two Hakka female actors showed how they got sexual pleasure by climbing a bamboo pole and playing on a swing:

Qing-Mei: Climbing the pole with naked feet, when I reached the highest point, my two legs clamped tightly and my bladder was full an excitement. Suddenly, I could only stay at that point. After a while, having taken a huge breath...I slid down, and my whole body was covered with goose bumps.

Shu-Zhi: ... Every time, when I played with the swing and pushed it forward, there was a cool breeze blowing up from my feet, just like someone's hand gently stroking my body. When I pushed backward and closed my eyes, there was another strong breeze blowing toward my heart. Wow ... so great! (Script obtained from the Uhan Shii Theatre Group)

When an actress Qing-Mei narrated childhood sexual sensation, she held the right side of the frame and then tilted the frame toward the audience with both legs, clipping it and crawling toward the audience and then slipping back to the starting position. Meanwhile, the other two actresses stood in their frames, with both hands and feet tightly gripping the right sides of the frames, up and down. Similarly, actress Shu-Zhi matched her lines with her own forward and backward swinging motion within her frame, while the other two performers stood in the frame and gripped it while twisting their bodies gently. It was not hard to see that Peng tried to liberate Hakka women's bodies and emphasize their own sexual sensations in front of the audience.

However, I argue that efforts to liberate Hakka women's bodies in the above scene may still identify Hakka women with the female body politics of western feminism. Can the unique qualities of Hakka women be displayed while transforming their childhood experiences into sexual liberation? Portraying the 'female sexuality' of Hakka women, as a directing strategy, may still fall into the trap of accepting the concept of singular sexual identity criticized by postcolonial feminists: in other words,

it may replicate the concept of liberating the female body to establish sexual autonomy, but remain unable to face Hakka women's sexual oppression and the difficulty of sexual liberation. Considering the colonial experiences of Hakka women, their gender identity was intertwined with race, class, and the colonized patriarchy, and, assuming this, it would be complicated to express. However, in the above scene, Hakka female actors were simply trying to form sexual identities or bodily sensations of their childhood experiences, so as to portray the liberation of their bodies and their public resistance to sexual oppression. In so doing, they again strengthened the sexual ideology of first-world women, rather than trying to explore the complexity of Hakka women's sexual identities in postcolonial Taiwan.

In the last part of this section, I would like to discuss the representation of memory space in *The Smell in the Kitchen*. This play was a Hakka musical that combined modern and traditional Hakka music and was performed by female actors. It depicted the fictional story of a Hakka girl who married into a Hakka village and whose dowry was only bottles of pickles. She was laughed at for lacking cooking skills, at first, but became popular for cooking new dishes using pickles, in the end. The play inserted the most memorable Hakka foods into female actor's memories, each of whom, at the end of the play, shared one of the most unforgettable dishes made by their mothers. The director chose to focus on the most inconspicuous private female space in Taiwan and transformed it into a public theatrical space, to explore the meaning of Hakka female space, which had been ignored for a long time. In the following, I will focus on how the space represented in the play transformed memories to enact cultural identity.

On each side of the stage in *The Smell in the Kitchen* was hung a huge photograph of Hakka architectures. The middle of the stage was empty. Some flag-poles, made by

colorful flowers pattern, served as separated screens. The female Hakka cast danced, sang, and performed in the empty space, which was not decorated as a realistic Hakka kitchen, but was used as an imagined space. Kevin Hetherington suggested:

Looking at the relationship between space and identity will aid our understanding of the nature of what has been described as an emerging ludic and transgressive politics, acts of resistance, and creation of alternative lifestyles through which these Others ritually produce their identities in Other places. (1998:108)

In this context, I propose that *The Smell in the Kitchen* represented female memory in a visible space. Through ritualized movement, actors transformed daily life experiences containing remembered Hakka symbols, into a visible space for Hakka cultural identity. In the scene 'Drying Mooli', for example, four Hakka women took bamboo sieves filled with mooli pieces on stage, and knelt down in different areas of the stage, and set the mooli on the ground, to dry them. At the same time, other three Hakka women sat on the left side of the back stage, cutting mooli into small pieces and putting them in bamboo sieves. Actors dried mooli pieces using slow ritual, serious movements (DVD 35:47-38:20). Peng has explained that her intention was to highlight these symbols of Hakka life:

Why I want to establish this ritual is because I know it is a very important ritual in Hakka people's lives, and it does not exist nowadays. Thus, drying mooli pieces becomes symbolic of daily life, precisely symbolic. To what extent? Once, we rehearsed in the Lin An-Tai Historic Residence, which is a traditional Hokkien people's house. A tourist guide introduced this house to a group of visitors and saw us. He immediately said, 'You see; Hakka people are drying mooli pieces.' To people who are not from a Hakka ethnic background, this is a significant symbol. (Personal Interview with Peng, 2008)

Through the rituals of Hakka people's daily lives, the play showed specific and

multiple meanings in Hakka culture. In 'Drying Mooli', the stage became a space for remembering rural Hakka life, and both dried pieces of mooli and bamboo sieves were displayed as symbols of this life. Furthermore, these symbols of daily life were transformed into symbols of the Hakka culture through performers' ritualized actions. The drying of mooli, in one respect, created a space in which for Hakka audiences could recall their memories; in another respect, it constructed a cultural identities of 'subaltern' Hakka women.

Similarly, the last scene in *The Smell in the Kitchen* was consisted of short monologues of every performer's memories. Each performer narrated and acted one of the Hakka dishes they most remembered their mothers cooking (e.g. rice-ball soup, fried eggs with mooli pieces, fried rice, dried fish soup). During the last actor's monologue, every actor held a big plate filled with vegetables and fruits with both hands, slowly formed a half circle, and ended by bending forward, toward the audience (see Figure 6). The director, again, constructed a memory space, and the ritualized displaying of food in front of audiences transformed the memory space into a space where Hakka culture could be experienced and imagined, to construct a collective Hakka cultural identity in daily life.



Figure 6 Ending Scene in *The Smell in the Kitchen*, 2005.
Source: The Uhan Shii Theatre Group

I argue that, through consciously applying Hakka mountain songs, as well as Hakka women's images in Hakka literature and specific symbols of Hakka rural life, Peng intended to subvert stereotypes about the Hakka culture, such as the notion that traditional Hakka mountain songs were vulgar, and challenge traditional images of Hakka women. Peng also used ritualized representation to construct Hakka cultural

identity and redefine the gender identity of Hakka women. She attempted to distort cultural and gender stereotypes and shed light on the multiple identities and experiences of Hakka people in their daily lives.

Section 3: The Shigang Mama Theatre Group and Images of Hakka Women

At midnight on the 21st September 1999, a 7.4 degree earthquake occurred in Taiwan (later called the 9-21 earthquake). This not only resulted in heavy damage to the environment including buildings as well as a number of deaths but also left survivors with deep spiritual trauma. Shigang, a village primarily inhabited by Hakka with approximately 15,000 inhabitants in total and located in the north-eastern part of Taichung County, lost 177 people (around 1.4% of the population). After the earthquake, in addition to emergency rescue, governmental and non-governmental groups entered the earthquake-stricken areas to launch a series of rebuilding works. In 2000, cultural and artistic practitioners also began to arrive to help with the earthquake relief work. Chung Chiao's Assignment Theatre³⁰ traveled to Shigang village in to launch a Shigang Women Theatre Workshop, which aimed to provide through theatre some relief from the economic, social and domestic pressure of re-constructing their homes. Eleven women (most of them Hakka) who participated in the theatre workshop founded the Shigang Mama Theatre Group which continues to exist nowadays.

In this section, I would like to explore the way in which a group of Hakka women attempted to create Hakka Contemporary Theatre from their suffering of earthquake

³⁰ According to Ron Smith (2005) and Ho Wen-Juan (2003), the artistic director and founder of Assignment Theatre in the 1993, Chung Chiao was introduced to the Philippine Educational Theatre Association, the Hong Kong People's Theatre Society through the Asian People's Theatre Network. His unique style of fusion theatre, a combination of Basic Integrated Theatre Arts Workshop (BITAW), the literary style of Magical Realism, and the practices of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, aimed to raise a community's critical consciousness regarding issues of oppression, to liberalize Taiwanese society, and create social changes.

experiences in post-colonial Taiwan. Firstly, I will review two major resources related to the Shigang Mama Theatre Group. Ho Wen-Juan (2003), in her Master's dissertation entitled 'From Kitchen to Stage: Exploring People's Theatre and Women's Empowerment', introduced theories and practices of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and how Assignment Theatre applied Boal's ideas about image theatre and forum theatre into Taiwanese society, using theatre as a language for the oppressed people. She also documented details of Shigang women's experiences in the workshop from 2000 to 2002 and how this theatrical experience motivated Hakka women to organize their theatre group and further establish the Shigang Fruits Cooperative in Shigang community to change women's status in public. Ron Smith's (2005) article, 'Magical Realism and Theatre of the Oppressed in Taiwan: Rectifying Unbalanced Realities with Chung Chiao's Assignment Theatre', examines Chung's fusion theories and people's theatre practices, taking as an example the 2003 production *River in the Heart* produced by the Shigang Mama Theatre Group.

I argue that, although both writers discuss the Shigang women and people's theatre experiences of Assignment Theatre, they mainly focus on how Chung utilized Boal's theories to provide a form of release to the oppressed people in Taiwan (including Shigang women). Therefore, both discourse contexts inevitably view the practices of people's theatre based on the theories of Chung and Boal as central to proving how their theatre training methods influenced Shigang women to change their own oppressed situation both in private (family) and in public (community). Taking Ho's thesis as an example, the second chapter explored the relevant literatures on Boal's theories and people's theatre; the following chapter briefly described Shigang women's experiences of the 9-21 earthquake and Ho's problem in changing her

research role as a researcher, from observer to participant; the fourth chapter demonstrates the relationship between Shigang women and the workshop held by Assignment Theatre. In my opinion, Ho's thesis arrangement may reflect an intellectual perspective, viewing 'knowledge' as the central authority, in relation to the performances of Shigang Mama Theatre Group and their social practices. In addition, both researchers chose to organize their discussion focusing firstly on Chung and his Assignment Theatre, then Boal's theatrical concepts, and finally the Shigang women. However, re-examining the process of discussions related to the Shigang women through a postcolonial perspective, again these working women of Taiwanese society fall silent within the circle of epistemic violence. Because of this, I intend to consciously choose the performances of the group and Li Hsiu-Hsun,³¹ the director and teacher of Shigang Mama Theatre Group, as narrative subjects to break out from the circle of epistemic violence of native intellectuals and to explore the specific life experiences of Shigang women and their subversion of Hakka women's oppressions into social practices as another contribution to post-colonial feminist theatre.

1. The Composition of Shigang Mama Theatre Group

The Shigang Mama Theatre Group is composed of eleven women: the majority of whom are female peasants. Half are Hakka women married to the Hakka men from Shigang; some are non-Hakka but also married to Shigang Hakka men. Their work is cultivating pears and doing daily domestic tasks. After the 9-21 Earthquake, Assignment Theatre traveled to Shigang to help alleviate earthquake-related stress by offering a series of people's theatre workshops named Shigang Women Theatre Workshop in 2000.

³¹ Li Hsiu-Hsun's original name was Li Yuen-Lan; she was a member of the Assignment Theatre. Li Hsiu-Hsun was referred Li Yuen-Lan in relevant documentations of the Shigang Mama Theatre Group. During my interview with her she informed me of this change of name.

The Shigang Women's Theatre Workshop was divided into four stages: *Mama on stage: Earthquake* (May-July 2000), *Mama on stage: Home* (Aug-Dec 2000), *Mama's Huo-Fang* (Feb-May 2001), and *River in the Heart* (June, 2001- Sep, 2002). In the first and second stages of the workshop, Chung merged together exercises, games, and dialogues to comfort women after the traumas of the earthquake and offer them an escape from the depression of living in a devastated area (Smith, 2005:113; Ho, 2003:45-46). The content of the workshop was based on the concept of Image Theatre referred to by Boal in *Poetics of the Oppressed*: participants are asked to express their opinions using only the bodies of the other participants and 'sculpting' with them a group of statues to concretise their opinions and feelings (1974:135).

Chung and Li were theatre instructors in the first and second stages of the workshop. Through applying Boal's Image Theatre, they asked these women to try the 'earthquake statues' exercise: each participant is asked to recall her memory of the 9-21 earthquake and, together, they use their bodies as statues to show images while the earthquake happened, then they add movements and dialogues in small groups. Earthquake statue exercises enabled Shigang women to express their situation through their bodies and to visualize their memories as well as sensations of the earthquake to further release the individual expression. According to Chang I-Chu (2002), Assignment Theatre also employed the exercise of Boal's Image Theatre ³² with the Shigang women to explore all kinds of possibilities to transform their difficulties into reality. For the women who participated in the workshop the earthquake not only destroyed their houses but also took away their hopes. In the exercise, one mother,

³² In *Poetics of the Oppressed*, Augusto Boal wrote about statue exercises of Image Theatre: starting with a grouping of statues to express the participant's opinions and feeling is the *actual image*, then through discussion and modifications by both participant and spectator-statues to show a second image which is the most acceptable to all is the *ideal image*. Finally, the participant is asked to show a *transitional image* to propose ways of changing the reality to the other. The transitional image is to stimulate participants to carry out the change, the transformation, and the revolution. (1974:135)

who held the position as sculptor, organized the other group members (as spectator-statues) to represent as *actual image* her and her family living in a temporary tent after the earthquake and having a poor, disordered life. Later, she presented her *ideal image*: building a new house. One of the spectator-stature participants tried to show a *transitional image* of four family members sitting together closely: she, as the mother, said to her daughter, ‘although the earthquake damaged our house, it brought us closer together as a family. Now we are crowded into a small tent but have lots to talk about’ (2002:152-153). Afterwards, the other participants presented their transitional images one after another through different silent statues. The exercise of transitional images encouraged Shigang mothers to positively confront their difficult living condition caused by the earthquake and helped them gradually to get rid of the identification as ‘victims’. Li, who was assistant director at that time, said the following:

Although it is half a year since the earthquake, these women could not find a proper way to release the fear in their mind. In the theatre space, in addition to playing theatre games to train their physical and mental concentration, the sharing of the earthquake experience enabled them to release their fear. These women felt their change through body experience in the workshop and, eventually, they want to organize a theatre group’. (Interview with Li Hsiu-Hsun, 2008)

When the first stage of the Shigang Women’s workshop ended, these women discovered that theatre became a platform to express their thoughts and feelings; thus, they decided to establish a theatre group. Considering most members are mothers, the theatre group was named ‘Shigang Mama Theatre Group’.

The main topic of the second stage of the workshop was life confessions, which combined disaster memories of Shigang women with cultural characteristics of the

Hakka village to encourage them to explore the meaning of 'home' through a survivor perspective. Similarly, the Shigang mothers attempted to review their life stories including marriage with Shigang Hakka men, raising children in Hakka families, and experiencing the earthquake as a representation of collective memory through practising Image Theatre. Both stages of the workshop have enabled these farming women, who have no theatrical experience, to develop their expression through their bodies, and, simultaneously, transformed their initially passive attitude into positive action. As a result, in August 2000 the Shigang Mama Theatre Group toured different earthquake-stricken areas and offered three performances to express their escape from the label of earthquake victim and their gratitude for the assistance from society to encourage other earthquake victims to overcome their traumas. In September, 2000, they officially registered the Shigang Mama Theatre Group as a long-term community theatre group.

In the third stage of the workshop, Assignment Theatre applied the theory of Forum Theatre³³ by Boal to encourage Shigang women to become aware of the social and gender oppression as a female in the Shigang community and to speak out for themselves through theatre performance. In the process of practicing Forum Theatre, these women were aware of the social conflict in relation to re-building the Hakka Huo-Fang³⁴ in their living circumstance. During the process of re-building the Hakka

³³ Augusto Boal pointed out that *Forum Theatre* was the third and last degree of Image Theatre. He explained the procedure of Forum Theatre as follows: First, the participants are asked to tell a story containing a political or social problem of difficult solution. Then the actors improvised or rehearsed a fifteen-minute skit portraying that problem and the solution intended for discussion. The scene will be performed again (exactly as it was the first time) to enable any participant in the audience to intervene in the issue and propose any solution in order to reach the agreement of the whole audience. One important thing which Boal reminds us of is that the participant who chose to intervene must continue the physical actions of the actor he or she replaces; they are not allowed to come on the stage and just talk. The solution must be performed on the stage, working, acting, doing things, in order to let them realize that things are not so easy when they have to put into practice. (1974:139)

³⁴ Huo-Fang refers to a traditional Hakka construction: a living space for the whole clan. 'Huo' means a group of people and 'Fang' means house in Hakka. The Huo-Fang is a three-dimension courtyard house in which the middle yard and main hall are the center of the building where there is a memorial tablet

Huo-Fang of the Liu Family after the earthquake, Hakka women's concerns and rights to express their thoughts were ignored by their Hakka male relatives. According to Ho, the women of the Shigang Mama Theatre Group observed that there were very few opportunities for women to participate and discuss public issues; even female members from the Liu family were restricted because of the patriarchal concept or classification according to gender, such as man's superiority over women and the fact that men dominate in public while women manage in private. Women could not participate in the meetings about re-constructing the Hakka Huo-Fang of the Liu Family, nor could they express their thoughts (and could only discuss with their husbands in private or attend meetings when their husbands were unable to). When they spoke during the meeting, most of their opinions were rejected or ignored by male relatives (2003:55-56). Therefore, in the play entitled *Mama's Huo-Fang*, the Shigang women attempted to perform the issue of rebuilding the Hakka Huo-Fang between four couples in the Liu family in the Forum Theatre form to portray how they faced the benefits, emotions and land rights intertwining in the family. This 'play' was performed twice in the play; firstly, it was performed by the women of the theatre group to raise the issue; the actor who held the Joker position in the play would then invite members of audience onto the stage to express their points of view to solve the problems and to perform the 'play' a second time, together with actors. Ho did not consider the performance of *Mama's Huo-Fang* to be entirely successful; on the one hand, the audience regarded the issue in the play as a 'family issue' and, therefore,

of family ancestors to affirm ancestral authority. The remaining rooms are built according to seniority; the main hall belongs to the elders in the family and the rooms on the right and left sides belong to family members in order of age. The space design of Hakka Huo-Fang precisely reflects the emphasis on blood relationship of Han Chinese, the patriarchal system and restricted family classes. The Hakka Hou-Fang of the Liu Family was built in the Qing dynasty and it preserved a number of ancient plaques and cultural heritage. Before the 9-21 earthquake, this construction was examined according to heritage criteria; unfortunately, it was seriously damaged during the earthquake. Thus, the Liu family decided to donate the land of their Huo-Fang to the government and to re-build the Hakka Huo-Fang as the Hakka Cultural Hall in Tu-Niu village to offer an example of restored traditional Hakka architecture.

chose to be silent; on the other hand, Forum Theatre became a 'form' for those male relatives of the Liu Family to comment: one man from the Liu family went on stage and said, 'the virtue of Hakka women is not spreading family scandals' (2003:57).

On stage, Hakka female actors were again forced to experience the oppression of Hakka men, departing significantly from Boal's concept of Forum Theatre:

In the forum theatre no idea is imposed: the audience, the people have opportunity to try out all their ideas, to rehearse all the possibilities, and to verify them in theatrical practice. (1974:141)

It is difficult not to note that the play's audience failed to practice or rehearse their ideas in response to the play's issues in a 'theatrical' way and that the form of Forum Theatre became a medium for the male audience to 'strengthen' their gendered class. However, the members of the Shigang Mama Theatre Group, as female fruit farmers, successfully expressed their thoughts on public issues in a public space through the Forum Theatre performance, and this was the motivation for these women to create their first performance piece, *River in the Heart*.

2. *River in the Heart*

The performance piece, *River in the Heart*, created by the Shigang Mama Theatre Group in 2003, can be viewed as an attempt by the Assignment Theatre to interact with Shigang women and portray Hakka women's life experiences and body aesthetic through performing art. The play was a collaboration between Shigang women and Li Hsiu-Hsun, a member of the Assignment Theatre who moved to Shigang after the 9-21 earthquake, in order to work with women there. According to Chung Chiao, 'the play was based on oral histories that focused on individual mothers' experiences in Shigang rural villages, and all women's life experiences were recorded in detail. Then,

I selected some important points; integrated them, as a script; and wrote a piece of poetry, “River in the Heart”, as the opening of the play’ (2007: 282).

River in the Heart is divided into six scenes: What Time is It Now, Raining Sound of the Temporary House, The Shadow of a Single Lamp, All Their Families..., Wind and Rain Sounds inside the Tent and Mothers’ Dreams. The play consists of an integrated collection of presentations from the workshop that is offered as a collage of memories, life stories and specific social issues in the Shigang community. Its intention is to explore women’s experiences as pear farmers in Shigang, being ‘married to Shigang’ as Hakka daughters-in-law, and personal experiences of the 9-21 earthquake. Smith has described the opening of *River in the Heart*, when the women slowly enter the stage from all directions, as crossing a river of real water that separates the stage from the audience. The women spread seeds to symbolize their roles as mothers and recite poetry (2005:115).³⁵ In the first scene, the stage is divided into two areas, representing the juxtaposition of women’s living conditions - in temporary tents and in farm fields. The second scene depicts the childhood memory of a Hakka woman, Yu-Chiung, who, along with her grandmother, was evacuated from their house after it collapsed during the earthquake. This scene is performed together with the Shigang women’s response to the Forum Theatre and the mothers’ inner depression and struggle with their life experiences. The third scene is a mixed representation of life experiences, including cultivating pears and surviving the earthquake. In the fourth

³⁵ Smith has translated the first part of poetry as follows:
There is a river that flows through my heart
I remember, I shall never forget
In those days, youth accompanied me
My eyes are like the first glimmering of light
I am awake in a meadow
My dreams are waiting for the serene cool nights
Leaves shine like stars in the sky
Time and youth pass by,
Same for all the women of this world,
They light a candle by exhausting their bodies. (2005:115)

scene, women burn incense in honor of Hakka ancestors and in order to symbolize the class restrictions in Hakka families and depict the experience of one non-Hakka mother, Yue-Shia, whose marriage was arranged by her family family-in-law to improve the farming enterprises of a Hakka family. At the same time, this scene also shows Shigang women, as poor peasants, deciding to learn production and marketing, as to avoid being exploited. The fifth and sixth scenes separately show the mothers' theatre experiences and their dreams for the future. In the following, I will analyze *River in the Heart* from a post-colonial perspective.

(1) Applying the techniques of the Theatre of the Oppressed to the decolonization movement

In their performances of *River in the Heart*, Shigang women employed Boal's theories to launch a 'theatrical' decolonization movement that endeavored to escape the multiple oppressions that Taiwanese women have been forced to undergo, in a variety of forms (patriarchal, classist, sexist and capitalist economic) in post-colonial Taiwan. They also wanted to show how 'subordinate' Taiwanese women (including Hakka women) transformed themselves from 'audience' to 'spect-actors', exposing within theatre the economic exploitation of Taiwanese farmers by the global capitalism.

Wang Wan-Jung considers the Assignment Theatre to have applied the theories and practice of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed to adopt a subaltern voice for themselves and develop a 'people's' and peculiarly Asian performing aesthetic that could, be regarded as a critique of western neo-colonization:

The Assignment Theatre practiced theories introduced in Boal's books *Theatre of the Oppressed* and *The Rainbow of Desire*, to organizing community theatre, applied theatre and theatre of people's performances and inviting actors from more than ten countries in Asia to launch the Asian

People's Theatre Festival, which examined how individuals in Asia have faced their historical circumstance and social problems and criticized European and American cultures, which have used their cultural and economic advantages to dominate local markets and cultures and exploit laborers and peasants in Asia. (Personal translation. 2004: 77-78)

The dialogue delivered by Shigang women in *River in the Heart*, who were trained by the Assignment Theatre and, in the first scene of the play, performed farmers, explores the oppression of peasant' laborers in Shigang:

Yi-liang: I heard my father-in-law say, 'There was not enough food at that time, and we tried to grow some sweet potatoes, Taros...'

Zhen-zhen: I also heard my father-in-law saying of the war period, 'If someone hid rice at home, he would be arrested by Japanese policeman and sent to prison'.

Hui-ling: And now? The land breaks. (Personal translation. Script recorded by Chung Chiao, 2003:206)

In addition to exploring the oppression of farmers, in the fourth scene, the women performed both office workers at the Farming Association and pear peasants alternately and on two areas of the stage, to represent the uncertain situation of Taiwanese female farmers before Taiwan joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2002.³⁶ In addition, they tried to show how female farmers worked to learn pear marketing but then found that their abilities were doubted by Farming Association employees:

Yu-qiong: Is this right? They may interrupt our Farming Association system.

Shu-yuan: Yes! Farmers do the marketing themselves....It sounds like fighting against each other?

³⁶ According to the WTO (World Trade Organization), after 12 years negotiations, 'Chinese Taipei has agreed to undertake a series of commitments to open and liberalize its trade regime even further in order to provide better access to its markets to foreign suppliers of goods and services in accordance with WTO rules' (From: <http://www.wto.org>). As a result, Taiwanese agricultural products might fall by 6-8% output value after joining the WTO and this would affect the acreage of planting area and farming opportunities in Taiwan.

A-qin: Ah! All my life has been devoted to pears. Our trying to be responsible for the marketing is for the sake of our farmers' welfares. If the Farming Association would stand by our sides to fight with us, we would never be afraid of Taiwan's joining the WTO. (Personal translation. Script recorded by Chung Chiao, 2003:218-219)

Actress A-qin, performing the role of a local pear farmer, expressed some of the feelings and thoughts regarding how local farmers in Taiwan have undertaken the oppression of global capitalism, which can be seen as neo-colonization. I argue that, by adopting Boal's theories, the Shigang women attempted to assert themselves as the 'subalterns' and to criticize the global corporate exploitation led by Europe and the West.

River in the Heart can be considered as falling within the tradition of post-colonial theatre mentioned by Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert:

Most postcolonial theatre is driven by a political imperative to interrogate the cultural hegemony that underlies imperial systems of governance, education, social and economic organization, and representation. Its discourses of resistance speak primarily to the colonizing projects of Western imperial centers and /or the neocolonial pressures of local/regional post-independence regimes. (2002:35)

In the play, the Shigang women not only presented themselves as subjects but also spoke out for female farmers. In addition, they utilized their native languages (including Hakka and Hokkien), combining traditional Hakka mountain songs and cross-ethnic experience, such as being born to a Hokkien family but marrying into a Hakka family, to construct the hybridity of Hakka culture. This hybrid subject expressed the fluctuation of local people's status and their experience of different cultures in Taiwan; at the same time, it can also be viewed as a critique of the exoticism of pan-Asian intercultural performances. Chung raised questions about

intercultural performances in Asia,

If we use an Asian form but repeat another exotic intercultural performance, what is the difference between the Asian and the Western versions? In other words, narrowed emotion in pan-Asian ethnic performance is also producing an alternative dominant culture that generates the mystery of intercultural performance, which is derived from the aesthetics of various traditions. (Personal translation. Chung Chiao, 2002:49)

In my opinion, the Shigang Mama Theatre Group deliberately used portrayals of the body aesthetic of local people to construct a hybrid identity that fought against exoticism, and this can be regarded as the localization of community theatre, with the purpose of contending with the damages done by globalization to local cultures.³⁷

Arlene Goldbard affirms that *River in the Heart* enabled Shigang women, as women of Shigang community, to transcend Hakka taboos about women speaking out and to express the specifics of identity: ‘... with participants [of community] discovering and claiming their own ethnic, gender, and class identities as a way to recast themselves as makers of history rather than its passive objects’ (2006:72).

(2) Constructing images of women laborers

In *River in the Heart*, Shigang women, as Taiwanese female farmers (including Hakka female farmers), represented the images of working and life experiences that could be considered as subversive of singular female stereotypes of oriental women and the generalization of universal women’s issues by Western feminism. In writing of the Theatre of the Oppressed Workshops with women in Italy and France, Boal mentions the oppression that Western females may encounter, ‘such as the problem of abortion,

³⁷ Dan Rebellato suggests in his book, *Theatre and Globalization*, the solution to globalization may be localization, ‘if global corporations bestride the earth, destroying local cultures, turning all high streets into copies of each other, degrading the environment...then surely great good will come from reasserting and protecting the local’ (2009:51).

the problem of being treated as an object, not being considered a human being, the problem of wages, and the problem of sexual abuse at work and on the street, open violence in the street'. Therefore, Boal points out that women feel that they live in a macho society and are more conscious of the effect that oppressions so when they do an image they are more compelled to express themselves (1990:67). What I would like to observe here is, the Shigang women in *River in the Heart*, who lived in postcolonial Taiwanese society, departed from their Western counterparts in the images they portrayed to critique potential male violence; their performances could be read as expressing their multiple oppressions by patriarchal families, postcolonial society and gendered classism. In the third scene, four female peasants push pears onto the stage and chat about their different reasons for becoming fruit farmers (see Figure 7):



Figure 7 Pears Harvest Scene in *River in the Heart*, 2003.
Source: The Shigang Mama Theatre Group

Yi-lian: Did not you marry in the city? Why you come back to work in fields. [.....]

A-qin: I have planted fruits in my marriage, and my original family also planted fruits. I do not know why, but both of my families are closely connected to fruits.

Li-qing: After my child was born, we went to the mountains to grow pears, apples, and peaches and waited day after day for the harvest. (Script recorded by Chung Chiao, 2003:214)

In the previous section, I analyzed the performance piece *Cat Walk Awakening*, produced by the Uhan Shii Theatre Group, and pointed out that the images in that play of Hakka women have been depicted by Hakka writers as a narrative strategy of opposing colonialism. In *River in the Heart*, Shigang women, as Hakka farmers, used

their depictions of laborers and work to excoriate the ‘labor image’ appropriated by Hakka men. In the scene mentioned above, when the female peasants slowed down the process of transporting boxes of pears, the other actresses pick up a pear dropped on the floor and say, ‘ I told myself when I was young ... never marry a farmer.’ The Shigang women transcended their real identification, as female farmers, to express their thoughts on stage, and their actions corresponded to what the post-colonial feminist Spivak has emphasized as a tendency for subaltern women to speak for themselves and thereby to avoid ‘the narrow epistemic violence of imperialism’ (1995:28).

3. *Pear Flowers* and the body aesthetic of women laborers

In 2004, the Shigang Mama Theatre Group cooperated with female director Li again to create a second production, *Pear Flowers*, which premiered at the Assignment Theatre and was then performed at the IDEA (International Drama and Theatre Education Association) Congress in Hong Kong in 2007. In 2008, the mother members of the theatre group toured in eastern and southern Taiwan, offering three performances among communities. *Pear Flowers* presented three images of Hakka women: the traditional Hakka mother, the young bride and the farming woman. Li, who is of half Hakka descent, has said, ‘I am not a feminist and did not consciously work with these women as a Hakka. However, after moving to Shigang and living with them, I discovered that these Hakka women are leading in a very invisible, unnoticed lives’ (Personal translation. Interview with Li Hsiu-Hsun, 2008). Li lived with the Shigang women for the eight years after the theatre workshop and rehearsed with them during the slack farming season. The second piece was motivated by the women wanting to transcend their invisible status and to further challenge the long-standing, narrow labor images of Hakka women as laborers. According to Li’s

recollections of her collaboration, ‘They truly wanted to fulfill traditional images of Hakka women (formed or educated by their parents or parents-in-law); however, after participating in the workshop held by the Assignment Theatre, they had opportunities to mature and develop new thoughts. Owing to their position, in-between the old and new generations, these women are still struggling with contradictions, and their experiences have been expounded to create *Pear Flowers*’ (Personal translation. Interview with Li Hsiu-Hsun, 2008).

Pear Flowers reflected the diversity of images of Hakka women: director Li intentionally depicted diverse images of Hakka women in different generations, displaying the diversity of the Hakka female by combining the oppressed body of the traditional Hakka mother with the ritualized body of Hakka daughters-in-law, and the laboring body of farming women in reality. This hybrid body image aimed to express the conflict that Hakka women experience in their daily lives and their desire to change and form a collective experience of Hakka women laborers.

The play can be divided into three parts: At its opening, an old woman wearing a blue traditional Hakka blouse slowly steps on stage while singing a Hakka mountain song and carrying a big wooden box on her back (see Figure 8). After setting the box down on the right side of the stage, she starts to recite the second part of the poem, ‘River in the Heart’, in Hakka:



Figure 8 The Image of traditional Hakka woman in *Pear Flowers*, 2004. Source: The Shigang Mama Theatre Group

There is a river that flows through my heart
I remember, I shall remember forever
In the first month when the New Year Festival was coming

The noise of firecrackers married my youth to this small town. (DVD of *Pear Flowers*, 2007)

These lines indicate the constraints imposed on married Hakka women by their families-in-law. It also sets the tone for the first scene, in which four actresses burn incense and memorialize their ancestors, to portray the duties and destinies of married Hakka women. In the second scene, a Hakka bride, wearing a modern wedding dress and shouldering two chickens and some cooking stuff, slowly walks on stage and lays down these burdens (see Figure 9).



Figure 9 The Image of a Hakka bride in *Pear Flowers*, 2004. Source: The Shigang Mama Theatre Group

Then, she lies on the floor and slowly twists her body to symbolize struggling, inner oppressions and women's experience of marriage and giving birth to a baby. Afterwards, she stands up, wearing a pair of men's shoes and leaves the stage while performing a kind of mechanical dancing. Meanwhile, the old Hakka woman returns to the stage with ritualized steps and carrying incense in her hand. After inserting the incense sticks into a small container, placed on a column on the left side of the stage, she burns paper money in a container, wipes the floor and cuts the chicken while reciting a traditional Hakka poem. Then, she shoulders the burden and leaves. In the final scene, an actress performing a farming woman shoulders two baskets filled with pears and sells them on stage, then expresses her feelings as a pear farmer. This scene ends with the old Hakka woman reciting the last paragraph of the poem 'River in the Heart'³⁸ as the young Hakka bride dances freely, without the men's shoes.

In *Pear Flowers*, Li tried to explore the possibilities of Hakka women's bodies by

³⁸Time and youth pass by,
Same for all the women of this world,
They light a candle by exhausting their bodies

using ritual, symbolic bodily movements to challenge the restricted 'labor' body images of Hakka women. During a rehearsal with the Shigang women, she posed questions about the labor body, 'Who said that women laborers cannot embody sophisticated body movements? Who said these body movements can only be interpreted by intellectuals? Why cannot ordinary people give them a try?' (Personal translation. Interview with Li Hsiu-Hsun, 2008). In the play, by burning incense and paper money and singing mountain songs, the actresses portrayed a ritualized body, as Li has further explained:

During my eight-year interaction with Shigang mothers, I found that Hakka women had significant apprehension of contradiction or conflict. Most of the Hakka women I worked with owned a unified labor body that was constructed by traditional Hakka culture. Therefore, focusing only on body culture in theatre when discussing the bodily alienation of oppressed women would be a big endeavor. (Li Hsiu-Hsun cited by Chung Chiao, 2007:285)

Chung considered *Pear Flowers* to be an attempt by Hakka women to explore the aesthetic of ritualized bodies through bodily actions that subverted the laboring body constructed by the patriarchal oppression of Hakka families. However, in relation to the post-colonial feminism perspective, I argue that the diversity of the body aesthetic presented by the Hakka female farmers in the play not only subverted singular stereotypes of oriental woman, but also challenged epistemic violence. Taking the second scene as an example, the old, traditional Hakka woman denounced the invisible position of Hakka women by enacting a ritualized body as she burns the paper money and says, 'The life of women is rarely to be seen by others; it is just like a shadow without a figure'. The Hakka slang she recites, 'The elder eats chicken's head, the younger studies, the woman takes agricultural implements and hangs two chickens on each shoulder' and the chickens she shoulders symbolically criticize the

gendered classes, formed in a Hakka culture usually centered around men, and the labor exploitation of Hakka women in society. Furthermore, the monologue performed by the Hakka daughter-in-law, Yue-Xia, in the third scene can be considered the speaking of a subaltern woman for herself and from a post-colonial perspective (see Figure 10),

Yue-Xia: My whole life is devoted to these pears. There is a pain in my heart; only we farmers can feel this pain. If a typhoon were coming, my heart would hurt as of being hit by thunder. When pears fall down in the heavy rain, I can only cry without tears. In the year the earthquake happened, lands were changed, houses collapsed, people died.... Looking after these pears keeps me alive. (DVD of *Pear Flowers*, 2007)



Figure 10 The Image of peasant in *Pear Flowers*, 2004.
Source: The Shigang Mama Theatre Group

The hybrid image of Hakka women, embodied by the actress wearing a western wedding dress but also shouldering cooking and farming tools and two chickens (which symbolized local, farming culture), in addition to the hybridity inherent in the Shigang women's body cultures, subverts the laboring image of traditional Hakka women. The actress who performs the young bride steps over the flame of a candle on the ground and dances in freedom, as if breaking with the taboo that woman cannot do the fire-crossing ceremony that is part of traditional Hakka religion. For me, although the play *Pear Flowers* reverses stereotypes of Hakka women by depicting a hybrid image of them, the character who eventually breaks away from conservative constraints and finally owns her freedom is the woman who wears the wedding dress and symbolizes modern Western culture. Might this character's description serve to reinforce the ideology of Western feminism and views of Western culture as more progressive and free?

Overall, the female members of the Shigang Mama Theatre Group, in experiencing the practices of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed via the Assignment Theatre, defined their presence on stage and expressed their opinions as fruit farmers in the Shigang community. Through their use of the theatrical forms of the Forum Theatre as well as the Image Theatre, these actresses reexamined how Taiwanese subaltern women are exploited and oppressed by an economic system that mimics the colonial economy and is dominated by men. As Smith points out,

They are standing up and speaking out about social issues and, in doing so, are challenging conservative views regarding the public visibility of women. [...] Their efforts to transform themselves, from voiceless observers into active participants implementing change within the Shigang community, takes a lot of courage, perseverance, and patience' . (2005:118)

In reality, Shigang women are also aware of the oppressed situation of female farmers (including Hakka women) and established the Shigang Fruit Cooperative in 2001, to improve pear marketing by farmers and avoid being exploited by retailers. For these women, as Boal's words have indicated, the practice of theatre has become a rehearsal for their real lives and their efforts will continue.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I first introduced Spivak's idea of women's diversity of location from a post-colonial feminist perspective and re-examined a dilemma in Taiwanese academic circles: Feminist researchers and theatre practitioners may have been limited by the consciousness of first-world feminists and may have reformulated feminism to serve Taiwanese academia but failed to relate it in depth to the concerns of subaltern women in Taiwanese society. In addition, feminism also affected feminist theatre productions in Taiwan, which still identified with the gender consciousness of

first-world women (for example, with the concept of female sexual liberation). These productions were not profoundly concerned with the silent position and multi-oppression of subaltern women (including Hakka women, the focus of my research) in Taiwan.

In the second and third sections of this chapter, I used the Uhan Shii Theatre Group's performances of Hakka females' oral histories and the Shigang Mama Theatre Group's performances of Hakka Contemporary Theatre to illustrate the application of different theatrical techniques (in the case of the former, oral history theatre and, in the case of the latter, Image Theatre and Forum Theatre, as proposed by Augusto Boal) and to highlight how these encouraged Hakka women of different generations to appear in theatre – from one perspective to break the silence of Hakka women and subvert the epistemic violence of imperialism; from another, to subvert the singular 'modern' image of feminist theatre that was widely portrayed in Taiwan. Both theatre groups' performances presented the critical hybridity of Hakka culture (through the use, for instance, of a hybrid stage language, hybrid Hakka accent and hybrid body image of Hakka women), not only forming a hybrid cultural subjectivity, but expressing the hybrid Hakkaness of postcolonial Taiwan. In addition, both theatre groups' performers were 'subordinate' Hakka women (most of them farmers), who performed their own life stories, so as to subvert the stereotype of Hakka women as laborers: The play *Cat Walk Awakening*, for example, depicted an image of the modern Hakka woman that subverted the laborer image depicted in Hakka male literature, while the play *Pear Flowers*, presented hybrid body images of Hakka women that reversed stereotypes of traditional Hakka women. However, I have also argued here that both theatre groups tended to re-enforce the ideology and modernity of Western feminism in the process of constructing Hakka female subjectivity: The

actresses in *Cat Walk Awakening* portrayed the sexual sensations of childhood experiences but ignored the difficulty of their own sexual liberation. In *Pear Flowers* the Hakka woman who was free wore a wedding dress, a symbol of modern Western culture. Overall, the female directors of these plays used different styles to present how Hakka women, the subaltern women of Taiwan, led a de-colonization movement in theatre and displayed a hybrid energy in their performances that demonstrated the specificity of Hakka culture in postcolonial Taiwan.

CONCLUSION

In my conclusion, I will divide it into two parts; the first one is a post-performance analysis of the Hakka Contemporary Theatre practice as a practical conclusion in response to my research and the second one will be a conclusion of the whole thesis.

***ShiCha*: Hakka Culture, Memory, and Identity**

In the piece of performance practice named *ShiCha*, performed at the Drama department of Exeter University in 2011, I attempted to be a theatre practitioner in response to the research topic of this dissertation: the construction of contemporary Hakka female theatre. During the process of studying female directors' performances of Taiwanese Hakka Contemporary Theatre, I discovered that the Hakka language, Hakka mountain songs and the history of Hakka people in Taiwan (such as Hakka immigrant history or female oral history) have been considered the most important elements of Hakka culture. If we consider these as elements employed by Taiwanese theatrical practitioners, I am curious about the possibility of applying these different elements to present Hakka culture and how to add a new directing style rather than following the traditional performing mode. In this individual theatrical activity, I also considered how to apply the concept of hybrid culture and female theatre through a postcolonial perspective, while, at the same time, communicating with the younger and non-Hakka audiences. These issues were fundamental in the processes from rehearsal to creation. In the play *ShiCha* (a Hakka phrase meaning 'drinking tea'), I tried to critically combine the modern performing form, Hakka elements, and a hybrid stage language to display my personal experience of Hakka life and understanding of Hakka culture to express the identity of Hakka culture. In the following, I will discuss my performance in three sections: the creating process, the content and

post-performance analysis.

1. The process of creating *ShiCha*

The play *ShiCha* was directed and performed by myself with two other Taiwanese Phd students, Chen Hui-Yun and Ho I-Lien, who studied in Drama department of Exeter University. I am a Hakka by ethnic background, and the two other actresses come from a Hokkien background (the majority of Taiwanese); thus, we have shared different mother tongues, living experiences, and cultures. However, both actresses and I have participated in the butoh workshop of the performance practice module; therefore, considering our shared experience, I chose to divide the three hours of rehearsal time into three parts: daily training, butoh exercises, and improvisation of Hakka cultural elements. The daily training part (around 30 minutes) included warm up, silent sitting and Tai-Ji, and allowed the actresses to be aware of their presence and energy and to observe how their inner worlds meet the outer form.

The second part of rehearsal involved performing exercises such as a butoh breathing exercise, imagination exercise, energy ball, butoh face exercise and butoh-fu³⁹. During this stage, the actresses have to use imagery as an invisible sub-score, not only to explore their cultural memory and bodies but also to work with Hakka elements. As I was working with two other actresses, I tried to explore the cultural characteristics through observing their movements; in addition, I wanted to add cultural elements, such as Hakka music or images of Hakka villages and traditional architecture, as impulses for the actresses to explore the further relationship between their own bodies and these Hakka elements for the improvisation part.

³⁹ According to Kurihara Nanako, Butoh-fu is a kind of butoh notation called by the founder of butoh, Hijikata Tatsumi. Hijikata trained his dancers and choreographed works using a tremendous number of words surround his dance. However, his writings often are strange, equivocal, and incomprehensible, like surrealistic poems. (2000:14)

In the rehearsal of the improvisation of Hakka cultural elements, we tried two different improvising directions: one involves the actresses' cultural bodies meeting the Hakka elements and the other involves the actresses' bodies embodying the Hakka elements. In the process of improvisation, I attempted to expand the butoh exercises and further combined them with various Hakka elements. Taking the butoh facial exercise as an example, the actresses were asked to freely exercise every part of their face in response to the music (which was randomly chosen by myself with different rhythms or songs prepared by the actresses which could represent their own personality). However, for the next stage, I replaced the music with Hakka Ba-yin music or Hakka old mountain songs and again requested the actresses to change their facial expressions in response to the quality, rhythm and melody of the Hakka music. Through observing the detailed transformation of the actresses' facial expressions, I noticed that Hakka old mountain songs performed on the Er-Sian (a kind of two-stringed instruments) resulted in the actresses using slow, twisting facial movements to express contradictory emotions. Furthermore, the actresses' facial expressions changed not only reacting to music but also embodying it, which illustrated their ability to embody Hakka elements.

During the three week rehearsal period, the actresses and I developed several short pieces through practicing butoh exercises with various Hakka cultural materials and further focused on presenting these chosen Hakka cultural elements to create the play *ShiCha*. First of all, we devised the opening scene and consciously utilized our faces to portray the twisting melody of traditional Hakka mountain songs. Secondly, I used my personal childhood memory of life in a Hakka village as the main scene and mixed this with the two actresses' childhood memories to open a hybrid cultural space. The final part of the play was the representation of the script, *The Beautiful Field*,

written in 1941 by Long Ying-Tsung, a Hakka male writer, during the Japanese colonization of Taiwan. We also developed the triangle sequences by practicing the butoh breathing exercises in our everyday training session and used these sequences to connect the above mentioned three parts. At times, these triangle sequences were also used to challenge the power relationship which existed between the different languages. All the above formed the creating process, from the rehearsal stage to the creation of *ShiCha*.

2. The content of *ShiCha*

The stage of *ShiCha* was very simple. In front of the auditorium, there was a small square tea-table



and a set of traditional tea pot and tea cup to symbolize the living culture of Hakka people (see Figure 11). The play involved three parts: Opening, Hakka Childhood Memory and *The Beautiful Field*. Each part was connected by a triangle sequence (see below). The main topic of the opening was the Hakka old mountain song: the three actresses all wore black and sat on three sides of the tea-table and only showed their faces to the audience. When the song started to play, the actresses used their faces to portray the quality of music to embody the specific twisting tunes of Hakka music. They had not only to adapt their facial expressions according to the Hakka music but also to enact

Figure 11 Opening Scene in *ShiCha*, directed by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2011. Photograph: Chen Hsin-Feng

the image of the tea pot and the smell of the tea. When the music suddenly stopped, the actresses stopped the facial movements and froze their faces (called ‘masks’ during the rehearsal) (see Figure 12). Afterwards, the actresses attempted



Figure 12 Facial Masks in *ShiCha*, directed by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2011. Photograph: Chen Hsin-Feng

to define and understand the implication of their ‘frozen’

masks. The actresses firstly made a sound for that figure and then spoke a term in different languages (Hakka, Hokkien, and English) to express their interpretation and interacted with each other. Finally, each actress made a statement to the audience and ended the opening scene.

The second part of the *ShiCha* was Hakka Childhood Memory, developed from the exercises



Figure 13 The stage of Hakka Childhood Memory Scene in *ShiCha*, directed by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2011.

Photograph: Chen Hsin-Feng

of butoh-fu. In the rehearsal, the actresses shared their most memorable childhood experiences from their native upbringing, which included making a fire for cooking with branches, shouting in the mother tongue when receiving an injection, listening to grandmother chatting with neighbors in Hakka and Hakka mountain songs from the radio during the nap, and hearing a Taiwanese opera (Ga Zi Xi) song on a TV program while playing in the yard. In this second part, a Hakka poem based on my childhood memory was written and recorded in Hakka and English as a sound loop. The stage formed an inverted triangle shape again with the tea-table as the apex and two other chairs on the upper stage as two parallel apexes. Using the square tea-table area a little girl had a nap. When she was sleeping, the two other actresses performed alternately

their own childhood memories on the upper stage as the collected memories of Taiwanese children (see Figure 13). Then the spotlight went back to the square tea-table area just like sunlight flooding into the room. The little girl was awakened by her grandmother's steps, and as usual, she served her grandmother a cup of tea. The grandmother disappeared



Figure 14 Speaking Hakka Scene in *ShiCha*, directed by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2011.
Photograph: Chen Hsin-Feng

after drinking the tea; the little girl was surprised and wanted to speak but she could not. Finally, she squeezed out the numbers

one to ten in Hakka. By representing memories of Hakka childhood life and my personal experience of the difficulty speaking Hakka in this scene, I intended to critically display the combined childhood memories from different cultural backgrounds of Taiwan; on the one hand, to present the internal diversity of a culture (Taiwanese culture) and the uniqueness of Hakka culture; on the other hand, to communicate with the audience from different culture backgrounds by using English in the sound loop (see Figure 14).

The third part was the representation of *The Beautiful Field*. The script was about three intellectuals who grew up together in a Hakka rural village during the Japanese colonisation and one of them had the opportunity to work in China. In their



Figure 15 The stage of *The Beautiful Field* in *ShiCha*, directed by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2011. Photograph: Chen Hsin-Feng

farewell, they had a conversation about the future and blessed each other. The conversation among them was filled with hope of their village and reluctance to leave. In this scene, the image of a Hakka village in Taiwan was projected on the wall behind the three actresses, who sat on the three apexes of the inverted triangle stage (see Figure 15). In the play, the female actresses replaced the original male intellectuals' roles in the script. They enacted the farewell scene through making and drinking tea and again creating the behaviour of 'drinking tea' as a symbol of the Hakka culture. The lines of the script required a combination of the actresses' native languages (Hakka and Hokkien) and English and formed a hybrid stage language, not only to explore the complexity of language but also to break away from the concept of a singular stage language. In the end of this scene, the three characters raised their cups of tea in a toast to bless their deep friendship. At the same time, the stage light

and the projection slowly faded out and a short documentary was shown. The documentary recorded a social event in the Tai Po farmlands,⁴⁰ Miaoli County in 2010, where the majority of residents are Hakka people. Through the short documentary, I attempted to contrast the political violence explored by the Hakka social event with *The Beautiful Field*, in one aspect, to criticize the tendency of writers to romanticize the Hakka village during the colonial period; in another aspect, to expose the reality of Hakka farmers, who nowadays still have to face oppression by the authority of Taiwan.

The aim of the triangle sequences mentioned above was to connect the three parts and to end the performance. The sequential movements were presented three times in the style of an advertisement. Each time the actresses would do the same movements twice: the first time in silence, and the second time pronouncing the names of the organs (heart, liver, lung, and kidney) in different languages. The actresses used both Hakka and English simultaneously, then Hakka and Hokkien simultaneously and finally Hakka only.

The above outlines the content of *ShiCha*. In the following section, I will further discuss the embodiment of Hakka culture and the construction of Hakka cultural identity in the play.

3. Performance analysis of *ShiCha*

To analyse the performance of *ShiCha*, I will consider different aspects which related to the embodiment of Hakka culture, the representation of Hakka memory and

⁴⁰ The event drew the attention of the public because the Miaoli County government planned to expropriate farmers' lands, offering a low price, in order to build a science park. Some of farmers did not accept the expropriation and refused to hand over the land rights; as a result, the government asked the police to enforce the law and threatened farmers by driving excavators into the rice fields and destroying them.

theatrical space, gender and the audience communication.

(1) The embodiment of Hakka culture

What is Hakka culture in Taiwan? What are the characteristics of Taiwanese Hakka culture? Being a Hakka from Taiwan, I have asked myself these questions during the process of research and theatrical improvisation several times. Historically, Hakka people migrated from China to Taiwan during the Qing dynasty; Hakka people in Taiwan have experienced political change from Qing imperialism (17th century) through Japanese colonization (1895-1945) to the KMT regime (1945-1987). Academically, most scholars point out that in Taiwanese history, the Hakka ethnic group is a silent, invisible group; therefore, Hakka culture and language have faced the crisis of disappearing (Chuang Ying-Chang, 1994:32; Hsiao Hsin-Huang and Lim Khay Thiong, 2007:25; Wang Fu-Chang, 2003:131-139). From the viewpoint of ethnic research, Wang Fu-Chang considers that 'historical origins, migration experience, language, proverb, customs, religion, family characteristic, architectures and clothes of one ethnic group, these historical memories and cultural characteristics can be regarded as the specificity or essence of the group' (Personal translation. 2003:45), suggesting that Hakka people's language, living style, architectures, and history in Taiwan might form the cultural uniqueness. Chuang Ying-Chang pointed out that the Hakka ethnic group, both in Taiwan and China lived mainly on the margins; Hakka people in one aspect related to their ethnically developed history and maintained close interaction with other minority groups; in another aspect related to ethnic consciousness, they always insisted that they had Han-Chinese blood; these two contradictory tensions formed Hakka culture (1994:34). Living in the 'in-between' area (the dominant Han Chinese territory and marginal area) has formed Hakka people's ethnic character, giving them a sense of pride but also inferiority, and this

contributed to the hybridity of Hakka culture.

Bhaba suggested that ‘culture only emerges as a problem, or problematic, at the point at which there is a loss of meaning in the contestation and articulation of everyday life, between classes, genders, races, nations’ (1994:34). Hakka ethnic group has faced the pre-dominance of Chinese cultural identity monopolized by the KMT regime after 1949 and the native cultural movement in the 1970s, in which the Hokkien ethnic group identified their language as ‘Taiwanese’ and their culture as ‘Taiwanese culture’ to fight for political independence from the Republic of China (Taiwan). As a result, the Hakka ethnic group in Taiwan had to face their language and culture being marginalized and pursued the ‘returning my mother tongue’ movement to request their legitimate rights in the 1990s.

Recently, Hakka consciousness has risen in Taiwanese society since the Hakka cultural movement began in 1988; since then, a number of Hakka scholars have contributed to the development of Taiwanese Hakka culture through doing field research or re-examining the history of Hakka ethnic groups in Taiwan. They view the Yimin temple ceremony, Ba-yin music, mountain songs, and Tea-picking Opera as important elements of Hakka culture. Apart from defining the Yimin ceremony as a unique historical experience formed by the Hakka ethnic group in Taiwan, some scholars also view the worship of the god named ‘Three Mountain Kings’ and the lineage organization to commemorate Hakka ancestors as specific cultural beliefs of Hakka people (Chuang Ying-Chang: 1994; Liu Huan-Yue: 1999). In addition, some scholars have dedicated themselves to reconstructing the image of Hakka culture as images belonging to Hakka people in Taiwan. Chang Wei-An suggests that ‘when Hakka culture is fully developed, some things which existed in the past but have not been noticed may be re-viewed or re-narrated as specific to one ethnic group. The

ethnic group can be constructed through re-narrating these things; for example, pounded tea, Hakka food, Tung blossom and flower pattern textiles' (Personal translation. 2005:9).

Whether through re-examining the history and the tradition of the Hakka ethnic group or re-symbolizing objects or images as 'Hakka' cultural elements based on Hakka people's living experience in Taiwan, Hakka cultural practitioners and researchers have attempted to identify Hakka as cultural subject and deepen it in the process of construction. Taking as an example the Hakka Tung Blossom festival, held by the Council for Hakka Affairs (CHA) in Miaoli County every year recently, the organizers successfully construct the Tung blossoms as a Hakka image. In the festival, Miaoli, as a Hakka village, becomes a place selling cultural products (a range of products including photography and literature based on the Tung blossoms). Through these Hakka products, organizers have attempted to commercialize the Hakka culture. ⁴¹

In a similar way, cultural images as represented in Taiwanese cinema are discussed by Huang Yi-Kuan as follows:

Culture itself is not tangible and visible. Only through the process of representation can culture be revealed by visible objects and be recognized, be constructed. Hakka culture needs to be presented by community members through actions or texts. [...] From the 1980s to 2000, some Hakka images and spaces were represented in Taiwanese films, and these became a kind of construction and illustration of the Hakka culture. (Personal translation. 2007:187)

In addition to geographically represented Hakka space to form the image of Hakka and to visualize the Hakka culture, in terms of Hakka Contemporary Theatre, Pang used flower pattern textiles, blue blouses, and photographs of Hakka villages. In

⁴¹ The resources website: <http://tung.hakka.gov.tw/eng/main.aspx>.

addition, Pang also ritualized aspects of Hakka people's daily lives, such as drying mooli pieces or working in farms, and used them on stage as symbols of Taiwanese Hakka culture and in this way created with the audience a sense of Hakka cultural identity.

These issues related to the creation of cultural identity raise a number of questions. If ethnic or culture identity can consistently be constructed and re-created, what kind of elements in my performance can be implemented to express the specificity of Taiwanese Hakka culture? In theatre, in what way should these cultural elements be presented in order to communicate with audiences? For Hakka people, the concept of Hakka might derive from their living style and aspects such as individual experience, belief, habitus, and custom. However, for non-Hakka people, the concept of Hakka may come from formal features: knowledge, language, art, words and symbols. In my opinion, one way to embody Hakka culture in theatre is to represent my personal Hakka memories or Hakka life experiences as visible images in front of the audience. Although individual Hakka life experience can not reflect the collective consciousness of Hakka culture in Taiwan, my intention is not to construct a collective Hakka consciousness but to reveal the real situation of the younger Hakka generation, most of whom lost their mother tongue during their up-bringing, and to illustrate the interaction between individual living style and Hakka culture as fragments. However, what kind of performing style or aesthetics should I utilize to interpret the Hakka elements? Taking into consideration my own experiences and abilities, I chose to combine my own Hakka childhood memories and awareness of Hakka cultural elements with my recent cross-cultural theatrical experience, accumulated through participating in theatre workshops and through my research during three years of study in the UK, as the main creative direction for the play *ShiCha*.

I tried to embody the Hakka culture through applying the concept of hybridity in the play. For example, the opening of *ShiCha* critically combined the butoh performing aesthetic, with the actresses employing butoh facial expressions, with the Hakka Old Mountain Song music. In Taiwan, Hakka mountain songs are considered important musical elements indicating the quality of Hakka culture. In addition, they are regarded as the core of Hakka music as they embody the spirit of the Hakka culture (Chen Ben: 2002; Chiu Yen-Kui and Wu Chung-Chieh, 2001:119). According to Cheng Rom-Shing (2007), Hakka people in Taiwan immigrated from China in different periods; as a result, southern Hakka people preserved their original Hakka folk songs, while, in northern Taiwan, apart from the ‘Old Mountain Song’, the other mountain songs are referred to as ‘Nine Tunes and Eighteen Tones’.⁴² Cheng emphasizes that, since the 1960s, Hakka people have changed their attitude towards Hakka mountain songs and now regard them as one of the most important symbols of the Hakka culture (2002:164-166).

In relation to the performances of the Hakka contemporary female directors’ discussed in the preceding chapters, mountain songs have become essential elements in Hakka Contemporary Theatre, utilized either as an accusation of environmental pollution in Taiwan, as in *Mundane Orphan*, or as the inspiration of Hakka female elders, as in *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here*. Female directors interpreted and applied the Hakka mountain songs from an individual aesthetic perspective; for example, Peng attempted to display the creativity of improvisation through asking the actresses to improvise lyrics (e.g. The Adopted Daughter Song in *Taiwanese Confession VI: We*

⁴²Cheng Rom-Shing explains that the ‘Nine Tunes and Eighteen Tones’, which are sung in the Hakka Sih-sian language, can be sorted according to their origins into two systems: ‘tunes’ and ‘tones’. The ‘tunes’ system can be categorized into the “Tea-picking Tunes” subsystem and the “Mountain Songs Tunes” subsystem; while the ‘tones’ system can be divided into many “minor Tones”. Among all the tune patterns, the “Mountain Songs” also called the “Grand Mountain Songs” or the “Old Mountain Songs”, were developed from the “Sih-sian Mountain Songs”. (2007:78)

Are Here) and she re-composed Hakka mountain songs, adding modern music elements to portray Hakka female elders' inner feelings.

In *ShiCha*, I chose a recording of an Old Mountain Song played on the Er-Sian musical instrument by an old Hakka musician named Hsu Mu-Chen⁴³ as the opening music. Cheng suggests that the 'Old Mountain Songs' were developed from the 'Shi-sian Mountain Songs' which are now among the oldest Hakka folk songs in north Taiwan. Its melodies are steady and flexible and form a tune for which lyrics can be freely improvised (2007:78-79). By employing the oldest tune of mountain songs to emphasize cultural characteristics of Hakka music, I require the actresses to naturally twist their facial expressions in slow motion to break away from the usual mode of performing Hakka mountain songs (either singing or reciting). In one aspect, I attempt to explore an alternative way to portray the quality of the Old Mountain Song; in another aspect, in the processes of interaction between tea drinking and Hakka music the actresses theatricalize the images of Hakka culture through their facial transitions. Through these facial transitions, I wanted to construct the tea-drinking culture as Hakka culture and to express my personal cultural identity. Stuart Hall, in his *Questions of Cultural Identity*, discusses the concept of identity as follows:

Identity is such a concept - operating 'under erasure' in the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all. (1996:2)

Based on Hall's perspective, identity itself is a complex and fluid idea; thinking about or questioning identity enables researchers and practitioners to respond to certain

⁴³Hsu Mu-Chen (1994-) was born in Hsinchu and became blind at the age of two. He started to play Er-Sian and sing the mountain songs when he was thirteen and became proficient in playing every traditional music instrument. In 1998, he was awarded the sixth Folk Artist Heritage Award. The Old Mountain Song used in *ShiCha* was recorded in his CD, *Coming Back*, in 2003.

crucial issues. Similarly, the ethnic, cultural identity of Hakka people is consistently flowing from identification with the ‘hometown’, China, to identification with the land of Taiwan. In addition, Hakka identity also relates to the understanding and identification of non-Hakka people in Taiwan. In my performance, I attempted to express the diversity of Hakka cultural identity by using the body as a metaphor for cultures, which is one of the reasons for applying the performing concept of *butoh*: ‘the body is a metaphor for words and words are a metaphor for the body’ referenced by Kurihara Nanako, a researcher of Hijikata’s *butoh* dance (2000:16). Hijikata, ‘saw the body in everything and attempted to capture it in words’ and the body of *butoh* as a metaphor for language :

Instead of liberating the body from language, Hijikata tied the body up with words, turning it into a material object, an object that is like a corpse. Paradoxically, by this method, Hijikata moved beyond words and presented something only a live body can express. (2000:17)

The ‘captured body’ was put into words; on the other hand, words and language reflected the characteristics of a culture. By expanding this idea, I attempted to connect languages (Hakka and Hokkien), Hakka music and the body, and to view the actresses’ bodies as metaphors of Hakka culture. Therefore, the actresses used their faces as a metaphor for the Hakka music and their bodies as metaphors for Hakka culture. They not only have to listen and sense the ‘Old Mountain Song’ music but also to express this sensation through their bodies. Together, in relation to the music, they present a Hakka identity as a whole; however, at the same time, each actress has their own cultural bodies and cultural identities.

Another characteristic of *ShiCha*, which is worthy of further discussion, is the attention it gives to complexity of language as an identity strategy in Hakka culture.

Language is an important hallmark of ethnic groups. The Hakka language, a remarkable distinguishing feature of Hakka culture, was affected by the restrictive migrant quotas during the immigration period and the language assimilation policy enacted under Japanese colonial rule and the KMT regime. As a result, the Hakka language (along with Hokkien and aboriginal languages) was not only regarded as a 'lower level' dialect, but was forbidden from being spoken in public. Hakka was doubly marginalized, inferior to both the official languages (Japanese and Mandarin) and the language used by the majority of Taiwanese (Hokkien). The marginal situation of the Hakka language in Taiwanese modern theatre is difficult to ignore; for a long time, the stage language used in contemporary theatre has been either Japanese or Mandarin. Taking the origin of Taiwanese modern theatre, New Theatre (Xin Ju), as an example, stage language has either combined Japanese and Hokkien or Mandarin and Hokkien, in which the Hakka language has no position:

During the Taiwanese Xin Ju movement, which happened in the Japanese period, spoke Japanese and Hokkien constituted the major stage languages. After the Second World War, people made an effort to learn Mandarin; however, influenced by the reality, New Theatre groups still mainly used Hokkien as their stage language. (Personal translation. Chiu Kun-Liang, 1997:184)

The Hakka language, which used to be spoken in the course of Hakka people's daily lives, was suppressed by the dominant Mandarin education policy and a minority of the population before the lifting of Martial Law in 1987. According to Wang Fu-Chang, Hakka citizens, for decades, made up the smaller populations of cities, and most tended to hide their Hakka identity for reasons of economic competition, and to learn the favored language, such as Mandarin, which had a cultural advantage, and Hokkien, which was spoken by the majority of people. Many Hakka also emphasized the importance of Mandarin education while raising their children, rather than

preserving Hakka language and culture. This resulted in most of the second generation who were born and grew up in cities gradually losing the ability to speak Hakka (2003:131). However, following the Hakka movement of 1988, the Council for Hakka Affairs (CHA) was established in 2000 to promote Hakka culture and preserve and promote the Hakka language as a public language.⁴⁴

As a Hakka growing up in Hsinchu city, I have experienced the range of difficulties associated with speaking Hakka and have been unable to properly express my thoughts and emotions by using my mother tongue. My personal experience with the Hakka language and research on how female directors have constructed Hakka identity by asking actors to speak Hakka on stage in Hakka Contemporary Theatre inspired me to investigate the following in relation to the Hakka language in *ShiCha*: first, to present the power relationships enforced through languages; second, to represent my personal experience of losing my mother tongue; third, to objectively display differences in languages by using a hybrid stage language to distinguish the specificity of the Hakka language. Finally, I would like to affirm the fragmented Hakka language used in the play as reflective of the individuality of Hakka culture.

To begin, the triangle sequences used in the play could be considered a challenge to the limitation of languages. When three of the actresses silently perform sequential movements, they depict a harmonious scene, while, at the same time, the movements do not indicate any power relationship. However, later, when two other actresses pronounce the names of the organs in English while one actress pronounces them in Hakka one second later, the same movements imply the power relationships appended

⁴⁴According to Wang Li-Jung, the CHA is responsible for helping the Ministry of Education in Taiwan promote 'Mother Language Education' in primary schools and for helping to provide sponsorship to kindergartens to teach Hakka and strengthen the foundations for mother language education. In addition, the CHA has also put more effort into promoting the use of the Hakka language in administrative institutions and in the mass media. (2007:882)

to the languages. The two actresses present a confident, cooperative attitude when speaking English together, while the third actress stops for a second and speaks in Hakka, which indicates the differentiation of languages. The sequential movements are repeated three times, and the second time, the two actresses speak together in Hokkien, while the third actress again speaks in Hakka one second later to show the marginal position of the Hakka language in Taiwan. In the third triangle sequences, the three actresses pronounce the names of the organs together in Hakka in the second time. They do this to present the Hakka language as a subject and affirm the power of the narrative to collect the audience's identity.

In the scene 'Hakka Childhood Memory', I convey my personal experience of the difficulty of speaking Hakka. When the little girl stares at the place where her grandmother disappeared and cannot speak, her struggle indicates my own experience of losing my mother tongue and suffering as a result of being incapable of expressing emotions in the proper language. In addition, the fragmented Hakka spoken by the girl suggests the consequences of Hakka's marginalization in Taiwan. However, when the girl counts from one to ten in Hakka a second time, the two other actresses present overlap in Hakka with English, creating an echo effect. Using this echo of languages, I hope not only to equally present different languages, but to focus on breaking out of the power relationships that always accompany their use.

Before discussing the hybrid stage language used in *The Beautiful Field*, it is necessary to illustrate the cultural background of the script and how the script reflects the effects of colonisation. *The Beautiful Field* was written by Hakka writer Long Ying-Tsung,⁴⁵ at the invitation of the Governor of Taiwan, in 1941.⁴⁶ Composed in

⁴⁵Long Ying-Tsung (1911-1999), whose real name was Liu Jung-Tsung, was born and grew up in a Hakka village named Beipu, in Hsinchu County. He was educated by Japanese teachers, held a position in the Bank of Taiwan, and was a writer, at times. In 1937, Long's short novel, *A Town Cultivated*

Japanese and edited with the Brief Youth Theatre Scripts by the Intelligence Department of the Governor of Taiwan, it was then translated to Mandarin by Ye Di. The script consists of two scenes that depict four different types of intellectuals who live in a Hakka village. They face conditions in rural Taiwan with four different attitudes realistic, doubtful, idealistic, and decadent while discussing the future of their village. In the first scene, three intellectuals have a conversation about their understanding of the 'Japanese Spirit': though living in the country side, intellectuals have to loyally complete their jobs as part of a social community, to fulfill the idea that 'the world is a family'. The second scene portrays a young intellectual who finally dedicates himself working in the Chinese areas occupied by Japan during World War II and leaves the village after a farewell.

When Long was initially invited by the Japanese governor to write a script, the aim of this script was affected by the cultural policy of the 'Local Culture Revitalization Movement', organized by Japanese officials. Therefore, the content of the script inevitably reflected the concept of the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere'⁴⁷, articulated by the government and military of the Empire of Japan. Liu Shu-Chin

Papaya Tree, was awarded the title of 'Best Novels' by Japanese magazine *'Transfer'*. After its publication, Long continued writing novels, poems, and notes that were published in Taiwanese and Japanese journals. In 1946, after World War II, the national government of China forbade writers from publishing writings in Japanese in news papers and journals and mandated that they only write in Mandarin. As a result, Long who could only write in Japanese, stopped writing for thirty years, until, in 1978 he published his first Mandarin novel, *Du Fu in Chang An*. (http://literature.ihakka.net/hakka/search_main.htm)

⁴⁶The Governor of Taiwan was a dominant dictatorial institution established by the Japanese colonizer. According to Chen Kung-Li, "The Governor of Taiwan possessed legislative, administrative, and, military rights to manage the people of Taiwan and was a significant political institution in colonized Taiwan. In 1919, the Governor of Taiwan implemented the system of cultural governors, tried to govern the Taiwanese through culture assimilation and eliminated the specificity of Taiwanese cultures". (1996:286-287)

⁴⁷According to Liu Shu-Chin, after the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War began, the Empire of Japan owned a huge swath of occupied areas called 'Greater East Asia', which generally included Taiwan, the New South Islands, the South Pacific Islands, Korea, China, South-East Asia and South Asia. Owing to the demand for new resources from these occupied areas, the colony of Taiwan became a critical medium between the Empire of Japan and the occupied areas and gradually moved toward the central position of the Empire of Japan. The earliest colony, Taiwan had become a historical, educational, and professional 'new' territory second to the Japanese island itself. (2008 : 12-13)

refers to the local culture of Taiwan during the Kominka Movement and to Japanese imperialism during the late period of Japanese colonisation (1937-1945):

Before World War II, Taiwanese 'local culture' was a production, produced by imperialism. It was different from the 'local culture' formed more recently by the phenomenon of globalization or global localization, which has developed through capitalism. (2008:3)

Local cultural activities during the Japanese colonial period were usually dominated by the Japanese government and aimed to persuade Taiwanese elites to create literature that reinforced the nationalistic spirit of the Japanese Empire. Such literature, as part of the local culture of Taiwan, was intended to be incorporated into the culture of Japan; thus, its content had to correspond to Japanese cultural policies. Therefore, Taiwanese elites gradually developed a sense of cross-border existence and imagined cultural interaction with Japan, Korea, and the occupied areas of China. In the first scene of *The Beautiful Field*, it is difficult not to notice that the Taiwanese intellectuals depicted in the play have internalized colonialism. They are keen on discussing or exploring the 'Japanese Spirit' and the 'Greater East Asia Community', emphasized often by the Empire of Japan:

Youth B: Yes! Our Japan is working for the Greater East Asia Community!

Youth A: I am restless now!

Youth B: But I think we should not panic; you dutifully complete your work and play the music you like during leisure time.

Youth A: Right! You explore the Japanese Spirit through reading and I embody the Japanese Spirit through playing music. (Chiu Chun-Mei (ed.), 2007:178)

This excerpt from the first scene reflects the significant internal relationship between the cultural classes, 'central culture (the empire) /local culture (the colony)', and the Taiwanese intellectuals. However, as Long noted in talking about the circumstances of

Taiwanese intellectuals at that time, “The Japanese settlers who live in the colony of Taiwan want to see the Japanese literature created by Taiwanese writers. The colonial policy of Japan is assimilation; I am also being viewed as a person who does not understand the Japanese Spirit” (Lin Chih-Chieh, 1981).

I argue that the discussion of the Japanese Spirit involved in *The Beautiful Field* can not only be considered as strengthening the dominant status of Japanese culture, but can be seen as resisting colonial cultural policy in a soft way: even these Taiwanese intellectuals, who used to be viewed as part of Taiwan’s lower cultural class, could understand, explore, or discuss the spirit of Japanese culture, which usually was viewed as belonging to the upper class. In my opinion, the depiction of a local Taiwanese area (a Hakka village) and intellectuals in a village, on the one hand, reflects the cultural classism internalized by the colonized intellectuals (which means, for the Taiwanese intellectuals, that colonial culture was higher than the colonized culture); on the other hand, it expresses persistence on the part of the colonized intellectuals (raising and incorporating Taiwanese culture into Japanese culture, to challenge the lower cultural class status of the local culture under colonization). However, the first scene of the script may reiterate the cultural class consciousness of colonialism and make it difficult to show the subjectivity of Hakka culture in *ShiCha*; thus, I decided not to adapt its content and chose to represent part of the second scene instead.

In *ShiCha*, *The Beautiful Field* is represented as a conversation among intellectuals about their imagination of new colonial spaces:

Youth C: Farewell my hometown, two feelings is intertwining in my mind.

All memories of the hometown like dreamy things (spoken in Hokkien).

Youth A: Or the sadness of separation (spoken in Hokkien)?

Youth B: Even though we will separate far away (spoken in Hakka), we will write letters to each other.

Youth C: You tell me news of our hometown (spoken in Hokkien). I will tell you interesting things happening in the strange lands.

Youth B: Reading books whenever you have time; people cannot live without reading books (spoken in Hakka). (Chiu Chun-Mei (ed.), 2007:182)

The term ‘the strange lands’, used by Youth C, reveals that colonized Taiwanese intellectuals were full of imaginative ideals for the newly expanded territories, the East Asia Community, constructed by the colonizer. Liu Shu-Chin points out that in the mid 1930s, people in Taiwan experienced a sense of internalizing colonial spaces and further imagined a world landscape full of imagination and pioneering:

This landscape is not only colonial, imperial, but territorial and global. It stands on a specific foothold, which involves the world understanding of colonized people, the imagination of imperial regional expansion, and the acceptance and unconscious repetition of the colonial world perspective to form another unstable, vogue imagination of the imperial community or the East Asia Community. (Personal translation. 2008:11)

Understanding the internal imperial and colonial perspective of the world landscape in the script, I chose to utilize the hybridity of languages to challenge the subordinate position of Hakka villages depicted by Hakka writers in the Japanese colonial period.

ShiCha combines Hakka, Hokkien and English, to form a hybrid stage language and freely, critically uses Hakka, Taiwanese local and modern elements to construct a hybrid subject. In presenting this hybrid subject, I seek a cultural strategy that presents Hakka culture as a subject, from an objective perspective, in the conditions of post-colonial Taiwan: that is, I seek to freely draw on local cultures in Taiwan and modern advancing elements on stage and combine them with Hakka culture, to express its specificity. Wu Rwei-Ren refers to the concept of anti-colonial modernity

as follows:

The concept of anti-colonial modernity is opposed to colonial modernity. It can be considered as breaking out of the formula, where West is equal to modern. The anti-colonialists chose to forge an alliance with the alternative concept of ‘Western modernity’, the modernity that emphasized the aspect of liberation, and to go against the mainstream concept of ‘Western modernity’, the modernity usually used as domination. (2006:99)

Anti-colonialists attempted to strategically subvert the cultural assimilation and classism that accompanied colonial modernity. As for me, my purpose is not to re-strengthen the modern performance forms or western language (English) in *ShiCha*, but to apply the Hakka language as an ‘anti-colonial’ strategy: the original script of *The Beautiful Field* was written in the colonial language, Japanese, and then translated to Mandarin. In speaking Hakka on stage, I wish to convey that the Hakka language, as part of a hybrid stage language, is a language that can be freely, equally performed with different languages and can represent Hakka culture, furthering communication with non-Hakka audiences.

(2) Hakka memory and theatrical space

In this section, I discuss how my Hakka childhood memories have been represented in the theatrical space of *ShiCha* and how they have helped to visualize my personal experiences as an embodiment of Hakka culture.

The term ‘space’ is a broad concept; it can refer not only to geographical, but to fictional space. In relation to space and theatre, McAuley discusses the concept of theatre space: “it is a place of employment for some, a place of entertainment and cultural enrichment for others” (2000:25-26). McAuley defines theatre space as “the theatre building itself (which is all part of the experience of theatre for both

practitioners and spectators and affects the way performance is experienced and interpreted)” and considers theatre space to include audience space (auditorium), practitioner space (stage), and performance space. Performance space is the space in which performers and spectators meet and work together to create performance experiences. Theatre space can be understood as a place where performances are created, while performance space is a space created by performance. In addition, McAuley quotes from the writings of Anne Ubersfeld, who regards theatrical space as ‘a general notion that refers to the whole complex function of space in the theatre’ (2000:18). In the following, I will analyse how the representation of memories have formed ‘differences’ to enrich the theatrical space.

In the second part of *ShiCha*, a traditional red brick Hakka house is projected onto the stage; triangular performing area, a number of children’s games and childhood memories are mixed and performed, to create a performance space. Hakka memory, as part of Taiwanese memories, is used to bridge the difference in this performance space. Ric Knowles has analyzed four performances in Toronto that embody the performance forms of minoritized cultures and ‘build memory’. He points out that memory bridges difference:

It takes place in the present but recalls, incorporates, or appropriates the past. All cultural memory is performative. It involves the transmission of culture through bodily practices such as ritual, repetition and habit. (2009: 16-19)

My personal cultural memories of serving tea to Hakka elders and listening to Hakka mountain songs on the radio are visualized and theatricalized in theatrical space (through lighting, the sound loop, projections, and acting). In the second scene, the ritualized movements made by the little girl who serves a cup of tea to her

grandmother, embody indeed, represent the past through cultural memories, as a means of obtaining power within the society that values the past.

In addition, the act of 'serving tea' could be viewed as a kind of cultural transformation: a 'restored behaviour' of tea culture that values the life culture of the Hakka ethnic group in Taiwan. Kevin Hetherington draws attention to the relationship between the restored behaviour and identity performance:

[...] this notion of restored behaviour, which not only shows how such performances are recognizable to others who share a particular identification, but how they produce distinct identity positions through their performances in a 'theatrical space'. The uncertainty surrounding such performances and the uncertainty of the spaces in which they occur have a symbolic importance in performing new or alternative ordering of identity positions. In particular, such performances articulate a monstrous 'heteroclitite' identity which comes to be defined by its hybrid, uncertain, and multiple forms. (1998:142)

In the second part of *ShiCha*, my personal Hakka life experiences memories during my upbringing are combined with two other actresses' childhood memories, to present a hybrid cultural memory in the theatrical space. Uncertainty becomes a critical feature of the hybrid cultural memory presented: first, the space reflects the uncertainty of childhood memories in Taiwan (which are a combination of Taiwanese collective childhood memories and individual local life experiences); on the other hand, it is difficult for spectators to determine which childhood scene belongs to which category (Hakka childhood memories or Taiwanese childhood memories). Hakka cultural memories occupy a position in the performance that is surrounded by these uncertainties and are involved in the construction of a hybrid cultural identity that inspired by my personal Hakka identification with Hakka culture and search for a Taiwanese Hakka identity.

(3) Gender in *ShiCha*

In the last Chapter, I showed that postcolonial theatre tended to own post-colonial perspectives as a discursive resistance, particularly against class, race, and gender oppression. In addition, post-colonial theatre feminists have drawn significant attention to the de-centralization of the perspective of Western feminism, in terms of considering the concept of gender, and have re-examined the complexity of gender as it relates to women who suffered ethnic or class exploitation and oppression during colonisation. Gilbert and Tompkins suggest that gender is “less likely to function alone as a category of discrimination in post-colonial plays than in combination with other factors such as race, class, and/or cultural background” (1996:213). Accordingly, although *ShiCha* is performed by the three ‘actresses’, it does not aim to present gender as a means of resisting oppression. However, I attempt to re-consider the interaction between the concept of gender and Hakka culture in the play.

The opening of *ShiCha* is an attempt to show a ‘gendered’ body in response to the concept of non-binary gender categories usually pursued by feminists in theatre. Western theatre feminist Judith Butler pointed out that understandings of gender were performed and further explained, “[that] the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality” (1999:136). For Butler, gender is not a fact; various acts of gender create the idea of gender. She considered gender “a corporeal style, an ‘act’, as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where ‘performative’ suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning” (1999:139).

In my opinion, by expanding the notion that ‘the various acts of gender create the idea of gender’ the various movements of Hakka culture can create the idea of Hakka

culture. Therefore, I have chosen not only to emphasize the concept of ‘gendered’ bodies in the opening of *ShiCha* but I have also deliberately requested that the actresses use ‘gendered’ faces to enact the old mountain song sung by a Hakka male musician. For me, the opening is not only focused on embodying gendered bodies, but, rather, freely presents Hakka music in the condition of self-identified gender. For the actresses, a gendered body needs to be emphasized in connection with the Hakka old mountain song, as a symbol of Hakka culture; furthermore, the opening, in which the actresses’ facial expressions adapt to the Hakka music, can be read or interpreted by the audience as presenting various cultural possibilities.

The representation of *The Beautiful Field* interprets ‘gender’ from a post-colonial perspective, which could be considered in combination with other factors, such as race, class, and cultural background. Performed by the three actresses who portray the three ‘male’ intellectuals in the script, it subverts the image of intellectuals as males and builds up ‘female’ images of Hakka intellectuals (as the three actresses are all intellectuals). In addition, in portraying ‘female’ intellectuals of Taiwan, I have tried to reverse the imagined colonial world landscape internalized by the male writer, Long:

Youth C: What you said just like an old man, ha-ha... (spoken in Hokkien).

Youth B: I think the younger generation should work very hard (spoken in English); the time of strength is coming (spoken in Hakka).

Youth A: When will we see each other next time? I hope everyone will have success (spoken in Hokkien).

Youth C: Keeping our deep relationship in heart (spoken in Hokkien), I will engage myself with a first step. (Chiu Chun-Mei (ed.), 2007:183-185)

The dialogue amongst the actresses presents and combines elements of Hakka culture with elements of local Taiwanese culture and modern performing styles, to form a

hybrid subjectivity, which not only breaks with the subordinate position of Hakka culture depicted in the script, but also aims ‘to recuperate female subjectivities while showing that gender is an ideology mapped across the body in and through representation’ (Gilbert and Tompkins, 1996:212). The power of moving forward is aptly conveyed by the ‘female’ intellectuals and breaks with the original context of *The Beautiful Field*, which does not depict women. In addition, the representation concludes with the short film that shows a Hakka woman accusing the violence of the Taiwanese government. By using this short film, I hope to break the invisible and silent position of Hakka women in Taiwanese society and own a position of hybrid subjectivity.

(4) Communication with audience

Before discussing the way the play, *Shicha*, communicated with the audience, I would like to draw attention to the theatrical form of the Hakka Contemporary Theatre. In Chapter One, I have examined the relationship between the Hakka culture and the development of Taiwanese contemporary theatre. According to my previous research, some theatre researchers pointed out that after the 1970s, practitioners of modern theatre in Taiwan took the initiative in absorbing the training methods and performing styles from western modern theatre. Furthermore, after the Little Theatre Movement of the 1980s, a number of theatrical forms from the West and Japan were adapted by Taiwanese theatre practitioners and have affected the acceptance of audience nowadays. Most audiences tend to regard modern theatrical form as progressive, and avant-garde. Zhong Ming-De points out that, “the authority of modern theatre is still in the West, modern theatre must earn the narrative permission of the West; otherwise, even Taiwanese audiences cannot really listen to it” (Personal translation. 1999:24). Theatre practitioners and researchers in Taiwan have to face the fact in an objective

perspective: modern theatre is originally from the West and still occupies the central position nowadays. Therefore, the appropriation of the Western modern theatre to form the Taiwanese contemporary theatre could be considered as “re-producing the process of colonisation (through westernization or Japanization)” (1999:26). Therefore, Zhong claims, “most content of localization is to accept the fact that Taiwan has been westernized and even to criticize the process of colonisation through a colonized way” (1999:26).

Through absorbing the ‘anti-culture’ of anti-westernization or anti-Japanization culture (usually accompanied by capitalism or imperialism), a number of performances made by so-called experimental or avant-garde theatre groups attempted to subvert the long term dominant Chinese culture in Taiwan. I argue that the theatrical forms of modern theatre may also be viewed as an appropriation to earn the narrative permission in the theatre field in order to open more possibilities for communication between Taiwanese audiences and Western audiences. For example, the Hakka Contemporary Theatre performances produced by female directors are individual combinations of cultural, musical, historical, and traditional elements related to ‘Hakka’ and the modern performing form to construct an alternative theatrical form as Hakka theatre. Female director Peng of the Uhan Shii Theatre Group described her experience of creating *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here* as a situation similar to ‘making something out of thin air’: “it (the Hakka) must be combined with something to have its new life” (Peng cited in Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005) . Consequently, *Taiwanese Confession VI: We Are Here* became a performance that combined the Hakka oral history with modern theatre. As Peng said, “ at its première we only sold ten tickets, but after it had been performed once, all tickets were sold out; most Hakka people bought tickets and went into the National Theatre Concert Hall to

see a performance for the first time in their lives” (Peng cited in Hu Tzu-Yun, 2005).

In my opinion, Hakka Contemporary Theatre is not narrowly adopting western theatrical forms but is gaining the permission to critically express its cultural subjectivity and construct the identity of Hakka culture. Hence, the way to combine modern performing style and the Hakka elements has become the creative direction of female directors. *ShiCha*, as a play in response to my research, it is necessary to efficiently communicate with the audience in the UK. There is no denying the form of modern theatre is an easy way to communicate with the British audience. This can also illustrate why I choose to combine modern theatre form, butoh training, Hakka cultural elements, and a hybrid stage language (Hakka, Hokkien, and English) to search for my personal cultural identity as a Hakka. Helen Freshwater reminds us considering the relationship between theatre and audience that “it is important to remember that each audience is made up of individuals who bring their own cultural or reference points, political beliefs, sexual preferences, personal histories, and immediate preoccupations to their interpretation of a production” (2009:5-6).

In the process of performing *ShiCha* in Exeter University, audiences who came to see the play involved British students and students from different countries, they brought their own cultural or reference preferences with them. After the play finished a British response in the post talks was as follows:

For me, I do not feel I know the majority culture well enough to understand, and so, maybe if you are looking or thinking about for your appearing audience, how do you use the majority to show the minority a little bit to define yourself through the difference; otherwise, I cannot say that is clearly the minority, because I cannot see the differences. (Recorded by Hu Tzu-Yun, 2011)

The above commentary points out the critical difficulty and challenge during the process of creating this play: to audiences, who do not understand the Hakka culture, it is not clear enough for them to recognize the Hakka culture in the hybrid subjectivity created in the play. However, the audience could catch vaguely the searching for a Hakka identity in *ShiCha*, as one said, “I think this is really interesting aspect of it you try to discover your identity maybe that is a kind of routine martial, somehow”. In addition, one Taiwanese audience Wu Yi-Chen wrote down the following comment:

I do not think the question of ‘what the Hakkaness is?’ or ‘what is the cultural difference between Hokkien and Hakka ethnic groups in Taiwan?’ would be the main issue in your presentation. These questions sound too heavy to be shown by the tea-pot, flower pattern textile, the projection of rice field. If we say the creative direction of the play is a claim to present your exist as a Hakka today, I really like the tone of your presentation. It corresponds to the atmosphere shown in the poster and expresses the connection of the environment and your native upbringing. So, I think a play can answer a question is a good play. (Personal translation. Hu Tzu-Yun, 2011)

Above all, I could not confidently assume that the play *ShiCha* well made in response to the research topic of this dissertation: the construction of contemporary Hakka female theatre. However, this presentation is a start in the contemporary theatrical field. As Bharucha said, “tradition can be invented in any number of ways, even though we may not be aware of it” (1993:192).

To conclude, the play *ShiCha* applied the concept of critical hybridity in a post-colonial perspective in order to form a hybrid subjectivity of Hakka culture. Through freely and critically combining Western performance styles with local languages of Taiwan, the body aesthetics of butoh, and Hakka cultural elements to

express the hybrid energy of Hakka culture. This theatrical piece was an attempt to position Hakka culture as a subject and to utilize a mixed stage language, a hybrid performing form, and a representation of hybrid childhood memories to portray the specificity of post-colonial Hakka culture in Taiwan. Although the play was not mature enough, the adaptation of traditional Hakka cultural elements showed its potential in the future.

Theatre as Locations of Cultures

Taiwan, a country defined by the first world as ‘developing’, is a state is still threatened by China today, a country fighting for national sovereignty, an island composed of heterogeneous ethnic groups, and a location which suffered economic exploitation and cultural assimilation by different colonial regimes. In Taiwan, theatre is a location of cultures, whether the Taiwanese cultural identity of New Theatre in the Japanese colonial period, the Chinese culture hegemony of Spoken Drama in the KMT internal colonization, or the various attempts of experimental theatre in the Little Theatre Movement; theatre in Taiwan always reflects the power relationship among cultures.

As a Hakka female researcher and a Hakka Contemporary Theatre practitioner, I have chosen female directors’ productions as my research themes to observe how Hakka (including Hakka people in general, women in particular, and every kind of cultural element) were positioned and portrayed in theatre in Taiwan. Therefore, it is not difficult to discover that an unequal power relationship still exists in the theatre; however, it is also evident that a minority culture, such as Hakka culture, can speak out about its marginalized position. Bhabha wrote in the introduction of *The Location of Culture*, “We find ourselves in the moment of transit where the space and time

cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion' (1994:1). At this moment of completing my thesis, I have realized that academic research is not searching for a narrow understanding of the 'others' or emphasizing the difference, but rather it is coming to an understanding of ourselves in the process of research. This is a crucial reason that I have included in the introduction of this thesis; my critical position has stepped outside the frame of Taiwanese academic research, in which most researchers identified themselves with concepts or cultural consciousness of the first-world scholars. Instead, I have applied discourses of post-colonial researchers of third-world cultural studies to examine the complexity among Taiwanese Hakka culture, Hakka subaltern women and the Hakka ethnic group.

After the lifting of Martial Law in 1987, the Hakka ethnic group gradually overcame its marginal position in colonial history and started to establish a proper role in response to the ongoing process of democratization and localization in Taiwan. In every aspect - political, cultural, linguistic, and literary - Hakka people attempted to re-illuminate Hakka history to construct the subjectivity of Hakka culture. In the 21st century, by writing this thesis, I wish to investigate what kind of impact the Hakka Contemporary Theatre could make on the local and global society in which we live today.

In Chapter one, I have offered a landscape of Hakka Contemporary Theatre and have examined the interaction between the Hakka culture and Taiwanese modern theatre to form my argument: from the Japanese colonial period to the 1980s, many theatrical practitioners showed the tendency to utilize Hakka materials in modern theatre as a symbol of Taiwanese culture and to represent a vague Taiwanese cultural imagination and identity. In Chapter two, I have introduced the concept of hybridity from diaspora

discourse to a post-colonial perspective to analyze the Hakka elements involved in Wang Chi-Mei's *Mundane Orphan*, as a part of Taiwanese hybrid culture. I have pointed out that Hakka culture, in the play, was a part of a hybrid Taiwanese culture, and served to construct a pan-Taiwanese identity, thereby losing its cultural subjectivity. In addition, I have discussed how the Hakka female director, Chiu Chuan-Chuan, attempted to represent Hakka immigration history to form a Hakka consciousness and I have put it forward as a 'pan'-Hakka consciousness, an integration of Hakka people in Taiwan, which failed to show the internal differences of Hakka culture (such as different accents of Hakka language).

In the third chapter, I have re-examined the transition of Western feminism to the society of Taiwan and Taiwanese feminist theatre to form my argument: that the content of Taiwanese feminist theatre has been identified with the consciousness of first world feminists and failed to depict the multi-oppression and exploitations of most Taiwanese women under colonization. Furthermore, I have used the Uhan Shii Theatre Group's performances of Hakka females' oral histories and the Shigang Mama Theatre Group's performances of Hakka Contemporary Theatre as examples to demonstrate how Hakka women, as subaltern Taiwanese, appeared in theatre and expressed their thoughts to break the silence of subaltern women and subvert the epistemic violence of imperialism. On the other hand, at the same time, I have criticized both theatre groups for the way in which they re-enforce the ideology and modernity of Western feminism in the process of constructing Hakka female subjectivity.

In a previous conclusion, I have illustrated how I produced a piece of Hakka Contemporary Theatre based on research into these female directors and applied the concept of critical hybridity in the play *ShiCha*. I have proposed my opinion of

embodying Hakka culture in my post-performance analysis: Hakka Contemporary Theatre does not narrowly adopt western theatrical forms but critically expresses its cultural subjectivity to construct the identity of Hakka culture. As Bhabha said, ‘The move away from the singularities of ‘class’ or ‘gender’ as primary conceptual and organizational categories, has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions – of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation – that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world’ (1994:1). With regard to the ‘subject positions’ of Hakka culture in Taiwan, Hakka cultural researchers and theatre practitioner should consider these in relation to circumstances of Taiwan or in the world. Finally, I hope that this thesis may encourage more Taiwanese to appreciate the value of having Hakka people living in Taiwan. This research would not have been possible without the openness and opportunity offered by the academic context here in the UK and I look forward to contributing to knowledge in this field in the future.

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