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# Building a Democratic Consciousness in Taiwan: An Analysis of Lung Ying-tai's Political Essays Over Three Decades (1984–2003)

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Building a Democratic Consciousness in Taiwan:  
An Analysis of Lung Ying-tai's Political Essays Over Three Decades (1984–2003)

A Thesis Presented  
by  
CONRAD W. BAUER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
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Building a Democratic Consciousness in Taiwan:  
An Analysis of Lung Ying-tai's Political Essays Over Three Decades (1984–2003)

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ABSTRACT

BUILDING A DEMOCRATIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN TAIWAN: AN ANALYSIS OF  
LUNG YING-TAI'S POLITICAL ESSAYS OVER THREE DECADES (1984–2003)

MAY 2015

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Throughout her writing career, the Taiwan intellectual Lung Ying-tai (1952– ) has elaborated a distinct vision of how her country could realize the civic foundations of a democratic society. This ambition began with “Wild Fire,” an editorial column that ran in the Taiwan newspaper *The China Times* from 1984 to 1986, which was later compiled into a 1986 book, *Wild Fire Collection*. At this time, Taiwan’s political structure had just begun a process of liberalization. Under increasing international and domestic pressure, the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party eased its authoritarian control over the island. Lung took advantage of this unique moment, and, during Taiwan’s radical political reorganization, helped lay the foundations for a civil society based on democratic values. Lung’s vision of Taiwan’s burgeoning civil society centered on a strong democracy rooted in individual empowerment; an educated citizenry; and a native identity tied to the island.

As Taiwan has continued its process of liberalization through the 1990s and into the 21st century, Lung has remained an outspoken voice in Taiwan’s political and cultural development. This thesis traces the themes that Lung first introduced in *Wild*

*Fire Collection* through two later essay collections, *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* (1999) and *When Facing the Sea* (2003). The issues that Lung discussed in “Wild Fire” have only become more relevant as Taiwan’s society puts into practice the democratic values that Lung called for in the mid-1980s. Meanwhile, globalization and China’s rise have brought the debate over Taiwan’s cultural identity to the fore.

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## INTRODUCTION

Lung Ying-tai's career as a social critic began when she submitted an opinion piece to the Taiwan daily *The China Times* (*zhongguo shi bao* 中國時報) in November 1984.<sup>1</sup> Titled “My Fellow Citizens, Where is Your Outrage?” (*Zhongguo ren, ni wei shen me bu sheng qi* 中國人，你為什麼不生氣), the piece took the form of a direct appeal to her compatriots in Taiwan,<sup>2</sup> challenging them to rethink their role as citizens in a state on the brink of massive political reformation. At the time, the authoritarian rule of the Kuomintang party was showing hints of change towards a more liberal political structure, but no one could be certain of the direction and extent of liberalization. At this crucial juncture, Lung Ying-tai outlined a vision of a citizenry that she believed would be prepared for – indeed, could even demand changes towards – a democratic society. For democracy to take root in Taiwan, the attitudes and perspectives of the citizenry needed to reform as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the paper, I use “Taiwan” as an adjective meaning “of Taiwan.” The term “Taiwanese” often refers specifically to an ethnic group in Taiwan, namely the ethnically Chinese who came to Taiwan before 1945 (but usually not including the Hakka [*kejia* 客家] minority).

<sup>2</sup> The political classification of the island of Taiwan has been a thorny issue for at least the past 66 years. In 1949, the Nationalist Kuomintang Party retreated from mainland China to Taiwan, bringing the government structure of the Republic of China in tow, while the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland. For many years these two political parties insisted that they were the legitimate government for all of China, including Taiwan. In 1991, the Republic of China changed its name to the Republic of China on Taiwan and relinquished its claim to mainland China, while the PRC still lays claim to the entirety of the territory.



### **Main Themes: Individualism, Education, and Cultural Identity**

Lung's vision for a society that reflects democratic values has centered on three main developments: changing the way individuals view themselves as members of society; reforming the education system to cultivate independent thinkers; and recognizing a cultural identity specific to Taiwan and distinct from that of mainland China. These three ideas are at the core of the "Wild Fire" essays and recur in Lung's writing throughout her career.

In promoting individualism in Taiwan's society, Lung ran up against the region's significant and longstanding ideological inertia. A long-held view promoted by intellectuals and politicians on both sides of the Pacific Ocean was, as Keith Maguire describes it, that "Western concepts of individual liberty and human rights were likely to undermine the solidarity of the group which was the foundation of Asian societies."<sup>3</sup> Lung, who had spent close to ten years living in the United States pursuing a doctorate in English and American Literature at Kansas State University and teaching before assuming the role of a social critic, was typecast by her critics as a lackey for the West, with views alien to Taiwan's society.<sup>4</sup> For example, at the time Taiwan had a growing political opposition movement, which organized itself around underground political

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<sup>3</sup>Maguire, *The Rise of Modern Taiwan*, 84. In *Alternate Civilities*, Robert Weller makes the case that certain aspects of Taiwanese culture do indeed align with democratic values. The ideological inertia that Lung ran up against almost certainly represents a reductionist view of Asian values. Later in the thesis, I discuss how Lung challenges these reductionist interpretations of Chinese culture. Regardless of its validity, this interpretation still shaped the discourse on where individualism fit in Asian society at the time.

<sup>4</sup> See the chapter "Spring Rain Extinguishes the Wild Fire" (*chun yu mie ye huo* 春雨滅野火) in Su Buchan's *Long Yingtai Feng bao*, pp. 58-137.

magazines. Writers in these magazines, ostensibly ideological allies of Lung's for seeking political reform in Taiwan, ridiculed Lung for making individualism a big part of her calls for social change, as they believed it to be an ineffective or irrelevant in spurring reform.<sup>5</sup>

Among Chinese intellectuals,<sup>6</sup> educational reform of the citizenry as a precondition to establishing democratic values within Chinese society has been a prominent topic since at least the end of the 19th century.<sup>7</sup> After studying at Columbia University in the 1910s with John Dewey (1859-1952), a leading American proponent of educational reform, the Chinese intellectual Hu Shi (1891-1962) returned to China to become a leading figure in the liberal reform movement. Decades later, following in Hu's footsteps, Lung Ying-tai would pick up a similar rallying call for educational reform. She believes that by developing the capacity for critical thinking, the citizenry can free itself from ideological control by the government. Later in her career, she would see education as a crucial ballast against the negative social effects of media sensationalism.

The last topic discussed in this thesis is Lung's view on Taiwan's cultural identity. Under KMT rule, the people of Taiwan were required to think of themselves as politically and culturally a part of China, and were denied any native cultural identity. Open discussion of Taiwan culture was only possible following the political liberalization

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<sup>5</sup> Long, *Ye Huo Ji*, 47.

<sup>6</sup> While Lung Ying-tai identifies strongly as being from Taiwan, this does not preclude her from recognizing her ties to a Chinese cultural heritage. Clearly, based on her writing, Lung sees herself as a descendant of the reformist Chinese intellectual tradition that began with such thinkers as Liang Qichao (1873-1929) at the end of the Qing (1644-1912) dynasty.

<sup>7</sup> Ogden, *Inklings of Democracy in China*, 68.

of the 1980s. However, culture and politics remain entangled in Taiwan society. Through the “Wild Fire” essays, Lung was one of the first Taiwan intellectuals to bring the discussion of Taiwan’s native identity to the public. Lung believed open discussion on the Taiwan people’s cultural heritage was an important component in establishing a strong civic identity. Building respect and recognition towards Taiwan as a shared homeland would give the people of Taiwan a new civic consciousness.<sup>8</sup> Could Taiwan maintain cultural ties to its Chinese heritage even as the government relinquished its claims to the territory of mainland China? How should Taiwan respond to globalization the cultural hegemonizing forces of the West and China? These are the two main questions that Lung’s work addresses, analyzed here in Chapter 3.

### **Methodology**

This thesis is structured as a thematic discussion of Lung Ying-tai’s views, as expressed in her writing, on the three points detailed above: the individual in society, education, and cultural identity. Each of these points is further broken down into subtopics. Three of Lung’s book are mainly considered: *Wild Fire Collection* (*ye huo ji*

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<sup>8</sup> According to Cai Huiping, Lung has previously endorsed a possible Taiwanese declaration of independence from China, should it come to a public referendum, but regardless of what happens, Taiwan should maintain a cultural connection to mainland China. (Cai, *Long Yingtai, The Politician*, 154) Lung’s qualified and hypothetical statement in this context does not come across as a ringing endorsement of independence, and considering Lung’s political affiliation with the pro-unification KMT Party, her views could conceivably be classified as pro-unification. However, from her writing, it is clear that she does not believe that a democratic Taiwan could unite with a non-democratic China. Her most well-known essay on this topic is probably “The Taiwan That You Might Not Know About,” (*ni ke neng bu zhi dao de Taiwan*, 你可能不知道的臺灣) which appeared jointly in a mainland newspaper as well as in *The China Times*. Background on the publication and a partial translation can be found on the blog EastSouthWestNorth.

野火集 1986), *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* (*bai nian si suo*, 百年思索, 1999), and *When Facing The Sea* (*mian dui da hai de shi hou*, 面對大海的時候, 2003).<sup>9</sup> Through a inter-disciplinary approach which incorporates sources from the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, cultural and media studies, literature, and political science, the thesis examines how Lung's views have changed or remained consistent over the course of her writing career, and also gives a broader sense of the cultural, social, and political changes that took place during this unique time in Taiwan's history.

#### **Note on Romanization**

In general, I use *Hanyu pinyin* for Romanization, especially in citations for book and article titles. I use Wade-Giles Romanization for proper names, including Lung Ying-tai, Lee Teng-hui, Ma Ying-jeou, and Kuomintang. Citations have authors' names in *Hanyu pinyin*, hence Lung's name is written as Long. For Chinese names, I put the surname first and the given name second. Chinese characters appear in the traditional form.

#### **Note on Translation**

The translations from Chinese to English are by myself. Names of Lung Ying-tai's essays appear in English translation with *pinyin* and Chinese in parenthesis.

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<sup>9</sup> I use the 20th anniversary of *Wild Fire Collection*, published in 2005, which includes essays and lectures that Lung wrote in 1984 to 1986, after the first edition was published, as well as commentary from other writers.

CHAPTER I  
INDIVIDUALISM

**Introduction**

Lung Ying-tai advocates for the individual citizen as the core unit in Taiwan's society, believing that the needs of each person should not be subsumed within large-scale social forces. Through the course of her writing, individualism as a value manifests in several different ways. Most importantly, Lung believes that individuals have to make their voices heard through greater civic engagement. Lung has led by example, using stories from her life to show how Taiwan's citizens can be more engaged in society. Lung also confronts the question of how individualism can be accommodated within Asian societies, which have long been seen as centered on collective needs. Lung adds a new twist on the idea of individuality, analogizing from the individual's role within society to Taiwan's place in the community of nations.

Lung began writing about individualism in 1984 with her first published essay, "My Fellow Citizens, Where is Your Outrage?" Lung's position was in direct opposition to the dominant political rhetoric of the ruling governmental party, the Kuomintang (KMT) or Nationalist Party. After losing control of mainland China to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949 and retreating to Taiwan, the KMT established the island as the base of the Republic of China (ROC), while the CCP established the socialist People's Republic of China (PRC) on mainland China. Both governments claimed to be the rightful ruling government for all of China, with the KMT promoting the belief among Taiwan residents that it would eventually retake the mainland from the Communists.

The KMT imposed martial law in 1949, and used the constant military threat posed by the CCP as a premise to encourage heightened vigilance among the residents of Taiwan. Under martial law, civil liberties guaranteed in the Constitution were suspended. It was the civic duty of all Taiwan's citizens to remain committed to the cause of fighting the Communists, as opposed to calling for political change on their home island. The KMT had long stifled political dissent, and direct criticism of the ruling party was rare, especially in mainstream newspapers such as *The China Times*, where Lung's essays were published.<sup>10</sup>

KMT policy was at odds with its own political doctrine as well as social and economic forces, and Lung Ying-tai, like other social critics, exploited these inconsistencies.<sup>11</sup> The Kuomintang was supposedly founded on democratic ideals, especially the Three Principles of the People proposed by KMT co-founder Sun Yat-sen: nationalism, democracy, and social welfare. In advocating for democracy and individual rights, Lung could plausibly argue that her goals were in fact not subversive, and ultimately in line with the ruling party's.

Thanks in part to KMT policies in the mid-20th century, Taiwan experienced rapid economic growth that pulled many of its citizens into the relative wealth and

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<sup>10</sup> I have yet to uncover a satisfactory explanation as to why Lung Ying-tai's highly critical writings initially escaped censorship. On the one hand, Lung was riding a general trend towards liberalization. On the other hand, Lung started writing during the height of a KMT censorship campaign. The 1985-1986 period saw more instances of censorship than any other years in Taiwan's post-1949 history (Cohen, *Taiwan at the Crossroads*, 146). Lung herself writes that her column didn't suffer censorship (*Ye huo ji*, 53). Joyce Yen argues that "There was nothing revolutionary in Lung's writings...Yet, from the beginning, Lung chose to be influential rather than heroic. She knew what *not* to write to keep her column in a newspaper read by one million people." (Yen, "Insightful Social Critic.")

<sup>11</sup> Clough, "Enduring Influence," 12.

comfort of the middle class. Taiwan's GDP grew at an annual rate of 8.6% between 1951 and 1993, at which point Taiwan's GDP per capita was over \$10,000.<sup>12</sup> At least one scholar credits the social structure of companies as a basis for democratic values underlying civil society in Taiwan,<sup>13</sup> and indeed, the improving economy was indeed one of the factors that pushed Taiwan towards democratization.<sup>14</sup>

In the early phases of its authoritarian rule, the KMT was able to maintain efficient control over the written word at the point of production and distribution.<sup>15</sup> But later, with the expansion of the economy in Taiwan, market forces could be exploited by citizens to exert power over the government. For example, market forces played a direct role in reshaping the media. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, media outlets (especially newspapers) were caught between the demands of government censors and the demands of their readership. In some cases, when a particular newspaper acquiesced to government demands to limit coverage of sensitive events, readers punished them by defecting to other newspapers. In 1977, according to Daniel Berman, the *United Daily News* (*lian he ri bao* 聯合日報) failed to publish reports of anti-government violence in the town of Chung-li. Resulting subscription cancellations of the *United Daily News* by disgruntled readers catapulted *The China Times* from number two to number one in

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<sup>12</sup> Myers, "A New Chinese Civilization," 40.

<sup>13</sup> Chen, "Taiwan's Social Changes," 80.

<sup>14</sup> For a full list as compiled by Bruce Jacobs in his book *Democratizing Taiwan*, see footnote 55.

<sup>15</sup> Winckler, "Cultural Policy in Postwar Taiwan," 38.

island-wide circulation.<sup>16</sup> Lung's argument likely met with a sympathetic audience among her Taiwan readers, who were becoming more civically aware, and more aware of the power that they already wielded in the social sphere.

### Civic Engagement

From her earliest social commentaries, Lung Ying-tai makes clear her belief that the individual should act as an empowered member of society. When individuals do not stand up for the greater society and their own best interests, larger and more aggressive actors will secure a monopoly on power. In the “Wild Fire” essays, Lung directs her anger at a government that does not maintain the rule of law against big business, criminal gangs, and individual bad elements in society.<sup>17</sup> For Lung, the social sphere is a battleground, or zero-sum conflict, between these aggressors and the civically engaged. If individuals do not band together in collective action and actively put up a fight, they will inevitably be exploited.

In her first essay “My Fellow Citizens, Where Is Your Outrage?”<sup>18</sup> – an unsolicited submission to the *China Times* – Lung describes being inspired to write by a feeling of disgust upon watching television one evening:

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<sup>16</sup> Berman, *Words Like Colored Glass*, 140.

<sup>17</sup> The “Wild Fire” essays appear as both a book and as newspaper columns. In general, when referring to these works, I put the term in quotes to refer to both the newspaper column and the accompanying social response, known at the time as “The Wild Fire Phenomenon” (*ye huo xian xiang*, 野火現象).

<sup>18</sup> In the original title, Lung addresses her fellow citizens as *Zhongguoren*, “Chinese people,” a term now somewhat outdated as a reference to residents in Taiwan. Her arguments surely extend to residents of Mainland China (and any other reader, for that matter) but rendering the title as “Chinese people” would likely engender confusion among contemporary English-language readers.



I heard someone joke on last night's news: "If you make public the names of all the companies that aren't passing their inspections, how will the businessmen who operate them be able to put food on their tables?" I felt disgusted and angry. Yet I wasn't angry at that person on the news, but at my eighteen million weak and selfish compatriots.<sup>19</sup>

This moment of frustration proved to be decisive in Lung's life, as the essay launched her career as a social critic and politician, and *Wild Fire Collection* would go on to become the "...best-selling and most-talked-about book of the decade in Taiwan."<sup>20</sup> Through the course of her essay, Lung clearly does not share the newscaster's glib solicitude for the businessmen's livelihood. If the businessmen do not meet the standards of regulators, they must be profiting by causing harm to others. Why should society show concern for such people, when they are not concerned about society?

This television incident then becomes a launching point for a diatribe aimed at her fellow citizens, in which she paints a grim portrait of Taiwan's society. On the one hand are those who take advantage of public space for personal gain: taxi drivers who ignore traffic regulations, individuals and companies who dump untreated waste into Taiwan's waters, and food stall operators who litter and create noise pollution in the spaces they occupy temporarily. On the other hand, the rest of society passively allows such unsavory elements to get away with their contemptible activity. "The people of Taiwan are timid

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<sup>19</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 003. Most of Lung Ying-tai's books come with a particular pagination. The foreword or introduction is paginated starting at 01, and the body of the work is paginated starting at 001.

<sup>20</sup> Yen, "Insightful Social Critic."

and selfish...unless someone is climbing into our beds to murder us, we would rather close our eyes, pretending to be asleep.”<sup>21</sup>

Beginning with “My Fellow Citizens, Where Is Your Outrage?” and continuing throughout the “Wild Fire” essays, Lung refers to these passive individuals as “The Silent Majority.” A foundation of Lung’s argument is that society belongs to the individual, and accordingly, society will reflect the quality of individuals who constitute it. “The quality of the populace dictates the quality of the government, which dictates the quality of society and the quality of the environment,” Lung lays out in a later “Wild Fire” essay, “The Shame of Silence” (*yi “chen mo” wei chi – wei gaoxiong ren he cai* 以「沈默」為恥 – 為高雄人喝采). “When a country’s environment is a vile mess, this means that its people are unable to establish a beautiful society. What would you say the quality of our populace is?”<sup>22</sup>

At that time, Lung clearly did not hold Taiwan’s citizenry in high regard. And throughout her writing, Lung argues that because the majority of Taiwan’s population is not civically engaged, Taiwan’s society does not reflect the interests of the majority of its population. In short, the people have not realized their capacity to take control of the society they live in. Lung’s essays are meant to spur this apathetic segment of society into direct action. In “My Fellow Citizens,” Lung offers a positive example of a few concerned individuals who banded together to form a consumer advocacy group, which put pressure on the Health Bureau. This upbeat story is countered, however, by a warning about scheming government officials who can scuttle the effectiveness of governmental

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<sup>21</sup> Long, *Ibid.*, 003.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 077.

agencies facing public pressure: “But now we have the Health Bureau sitting on the toilet not doing anything, and some nameless influence-peddling legislator has already taken the teeth out of this ministry before it can effectively do anything.”<sup>23</sup> Lung concludes “My Fellow Citizens” with a plea to maintain vigilance, exhorting her compatriots to stand up and express their anger directly to their public representatives and relevant government agencies. “If you’ve got the guts, if you’ve got the conscience, then go right now, tell your public servants and legislators, tell the Public Health Bureau, tell the Office of Environmental Protection: You’ve had enough! You’re outraged! And you’ve got to say it as loud as you can.”<sup>24</sup>

In one of the series’ early essays, “Dire Straits” (*nan ju* 難局), Lung poses the question, “If a system cannot protect the individual, does the individual have the right to protect himself?”<sup>25</sup> Lung tells the story of three people whose individual freedoms are in some way constrained by social forces: Socrates, for being unjustly imprisoned; Thoreau, for his act of civil disobedience during the Mexican-American War; and Bernhard Goetz, the “Subway Vigilante,” recently in the news for shooting four alleged attackers on the New York City subway in December 1984.

While Lung advocates for grassroots action emanating from the people, she stops short of calling for vigilante justice along the lines of Goetz’s example. She recognizes that in order for society to function, individuals must abide by the rules of the system. This is one reason why she brings in the example of Socrates, who supposedly refused a

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 005.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 006.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 002.

friend's offer to help him escape from jail on the eve of his execution. Given these individual obligations to society, it is all the more important for social structures to have mechanisms in place that protect the individual. She singles out nationalism, the education system, and the extended family structure as particular social institutions that put the individual at risk: "Underneath the peaceful surface are how many late-night sighs, broken dreams, crumbled wills of the individual? All for the sake of an abstract ideal, a system that initially was meant to benefit the individual but often sacrificed the individual."<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, she concludes, social institutions need to protect the powerless of society, not exploit them.<sup>27</sup>

Taiwan transitioned into a democratic society in the 1990s. Yet in the first page of *When Facing the Sea*, published in 2003, Lung echoes her vision of societal priorities from nearly twenty years before. She tackles head-on the oft-repeated Chinese saying, "Sacrifice the Little Self to complete the Large Self (*xi sheng xiao wo wan cheng da wo* 犧牲小我完成大我)." This saying is often cited in a political context to encourage individuals to give up their personal interests for the betterment of the larger group, including the nation. (In the context of Chinese society, the saying also resonates with followers of Buddhism.) As Lung writes, "Who decides what is the 'Large Self?' Doesn't the 'Large Self' only exist for the sake of the 'Small Self?'"<sup>28</sup> Lung explains that those in

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 023.

<sup>27</sup> I discuss more how Taiwan's citizens actively engage in civic society in Chapter 2.

<sup>28</sup> Long, *Mian dui*, 06. Here, Lung makes a reference to one of KMT founder Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People (*sanmin* 三民), *minsheng* or "livelihood of the people." Sun believed that one of the central roles of government was to provide for the welfare of the people.

power (the “Large Self”) often claim to represent the “Small Self” in their decision-making process, when they actually make decisions to further their own interests, violating their political mandate.

The saying is well-suited as a foil for Lung’s rhetorical position. She has long argued that civil society and government (here represented in the idea of the “Big Self”) are collective manifestations of the individual (“Small Self”). But Lung also turns the argument on its head, stating that the Small Self should in fact come before the Big Self. In this way, Lung stands up for individual rights in perhaps her most direct fashion yet.

In the 1999 book *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years*, Lung presents a more complex vision of how individuals play a critical role in working together to create a vibrant civil society. Lung’s then-husband was a German national, and their family had relocated to Europe in 1986. They remained there until 1999, when Ma Ying-jeou, then mayor of Taipei (and later President of Taiwan), invited her back to Taiwan to serve as the Cultural Commissioner of the city of Taipei.<sup>29</sup> Despite living abroad, Lung had remained an active participant in Taiwan’s cultural discussions, as she continued to publish in Taiwan’s newspapers. She had also started publishing in European newspapers. In the late 1980s and early 1990s Taiwan passed several significant political milestones, including the founding of the opposition party the Democratic Progressive Party in 1986 and the first presidential election in 1996. While Lung’s direct experience with Taiwan’s fledgling democracy in the 1990s was limited to visits home, but in Europe she could readily witness how democracy was unfolding in Eastern European nations transitioning out of communism. In her writing, these nations become a foil and measure for

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<sup>29</sup> Lung later served as the first Minister of Culture of Taiwan under Ma between 2012-2014.

questioning how the people of Taiwan are realizing their burgeoning democratic ambitions.

In *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years*, the concept of universal human rights becomes a logical extension of individual empowerment and the idea that each person's rights should be guaranteed by society. Human rights become one aspect of how individuals work together to realize a healthy democratic civil society.

In the essay "Does Taiwan Have a Human Rights Problem?" (*Taiwan you ren quan wen ti ma* 台灣有人權問題嗎) Lung describes how the gypsy population in the Czech Republic, which enjoyed some measure of protection under a socialist system, had some of their rights taken away from them once a democratic government was established. In Lung's example, one Czech town voted to build a wall to keep the gypsy population out.<sup>30</sup> With the power now in the hands of the people, the majority population created policies to oppress a minority. Lung uses this story as a warning to her compatriots to make sure that they fight to actively guarantee human rights even after their government has nominally transitioned into a democracy. "...a democratic system does not necessarily guarantee human rights, because the people in the system who exercise power do not necessarily have a fully realized concept of human rights."<sup>31</sup> The participatory democracy and civic engagement that Lung envisions are not ends in themselves, and do not come to rest once democracy has been realized.

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<sup>30</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 192.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

### The Author as Example

Throughout the “Wild Fire” essays, Lung paints herself as an engaged public citizen to serve as a positive model of the individuality she wishes her fellow citizens of Taiwan to assume. Her essays are written in the first person voice, and she creates an outspoken persona for herself through the criticism she constantly levels at society. Lung appeals to her readers in a very emotional way, as is clear from the title of her first essay. She contends that the state of Taiwan’s society should engender a visceral reaction within her readers, the same sort of response she had to the newscast. Her essays challenge her compatriots to show the same level of personal investment in their society.

Clearly, Lung does not shy away from using her own experiences to initiate discussion on social issues and criticize illiberal aspects of Taiwan’s society. In an essay titled “Confessions,” (*zi bai* 自白) published nine months after “My Fellow Citizens,” Lung for the first time writes openly about her gender. “I regret that I am a woman,” she begins.<sup>32</sup> Lung recognizes that her name in Chinese has a masculine ring. Because of her name and outspoken style, many readers had assumed she was a man. The gradual discovery of her gender among the public and the media drew some skeptical responses. “Do you think a woman writing these kinds of things is appropriate?” one interviewer asked her in the same essay cited above.<sup>33</sup> Another writer told her that her essays were published because of her gender, rather than their quality.<sup>34</sup> Her response in the essay is

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<sup>32</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 093.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 096.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 097.

to use these personal experiences of prejudice to challenge gender stereotypes, telling one interviewer who calls on the phone that she is busy fixing the toilet. Lung also draws on her firsthand experience as a professor at a Taiwan university to support her indictments of Taiwan's education system. These personal anecdotes draw Lung's readers into relatable narratives of social injustice, in hopes of provoking outrage similar to her own.

Lung advocates for the individual through stylistic as well as thematic means. Through the first person voice, and by sharing personal details of her life, Lung cultivates an intimate relationship with her readers. Her audience reads about her interactions with her students, her pregnancy while writing the "Wild Fire" series of essays, and her experiences as a graduate student in the United States before returning to Taiwan. To give her writing voice more of a personable, socially situated dimension, her essays often take the form of a dialogue. The title of her second essay, "Is Outrage Really Useless?" (*sheng qi, mei you yong ma* 生氣, 沒有用嗎), published sixteen days after "My Fellow Citizens, Where is Your Outrage?", directly confronts one of the overwhelming responses she received from readers who felt powerless to do anything productive in Taiwan's society.

Lung continued to directly address reader responses as evidence of the widespread impact of her essays, or to illustrate negative attitudes she wishes to overcome. Lung weaves in letters from students who explain how their teachers encourage them to read the "Wild Fire" essays in their classes, or from soldiers in units whose commanders prohibit them from reading *The China Times*, where her essays were published. She quotes some members of her audience who call her a hero. Others call her a traitor, and she incorporates their voices, too. Either way, this technique not only



heightens rhetorical engagement with her readers, but also by extension models how “The Silent Majority” can become more civically engaged and make their voices heard. The intimacy that Lung creates with her readers is a hallmark of her writing, and an important factor behind her success and longevity as a social critic and public figure in Taiwan.

In *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years*, Lung’s writing embodies the example of the engaged and empowered individual she wishes to see in Taiwan’s society, despite living abroad. Even while situated in Europe her personal example can seem all the more relevant, because she still took an active interest in Taiwan’s current affairs and was able to maintain her influence as a cultural critic. During the period of her “Wild Fire” essays, Lung was sometimes criticized as a carpetbagger who was not personally invested in Taiwan’s society and who would eventually leave again to live abroad.<sup>35</sup> But her continued writing for a Taiwan audience demonstrated her commitment to that society, even when circumstances demanded that she could not be a direct participant. Her essays at the time are groundbreaking precisely because she presented a view of Taiwan from Europe to the Taiwan public just as the KMT abandoned their censorship of the news media. Many Taiwan citizens must have experienced their society from an outside perspective for the first time through the essays of Lung Ying-tai’s expat period.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Su, *Long Yingtai feng bao*, 82. This charge resurfaced after Lung’s return from Europe. One essay by a critic of Lung, compiled in *When Facing the Sea*, is titled “Lung Ying-tai is but a Passing Visitor From Europe” (*Lung Yingtai zhi shi Ouzhou lai de guo ke*, 龍應台只是歐洲來的過客). Long, *Mian dui*, 181.

<sup>36</sup> Another essay in *When Facing the Sea* describes Lung’s essays as postcards from a foreign land and compares them to those of the Taiwan author Sanmao (三毛, also known as Echo Chan in English), who published travelogues in Taiwan’s newspapers while living abroad in the 1970s and 1980s. Long, *Mian dui*, 184.

Just as Lung projects her own example to model individualism in Taiwan's society, she formats her books to give "The Silent Majority" a public voice. *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* gathers together the final essays Lung Ying-tai published while living in Europe, as well as personal reflections on her life and career and her decision to return to Taiwan. Like many of Lung's other works, *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* also incorporates essays by other social critics written in dialogue with Lung's own work. Lung began this tradition after the publication of *Wild Fire Collection* with a volume called *Wild Fire Continued* (野火集外集, *ye huo ji wai ji*, 1987), which incorporates a few of her essays published in *The China Times* after the *Wild Fire Collection* was initially published. (All of the essays are compiled into the 25th anniversary edition of *Wild Fire*.) However, the book is mainly a collection of essays written by other critics in response to Lung Ying-tai's column, as well as letters from readers.

This collegial, dialogic book format resonates with Lung Ying-tai's view on the individual in society. Individuals who impress their own will too powerfully are just like the business owners Lung could not sympathize with at the beginning of "My Fellow Citizens." For Lung, a powerful civic society is formed through cooperation between civic-minded individuals. A collaborative book in itself demonstrates how "The Silent Majority" described in "My Fellow Citizens, Where is Your Outrage?" can transition to a more active citizenry.

In an essay compiled in *Thinking Back on The Last Hundred Years*, "A Transitional Figure's Testimony of a Transitional Period – My Reading of *With the People Always in My Heart*" (*guo du ren wu jian zheng guo du shi dai—wo du Taiwan de*

*zhu zhang* 過渡人物見證過渡時代—我讀台灣的主張), Lung critiques Taiwan's then-president, Lee Teng-hui (1923- ) by her standards of inclusiveness and self-empowerment. She writes that Lee takes a patronizing tone towards the citizens of Taiwan in his autobiography, *Advocate for Taiwan*.<sup>37</sup> "His sincerity belongs to that of a transitional personage moving from an authoritarian era to a democratic era. His thinking, his language, his self-positioning, his recognition of the people, they are still like that of an advisor, a minister, a prophet, or a family patriarch from a previous time."<sup>38</sup> Instead of envisioning Taiwan's citizens working together and creating society through their actions, Lee grants himself an outsize role in Taiwan's development into a democratic nation.<sup>39</sup>

Lung's dialogic methodology continues in *When Facing The Sea*. In recognition of the significant differences of opinion circulating on the subjects of democratization and civil society, Lung's own writing occupies only the first quarter of this collection. The rest is given over to the transcript of a debate she took part in at the National Museum of Taiwan Literature, along with essays by other authors and letters she received in response to the opening essays, which had appeared previously in Taiwan's newspapers. These responses come not just from Taiwan, but from all over the world, indicating the global import of the dialogue that she and her critics and readers are engaged in.

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<sup>37</sup> Lung claims that there is an English-language edition, which may be titled *With the People Always in My Heart* (Taibei Shi : Yuan liu chu ban shi ye gu fen you xian gong si, 1999). However, I've been unable to find this translation.

<sup>38</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 159.

<sup>39</sup> Lee was in fact an important figure in establishing democratic institutions in Taiwan. What Lung criticizes is his mentality in respect to Taiwan's society, not his accomplishments.

### **Individualism in Asian Society**

While Lung's "Wild Fire" essays focus primarily on Taiwan's society, she expands her scope in *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* to discuss Taiwan in the context of other Chinese-speaking nations. As the only democracy, Taiwan occupies a unique position among these nations. Lung uses Taiwan's anomalous status to contest claims by other political philosophers about the kinds of political systems best suited for Asian nations.

Individualism is one of the key topics that Lung discusses in this context. The reductionist, stereotypical view of Chinese and other Asian societies is that they put the interests of the group before those of the individual. In the mid-1990s, Asian leaders including Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore argued that cultural norms would likely inhibit Chinese societies from establishing a democratic political system.<sup>40</sup> These leaders held to the belief that Confucian culture offered a basis for society different from Western ideas of human rights. From this perspective, society can be based on filial commitments to family and nation, rather than individual responsibility. Lung confronts these arguments in two different ways. First, she contests the defining of Chinese culture as purely Confucian. Second, she argues that culture does not play a determinist role in a nation's political structure.

To challenge these basic assumptions about Chinese culture, Lung scans the cultural history of China in search of a figure who offers an alternative to these assumed social roles. In the "Wild Fire" series, Lung invoked Thoreau and Socrates as recurring

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<sup>40</sup> Weller, *Alternative Civilities*, 4.

examples of individuals acting against mainstream social and cultural trends. For *Thinking Back on The Last Hundred Years*, Lung turns to a figure from classical Chinese literature, Thief Zhi.

In an essay by the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi, Thief Zhi plays the role of antihero and foil to Confucius. According to Lung, Thief Zhi is a bandit and gang leader who questions Confucius' political aspirations, describing them as hypocritical, selfish and motivated by the pursuit of fame. "There is no greater thievery than this! Why does the whole world not call you Thief Kong [Confucius' surname], but insist on calling me Thief Zhi?"<sup>41</sup> Lung agrees with Thief Zhi that Confucius' crimes against society are even more disruptive than the crimes of Thief Zhi and his gang, because Confucius wants to hijack the political process and impose his philosophy. Lung seems to suggest that Confucius' involvement in politics had a more lasting and detrimental effect on Chinese society than Thief Zhi's banditry.

Lung continues applying the story of Thief Zhi across history to illustrate alternative currents and trends that resist mainstream thought and culture. Her argument is that while a conservative form of Confucianism has been the primary source of filial piety, collectivism, and other Asian values over the past 2500 years, it has always existed in dynamic tension with other "Thief Zhis" of Asian thought. Lung cites China's Cultural Revolution as one example of when alternative political ideologies took precedence over Confucianism. "In the 20th century, did not Confucius actually become Thief Kong?"<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 059. Using the role of Thief Zhi as a stand-in for subaltern trends in Chinese culture becomes a common trope for Lung. It appears later in an essay in *When Facing the Sea*. Long, *Mian dui*, 039.

<sup>42</sup> Lung, *Bai Nian*, 060.

Lung is not endorsing the Cultural Revolution, but rather using it as an example to argue that other political currents criss-cross Chinese history.<sup>43</sup> Lung's goal is to demonstrate that the ideological history of China and other Asian nations is not as cut and dried as is often presented by conservative political thinkers in the region.

Besides establishing a more colorful and varied view of Chinese political history, Lung also challenges a central tenet of her opponents' arguments: that present political structures in China should be determined by those of the past. Lung believes that political thinkers who advocate a conservative form of Confucianism present an oversimplified and static view of how culture operates: "...whether individualism or human rights are part of Chinese culture and whether they ought to be adopted within China do not in the slightest have a necessary logical connection...tradition is not a foregone conclusion, but a series of constant breakthroughs."<sup>44</sup> Western culture is hardly a monolithic set of ideas that remains static over the centuries, but a living thing that is constantly evolving. From a historical distance, the ideas of human rights and individualism are relatively recent additions to the Western mix of cultural values. Asian cultures are likewise malleable, and in fact have adopted other Western ideas in the past, Marxism being a clear example. Lung's implication is that human rights based on the individual in society can gain traction throughout Asia, as it has in Taiwan.

Lung's take on Taiwan's society and how it interacts with Asian values has much in common with the thesis of the book *Alternate Civilities* by the anthropologist Robert

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<sup>43</sup> Lung's example of the Cultural Revolution is perhaps not the best, as critics could counter that the chaos of that period resulted from abandoning Confucian values.

<sup>44</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 072.

Weller. This work was published in the United States in the same year that *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* came out in Taiwan. Weller writes, “Taiwan has not abandoned Chinese culture...culture has in fact been important in Taiwan’s political change, but only because Chinese culture is, and has always been, multifaceted and adaptable.”<sup>45</sup> Weller argues throughout his book that Taiwan’s newly built democratic society is unique to the island, having evolved out of its specific cultural traditions. These cultural traditions demonstrate that not all of Asia is subject to a dominant authoritarian ideology often attributed to Confucianism.

Lung’s critique of supposed “Asian values” is part of a broader move to place Taiwan’s democratic values in a regional and global context. The essays Lung wrote while living abroad in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s stem from her role as an expatriate intellectual figure. She offers the view from the outside looking in, a comparative perspective between Taiwan’s cultural and political structures and those of neighboring Asian states (including Singapore and China), as well as the European states she grew familiar with while living in Germany and Switzerland.

### **Individualism in an International Context**

Especially after Lung’s relocation abroad in the mid-1980s, her discussion of democratic issues expanded to a global context beyond Taiwan society. In *Thinking Back on The Last Hundred Years*, Lung writes extensively about the concept of human rights as an extension of the individual’s rights. She also challenges dominant political ideologies of the time that contend that democratic values do not square with traditional Asian values.

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<sup>45</sup> Weller, *Alternate Civilities*, 7.

By analogy, Lung extends her longstanding endorsement of the power of the individual in society to an international context, arguing that Taiwan as a nation state should maintain its unique cultural heritage within the global arena. Taiwan, she believes, needs to take an active role in how it interfaces with the world, rather than passively letting a homogenous form of globalized culture take over. This echoes Lung's fears of the individual's rights becoming lost within the collective. At the time, cultural critics, including Lung, feared that Taiwan was at risk of losing its "Small Self" in the growing tide of the "Large Self" of global cultural homogenization.

Just as Lung put forth in "My Fellow Citizens, Where Is Your Outrage?" that the people of Taiwan were not socially engaged as individuals, she argues in "In Between Starbucks and Wisteria House" (*zai zi teng lu he Starbucks zhi jian* 在紫藤廬和 Starbucks 之間) that Taiwan as a nation is not engaged with the rest of the world. Wisteria House, a colonial-era teahouse in Taipei, becomes a metaphor for Taiwan's unique cultural heritage, while Starbucks is a familiar symbol of globalization. "Anyone with experience can see in an instant Taiwan's introverted nature. Songshan Airport has very few international travelers. The English street signs in the capital are a total mess."<sup>46</sup> At the same time, Lung points out that without thoughtful consideration as to how its society should confront globalization, Taiwan would allow its cultural heritage to disappear in the face of global cultural homogeneity:

Maybe you say "internationalization" refers to the trans-nationalization of science, technology and economics. But this has also had an unanticipated effect on our deeply embedded cultural structures, breaking down traditional national and ethnic boundaries. It seems that the thousand-year-old traditions that came by adhering to those boundaries – different kinds

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<sup>46</sup> Long, *Mian Dui*, 003.



of laws, beliefs, ethics and values – can't but require new meanings when coming into contact with “internationalization.”<sup>47</sup>

Lung's vision for how Taiwan ought to establish its place in the world as a cultural entity, as elaborated in the essays “Between Starbucks and Wisteria House” and “When Facing the Sea,” follows a similar path to her vision of Taiwan's society in the “Wild Fire” era. Just as she urged Taiwan's citizens to shake off their self-absorption and lack of concern for society and stop letting social forces dictate their future, she urges Taiwan's society to do the same in its relationship with the rest of the world. Lung concludes the essay with her dichotomous symbols of Starbucks and Wisteria House:

“Internationalization” is not letting Starbucks take the place of Wisteria House; “Internationalization” means opening one's doors and letting Starbucks come in, and after Starbucks enters, still knowing how to make the luster of Wisteria House even more appealing and elegant. It's knowing how to make other people recognize Wisteria House as what is unique to our culture.<sup>48</sup>

I come back to this topic in my discussion of cultural identity in chapter 3.

### **Conclusion**

Over the course of twenty years from *Wild Fire Collection* to *When Facing the Sea*, Lung's writing witnesses advancement towards the ideals that she believes should be at the foundation of Taiwan's society. Lung notes that respect for the individual has already begun crystallizing into one of Taiwan's core values, a far cry from the 1980s, when she assailed her fellow citizens' failure to fight for individual empowerment. As she writes in *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years*,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 005.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 10.

I believe that Taiwan's subjectivity (*zhutixing* 主體性) must be built upon its free and democratic value system, even though they are not as yet very solid and stable. This common value system includes, for example, believing that the value of the individual is not less than the value of the national collective...<sup>49</sup>

In examining her essays over the course of this period, it becomes clear that this hard-won value system is not just an outcome of democracy, but a means to realize it. Even if the people of Taiwan now have the right to express their individuality, they may not choose to do so, or they may not do so in the most democratic of ways. How Taiwan's citizens achieve an ideal democratic value system successfully through education is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>49</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 043.

## CHAPTER II

### EDUCATION

#### Introduction

For Lung Ying-tai, each person's capacity for self-improvement through education is a critical precondition to participating actively and appropriately in civil society. In Lung's analysis, the goal of education is to teach critical thinking. This empowers citizens to be more discerning when processing and analyzing information, and thus less easily swayed by government propaganda or media hyperbole. By advocating for an education system that teaches critical thinking, Lung hopes that Taiwan's citizens will develop a greater ability to think rationally.

Lung's emphasis on education and the critical thinking capacity of Taiwan's citizens is based on her belief that government authority is ultimately mandated by the people. What she calls the "Silent Majority" – a passive and disengaged population, lacking in education – will end up controlled by an authoritarian regime. A country transitioning to a more democratic government requires a change in the quality of its citizenship.

Lung's quality assessments of the citizens of Taiwan establishes her within a long tradition of Chinese social critics, dating back to at least the end of the Qing Dynasty.<sup>50</sup>

As Gloria Davies argues,

What differentiates Chinese critical discourse is its characteristic elevation of *youhuan* [earlier in Davies' work translated as "worrying"] to the status

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<sup>50</sup> Discussing the "quality" of a citizenry sounds a bit awkward in English, but no other English term quite captures the sentiment that Lung evokes. "Quality" refers to the moral refinement, or civility, of the population, but also to its cultural refinement.

of a justifiable moral concern over the nation's well-being, complexly enmeshed with a pedagogical resolve to improve the cultural quality (*wenhua suzhi*) of the Chinese people.<sup>51</sup>

Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the founder of the KMT, justified the party's initial authoritarian rule as a steppingstone to a democratic government. He relied on the argument that the Chinese people were poorly educated and lacked the civic consciousness necessary to participate in a democratic system.<sup>52</sup> The push to improve the citizenry of the Chinese nation spurred a number of cultural reform efforts in the early 20th century, including the New Culture movement and the campaign to abandon classical Chinese for the vernacular *baihua*.<sup>53</sup> The Chinese Communist Party has echoed the same logic: Andrew Nathan quotes a party official as having said, "Our people are not ready for democracy. They aren't interested. Their educational standard is too low, and they don't know anything about politics."<sup>54</sup>

It is a matter of debate how much the KMT in Taiwan, over the first decades of its rule, sincerely wanted to incubate the civic, self-governing capabilities of the populace and actually transition towards democracy. For many years under martial law, the KMT

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<sup>51</sup> Davies, *Worrying About China*, 17. The term Lung uses, *liu* 流, a classifying word for grade or class, is slightly different from the terms *wenming* and *suzhi* that Davies refers to. However, Lung uses *wenming* and *suzhi* elsewhere in the "Wild Fire" essays, and *liu* is used in much the same way. A recent example that illustrates what Davies terms *youhuan* is an October 2014 *New York Times* editorial by the Chinese novelist Yan Lianke, titled "Finding Light in China's Darkness." He cites specific examples of his countrymen's moral depravity, and writes, "...darkness is not the mere absence of light, but rather it is life itself. Darkness is the Chinese people's fate...A system of morality and a respect for humanity that was developed over several millenniums is unraveling." Yan, "Finding Light in China's Darkness," 22 October 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, 379

<sup>53</sup> Ogden, *Inklings of Democracy in China*, 68-69.

<sup>54</sup> Nathan, *China's Transition*, 228.

justified the halted progress of democratic reforms and suspensions of civil liberties by pointing to the need for heightened vigilance in the face of threats from mainland China. In his book *Democratizing Taiwan*, J. Bruce Jacobs presents a number of social and political factors that were critical to Taiwan's democratic transition.<sup>55</sup> and these factors do not point to a consistent or concerted KMT initiative to build a democratic government over the course of the 20th century.

As mentioned above, Lung believes the core mission of education is to promote what she terms "independent thinking" (*du li si kao* 獨立思考). Her vision is contrasted with Taiwan's actual education system, which she describes as static, strict, and more focused on churning out compliant citizens than capable thinkers. Lung hopes that an education based on critical thinking would help the citizens of Taiwan question the foundations of KMT ideology taught in school, as well as the sensationalism that dominated the media. While living abroad, Lung writes admiringly of the German educational system to give her Taiwan readership a positive example of what she believes an informed, engaged citizenry should look like.

### **Independent Thinking**

In arguing for educational reform to improve the quality of Taiwan's populace, Lung draws on her perspective as a university literature professor and a product of

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<sup>55</sup> Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 6-16. The factors listed by Jacobs include administrative and economic factors; social and educational development under Japanese and KMT rule; relatively high educational levels; electoral experience under Japanese and KMT rule; increasing economic prosperity and equality; reformers among top KMT leadership; a nonviolent democratic opposition and links between that opposition and the government; and popular associations and interest group activity. Jacobs also lists two external factors, American political pressure and the fall of President Ferdinand Marcos in the neighboring Philippines.

Taiwan's education system. In the essays "Kindergarten University" (*you zhi yuan da xue* 幼稚園大學), "Robot Middle School" (*ji qi ren zhong xue* 機器人中學), "A Generation That Does Not Make Trouble – To University Students" (*bu hui 「nao shi」 de yi dai – gei da xue sheng* 不會「鬧事」的一代—給大學生), and "Like Rats in a Cage" (*jing sheng beng kui de lao shu* 精神崩潰的老鼠), Lung, from the perspective of an insider, criticizes Taiwan's education system for not developing a citizenry actively engaged in society. She stresses that the goal of going to class is to cultivate knowledge, not to perform mindless activities.<sup>56</sup> Taiwan's university students, she wonders,

...after leaving the university, will become what kind of citizens? What kind of backbone to society? Can they distinguish what is right from what is wrong? Do they dare to "get outraged?" Do they know how to stand up for their own rights? Do they know the definition of social conscience and moral courage? I am afraid the answer is no.<sup>57</sup>

Instead of fostering a generation of critical thinkers, the Taiwan education system, in Lung's view, is a force of social control over Taiwan's youth. The means of education have turned into the ends, and teachers are more concerned with enforcing regulations on attendance, dress code, and behavior, rather than teaching content.<sup>58</sup> Far from encouraging students to think independently, and teaching sets of values, Taiwan's school system turns middle school pupils into robots and treats college students like kindergarteners. And, as Lung argues in "Like Rats in a Cage," exerts undue pressure on students to succeed through higher education without offering them viable alternatives.

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<sup>56</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 35.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 039.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 033.

As an example of these unsatisfactory modes of education, she presents a hypothetical situation: "...[A student] can familiarize himself with Orwell's *1984* and write an essay discussing eloquently the role of the individual within a larger system, but if you ask his opinion on the Jiangnan Incident, he comes up empty. Can we really say he understands the true meaning of the book?"<sup>59</sup> In instances such as these, Lung believes, students have not grasped the reason why literature such as *1984* exists in the first place, which is to enlighten readers to the dangers of any government monopolizing the social sphere and extending itself into all aspects of individual lives.

Lung's negative assessment of Taiwan's educational system in the 1980s accords with research from other Taiwan scholars. Political scientist Marc J. Cohen wrote in 1991, "Both the curriculum and pedagogical methods...insure intellectual sterility. Students are expected to learn huge amounts of material...by rote...this rote learning and indoctrination does little to encourage creativity, critical thinking, or the development of an informed citizenry."<sup>60</sup> Lung and Cohen both describe an education system of more service to the KMT regime than the student population.

In these arguments, Lung shows the influence of her years spent in the Western education system. The model she proposes for Taiwan is by and large built on the progressive education system found in the West. Her arguments echo the early 20th-century American philosopher John Dewey, whose views on education had an enormous

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<sup>59</sup>Long, *Ye huo ji*, 87. The year before Lung wrote this essay, a Taiwan-born American citizen named Henry Liu (pen name "Jiangnan"), who had written a critical biography of the ROC's then-president Chiang Ching-kuo, was assassinated in his home in California by gang members working in collusion with the ROC intelligence agency. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, 142.

<sup>60</sup>Cohen, *Taiwan at the Crossroads*, 174.

role in shaping the modern education system in the United States.<sup>61</sup> For example, Lung's argument that students should link 1984 with the Jiangnan incident sounds similar to Dewey's recommendation that teachers acquaint themselves with local conditions and use them as teaching resources as a way to connect education with experience.<sup>62</sup> Dewey was also indirectly hugely influential on the reform movement in China, as one of his students, Hu Shi (1891-1962), was a leading Chinese intellectual of the 20th century.

In contrast to the mechanical teaching methods described above, Lung's essays illustrate the critical thinking she wishes more of her Taiwan compatriots would exhibit. In an interview she gave during the "Wild Fire" period, she states, "Honestly, if you read [my work] carefully, you will discover that no matter how I encourage people to stand up and fight for their rights...I always say that they need to take reason as their foundation."<sup>63</sup> An example of this principle at work in Lung's writing can be found in the essay "An Unbiased Look at the West" (*zheng yan kan xi fang* 正眼看西方). In this work, Lung takes aim at the two prevailing attitudes that coexist towards the Western world among the people of Taiwan. On the one hand she criticizes the tendency of Taiwan's citizens to "Worship the West" (*chongyang* 崇洋), as seen among parents who send their kids to study English and then on to study abroad in Western countries, or among staffers in restaurants who show preference to Western customers. On the other

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<sup>61</sup> Dewey's views on society at large may also have influenced Lung, directly or indirectly. His position of the role of the individual in society has much in common with Lung's own. See, for example, his chapter "Intelligence in Social Action" in *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy* (435-66).

<sup>62</sup> Dewey, *Intelligence in the Modern World*, 668.

<sup>63</sup> Su, *Long yingtai feng bao*, 203.



hand, Lung criticizes those who look down on Westerners as monkeys, devils, or barbarians, and see Chinese culture as morally upright and Western culture as morally corrupt.<sup>64</sup> For Lung, neither view represents a rational take on Western culture. Lung takes a more reasoned tack:

What we ought to do is carefully examine whether Western values and behavior are worthwhile for us to acquire. If so, it doesn't matter whether they are Western or not Western, we need to pay respect where respect is due, and strive to "Worship the West." If they are not worthwhile, then it doesn't matter whether they are Western or not Western, we shouldn't succumb to temptation.<sup>65</sup>

Lung's call for rational, deliberative discourse can sometimes strain against the emotional stridency of her writing style, as discussed in Chapter 1. Lung urges readers to let their anger inspire them to civic action, while at the same time arguing that readers should make decisions based on careful, thorough deliberation. I return to this tension in the conclusion of the paper.

Lung's own method of criticism echoes and illuminates the "independent thinking" she would like to see instituted as a goal of the education system.. For Lung, granting students more freedom in the classroom would not only serve idealistic purposes, but also deliver pragmatic benefits. Lung argues that critical thinking abilities serve the needs of Taiwan's growing middle classes, who want their children to join an internationally competitive labor force.<sup>66</sup>

Most important to Lung, the education system should serve as the basis of civil society in Taiwan, creating a more informed and engaged citizenry trained to question the

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<sup>64</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 049.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 051.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

world they live in. In her calls to reform the education system, Lung hopes that the people of Taiwan will reevaluate longstanding institutions and social values in their culture and society, including the roles of government, family, and education, along with patriotism and blind devotion to authoritarian dictates of the government.

The foreword to *Thinking Back on The Last Hundred Years* is a speech given by Lung at the graduation ceremony of National Taiwan University's Law department. Lung returns to her vision of the purpose of education: cultivating the ability to think critically and independently. The speech is aimed at graduating students who have primarily studied law and politics, and who may one day become prominent policymakers in Taiwan. Lung argues for the importance of cultural studies, history, and philosophy in education, beyond the practicalities of law and politics.<sup>67</sup> She contends that the study of history enlarges our contextual understanding of current events. With this larger understanding, she writes, "I am afraid you will discover that sixty percent of the so-called knowledge that you get from this society's educational system and broadcast media is half true and half false."<sup>68</sup> Lung's words here are especially notable for revealing more concretely how she would have the educational process, through the study of the humanities, develop critical judgment in students.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a signature organizing principle of Lung Ying-tai's publications is to include work by other authors alongside her own. These pieces may be in the form of letters from her readership in response to her writing, essays by other

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<sup>67</sup> Similarly, in 2010, Lung gave a speech to a group of MBA students in Hong Kong titled "What's The Purpose of Literature?" (*wen xue you yong ma* 文學有用嗎?). He, "What's the Purpose of Literature."

<sup>68</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 015

intellectuals challenging Lung's viewpoints, or in the case of the 25th Anniversary Edition of *Wild Fire*, essays by other luminaries discussing the significance of Lung's writing.

This technique provides further evidence of Lung's commitment to fostering a well-informed populace capable of independent thinking. Though her essays often have a polemical tone, employing whatever rhetorical tactics will convince her readership, she is also genuinely dedicated to giving her readers a more complete picture of a given issue. She recognizes that her opinion represents just one side of the story. As her ultimate goal is to cultivate an informed society of critical thinkers, her multi-authored books offer a more comprehensive storyline to the reader.<sup>69</sup> Lung does not shy away from publishing essays that harshly criticize her own position. A particularly evocative example came in the aftermath of Lung's 1997 essay, "Good Thing I'm Not a Singaporean" (*hai hao wo bu shi xinjiapo ren* 還好我不是新加坡人). This editorial incited much public discussion, compiled in *Cheers, Thomas Mann! (gan bei ba! tuomasi man, 乾杯吧! 托馬斯曼 1997)* alongside Lung's original essay. The response pieces included such titles as "I am Proud to be Singaporean," "I Want to Become a Singaporean!" and "Good Thing She [Lung] is Not a Singaporean."

In *When Facing the Sea*, Lung challenges the citizenry of Taiwan to adopt a more discerning and circumspect attitude towards politics, even though Taiwan had achieved a democratic government. In the early 2000s, Lung was especially concerned with the

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<sup>69</sup> A further benefit to this approach is that books she published many years ago, such as *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years*, maintain their significance over time. Instead of losing relevance and declining into dated commentary on past events, they become something of a historical record, in which readers can view a past event from a variety of perspectives.

increasingly polarized political environment, which she felt encouraged the people to assess society, culture, and politics through an emotional, rather than a rational, lens. Lung railed against the tendency in political arguments to reduce issues to their two most extreme positions:

Taiwanese Opera or Peking Opera, Southern Min dialect or Peking dialect, Republic of Taiwan or Republic of China, Democratic Progressive Party or Kuomintang, these are all but external differences. If openness, tolerance, diversity are not seen as the core substance of our culture...I do not know what the significance of Taiwan culture is.<sup>70</sup>

Lung argued that such political discussions should build on shared values and common concerns of citizenship, rather than devolving into partisan struggles.

These arguments against polarization are not just rhetorical bluster in response to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), whose policies Lung opposed. Polarization was in fact a commonly observed and well-documented political trend in Taiwan in the early years of the 21st century. Dafydd Fell, in characterizing this trend towards polarization, points out that by the time of Chen Shui-bian's second presidential term from 2004 to 2008, the KMT and the DPP were on opposite sides of three political issues (unification vs. independence, Chinese vs. Taiwanese identity, and military procurement). Just ten years earlier they had either been in agreement, or each topic was a nonissue.<sup>71</sup>

In the face of such partisanship, Lung again urges her compatriots towards rationality:

We lack the power of rational consideration. Accusations of “Taiwan sell-out” and “traitor to Taiwan” have become the whips of the bloodthirsty. “Do you love Taiwan or not?” and “Are you or are you not a Taiwanese?”

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<sup>70</sup> Long, *Mian dui*, 045.

<sup>71</sup> Fell, “The polarization of taiwan's party competition in the DPP era,” 87.

have replaced “Are you capable or not?” and “Are you professional or not?” We do not use our brains to think, we use our blood.<sup>72</sup>

For Lung, this increasingly combative political environment directly threatens the independent thinking she had pushed for since her “Wild Fire” essays. And just as Lung first argued in the 1980s, education provides the necessary means for Taiwan’s citizens to see through the machinations of government and participate more fully in civil society.

### **Why Discuss Education?**

In the period of her “Wild Fire” essays, Lung’s ability to criticize the government directly was limited, owing to media censorship by the ruling KMT party. As she writes in “This is What Really Happened in the 1980s” (*ba shi nian dai zhe yang zou guo* 八〇年代這樣走過), an essay reflecting on the “Wild Fire” phenomenon,

What I could discuss and criticize was the environment, public safety, education, these kinds of social problems. Nevertheless, under that kind of totalitarian regime, any thinking person would realize: all social problems are inescapably rooted in the government. But this was something I could not write.<sup>73</sup>

In this light, the criticisms she levels at the people of Taiwan in the “Wild Fire” essays serve as an indirect condemnation of the ruling KMT authority. Should the citizenry cultivate a greater understanding of society and government through education, Lung implies, the end result would be a repudiation of the Kuomintang’s authoritarian regime and the institution of a government based on the will of the people.

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<sup>72</sup>Long, *Mian dui*, 021.

<sup>73</sup>Long, *Ye huo ji*, 51. This essay appears in both *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* and the 20th anniversary edition of *Wild Fire Collection*.

Lung's indirect critique of the KMT necessitated her finding a target to stand in for the authoritarian government. As she wrote in the essay cited directly above, "I am convinced that that unfair system could exist because each person allowed it to exist; an even more systemic problem than the system was the individual."<sup>74</sup> She aimed her criticism at Taiwan's citizenry, in hopes of encouraging her compatriots to become the "thinking people" who demand more from their government.

The calls for change she makes among the people of Taiwan throughout the "Wild Fire" essays, then, can also be understood as calls for change in Taiwan's governmental structure. The inevitable outcome that she expects to see, and prods her readers to enact, is greater liberalization in Taiwan's society and a realization of the democratic values promised to the citizens of the Republic of China.

What we need is a government that dares to face reality and accept challenge, a government bold enough to shoulder responsibility. But in order to bring about this kind of government, what we need even more is a populace with the ability to think critically, a rational, outspoken populace. Returning to the heart of the matter, it is really cliché to say it: the quality of the people determines the quality of the government.<sup>75</sup>

The final line of the above quotation is reprised almost word for word in a later essay, which asks at the end, "Of what quality is our society?"<sup>76</sup>

During the early 2000s, the people of Taiwan were no longer as seriously threatened by government propaganda through media manipulation as they had been

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 057.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 077.

during the “Wild Fire” period.<sup>77</sup> However, Lung still worried about the threat posed to public discourse and public perception by another large social institution: the media, and especially, television news. Lung believed that the media, far from informing people and keeping them up to date on current events, was turning into a form of entertainment. As the government eased up on its censorship programs, market forces took even greater hold of media outlets. Lung describes the resulting coverage: “...the international coverage on cable news is a kind of collective punishment: A story of a child swallowing nails receives ten times more coverage than the news of a million starving people in Ethiopia; a scene of a dog in Nantou eating betel nuts exceeds the Argentinian presidential election in importance.”<sup>78</sup> As a result, “If television is an index of knowledge, then the present 24-hour domestic news broadcast in Taiwan keeps us mired in pervasive grandiose navel-gazing. Not only is it a symbol of our country’s backwardness, it is an abomination of culture.”<sup>79</sup> In Lung’s view, news outlets focused more on content that would sell, rather than content that would enlighten, to the detriment of Taiwan’s society as a whole.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> While Lung argues that the DPP is still able to exploit the supposedly independent media as a vehicle for propaganda, the media did not suffer from the overt censorship and manipulation imposed earlier by the KMT. Long, *Mian dui*, 020.

<sup>78</sup> Long, *Mian dui*, 004.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 009.

<sup>80</sup> For a discussion of the role of cable news call-in shows in shaping public political discourse, see Alice Chu’s “Taiwan’s Mass-Mediated Crisis Discourse: Pop Politics in an Era of Political TV Call-in Shows” in *The Minor Arts of Daily Life*. Chu argues that these news shows perpetuate a sensationalized, bifurcated view of Taiwan’s politics. This is a clear example of the type of media environment that Lung opposed.

Earlier, in *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years*, Lung laid out the role she believed the media should adopt in society. First, in “A Book: Behind the Scenes” (*yi ben shu de bei hou* 一本書的背後) Lung compared the publishing world in Germany to that of mainland China and Taiwan. Lung points out that in the year 1996 more books were published in Germany than in mainland China, despite Germany’s much smaller population.<sup>81</sup> Lung also tallies the total numbers of bookstores and books read per year, as a means of gauging educational discrepancies between Germany, China, and Taiwan. To spruce up all these dry statistics, she tells the story of a friend’s book on Thomas Mann, which included over ten thousand footnotes and was subjected to a rigorous editing process, even though it was written for the general audience.<sup>82</sup> Clearly she finds the average German’s appetite for the printed word to be a positive indicator for the civic health of Germany’s citizenry, and an aspect of society that Taiwan and China could promote and improve upon to develop the quality of their citizenry.

In a similar piece, “The Kinds of Newspaper Supplements a Country Has Says A Lot About that Country” (*you shen me fu kan, jiu you shen me she hui* 有什麼副刊，就有什麼社會), Lung goes behind the scenes at the German newspaper she occasionally contributes to, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. In page-by-page detail, she describes one issue of the newspaper’s supplement, which is dense with cultural criticism, including reviews of books, art exhibits, cultural events, and architectural projects across Europe as well as editorials, essays, and short stories by prominent authors. She groups

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<sup>81</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 076.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 078.



the pieces into three types: criticism, artistic work, and cultural news.<sup>83</sup> We can see from Lung's catalog that the supplement of this newspaper is clearly aimed at a very cultured and educated reader.

Lung also praises the administrative structure of the newspaper. Her editor has a Ph.D. and is also a celebrated journalist in her own right. The newspaper itself is set up as a foundation, instead of a company: it does not have a publisher or a group of shareholders, but is run by a group of appointed administrators.<sup>84</sup> As elsewhere, Lung makes known her distaste for the mass-market, bottom-line-oriented, post-KMT-censorship media in Taiwan, and clearly advocates for media aimed at cultivating an informed readership.

Lung Ying-tai wrote this article at a time when newspaper supplements in Taiwan (called *fukan* 副刊) were slowly disappearing from dailies across the island. Lung's own career as a political columnist and essayist began with a piece published in *The China Times* supplement, *Renjian* (人間, "Human Realm"). Supplements played a commanding role in the dissemination of literature and ideas in Taiwan during much of the 20th century.<sup>85</sup> Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, a leading scholar on Taiwan literature, points out that because news on political events was heavily censored, and thus without much variation between newspapers, newspapers relied on their cultural supplements to attract

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>85</sup> Lin Lijuan, *Long yingtai* 《*ye huo ji*》 *yan jiu*, 19-25, and Chang, *Literary Culture*, 141-167.

readership. At the same time, an educated, growing middle-class population created a demand for cultural content.<sup>86</sup>

Towards the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s, as Chang notes, the newspaper supplement in Taiwan began to lose prominence, while publishing houses and the book-review sections of newspapers rose in importance.<sup>87</sup> At the same time, as Chang wrote, “more consideration is given to the popular reception of literary products, while high moral ambitions and elitist assumptions about the arts are treated with cynicism.”<sup>88</sup> Lung saw the *fukan*’s shrinking market in Taiwan as a troubling indicator of the population’s unwillingness to improve itself educationally. In an ironic turn, once the “Silent Majority” that Lung had long encouraged to become more active in society was able to make its voice heard through the power of the market, they no longer seemed interested in what Taiwan’s intellectuals had to say, instead seeking out their news through media such as cable television. With the shrinking of *fukan*, Taiwan’s intellectuals lost an important avenue for getting their voice heard among the public.

### Native Identity

In *When Facing the Sea*, Lung Ying-tai argues that the education system in Taiwan ought to foster a greater knowledge and understanding of local culture. “Taiwan needs to ‘Taiwanize’ [*bentuhua* 本土化], it is our inalienable right,” she writes. “When a ten-year-old child brings home a map to show his mother, it ought to be a map of their

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<sup>86</sup> Chang, *Literary Culture*, 145.

<sup>87</sup> *Bai Nian*, 200.

<sup>88</sup> *Bai Nian*, 201.

own village, and he should know each mountain and rock, each blade of grass and each tree on that map.”<sup>89</sup> Lung argues that learning about Taiwan goes beyond simply being taught about Taiwan’s majority Hoklo (Taiwanese) population, and should include lessons on all the different ethnic groups in society, including the Aborigines, Hakka, and even recent immigrants from southeast Asia.

Earlier in her career, Lung had made a similar argument that textbooks in Taiwan’s schools should recognize the island’s own unique history and culture. Writing in the “Wild Fire” era, Lung points out that “In a book of a thousand pages, only thirty-plus pages are truly focused on discussing ‘Taiwan!’”<sup>90</sup> However, in the political context of her 2003 essays, Lung suggests that Taiwan’s textbooks are too culturally oriented towards the majority Hoklo population. Several years earlier, a significant political controversy erupted surrounding revisions in school textbooks that critics believed placed too much emphasis on Taiwanese culture while downplaying mainlander contributions to Taiwan.<sup>91</sup> Lung’s essay seems to reference this debate, arguing that school textbooks should reflect the variety of cultural perspectives that can be found in Taiwan. Lung believes that an education rooted in pluralist values can counteract the increasingly divisive political and cultural climate of the day.

At the same time, Lung writes, many citizens of Taiwan are not developing a sense of their cultural heritage because they are studying abroad in English-speaking

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<sup>89</sup>Long, *Mian Dui*, 025. The continuation of this passage is cited later, in Chapter 3. See footnote 139.

<sup>90</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 163

<sup>91</sup> See Wang Fu-chang’s article “Why Bother About Textbooks? An Analysis of the Origin of the Disputes Over *Renshi Taiwan* in 1997.” I return to the controversy over textbooks in Taiwan in the conclusion to this thesis.

countries. Echoing an argument from the “Wild Fire” days, Lung writes that Taiwan’s culture lacks a strong foundation of core values in part because of a weak domestic education system, compounded by parents who send their kids to English-speaking countries for schooling:

Who is cultivating Asian countries’ domestic education systems for the long term? Of the students educated in the United Kingdom and the United States, many become successful and continue to cultivate the soil of American and British culture, while few return to Asia to irrigate the local soil. As a result, dominant cultures become more dominant, while weaker cultures continue to be weak.<sup>92</sup>

Clearly, Lung believes the domestic education system to be a key factor in establishing a distinct cultural identity in Taiwan. What this cultural identity should look like is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>92</sup> Long, *Mian dui*, 09.

## CHAPTER III

### CULTURAL IDENTITY

#### **Introduction**

From her earliest writing in the “Wild Fire” essays, Lung Ying-tai has thrown herself into the evolving debate over Taiwan’s cultural identity. The evolution of this debate coincided with the political liberalization measures introduced by the KMT in the mid-1980s, which proved to be the biggest change in Taiwan’s society during Lung’s career as a social critic, and eventually sparked Taiwan’s transition to a full-fledged democratic government. As the KMT eased authoritarian control over the island, the people of Taiwan could debate freely the question of their cultural relationship to China and the rest of the world.

Lung has argued consistently for a pluralist vision of Taiwan’s society. Yet, as cultural perceptions on the island have shifted away from China and towards an indigenous Taiwan-centered culture, Lung’s vision of a pluralist culture has changed. Hence, it is necessary to examine Lung’s writing over the course of her career to get a clear picture of her take on Taiwan’s culture. The view she began to elucidate in her “Wild Fire” column recognizes Taiwan’s cultural debt to the Chinese culture heritage, while also celebrating elements of Taiwan’s culture unique to the island. On the international level, Taiwan should, in Lung’s view, resist being insular and closed-minded, and strive to integrate itself with the world. This integration means opening Taiwan’s doors to the world and sharing its culture internationally without becoming beholden to the globalizing forces of Western, and especially American, culture.

The question of Taiwan culture was heavily censored when Lung first entered the debate. The official line of the Kuomintang government throughout their authoritarian

rule was that Taiwan was host to the Republic of China government in exile, and therefore served as cultural and political home to the Chinese nation. The culture of Taiwan was supposed to be no different from the culture of mainland China; in fact, the Republic of China was preserving the classical Chinese culture that the People's Republic of China under socialism had repudiated.<sup>93</sup> Public discussion about a culture specific to Taiwan, recognizing the unique aspects of Taiwan's cultural heritage, such as aboriginal culture or the impact of the colonial era under Japan (from 1895 to 1945), was largely prohibited.

In the late 1970s, the literature of Taiwan served as a safe space where debates on the question of a native Taiwanese culture could be initiated – particularly within a fictional genre known as Nativist (*xiangtu* 鄉土) literature.<sup>94</sup> This form of literature focused on challenging the Nationalist Mainlander government as well as capitalist values and Western imperialism.<sup>95</sup> Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, assessing the significance of the *xiangtu* literary movement, states that “...it is...undeniable that literary nativism

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<sup>93</sup> The argument that China and Taiwan are culturally identical still dominates mainland Chinese rhetoric, as the mainland policy of unification is based in part on Taiwan and China's shared Han cultural heritage. For example, a mainland Chinese scholar, referring to Lung Ying-tai's essays from *When Facing the Sea*, writes, “Lung Ying-tai's perspective separating Taiwan's and mainland China's culture into two distinct entities is mistaken and even absurd, because Taiwan and the mainland both belong to one China, and the superior Han Chinese culture is the shared heritage of both the mainland Chinese and our compatriots on Taiwan.” Zhong, “Ye huo zai ran,” 25.

<sup>94</sup> In “Constructing a Native Consciousness: Taiwan Literature in the 20th Century,” Angelina C. Yee traces the role of literature in giving voice to a native Taiwan identity even further back, to Taiwan authors writing under Japanese colonialism in the early part of the century. Yee, “Constructing a Native Consciousness,” 83-101. Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang also recognizes this, noting that nativist literature grew out of the literature of the Japanese colonial era. Chang, *Modernism and the Nativist Resistance*, 149-50.

<sup>95</sup> Chang, *Modernism*, 2.

was used by a special group of people at a particular historical moment to challenge the existing sociopolitical order.”<sup>96</sup> That a literary movement should be so integral to a political movement is not unprecedented in the history of Chinese thought. Chang notes a similar dynamic during the May 4th movement and throughout the Communist regime’s control of China.<sup>97</sup>

Other social movements contributed to the growth of civil society in Taiwan and demonstrated the possibility for debate on identity issues. Lü Hsiu-lien (Annette Lu, who would later serve as Vice President of Taiwan under Chen Shui-bian) traces the beginning of Taiwan’s feminist movement to a speech she gave on Women’s Day (March 8) at National Taiwan University in 1972.<sup>98</sup> Shortly thereafter, Lu began to write a column in *The China Times* that ran for five years, bringing greater exposure to the women’s rights movement in Taiwan.<sup>99</sup> Lu explicitly tied social movements such as feminism to democracy, on the shared principle of equal rights for all citizens.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>98</sup> Lü, *My fight for a new Taiwan*, 52. Some of Lung Ying-tai’s writings, including the “Wild Fire” essay “Confessions,” touch on her experience as a woman in Taiwan’s society. In “Cultural Identity and the Politics of Recognition,” Tu Weiming refers to Lung in the context of Taiwan’s women’s movement in the 1980s: “Strictly speaking, scholar-activist Chang Hsiao-hung, artist Yen Ming-huei, film critic Chao Hsiung-p’ing and literary critic Lung Ying-t’ai [sic] are not feminists, but they were instrumental in sensitizing the general public to the intellectually challenging ‘feminist’ perspective in the 1980s.” (Tu, “Cultural Identity and the Politics of Recognition,” 91)

<sup>99</sup> Lü, *My fight for a new Taiwan*, 53.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 84.

Lung Ying-tai was a college student at National Cheng Kung University in Tainan when the women's movement in Taiwan was ascendant, and she was likely aware of its impact and influenced by its ideals. Lung also spent several years in the 1970s living in the United States, home to a large expat community from Taiwan. At the time, this group, largely comprised of younger Taiwan citizens such as Lung who had come to the USA to work or study, was a hotbed of political activism and host to a group agitating for Taiwan independence from mainland China.<sup>101</sup> It is very likely that Lung had some interaction with Taiwan pro-democracy advocates while in the United States.

To my knowledge, Lung has not written about any direct contact she had with the Taiwan independence movement in the United States. However, she has written about how her time in the United States helped to shape her cultural identity. In one story from 1979, she meets a man from the Chinese province of Hunan on the streets of New York.<sup>102</sup> As a *waishengren*, Lung identified as Hunanese because her father was born in Hunan. Furthermore, she was required by the KMT government to classify herself according to the mainland Chinese province that her family originated from. Until meeting the Hunanese man in New York, it had never seemed out of the ordinary for her to tell someone who inquired about her background that she was from Hunan.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Fleischauer, "The 228 Movement," 378. Annette Lü also discusses her interaction with the Taiwan Independence Movement during various periods of study in the United States (Lü, 45-49, 62-67).

<sup>102</sup> Long, *Ye Huo Ji*, 161.

<sup>103</sup> Lung's story has an apocryphal ring to it. When this event happened, she had already been living in the United States for several years. Surely by this time she had already negotiated the topic of identity and birthplace in her interactions with Americans. What is significant about this particular interaction, and her telling of it, is that this may have been the first time she came face to face with a PRC citizen.



When this Hunanese man asked where she was from, she realized how out of place it sounded to say she was also Hunanese. She was not born there, had never been there, and could not speak the Hunanese dialect. She could only answer by saying she was from Taiwan, but that felt awkward to her as well. She had never identified with Taiwan's culture and had little knowledge or experience of what was culturally unique to Taiwan. According to Lung, this proved to be a defining moment in the process of recognizing her own cultural identity.

In the "Wild Fire" essays, Lung describes how living abroad changed her perspective on her home country. While growing up in Taiwan in the '50s and '60s, the information accessible to her on domestic and international events was strongly censored by the government. Lung compares this censorship to being force-fed just one type of food. Once abroad, she developed a very different perspective. She writes, "Why when students go abroad do they suddenly "change?"...when they go abroad, they discover uncensored news and teaching materials that provide completely different explanations [on current events]; how can they not be surprised? How can they not feel that they have been tricked? This "change" is simply a matter of course."<sup>104</sup> Lung aligns herself with the general disenchantment among educated citizens who had spent time abroad, a growing social force at the time Lung wrote the "Wild Fire" essays.

Daniel Berman refers to the impact knowledge of events of the outside world not readily available in one's own country as the International Demonstration Effect (IDE), and believes it had a significant impact on political events in Taiwan in the mid-1980s.

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<sup>104</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 102.

For example, around the same time that Taiwan began its liberalization movement, the neighboring Philippines was also shaking itself free of a dictatorial regime.<sup>105</sup> As the people of Taiwan caught wind of this and other news from the outside world, it changed their perspective on the Nationalist regime.

### Taiwan Consciousness

In opposition to KMT cultural policies, Lung Ying-tai has written that the people of Taiwan need to establish a native sensibility tied to the island they live on. She and other social critics call this “Taiwan Consciousness” (*Taiwan yishi* 台灣意識).<sup>106</sup> For some critics the concept of “Taiwan Consciousness” has a potent political connotation, implying that Taiwan is a political body distinct from China. Lung, however, avoids writing directly about this highly sensitive aspect of the conversation.<sup>107</sup> Instead, Lung builds her argument around social issues, arguing that a lack of reverence for Taiwan, and

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<sup>105</sup> Berman, *Words Like Colored Glass*, 90.

<sup>106</sup> The term “Taiwan Consciousness” (*Taiwan yishi* 台灣意識) apparently became a catchphrase among social critics around the time Lung Ying-tai began her writing career. Hsiao writes, “...the first half of the 1980s saw a boom in *tang-wai* political magazines. Journals organized by militants, especially *Cultivate* (*Sheng-ken*) and its successors, began to challenge the legitimacy of the KMT government and promote ‘Taiwanese consciousness’ (*T’ai-wan i-shih*)...” (Hsiao, *Contemporary Taiwanese cultural nationalism*, 90). Hsiao also notes that “A pop-star’s emigration to Mainland China in 1983 provoked a controversy on the contents and the justification of a Taiwanese or Chinese orientation as a guiding principle for socio-political action...known as the ‘Debate on Taiwanese Consciousness’ (*T’ai-wan i-shih lun-chan*)” (Ibid., 90).

<sup>107</sup> Lung may not advocate independence, and thus may hold the position that Taiwan Consciousness is not tied the independence movement. This position was taken by James Soong (Soong Chu-yu, a *waisheng* politician and presidential and vice-presidential candidate in 2000 and 2004 respectively) in a speech he made at Qinghua University in Beijing in 2005 (Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 205). For discussion of an article Lung published on the occasion of Soong’s visit to mainland China, see footnote 133.

a weak sense of attachment to Taiwan, are at the root of the island's endemic social problems.

In "Taiwan is Home to Whom? - Ah! Retrocession Day!" (*Taiwan shi shei de jia* – *a! Guangfujie!* 臺灣是誰的家–啊!光復節!) Lung writes on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the holiday celebrating Taiwan's return to China from Japanese occupation in 1945. She marks this anniversary by discussing the Taiwan people's attitude towards the island they dwell on.<sup>108</sup> The irony in her title is that after forty years, Taiwan and mainland China were still not unified under one government, and despite official propaganda, the Kuomintang had no chance of recovering the mainland from the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>109</sup> In the essay, Lung suggests the population of Taiwan is there to stay:

But I love Taiwan, love unapologetically this piece of land that I detest, because I was born here, because my parents and brothers, my friends and colleagues...and generation upon generation of their descendants all still have to grow up and live on this island that has already suffered all the devastation that it can handle.<sup>110</sup>

At that time, however, the KMT still presented Taiwan as the staging ground for retaking the mainland, not a long-term home for the some two million refugees who came across the straits in and around the year 1949. The party actively discouraged Taiwan's

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<sup>108</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 112.

<sup>109</sup> Taiwan did not officially give up this position until 1991, when it amended the Constitution to restrict Taiwan's sovereignty to Taiwan and outlying islands, while recognizing the rule of the PRC on mainland China. Jacobs, "'Taiwanization' in Taiwan's Politics," 36.

<sup>110</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 011.

people from thinking of themselves as Taiwanese and of Taiwan as their home.<sup>111</sup> This position was mostly directed toward the immigrants that came to Taiwan during the KMT retreat from the mainland, but even the population that predated the KMT's arrival was supposed to be swept up in the ideological tide, which the government referred to as a "cultural renaissance."<sup>112</sup> The government counted this population as citizens of China, and they were meant to perceive themselves as such.

Lung addresses the general atmosphere resulting from this propaganda campaign, noting that few people feel a strong attachment to the island of Taiwan:

I don't know who looks upon Taiwan as their home. There are those who nostalgically look back to the mainland of the past, and there are those who take their green cards and fly over to the mainland of the future, and there are even more who do not care to think about the past, and do not care to think about the future.<sup>113</sup>

She writes about her younger, newlywed friends who have decided not to have children because they lack confidence in Taiwan as a suitable place to start a family.<sup>114</sup> In Lung's view, even those born and raised on the island of Taiwan have often given up on the future of their native land, and are looking to live elsewhere.

For Lung, this pessimistic outlook is witnessed in the degradation of Taiwan's physical environment. She quotes with sympathy a letter from a disgruntled reader, clearly a native Taiwanese, who challenges the KMT's general attitude towards the island:

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<sup>111</sup> Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, 24.

<sup>112</sup> Allen, *Taipei*, 11.

<sup>113</sup> Long, *Ye Huo Ji* 016.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

Our homeland, Taiwan, used to be a land of green mountains and crystal-clear waters. Now it is treated as simply a place for a stopover. These people [the KMT] have no plans to lay down roots here, they are only resting here for a bit. Once they have gathered enough strength, they will leave. How can you expect them to love and respect the local soil?<sup>115</sup>

This letter exposes a contradiction in Lung's argument – a contradiction she allows to surface willingly. There are, in fact, many people who look upon Taiwan as their present and future home – they are simply not permitted to do so by their government. This may in fact be Lung's underlying message, but it was hard for her to come out and say so directly, so she couched her argument within a criticism of the people of Taiwan, rather than the government.

Along the same lines, Lung believes that a negligent attitude towards the island is behind the Taiwan people's lack of commitment to reforming their flawed systems and institutions. She bemoans this passivity among her university students, who do not struggle to reform an education system that, among other things, privileges professors and carries too many unnecessary restrictions against students.<sup>116</sup> In the broader society, she sees too many people who prefer to opt out of a society they think is beyond help, or not worth the effort to help. Instead, they plan to leave Taiwan to take up residence in another country, especially the United States.<sup>117</sup> Again, Lung may be insinuating that the government is most in need of change, not just the social institutions she criticizes, but she is unable to say so directly.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. 016.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. 037.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 025.

Lung's own background serves as a prime example of how the KMT ideology had become outdated. Lung's parents were immigrants from the mainland. Her father was a KMT soldier, and her parents fled the mainland with other refugees after the KMT's defeat to the CCP. Lung was born in Taiwan several years later, but did not grow up in the villages built to house military families (*juancun* 眷村). She was raised among the local population, where she was the only *waisheng* youth. Despite being inundated by local culture, she was always told that this culture was unsophisticated and not her own. Her lived experience as a Taiwan native was at odds with how she was raised, educated, and instructed by the government to perceive herself.<sup>118</sup>

In the 20th-anniversary edition to the *Wild Fire Collection*, Lung includes a transcript of "My Taiwan Consciousness" (*wo de Taiwan yi shi* 我的台灣意識), the first public lecture she gave after the first edition of *Wild Fire* was published. The speech discussed a highly sensitive topic, as Lung notes in the introduction, because at the time, the government did not allow its citizens to talk openly about Taiwan identity; they were only meant to identify as Chinese citizens. Lung terms this "cultural schizophrenia": "What is mine, I do not accept; what is not mine, I pretend is. As a result, I do not have anything."<sup>119</sup> To counteract this, Lung argues, the people of Taiwan need to establish a "Taiwan Consciousness," which she defines solely in cultural and social terms. The

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<sup>118</sup> These biographical details are culled from Lung's own writing, such as the subsection of "50 Years Our Home" (*wu shi nian lai jia guo* 五十年來家國) titled "Our Generation" (*wo men zhe yi dai* 我們這一代) (*Mian dui*, 017). Lung makes use of her autobiography in her rhetorical arguments about Taiwan identity, as in her encounter with the Hunanese on the streets of New York City cited earlier.

<sup>119</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 162

people must recognize that Taiwan has its own specific culture and history deserving of respect and cultivation.

Lung's arguments about Taiwan Consciousness foreshadowed a major shift in the cultural landscape as Taiwan moved out from underneath the Sinocentric cultural model imposed by the KMT for decades. This process accelerated shortly after Lung relocated to Europe, when Lee Teng-hui, the Taiwan-born KMT president from 1988 to 2000, promulgated a number of democratic reforms that helped Taiwan break free from the vestigial mainland KMT political system, including ending the terms of parliament members elected on the mainland in 1947. (As part of its claim that it would eventually retake the mainland from the CCP, the KMT had maintained in Taiwan the parliament elected on the mainland in 1947, with its original members representing the various provinces of China.) These efforts culminated in the first nationally held presidential election in 1996. "Taiwan Consciousness" was growing concomitantly in the cultural arena, including a resurgence of the Taiwanese language and a trend among hotels and restaurants to serve "Taiwanese" (rather than "Chinese") food.<sup>120</sup>

In 1999, when *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* was written, Lung – no longer subject to censorship – took note of this growing phenomenon, discussing openly how a native Taiwan identity was taking form on the island. "Twelve years after the end of martial law, Taiwan is progressively moving away from the China Consciousness of the old Kuomintang era and developing a Taiwan Consciousness that sees Taiwan as the most important component."<sup>121</sup> Lung writes throughout *Thinking Back on the Last*

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<sup>120</sup> Jacobs, "'Taiwanization in Taiwan's politics," 39.

<sup>121</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 135.

*Hundred Years* about how Taiwan identity is taking shape in relation to mainland China and the rest of the world.

Because liberalization of the cultural sphere in Taiwan paralleled political liberalization, questions about Taiwan's cultural and national identity arose at the same time, and were closely intertwined. Among Taiwan's political observers, national identity has been commonly seen as the most salient political issue on the island.<sup>122</sup> The national identity debate has referred specifically to Taiwan's relationship with mainland China, and is often simplified to the term *TongDu* (統獨). This abbreviation encapsulates both the prospect of unification with China and the prospect of independence from China.<sup>123</sup>

As the people of Taiwan negotiated the extent of their political independence from mainland China, they questioned cultural distinctions from China as well. Some commentators, hewing to the KMT's Sinocentric "cultural renaissance" model, saw Taiwan as the heir to China's long and glorious cultural heritage. This perspective is well represented within the iconic and controversial National Palace Museum in Taipei, and has been bolstered indirectly by the Chinese Communist Party's fraught relationship with cultural production on mainland China.<sup>124</sup> Initially under the Communist regime, cultural production was meant to serve the socialist spirit of the people, as epitomized in Mao

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<sup>122</sup> Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, 9; Fell, "The Polarization of Taiwan's Party Competition," 77.

<sup>123</sup> *TongDu* is slightly misleading as a term because it does not encompass the third and most popular prospect in Taiwan-mainland relations: maintaining the present status quo. Fell argues that *TongDu* is best seen as a spectrum incorporating immediate unification at one extreme, immediate independence at the other, and everything else in between. Fell, "The Polarization of Taiwan's Party Competition," 77.

<sup>124</sup> Allen, *Taipei*, 11.



Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" in 1942. Later, during the Cultural Revolution, the CCP seemingly repudiated culture in any form, which only bolstered Taiwan's claim to being the true home of Chinese cultural heritage. Up to the present day, artists in China are still unable to practice artistic freedom. Hence, Taiwan can present itself as a viable alternative home of "true" Chinese art.

This "cultural renaissance" perspective contrasted with the Taiwanization (*bentuhua*) movement, which professed that Taiwan was a distinct cultural entity from China, and stoked the sentiments of the local population who felt marginalized during the KMT's authoritarian rule. Advocates of Taiwanization also focused on language, and fought to include the Taiwanese dialect in official discourse. Even the name given to this dialect was a political touchpoint. The term "Southern Min dialect" associated the language with mainland China, whereas "Taiwanese" situated the language as specific to the island.

Lung believed that Taiwan could maintain its cultural ties to China even when distancing itself politically from the Communist government. For Lung, the people of Taiwan should not equate the CCP or the KMT directly with the Chinese nation, as these political parties had been in existence for less than a hundred years, while China as a cultural entity extends back centuries.<sup>125</sup> This argument echoed KMT propaganda in the 1990s, which proclaimed that the CCP could go the way of the Russian communists, but China would still be China.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 181.

<sup>126</sup> Jacobs, "'Taiwanization in Taiwan's Politics,'" 38.

In 1999, China was gaining political and economic strength across the straits, and had recently threatened Taiwan militarily by launching missiles off the island's coast before the 1996 presidential elections. Even in the shadow of this threat, Lung argues that the biggest danger posed by China is not military but psychological and spiritual.<sup>127</sup> As put forth in Chapter 2, patient, rational analysis has long been a hallmark of Lung's message, and she has always urged her fellow Taiwan citizens to follow her example. "Only after we recognize the complicated nature of politics and culture can we become a tolerant society. How can we turn around and oversimplify the concept of 'China?' Only because she is our 'enemy?'"<sup>128</sup> Given China's aggressive stance towards Taiwan, along with Taiwan's own cultural growing pains, it proved difficult at this time for many residents of Taiwan to maintain a reasoned perspective when looking across the straits. While it's hard to know for sure whether a Chinese invasion of Taiwan was a serious possibility or if China's missile launches were just posturing, Lung feared that the end result of China's actions would be a wholesale rejection of all things Chinese on the part of Taiwan's people, including Chinese culture. This, she argued, would be a mistake.

Lung's continuing inclination to link Taiwan and China culturally should not come as a surprise, considering the common association, throughout the Chinese diaspora, of Chinese nationhood with ethnic Han Chinese identity and culture. As Ien Ang has written about her own experience as a member of the Chinese diaspora, "The notion of a single centre, or cultural core, from which Chinese civilization has emanated – the so-called Central Country complex – has been so deeply entrenched in the Chinese

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<sup>127</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 186.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

historical imagination that it is difficult to disentangle our understandings of Chineseness from it.”<sup>129</sup> And in *Is Taiwan Chinese?*, Melissa J. Brown outlines the main themes of debate on China and Taiwan’s cultural and political entanglement: “First, Han ethnic identity is linked to Chinese national identity. Second, Chinese national identity is linked to Han culture. Third, Chinese national identity has a clear border, and a person or group is located on one side of it or the other.”<sup>130</sup> Lung is caught up in these basic assumptions when writing about Taiwan’s cultural relationship with China, arguing that Taiwan is in part culturally Chinese, and needs to maintain its Chinese cultural heritage even as it distances itself from China politically.<sup>131</sup>

Yet in discussing the relationship between culture and politics in Taiwan and China, Lung contradicts herself. On the one hand, she argues that the people of Taiwan should view China’s political and cultural entities separately. On the other, she believes that political values are part of Taiwan’s cultural fabric. She writes that the liberal values of democracy and equal rights – which she pushed for in the “Wild Fire” essays, and which are now at the core of Taiwan’s political system – should be regarded as part of Taiwan’s unique cultural identity. “Is it worth following a Taiwan Consciousness that

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<sup>129</sup> Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese*, 41.

<sup>130</sup> Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?*, 22.

<sup>131</sup> Lung’s argument parallels contemporaneous manifestations of what Davies called *youhuan*, “Worrying About China.” Many Chinese intellectuals living outside of mainland China were searching for a way to maintain their connection to China despite their misgivings about the CCP. See Ien Ang’s discussion of Tu Weiming’s *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* in her article “Can One Say No to Chineseness?” (Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese*, 40-44). Ang links the sentiment in Tu’s work back to C. T. Hsia’s 1971 essay “Obsession with China: The Moral Burden of Modern Chinese Literature.”

does not have at its foundation the values of human rights? Can we really allow our goal of anti-Communism to grow out of our control, until it blinds us to more enduring universal values?”<sup>132</sup> For Lung, these liberal values distinguish Taiwan culturally from other countries sharing a Chinese heritage, especially mainland China. While Lung is a strong supporter of democracy, she also wants Taiwan to maintain its cultural connection to mainland China. Ironically, because democratic values have become a part of Taiwan’s culture, what Lung believes should lead to greater unity across nations has created a cultural rift with China.

Lung’s 2005 essay “The Taiwan That You Might Not Know About” (*ni ke neng bu zhi dao de taiwan*, 你可能不知道的臺灣)<sup>133</sup> was published in both mainland China and Taiwan on the occasion of a visit by two KMT politicians to the mainland. In this essay, Lung argues that the people of Taiwan are not interested in unification with mainland China, because of the difference in political systems. She does not write, however, that Taiwan’s citizens are zealous supporters of democracy. Instead, she writes that they have incorporated the cultural mindset of democracy into their daily lives. They have come to expect government transparency, and the power to vote a government out of power when necessary. Participating in a democratic civil society has become part of their everyday routine, and thus a basis of Taiwan’s cultural identity, regardless of shared ethnic background. Lung’s reasoning validates Melissa J. Brown’s argument on the basis of identity:

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<sup>132</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 136.

<sup>133</sup> Long, “Ni ke neng bu zhi dao de Taiwan.” See footnote 107.

One of the most fundamental misunderstandings about identity is the widely accepted view that ethnic and national identities are based on common ancestry and/or common culture and therefore that identity is grounded in antiquity...However, culture and ancestry are *not* what ultimately unite an ethnic group or a nation. Rather, identity is formed and solidified on the basis of common social experience, including economic and political experience.<sup>134</sup>

In this article, Lung leaves open the door for unification, implying that Taiwan and China could come together as one country if mainland China adopted democracy.<sup>135</sup>

This vision of unification is still rooted in shared cultural ancestry, though, for why else would Lung even consider a possible unification with China, as opposed to, say, another democratic neighbor that previously counted Taiwan among its territories? This exposes a clear contradiction in Lung's rhetoric: as an advocate for democratic values, she wants the people of Taiwan to strengthen the democratic foundations of their society. Yet as an advocate for Chinese culture, she doesn't want Taiwan's newly established democracy to create a rift between Taiwan and China. Hence, her logic seems to present a double standard, in which Taiwan embodies its democratic political system culturally while China does not embody its communist political system.

When Lung returned to Taiwan after twelve years in Europe, the cultural landscape had been greatly transformed by Taiwanization. Lung returned to Taipei to serve as commissioner of the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, and opposition leaders questioned whether she was still in touch with Taiwan's culture. Some even questioned

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<sup>134</sup> Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese*, 2.

<sup>135</sup> In *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years*, Lung argues that the people in Taiwan are personally invested in a democratic China, because otherwise Taiwan will perpetually be threatened by China. Long, *Bai Nian*, 181.

whether she was still a Taiwan citizen.<sup>136</sup> Such a challenge would have been unimaginable when Lung left Taiwan, as Taiwan was then viewed as a culturally Chinese society. As an ethnically Chinese person, she would by default belong to Taiwan's cultural body. And it's also possible that those who questioned Lung's qualifications to become commissioner of culture were motivated less by her time abroad than by her status as a mainlander. Lung's years as commissioner coincided with the beginning of Chen Shui-bian's presidency (2000-2008), which saw even more pronounced moves towards Taiwanization, including the adoption of the word "Taiwan" in official discourse (instead of "Republic of China" or "ROC"), and taking steps to amend the ROC Constitution.<sup>137</sup>

As stated earlier, Lung's "Wild Fire" essays do not oppose emphasizing and cultivating distinct elements of Taiwan's culture, including aspects of Japanese culture from the colonial period (1895-1945), or Taiwan's folk culture that was suppressed during the KMT's authoritarian rule. Lung was among the first cultural critics to speak publicly about a "Taiwan Consciousness" and the societal harm caused by the KMT's promotion of a purely Chinese culture within a society that was not purely Chinese. She also challenged her compatriots to look upon the island of Taiwan as their home.

However, by the early part of the 21st century, Lung believed that the pendulum had swung too far in the opposite direction. In *When Facing the Sea*, from 2003, Lung is increasingly outspoken in making an explicit connection between China and Taiwan's culture, in response to increasing Taiwanization:

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<sup>136</sup> Cai, *Long yingtai dang guan*, 39.

<sup>137</sup> Hughes, "Negotiating National Identity in Taiwan," 52.

When we could finally embrace our own culture, we desperately grabbed hold of our land and turned it into something sacrosanct, into an orthodoxy, a totem, something absolute, we let it override everything, made everyone pledge allegiance to it, made everyone bow down and worship it. We are overbearing because we are out of balance. It is difficult for people who have been traumatized to find balance.<sup>138</sup>

What Lung particularly opposes is a construct of Taiwan's culture that does not recognize China's cultural influence within Taiwan. This rejection of Chinese culture is prevalent at the extreme end of the indigenization movement, and was termed "De-Sinicization," (*qu Zhongguo wen hua* 去中國文化). From the standpoint of De-Sinicization, the term "Taiwanese" includes the ethnically Chinese who came to Taiwan before the KMT retreat, but not those who came in 1945 or later.

Lung rejects this exclusionary view of Taiwanese identity, arguing that *bentuhua* should not be narrowed to exclude recent immigrants from belonging to Taiwanese culture. "But 'Taiwanization' is not that simple. Because, I ask you, what is 'Taiwanese?'"<sup>139</sup> She proceeds to argue that "indigenous" refers not only to the earliest settlers from China, but also to the Aborigines, the Hakka, and the immigrants who came over in 1949 from various Chinese provinces. Lung even speaks for the newest immigrants from Southeast Asia and mainland China. Just as the construct of "Chinese"

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<sup>138</sup> Long, *Mian dui*, 023.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 025. This is a continuation of a passage cited in chapter 2; see footnote 89. Here, Lung exploits a semantic distinction that is a bit lost in the English translation. *Bentuhua* can also be translated as "indigenization" into English, but such a rendering in English doesn't quite capture the most common connotation of the term, as the indigenous people of Taiwan are actually the Aboriginal population, not the Taiwanese population. This last statement by Lung might be better understood if translated as "indigenization" rather than "Taiwanization," as her argument exploits this semantic ambiguity. For a definition and translation of *bentuhua*, see Jacobs, "'Taiwanization' in Taiwan's Politics," 18-24.

was manipulated to create cultural restrictions on the people of Taiwan, Lung argues, the term “Taiwanese” is now being manipulated in a reverse fashion.

In a particularly controversial passage, Lung wrote,

We can oppose the Communist Party and we can reject the country of China. But Chinese culture, or perhaps it would be better to say the culture of the Chinese language, I am sorry, but that doesn't only belong to the People's Republic of China, it's something that we have also built our lives upon. And besides, based on the PRC's record of destroying Chinese culture, we can confidently say, Taiwan is the lighthouse in the dark of Chinese culture of the day.<sup>140</sup>

Such statements met with controversy because many critics, some of whose essays are compiled in *When Facing the Sea*, believed Taiwan should step out from China's shadow and put forth its own cultural heritage. Lung was perceived as perpetuating the Han-centered culture forced upon Taiwan during the authoritarian KMT era.<sup>141</sup>

Close inspection of similar debates over the previous decade demonstrates how readily the question of Taiwanese identity could be manipulated for political ends. In Taiwan the topic of cultural identity is very emotionally charged, and practically inseparable from politics. Such issues are difficult to approach from the rational, analytical standpoint that has long been the touchstone of Lung Ying-tai's career.

However reasoned her analysis of the basis of Taiwan culture, Lung clearly has an irreducible emotional – and arguably political – attachment to Chinese culture. One of her critics, Stéphane Corcuff, argues that Lung's resistance to Taiwanization is not based on an objective appraisal of Taiwan's cultural trajectory. “In the end,” he writes, “Lung accepts and defends cultural diversity if and only if the premise of Taiwan's Chinese-ness

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<sup>140</sup> Long, *Mian dui*, 031.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.



is not attacked. This is tolerant and inclusive only in appearance. It denotes in fact a very close-minded attitude and nothing else than yet another form of Han chauvinism.”<sup>142</sup> From Corcuff’s perspective, De-Sinicization was not a specific political agenda of the DPP, but rather a straw man created by Lung and other critics who feared that Taiwan’s society was moving too far from its cultural connection to China.<sup>143</sup> The inevitably political nature of this debate may have undermined Lung’s claims to the rational high ground.

Clearly, Lung occupies a contentious position in the debates that straddle Chinese and Taiwan culture. Viewed from China, Lung’s vision of culture is pragmatic and cosmopolitan, as it transcends a jingoistic nationalism centered on an ethnically Han identity. As William A. Callahan describes her in his book *China Dreams*,

Lung’s work is compelling because she challenges the mainstream way of figuring politics in Taiwan (and China) as the struggle between diametrically opposed elements: Confucianism vs liberalism, East vs. West, PRC vs. ROC, CCP vs. KMT, KMT vs. Taiwan’s pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, and so on...Her work is important because it consciously rejects the fundamentalism of exceptionalist national/cultural identity to pursue fundamental values that are both liberal and Confucian.<sup>144</sup>

Notably, Callahan’s book profiles citizen-intellectuals that he feels are pushing the frontiers of China’s civil society, not Taiwan’s. From the perspective of pro-Taiwanese nationalists, Lung is often seen as a conservative and reactionary figure. In describing Lung’s tenure as Cultural Minister under President Ma Ying-jeou, C. R.

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<sup>142</sup> Corcuff, “Lung Ying-tai.”

<sup>143</sup> Corcuff, “The supporters of Unification.”

<sup>144</sup> Callahan, *China Dreams*, 123.

Hughes, echoing the views of Corcuff, writes, “Ma’s and Lung’s focus on China arouses suspicion among many on the green [DPP] side of politics in Taiwan, who see them as typical of ‘mainlanders’ who just cannot grasp how the majority of people in Taiwan view the unique history and identity of the island.”<sup>145</sup> The inconsistencies between Callahan’s view and the perspectives of Corcuff and Hughes start to make sense when Chinese and Taiwan identity are plotted on two extremes of a spectrum, with Lung trying to establish a middle ground that recognizes both positions.

*When Facing the Sea* proposes a cultural model for Taiwan that is sometimes laboriously abstract and difficult to envision in practical terms. It is therefore refreshing to find in this volume an essay she wrote for the 20th anniversary of the Taiwanese modern dance troupe, Cloud Gate (*Yunmen* 雲門). Lin Huai-min, the founder of Cloud Gate, is celebrated across Taiwan as a cultural pioneer, as he established the dance troupe in the early 1970s when cultural expression in Taiwan was under strict oversight by the KMT regime. Cloud Gate has since become one of Taiwan’s most enduring and recognizable cultural symbols both domestically and abroad.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Hughes, *Revisiting identity politics under Ma*, 130.

<sup>146</sup> I saw Cloud Gate perform in Singapore in 2012 as part of *Huayi – Chinese Festival of the Arts*. The Cloud Gate website holds more information about the group (<https://www.cloudgate.org.tw/eng/> accessed 8 January 2015). Cloud Gate will perform at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in September 2015 as part of its Spotlight Taiwan series. I attended an earlier performance in this series by the ensemble A Moving Sound (*Sheng Dong* 聲動), which embodies a cultural fusion similar to that of Cloud Gate. A Moving Sound uses mainly traditional Chinese instruments to perform an amalgam of classic Chinese folk tunes, Aboriginal chants, and original interpretations of abstract cultural notions (for example, a Central-Asian-inspired tune called “Silk Road,” or a folk tune based on the excitement of Taiwan’s markets). Costumes and dancing are also worked into their performance routines. The lead singer, Mia, described their costumes to me in this way: “It’s the same logic of our music. It was designed by a fashion designer with the love of ethnic clothes. It’s more a creative design than one

In the essay, titled “Talented As a Wild Horse, Diligent as an Ox, Hard-working as a Spring Silkworm – Written for the 30th Anniversary of Cloud Gate” (*shi ye ma, shi geng niu, shi chun can– wei Yunmen san shi nian er zuo* 是野馬，是耕牛，是春蠶—為雲門三十年而作), Lung praises Cloud Gate for establishing a cultural name for Taiwan internationally. “A lot of people are discovering for the first time to their surprise that ‘Taiwan’ is not just ‘Chiang Kai-shek’ and ‘cheap apparel.’ There is actually something else to Taiwan, and it is an art form that speaks directly to the soul of Europe.”<sup>147</sup> Lung especially praises Lin for incorporating traditional Chinese culture along with more contemporary Taiwanese elements, including Aboriginal culture:

Lin Huai-min’s creative starting point is actually Ancient China...“Cloud Gate” is China’s most ancient form of dance...but Lin Huai-min also discovered very early on Taiwan’s indigenous cultural elements...even before people started calling for “Taiwan Consciousness,” Lin Huai-min was already putting “Taiwan Consciousness” into practice.<sup>148</sup>

In “Where Is the Globalized Me – A Talk Given at the Beijing Center for Modern Literature” (*quan qiu hua le de wo zai na li?–Beijingxiandaiwenxueguan de yan jiang* 全球化了的我在哪裡?–北京現代文學館的演講) Lung speaks more directly about Lin Huai-min as a role model for other artists who wish to promote their native culture in their work. As she is speaking to an audience in mainland China, Lung praises a cultural

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specific ethnic style. The color and pattern are easy to connect to Asia culture, and the design picks up some style of local drama costume.” (Hsieh, “Re: Question about a performance of yours”). Considering Lung’s endorsement of Cloud Gate in *When Facing the Sea*, and the Taiwan Ministry of Culture’s sponsorship of the Spotlight Taiwan series during the time Lung served as Cultural Minister, I suspect A Moving Sound embodies a cultural representation of Taiwan that Lung would endorse.

<sup>147</sup> Long, *Mian dui*, 063.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 069.

hero she admires on that side of the strait: the contemporary classical music composer Tan Dun. Tan achieved international recognition for contributing musical scores to two films from Greater China that were well-received internationally, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and *Hero* (2002). Of these two artists, Lung writes:

They race along on international “rails,” but loaded on their “train” is surely not an imitation of American modern dance, and not a low-quality Eastern sentiment...Lin Huai-min and Tan Dun both understand: Internationalization in no way involves tearing down one’s own home and abandoning one’s own traditions.<sup>149</sup>

Lung praises Lin and Tan because they have not shied away from establishing themselves on the global cultural scene, achieving international notoriety while producing a cultural product grounded in Taiwan or Chinese culture. From her earliest writings, Lung has promoted such a model of how Taiwan should integrate with the world.

### **Taiwan and Western Culture**

While Lung does not write explicitly about Taiwan’s interaction with Western culture in *Wild Fire Collection*, she does address how Taiwan should relate to the West economically and socially. Her perception of the West in these essays is very much in line with her later views, as exemplified by her praise of Lin Huai-min and Cloud Gate. In the “Wild Fire” essay “Weak Countries, Are You Able To Say ‘No?’” (*ruo guo, ni hui shuo “bu” ma* 弱國，你會說“不”嗎?), Lung writes about the detrimental impact of Western economic hegemony on developing countries, including Taiwan. She argues that as Taiwan becomes more economically powerful, it should assert itself against Western

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<sup>149</sup> Long, *Mian dui*, 105.

countries that wish to export tobacco and other harmful products to the island.<sup>150</sup> Through the topic of economic relations, Lung begins to formulate the assertive role she would consistently believe Taiwan must take in its interactions with larger and more powerful countries.<sup>151</sup>

In *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years*, Lung brings this concern more concretely into the cultural realm by questioning the cultural exports of the United States in its push for soft power around the world. While living in Germany she gained an added perspective on the impact of globalization, especially in the form of American cultural and economic hegemony. She shares this concern with her Taiwan audience in the essay “Whose Commodity is Emotion?” (*gan dong, shei de shang pin?* 感動, 誰的商品?) To illustrate how American values spread through soft power, she describes her reaction to the Steven Spielberg film *Saving Private Ryan*, which she watched in a German movie theater.<sup>152</sup> She sees individualism as a key American value, promoted by the United States around the world. But for Lung, only the American characters in *Saving Private Ryan* are presented as fully dimensional individuals, while members of the enemy nations are typecast and demonized. For Lung, Spielberg squanders an opportunity to make a statement about all of humanity, and ends up promoting a form of American exceptionalism that isolates its non-American viewers. She quotes her German friend as

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<sup>150</sup> Long, *Ye huo ji*, 149.

<sup>151</sup> Lung’s argument reflects Cohen’s assertion that dependency theory was popular in Taiwan’s academic community in the mid-1980s. Cohen, *Taiwan at the Crossroads*, 180.

<sup>152</sup> Long, *Bai nian*, 116.

saying, “If it were not for the fact that Germany was the invading country and we do not dare to make ourselves out as heroes, we would definitely produce this kind of movie!”<sup>153</sup>

By coming out explicitly against the spread of American cultural hegemony, Lung tacitly counters a criticism she has often received throughout her career. Her opponents have argued that she has absorbed Western values alien to Taiwan society through her education and experience abroad. This Western influence is particularly evident in her “Wild Fire” essays. In a particularly harsh response to these essays, a critic wrote, “Some people, even if they look Chinese, and know how to write Chinese characters, their souls are made abroad...inside, they think of themselves as Westerners, are always looking at China from a Westerner’s perspective, are always using a Western eye to pick apart China’s deficiencies...”<sup>154</sup> In 1999, when she returned from Europe to accept a political appointment in Taipei, Lung’s extended residency in Western countries also drew criticism during her confirmation process. Perhaps to resist this impression of holding alien values, Lung’s writings often seek to identify strains of liberal thinking, including human rights and individualism, within the Chinese political tradition itself. This can be seen in her discussion of the character Thief Zhi, addressed in Chapter 1.

Lung’s skepticism of American hegemony reappears in *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* when she writes about the establishment of the European Union. The book includes essays written by Lung just as the Eurozone launched. In her essay “Records of the Warring States for the 21st Century” (*er shi yi shi ji Zhanguo ce* 二十一世紀戰國策) Lung sees in the formation of this European economic and political

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>154</sup> Su, *Long Yingtai feng bao*, 78.

conglomeration a possible model for Taiwan and China. She writes that despite cultural differences between northern and southern Europe, countries across the continent could unify behind the need to counter the international influence of the United States.<sup>155</sup> Her use of the word “unify” (*tong* 統) to describe the Eurozone surely resonated with Chinese-language readers – especially when she surrounds the word in quotation marks for emphasis – as this word is one half of the *TongDu* formulation. Lung implies there may one day be expedient circumstances that enable China and Taiwan to form a supranational relationship without having to unify as a single country.

In *When Facing The Sea*, much like her “Wild Fire” essay “An Unbiased Look at the West” (discussed in Chapter 2), Lung continues to criticize the increasingly widespread presence of Western popular culture in Taiwan. She notes that Taipei has the highest concentration of Starbucks coffee shops in the world, and observes the people of Taiwan celebrating Valentine’s Day, Thanksgiving, Halloween, and New Year’s Eve with abandon. When it comes to news and current events, however, the people of Taiwan seem incurious about what is going on beyond the confines of their island.<sup>156</sup> For Lung, Taiwan’s interest in the world extends solely to mass-market culture, to the detriment of its unique cultural elements.

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<sup>155</sup> Long, *Bai Nian*, 270.

<sup>156</sup> Long, *Mian dui*, 004.

## Conclusion

In “Cultural Identity and the Politics of Recognition in Contemporary Taiwan,” Tu Weiming provides a succinct description of the cultural atmosphere in Taiwan at the turn of the last century:

Any attempt to address Chineseness as a constructive part of Taiwanese cultural identity, which may seem self-evident, is readily associated with the outmoded neo-traditional, conservative and conformist ideology. The irony is that as nativization [Tu’s likely translation of *bentuhua*] has become a dominant discourse, imported cultural products, outgrowths of the ubiquitous transnational capitalism, have inadvertently formulated an alternative discourse.<sup>157</sup>

In this light, Lung’s essays in *When Facing The Sea* clearly cut to the core of the culture debates that became a fixture of Taiwan’s society after political liberalization. Tu’s description touches on a number of issues that feature prominently in Lung’s writing in the same era: her consistent position that Taiwan ought to maintain cultural ties to China; the polarized nature of debate on Chinese culture within Taiwan; and the omnipresence of global mass-market culture and its interplay with Taiwan’s local culture.

Lung’s growing participation in Taiwan’s culture debates coincided with the increasing prominence of these debates on the national stage, not to mention her administrative involvement as a powerful cultural affairs commissioner. Lung advocates passionately for a culturally dynamic environment within Taiwan, especially in light of the island’s cultural interactions with the rest of the world. However elevated her purposes, the topic of cultural identity and Lung’s own position within this discussion seem perpetually mired in a tense political environment that pits advocates of Taiwanization against Lung and others who wish to explicitly recognize Taiwan’s

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<sup>157</sup> Tu, “Cultural Identity and the Politics of Recognition,” 77.



cultural debt to China. This debate continues unabated to the present day, and Lung, who recently stepped down as Cultural Minister of Taiwan, remains one of its most active voices.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis examines the work of the Taiwan politician and cultural critic Lung Ying-tai, whose career has closely paralleled Taiwan's democratization movement.<sup>158</sup> Specifically, I discuss three recurring themes in Lung's work and their appearance in three of her books from different decades: *Wild Fire Collection* (1985), *Thinking Back on the Last Hundred Years* (1999), and *When Facing the Sea* (2003). In the first work, Lung loosely presents a set of concepts that she sees as critical for Taiwan to develop the foundations of a civil society and democratic government. The themes of individualism, progressive educational reforms, and a strong locally-centered identity appear repeatedly in the "Wild Fire" essays and lectures. As Lung built a career as a writer and social critic over the next twenty years, her views on these topics continued to evolve.

What is especially significant about Lung's work is that despite rapidly changing political and social contexts within Taiwan over the twenty-year span discussed in this thesis, Lung remains remarkably devoted to these three particular themes. As a political and social commentator, Lung usually wrote her essays in response to a specific current event. Yet despite the *ad hoc* nature of this writing, Lung usually draws our attention to fundamental principles, building on her concepts of the individual in society, education in Taiwan, or Taiwan's identity. Lung has explored diverse topics throughout her career, but the three themes outlined in this thesis stand out for their consistency.

Lung's writing is strongly attuned to shifts within Taiwan's society and government, especially as Taiwan begins to realize the changes she has advocated. How does Lung adjust her message as Taiwan's society evolves? Regarding the role of the

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<sup>158</sup> As this conclusion serves as a summary of the previous four sections, I provide citations only where I introduce arguments not cited in previous chapters.

individual, Lung's early works discuss in detail the active role each citizen should take within Taiwan's society. In later writings, based on her experience living abroad and Taiwan's ongoing integration with the world, she generalizes her concept of individualism to include human rights and the question of how Taiwan as a unique society should interact with other nations in a global context.

On the subject of education, Lung's early writings oppose the rigid education system under the Kuomintang, which acted mainly as a tool of social control rather than a means of cultivating a citizenry capable of contributing productively to society. As the education system liberalized and government propaganda eased, Lung also called into question the media's role in society. She believes the media ought to follow her example and aim to cultivate an informed and educated citizenry. Instead, in her view, media outlets peddle sensationalism in pursuit of profits, to the detriment of society.

Of the three main topics discussed in this thesis, Lung's view on cultural identity in Taiwan went through the most modification in response to social and cultural shifts on the island. Early in her writing career, Lung advocates for a Taiwan identity that recognizes the island as a cultural entity distinct from China. While she maintains this position later in her career, the advancement of Taiwanization has outpaced even Lung's support. Yang Meng-hsuan and Chang Mau-kuei have explained how the Taiwanization movement that accelerated under Lee Teng-hui left Taiwan's *waisheng* population feeling isolated and stigmatized.<sup>159</sup> Lung's writings in the early 2000s argue that Taiwan

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<sup>159</sup> Yang Meng-hsuan and Chang Mau-kuei, "Understanding the Nuances of *Waishengren*", 114.

should not turn its back on its cultural Chinese heritage, an attempt to keep mainlanders culturally, socially, and perhaps politically relevant within Taiwan.

Based on Lung's vehement opposition to the DPP's political agenda, it seems Lung objected to the way Taiwanization became tied up in politics, instead of remaining a purely cultural phenomenon. It is hard to see, however, especially in the case of Taiwan, how these two strains could be kept separate. Consider, for instance, the debate over textbooks. As mentioned earlier, Lung argued in the "Wild Fire" era that textbooks should be a source of Taiwan Consciousness. In the 1990s, political momentum did in fact instigate textbook reform, sparking a huge backlash from the mainlander community, which felt that Taiwan's historical narrative was being rewritten to exclude or even demonize them.<sup>160</sup> Despite the inescapable politicization of the textbook debate, Lung still insisted that textbooks should be a safe haven for discussing culture independent of politics. It is hard to square Lung's vision of a Taiwan-centered school curriculum based on Taiwan Consciousness with her sympathy for unification and a specific Taiwan political identity distinct from mainland China.

Lung's rhetoric also strains for consistency when she combines strongly affective discourse with calls for rational and informed decision-making. For Lung this is likely no contradiction: emotional investment is more likely to produce the societal change she wishes to inspire, and an emotional reaction among her readers increases their own stake in the issues under discussion. Anger compelled her to write the editorial that launched her career, and within that editorial, anger compelled her to resist social and

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<sup>160</sup> See especially Wang Fu-chang's article "Why Bother About Textbooks? An Analysis of the Origin of the Disputes Over *Renshi Taiwan* in 1997."

environmental injustices. She believes that a personal, emotional investment in these issues is what will prod her fellow citizens to step up and challenge systemic problems.

Lung also tries to get her readers invested in Taiwan by feeling love for their home. In an editorial entitled “A Mother Who Has Caught Syphilis” (*sheng le mei du de mu qin* 生了梅毒的母親), Lung compares environmental blight in Taiwan to a diseased family member, in an effort to make readers regard the island with familial affection. How else would they come to see Taiwan’s increasing environmental degradation as an issue that concerned them personally?

Lung balances her calls for readers to become emotionally roused by Taiwan’s problems by urging them to temper their response with rationality once they have become engaged. Rationality is meant to provide insight into what sorts of actions to take in response. This is why throughout her career Lung encourages her readers to cultivate the capacity for “independent thinking.” This capacity allows citizens to moderate their emotional response and participate in civil society in a productive and thoughtful way. This directive is raised clearly in Lung’s essay “Dire Straits,” which compares the stories of Socrates and New York’s “subway vigilante” Bernhard Goetz. Lung argues that civic engagement should fall within legal bounds, and should not involve taking the law into one’s own hands.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> A similar quandary emerged for Lung in 2014 during the Sunflower Student Movement, when college students occupied government buildings in Taipei to protest a pending trade agreement with mainland China. Lung had famously called for greater student engagement in civil society (for example, in the “Wild Fire” essay “A Generation that Doesn’t Make Trouble – To University Students”), yet she was serving as a government minister in the administration being challenged by the students. Lung negotiated this balancing act by praising the students for the spirit of their movement, while criticizing their methods as illegal (“*Long Yingtai cai si xiang bo ruo*”). This

Perhaps the greatest tension within Lung's work lies between her promotion of cultural identity in Taiwan and her championing of rational analysis. Identifying with a certain cultural or social group is not usually an especially rational decision. As Melissa Brown argues, cultural identification is usually based on social factors that are essentially circumstantial. In her "Wild Fire" essays, Lung writes that love is a necessary foundation for fostering a civic identity tied to a particular place, implicitly recognizing that identification with a nation or state defies rational processes. Lung's emphasis on reason may prevent her from acknowledging that her personal attachment to her ethnically Chinese heritage is what lies behind her longstanding support for maintaining Taiwan's cultural ties to China. Despite Lung's views to the contrary, it is hard to imagine a debate on cultural identity that can remain purely rational, just as it is hard to imagine a debate on Taiwan's cultural identity distinct from its political culture.

### **Topics for Future Research**

This thesis explores the major themes in Lung Ying-tai's writings from the first twenty years of her career, but it is also meant to be an invitation for further analysis into her work. Only three of Lung's books are covered here in detail, and she has published well over fifteen books.<sup>162</sup> Some of the secondary topics touched upon briefly in this paper merit expansion, including relating Lung's writings to the work of earlier Chinese

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stance appears to be in line with her previous positions, but she was accused of changing her stance on student activism now that she had become part of the establishment.

<sup>162</sup> In "Lung Ying-tai's *Big River, Big Sea* In Context," a paper I presented at the University of Southern California in April, 2015, I explore Lung's take on Taiwan's cultural identity in her most recent book, *Big River, Big Sea—Untold Stories of 1949 (Da jiang da hai—yi jiu si jiu 大江大海—一九四九, 2009)*.

intellectuals, including Lu Xun and Hu Shi. This paper mentions Lung's intellectual debt to John Dewey, and other critics have mentioned Lung's fondness for Thoreau and Nietzsche.<sup>163</sup> How and to what extent has Lung been influenced by Western scholars? Comparisons between Lung's works and those of her contemporaries in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan would be very constructive, as would a cross-cultural discussion of Lung's views in comparison to a non-Chinese figure (such as the Brazilian cultural figure Clarice Lispector). How does Lung work within and around Chinese literary tropes, such as the topic of home (*jia*)? All of these topics offer further avenues for exploration.

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<sup>163</sup> Qiu, *Long yingtai chuang zuo zhong de xi fang yin zi*, 71.

## POSTFACE

I first encountered the work of Lung Ying-tai in the summer of 2013, while studying Chinese language intensively at The International Chinese Language Program (ICLP) of National Taiwan University. After spending several years in China and two more in Singapore, I still knew very little about Taiwan, and this was my first visit there. Thankfully, the ICLP curriculum focuses on Taiwanese authors and issues. As Lung Ying-tai is one of Taiwan's most outspoken voices on social, cultural, and political issues, I was assigned to read her essays on more than one occasion.

Owing to personal circumstances, I knew I would be returning to live in Taiwan after completing my Master's degree in Chinese Language and Literature at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. I decided to use part of my time in graduate school to prepare myself for life in Taiwan, by familiarizing myself with Taiwan's society and culture. Studying the life and work of Lung Ying-tai was an ideal means for learning about Taiwan, as her career stands at the juncture of the island's literature, politics, culture, society, and history.

For a translation workshop class in the second semester of my first year at UMass, I chose a few of Lung's essays, including two I had read at ICLP, "My Fellow Citizens, Where is Your Outrage?" (1985) and "Seeing-Off" (2008). As I prepared secondary material for this thesis project, I found that some English translations of Lung's works had been published in Taiwan, but none had appeared in the United States. Moreover, there was no scholarly research that treated her work specifically. This came as a surprise, as she should be a familiar figure to Western scholars of Chinese, owing to the frequent appearance of her work in Chinese-language chrestomathies in upper-level university courses. (I spoke recently with two teachers who use her essays in an



Advanced Chinese class, and a Chinese language student who said, “We had a whole unit on her in Chinese class last year.”) Here was a fertile topic for further research.

While initially I planned on a translation project, I decided that a critical analysis of selected works from various points in Lung Ying-tai’s career would be more advantageous in helping me gain a greater understanding of Taiwan. I then chose to focus on three books that Lung wrote in different decades – the first two published fifteen years apart, and the third published five years after the second – starting with her first work of social criticism from the mid-1980s.

## APPENDIX

### BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LUNG YING-TAI'S WORKS

Many of these books are compilations of previously published articles and op-ed pieces; articles and op-ed pieces that have not been compiled are not included in this list. Unless otherwise noted, books are collections of essays (to the best of my knowledge).<sup>164</sup>

Lung wrote some editorials in German newspapers, but these have not been collected into a published volume, and none of her books have been translated into German.

Titles are listed chronologically.

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Long, Yingtai. *Zai Haidebao zhui ru qin wang* [Falling in Love in Heidelberg]. Taipei: Lian he wen xue chu ban she, 1995. Print.

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