

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Open-ended Taiwan History and Spirit-oriented Cultural Politics:  
A Study of Cloud Gate's Works in the Postcolonial and Global Age

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in

Comparative Literature

by

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents, Jui-Liang Wei and Shu-Wen Chiang, for without their caring support and encouragement, the completion of my work would not have been possible.

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As for romanization, the thesis adopts mainland Chinese-developed *pinyin* system mostly, but maintains the Wade-Gile system conventionally used in Taiwan for certain terms, such as *hsiang-tu* and *Liao Tien Ting*. Those terms refer to Taiwanese literary movement, the names of Cloud Gate's repertoires, or Taiwanese names, and are already in circulation with the Wade-Gile system. To respect their conventional romanization system, I do not impose an overall consistency in my thesis.

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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In light of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of genre, this thesis examines the stylistic transition of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre's repertoires in terms of Director Lin Hwai-min's narrative and performative strategies from epic-like unification in the 1970s to novel-like liberation in the 1990s. Focusing on the development of Cloud Gate's repertoires in the 1990s, I analyze Cloud Gate's response to socio-political conflicts in Taiwan and cultural tensions on a global scale. Through an analysis of "The Tale of the White Serpent,"

“Legacy,” “Nine Songs,” and “Portraits of the Families,” I argue that Cloud Gate has utilized different strategies and attitudes to evolve from an entrenched allegiance to the center of Chineseness to an open-minded hybrid of Chinese, Taiwanese, and other cultural elements. Through spiritual- and philosophical-based choreography in “Songs of the Wanderers” and “Moon Water,” I exemplify Cloud Gate’s cultural strategy in a global age: On one hand, Cloud Gate impresses Western audiences, gains worldwide fame, and compensates for Taiwanese anxiety that Taiwan is not recognized as a nation-state internationally. On the other hand, Cloud Gate resists and challenges the view of Western gaze, managing to preserve cultural subjectivity. In the conclusion, I highlight how the ambiguity of movements along with novel-like theatrical design enables the coexistence of different ideologies, and how Cloud Gate’s repertoires embody a satisfactory consensus on the representation of Taiwanese culture.



## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

As a first professional contemporary dance company in Taiwan, Cloud Gate, founded in 1973, has not only recorded and interpreted the process of historical and cultural change in Taiwan but also absorbed and integrated various cultural energies into its repertoires from vigorous social movements since the 1950s. Lin Hwai-min, the founder and artistic director of Cloud Gate, started his journey of aesthetic enlightenment at that time and continued to inspire Cloud Gate's success into the global age of the 1990s. By incorporating various cultural elements from Taiwan's multi-layered history, the dance company has consistently challenged different political trends, helped constructed Taiwan's cultural identity, and contributed its own suggestions to solve Taiwan's political and cultural predicament. Focusing on Cloud Gate's development in the 1990s, my thesis seeks to investigate the dance company's strategy to negotiate the local and global conflicts in Taiwanese society: (1) the emergence of a native consciousness in response to the culturally and economically ambivalent relationship with China, and (2) the revival of local traditions in face of transnational cultural dynamics in the postmodern or postcolonial age. Specifically, I aim to examine the manner in which Cloud Gate represents and responds to controversies created by and among politicians, scholars, and the public regarding the characteristics of Taiwanese cultural identity and the definition of Taiwanese culture.

The dilemma between the enjoyment of a hybrid status and Taiwanese culture's claims for authenticity have simultaneously disturbed and stimulated Lin's works. This conflict became especially evident in the 1990s when Cloud Gate began to win

international acclaim on the global stage and brought images of Taiwan to Western audiences. In the interview with the famous cultural-political critic, Lung Ying-tai, Lin recalled the hybrid and confused cultural experiences during his childhood. He noted that outdoor Taiwanese opera, Nan-Guan, Beijing food, Hollywood and Japanese films, and Chinese novels commonly coexisted in the daily life and dynamically formed Taiwanese culture.<sup>1</sup> As Lung asked him whether he could clearly distinguish what exactly inspired him to found Cloud Gate, Lin said, “It was confusing at the very beginning.”

The conversation demonstrates that the multiple but inseparable cultural energies of Taiwan in Lin’s formative years may have provided Cloud Gate with diverse cultural sources, on one hand; but on the other hand, they also left Cloud Gate with an indefinite and ambiguous claim to any authenticity. This ambiguity becomes a tricky problem when Cloud Gate is praised as both an icon of Taiwan’s national culture and an authentic representative of cultural identity on the local and international stages. Questions may be raised: (1) What kind of hybridity has Cloud Gate incorporated that allows Taiwanese people to generally recognize it as an authentic representative of Taiwan, and (2) What kind of authenticity does Cloud Gate articulate to Western audiences that is commonly embraced by multi-ethnic Taiwanese society? Although the unsettling problem of Taiwanese cultural identity is the incessant cultural energy behind Cloud Gate’s excellent and abundant creations, how does Cloud Gate transform the problem into commonly satisfactory and acceptable repertoires that are acknowledged as Taiwanese cultural representations?

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<sup>1</sup> Lin also mentioned that he later discovered the beauty of indigeous culture when he was a college student.

The dilemma demonstrates that multilayered cultural heritages from Taiwan's complex history are still in a dynamic process of re-interpretation and re-integration. Because Cloud Gate's formation and transition are tightly intertwined with the socio-political environment and cultural tendencies, a brief introduction of the relationship between Cloud Gate and socio-cultural movements since the 1950s is necessary. Such information will give the reader a historic and cultural context for Lin's personal experiences, as mentioned above, and an appreciation of Cloud Gate's significance to Taiwan society. Then, I focus on the conceptual framework of the thesis.

*a. Taiwan History and Cloud Gate before the 1990s*

Lin was born in 1947, two years after the end of the Japanese colonial regime in Taiwan and Taiwan's reunification with the Republic of China. During that time, the KMT (Chinese Nationalist Party, then the leading party of the ROC) nationalists resorted to Sinocentric tradition as a cultural means to proclaim political authority and highlight the cultural differences from Japanese rule. The political agendas were further reinforced after the Communist party (PRC) defeated the Nationalist government and the KMT retreated to Taiwan in 1949, which left the Communist Party in control of mainland China. In order to justify the hegemonic authorities of the KMT in Taiwan, the government claimed Taiwan as the authentic Chinese nation-state and legitimate heir of the 5,000-year-old Chinese tradition. The Sinocentric culture became privileged over the native cultures, which were suppressed as impure and vulgar because of Taiwanese colonial histories, unorthodox dialects, and miscellaneous cultural heritages of diverse

ethnicities.<sup>2</sup> The political agenda of Sinocentric nationalism was strictly enforced as an official goal and ideology by all kinds of institutionalized organizations such as laws, schools, and cultural events until martial law was lifted in 1987. As a result, the majority of the population and Taiwanese cultural elites were marginalized by the unequal cultural valorization and political distribution in which the Chinese culture and mainlanders controlled most of the power, benefit, and influence. Deeply imbued by such cultural policies and ideology, Lin, like most of other Taiwanese, unquestioningly identified himself as Chinese and firmly believed in reunification with the mainland someday. He named his contemporary dance company “Cloud Gate,” the oldest known ritual dance in China, and aimed to perform works “composed by Chinese, choreographed by Chinese, and danced by Chinese for Chinese audiences” (Yang 56). In the face of a series of Taiwanese diplomatic setbacks in the 1970s, Cloud Gate’s Chineseness symbolized the opposition to Western cultural imperialism. Several repertoires inspired by Chinese literary tradition, such as “The Tale of the White Serpent” (1975) and “The Dream of the Red Chamber” (1983), revealed the influence of Chinese culture on Lin’s creations and aesthetic thought.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of its domination over the dissident voices, various cultural tendencies challenged the official ideology of Sinocentrism. Their diversity enriched the cultural expression in Lin’s material and broadened his thoughts on cultural identity. Two important literary trends that emerged in response to the KMT’s Sinocentric nationalism

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<sup>2</sup> The ignored history of Spanish and Dutch occupation in Taiwan in the 17th century, Japanese colonization in the 20th century, and a linguistic battle between official Chinese and native Taiwanese were introduced in June Yip’s *Envisioning Taiwan*. Diverse cultural heritages from different ethnicities can be seen in Melissa Brown’s *Is Taiwan Chinese?*

<sup>3</sup> Influences during Lin’s formative years were discussed in detail by Yang, Meng-yu.

were modernism and nativism *hsiang-tu*). The former was imported through close connections with American culture due to the military and economic relations with the U.S. during the Cold War in the 1960s; the latter indicated the rise of Taiwanese consciousness in the 1970s and 1980s. Lin's attraction to modernist innovative concepts and the tools of individualism, escapism and existentialism inspired him to write a few famous modernist novellas in the late 1960s; however, the American modern dance troupes that performed in Taiwan might be more closely related to the establishment of Cloud Gate in 1973. During the Cold War, the U.S. project of cultural diplomacy tended to propagate U.S. ideology through exporting American modern dance troupes to compete culturally and ideologically against the Soviet Union. Regardless of the imposing ideology of capitalism and U.S. values, those performances, which explored new ideas about body aesthetics and vocabulary, prompted Lin to pursue further training when he studied for his master's degree in writing at the University of Iowa. After his training with the Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham studios in New York in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lin developed his unique dance vocabulary nourished by the local culture. The integration of Chinese themes into the Western body vocabulary in Cloud Gate's early stages drew great interest from critics at home and abroad and became one of Cloud Gate's most distinguishable characteristics in its international acclaim. However, although it is inspired by Western dance aesthetics, Cloud Gate, with its emphasis on Chinese tradition vis-à-vis the American cultural and economic hegemony, implies anti-imperialist nationalistic sentiments and an awareness of the beauty of the island's Chinese culture.

The establishment of Cloud Gate in the 1970s can also be interpreted as a cultural product of the *hsiang-tu*, or the nativist literature movement. It was spurred initially by vehemence at political incidents such as the Diao-yu-tai movement and diplomatic frustration with the United Nations,<sup>4</sup> and later by the negative influences of industrialization. In his interview with Ma Yu-pei, Lin recalled his motivation to found Cloud Gate: “With the occurrence of Taiwan’s withdrawal from the UN and the Diao-yu-tai incident, I was eager to participate in society as soon as I came back to Taiwan [after finishing a master’s degree in the U.S.]... I thought it might be a good idea to found a dance company and perform for everyone in each community and campus.” Lin’s statement clearly shows his patriotic passion to engage in social movements and national construction through his concern for local people and places. This sentiment echoes the basic claim of the *hsiang-tu* literature movement, which is to return to the island’s cultural roots rather than immerse these roots in Western values, and to employ specific subject matter, style, and language to attract the audience rather than alienate them from the reality of Taiwanese society. Besides Chinese themes and images on the stage, Lin began to draw from Taiwanese local culture and folk traditions such as Taiwanese folklore, dialect, music, and costumes to create works in innovative forms. The interest in local color was explored in repertoires like “Legacy” (1978) and “Liao Tien Ting” (1979),

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<sup>4</sup> The Diao-yu-tai incident was caused by the U.S. decision to hand over the disputed island to Japan in 1972. The KMT firmly insisted on its sovereign power over the island because the Treaty of Shimonoseki was invalid after the end of WWII. As one of the founding members of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council from the UN’s creation in 1945, the Republic of China, represented by the KMT, was replaced by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as the sole legitimate government of China on October 25, 1971. Under the PRC’s One-China principle, both the ROC and Taiwan are excluded from the UN, which avoids the endorsement of Taiwan as an independent nation-state.

to name just a few, which corresponded to the position of the *hsiang-tu* literature movement.<sup>5</sup>

The debates on modernism and the *hsiang-tu* movement also extended to criticism of the rapid industrialization and economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s. Although the KMT glorified the economic miracle under their totalitarian control, the alternative cultural representation, especially in literature and film, exposed the frustration and disorientation that industrialization caused.<sup>6</sup> Increasing social demand for indigenization in the 1980s gave expression to the dissident voices of those who had been ignored, discouraged, and silenced by the master-narrative. In the wave of the *hsiang-tu* movement, Lin also began to pay attention to the underprivileged, who suffered from social inequality and economic exploitation in the process of modernization and capitalism. “Street Game” (1982) and “My Nostalgia, My Songs” (1986) were the most critical works in this trend.

The advocacy of the native soul and nostalgic sentiment in the wave of nationalistic consciousness and social commitment in the *hsiang-tu* literature movement gradually formed a “Taiwanese consciousness” in the mid-1970s. It condemned the literary defenders of Western-influenced modernist aesthetics and individualistic inclination as slavish followers of Western thought and viewed them as indifferent outsiders who pursued only aesthetic achievement without taking responsibility for local socio-political problems. In addition, it proclaimed Taiwan’s independent cultural history and colonial experiences as different from those of mainland China in the later development of

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<sup>5</sup> For Cloud Gate’s relationship with the *xiang-tu* literature movement, see Chen Ya-ping’s “Legacy in the Context of the 1970s Nativist Cultural Movement in Taiwan.”

<sup>6</sup> See June Yip’s *Envisioning Taiwan*.

nativism in the 1980s. The literary movement that accompanied the emergence of Taiwanese consciousness and anti-KMT political activities touched upon several controversial issues that threatened and destabilized the legitimacy of the KMT regime. The issue of the uneven distribution of social resources between mainlanders and local Taiwanese in the political structure and capitalist system further exacerbated the long-standing issue of the “provincial identity problem” (*shengji qingjie*), marking the ethnic tension due to the KMT’s inclination toward Chinese culture and those mainlanders whose refined knowledge of the culture helped justify the KMT’s nation-building project. The infamous 2-28 incident in 1947 was a tragic result of the political and social inequality between privileged mainlanders and exploited Taiwanese and has undermined the unity and harmony of the island since that time.<sup>7</sup> Lin had been a typical figure who successfully integrated Western, Chinese, and Taiwanese cultural elements into his repertoires. However, the binary oppositions between Chinese identity and Taiwanese consciousness, foreign influence and indigenous culture, and modernity and tradition urged him to re-think and re-situate the cultural standpoint of the dance company. He looked for a possible solution to such dichotomous thinking, which obstructed the peace of the island and limited the cultural richness for artistic fulfillment. Besides his works regarding social criticism, Lin attempted to transcend the ideological opposition by turning to Buddhism, as shown in “Nirvana” (1982), and to aesthetic pursuit through tai chi movements in “Adagietto” (1984). Through these new approaches, rather than

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<sup>7</sup> The 2-28 Incident was an anti-KMT uprising that exposed the tensions between the Taiwanese and ROC administration. On February 27, a quarrel between a female contraband cigarette vendor and an officer from the Tobacco Monopoly Bureau in Taipei triggered the rebellion and demonstration that were violently suppressed by the KMT government and caused the massacre (see Lai, Myers, and Wei’s “A Tragic Beginning”).



existing Chinese or Taiwanese cultural elements, Lin moved beyond the political debate and found a moderate consensus between the two extreme ideologies. Such artistic tendencies were fully developed and fulfilled in a much more mature and profound way in the 1990s.

***b. Local and Global Parameters in the 1990s***

Because the socio-political circumstances of Taiwan in the 1990s were further complicated by the global current of transnational capitalism and cross-boundary interactions, it is important to understand that Cloud Gate's success and achievement in the 1990s involved both local and global parameters. Regarding the local sociopolitical situation, the antagonistic relationship between mainlander elites and native Taiwanese did not calm down until lifting of martial law in 1987. The end of martial law represented a new democratic era that allowed and respected various political opinions through peaceful communication and negotiation. The independence of the mass media, liberalization of speech, right to assembly, publication and tourism, and the rule of law as the principle of governance opened the possibility of renegotiating the relationships with China on the issue such as national identity and the interpretation of history. The first native president of the KMT (1988-2000), Lee Teng-hui, began to shift from Sinocentrism to nativism and boldly asserted Taiwan's relationship with mainland China as "special state-to-state relationship" (qtd. in Yip 1). His statement came in response to the political entrapment imposed by China and the Taiwanese public inclination towards autonomy. Political liberalization and increasing practices of indigenization in the 1990s deepened the Taiwanese desire and belief in their subjectivity and independent value. President Lee's redefinition of Taiwan history, politics, and culture predominantly from a

Taiwan-centric perspective officially demythologized the ultimate goal of “returning to the mainland.” After KMT totalitarian rule, which some scholars interpreted as another colonial government (e.g., Chen Fang-ming), the postcolonial hybridity became a historical inevitability. Amid such political and cultural trends, Cloud Gate has also tried to evoke more multiple voices and cultural elements, which dynamically co-exist in Taiwanese society and no longer limit its scope by the idea of cultural purity or national unity.

However, even if political liberalization has opened up the increasingly tolerant social atmosphere in which diverse voices are freely spoken without any political interference, Lee’s support for Taiwanese independence split the society into two ideological extremes—Chinese orientation and nativism— without a third space in which to negotiate. Lee’s bold statement empowered the native influence of the DPP established in 1986 and divided the KMT into the nativitized KMT and the Chinese-inclined New Party. The antagonism between Chineseness and Taiwaneseeness has been politicized as the incompatibility between pro-unification with China, represented by the orthodox KMT (including the New Party), and pro-independence, represented by the DPP, along with Lee’s allegiances.<sup>8</sup> In other words, although an increasingly dynamic and hybrid phenomenon flourished in the cultural and social spheres, political choices and policy directions fell into the pitfall of either-or categories. This way of thinking often confined the freedom and potential of cultural creations. The curtailment held especially true for the artistic forms that were fairly dependent on political subsidies and financial support, such as film and performance art. In the face of the two radical stances between Chinese

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<sup>8</sup> More Lee’s influence on Taiwanese independence, see Richard Bush’s “Lee Teng-hui and Separatism”.

cultural centrism and Taiwanese indigenous consciousness, Cloud Gate participated in this ideological debate by moving beyond the either-or categories in its repertoires and providing a more open-ended interpretation for cultural identity. The first part of this thesis will highlight Cloud Gate's relatively flexible narrative and performative strategies in the 1990s by juxtaposing them with its relatively dogmatic repertoires in the 1970s. The focus on its transition from "The Tale of the White Serpent" (1975) to "Nine Songs" (1993) and from "Legacy" (1978) to "Portrait of the Families" (1997) will demonstrate Cloud Gate's transition from the commitment to nationalism to an appreciation of the hybridity of postcolonialism. The group has moved from the search for a historical conclusion to expectations of a renewed viewpoint, and from emphasis on coherence and continuity to an exploration of fragments and divergence.

Transnational capitalism, global migration, and Internet communication have promoted cultural interaction beyond national boundaries; similarly, the global market and its influence on the unrecognized status of Taiwan has also directed Cloud Gate's development. Because Cloud Gate has been a frequent guest at various international dance festivals, the group has gained international fame and survived in the postmodern age of "the becoming cultural of the economic, and the becoming economic of the cultural" (Jameson 60). On the other hand, due to Taiwan's inability to declare its independence officially as a nation-state, Cloud Gate's active global touring corresponds to President Lee Teng-hui's diplomatic strategies, which have been to settle Taiwan's identity crisis through active participation in global networks such as transnational incorporation, cultural exchange, and academic interaction. In other words, global visibility has enabled Cloud Gate to be a cultural ambassador to proclaim the existence of

Taiwan, which is otherwise invisible in the international political arena. In that case, besides the aesthetic quality and creative concepts in choreography, Cloud Gate's global visibility is inseparable from issues such as the kinds of themes that will interest the curators of international dance festivals and earn the group an opportunity to present in the name of Taiwan. The troupe had to learn how to grab the attention of global audiences and curators without catering to them with self-exoticism or Orientalism.<sup>9</sup>

The second part of the thesis will analyze "Songs of the Wanderers" (1994) and "Moon Water" (1998) as examples to demonstrate Cloud Gate's strategy to enjoy great popularity at international dance festivals and preserve its own cultural subjectivity at the same time. The two repertoires promote Eastern spirituality in the global and postmodern age as the group's means to attract and resist the Western gaze simultaneously. I shall highlight the difference between the Eastern spirituality-oriented view of personal life and the Western rationality-oriented worldview, so as to suggest Cloud Gate's uniqueness and irreplaceability in the global competition of cultural productions. Then, I shall concentrate on spiritual practice and depth to indicate resistance to the current fashion of modernization and commercialization, in which inner peace and meaning are devalued and ignored as unnecessary and useless. Cloud Gate's emphasis on spirituality confronts the Western way of thinking about cultural differences. It also preserves its own aesthetic and cultural autonomy and demonstrates Eastern cultural influences in Taiwanese society. From the culturally dynamic and heterogeneous conditions of postcolonial Taiwan, Lin refines the element of spirituality rooted in Daoism, Buddhism, and tai ji dao yin in

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<sup>9</sup> For Cloud Gate's development in the age of Globalization, also see Lin Ya-tin "Dancing in the Age of Globalization—Cloud Gate Dance Theatre and the Political Economy of Touring."

Taiwan. He promotes this spirituality as a symbol of Eastern culture in response to the Western desire to know about the East through the Orientalist gaze.

Although it might be problematic and oversimplified to depict the historical impact and cultural trends in a decadal periodization, the introduction aims to demonstrate Cloud Gate's close association with the socio-cultural movements of Taiwan from its establishment through the 1990s. This approach will provide a background for the further exploration of the implications of the group's development. Besides negotiating with different ethnic and political opinions locally, Cloud Gate's cultural exchange at international festivals has also urged Lin to adjust and redefine the troupe's cultural position on a global map. Its inconclusive view of Taiwan history and its inclination to spirituality will be the two axes from which to explore Cloud Gate's development in the repertoires of the 1990s.

*c. Genre as the Interpretative Framework*

Because Cloud Gate reflects the multi-layered cultural entanglement and can be associated with the complicated sociopolitical transition mentioned above, using a conventional framework to analyze the troupe's stylistic, thematic, or ideological transition might not be enough. In their recent research about Cloud Gate, scholars have tended to deal with the group's transition through analyzing its changes of topics, cultural resources, and body vocabularies. Chao Yu-ling, for instance, refuted Chan Hung-chi's idea that divided the development of Cloud Gate into three different stages.<sup>10</sup> Instead, the

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<sup>10</sup> The three stages are: (1) the first stage, 1973-1976: "integrated Chinese cultural tradition into contemporary dance"; (2) the second stage, 1976-1982: "sought [dances] with Taiwanese vernacular themes"; and (3) the third stage, 1982-1985: "rather fine and various," applying the works and ideas of foreign artists and composers without "the bitterness of insisting on reference to Chinese." Chan Hung-chi's article published in 1985 is quoted in Chao Yu-ling "Embodying Identity."

author proposed that Cloud Gate's repertoire should be considered as "a constant evolving entity rather than three different periods" (Chao, "Embodying" 12). Through an analysis of how, during its 24 years of development (1973-1997), Cloud Gate has incorporated different ethnocultural characters such as Chinese, Taiwanese, Western, and Asian cultures into different dimensions of repertoires (including "ideational sources," "movement," "space," "body," and "sound"), Chao indeed demonstrated that the evolving process could not be clear-cut. As Chao suggested, this phenomenon exactly mirrors the characteristics of the unique Taiwan experience as a diasporic society. However, the conclusion of "the evolving entity" may dismiss the nuances in the evolutionary process and leave some questions unsolved. Such questions include (1) How to interpret that the works, "The Tale of the White Serpent" and "Legacy," which represent Chinese ideology and Taiwanese ideology, respectively, were both shown under the KMT's Sinocentric governance; and (2) Why "Nine Songs," which was adapted from the Chinese literary canon, and "Portrait of the Families," derived from the tragedy of Taiwan history, both emerged along with the rising Taiwanese consciousness and movement of indigenization. What is the difference between these two sets of evolving processes? How can we take for granted that "Cloud Gate's attitude towards national identity has evolved from a Taiwan Chinese nationalism to an exclusively Taiwanese one" without dealing with the Taiwanese ideology shown in the times of Chinese nationalism and the Chinese ideology in Taiwanese periods (Chao, "Embodying" 16)?

To explain the different significances of the different interwoven cases, this thesis appropriates Mikhail Bakhtin's socio-linguistic notion of genre as an interpretative

framework. Highlighting the socio-ideologically based essence of language, Bakhtin proposed that language carries out a worldview and social phenomenon instead of being merely an objective linguistic system with fixed meaning. Linguistic signs compose, modify, and transform different connotations and evaluations within a particular social context. The discourses between self and others interpenetrate and further weave a web of dialogic relationship. To Bakhtin, language is an inherently dialogic zone in which different opinions and perspectives compete, struggle, and interact with each other. As opposed to the realities of heteroglossia, a unitary language with a single value system is an unnatural product of socio-cultural dogmatic control. In that case, how an artistically organized form responds to the realities of heteroglossia and how its linguistic characteristics are shown in literary works become critical to the classification of genre for Bakhtin. As Bakhtin mentioned that “certain features of language (lexicological, semantic, syntactic) will knit together with the intentional aim, and with the overall accentual system inherent in one or another genre,” the features of language not only define a genre but also suggest a certain sociopolitical implication to the given genre (“Discourse” 287).<sup>11</sup>

In his “Discourse in the Novel,” Bakhtin contrasted the different linguistic features between the language of the epic and that of the novel. Poetic language corresponds to a unitary authority that suppresses the diversity of dialects and guarantees the stability, unity, and coherence of language; in contrast, the novel permits the multiplicity of individual voices and opens up a space for their interrelationships. Languages with an ideological unification and centralization versus languages with centrifugal forces

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<sup>11</sup> The interpretation of Bakhtin’s theory is also based on Brandist and Dentith’s works.

differentiate the epic and the novel. Bakhtin developed the idea more concretely in “Epic and Novel,” in which he clarified the subjects and features for both genres and associated the linguistic characteristics with certain social values embedded in them. According to his definition, the epic as a unique genre includes three remarkable characteristics: “(1) a national epic past...serves as the subject for the epic; (2) national tradition... serves as the source for the epic; (3) an absolute epic distance separates the epic world for contemporary reality” (“Epic” 13). The epic world shows “completed, conclusive, and immutable, as a fact, an idea and a value” inherited from or related to the “national heroic past,” which is inaccessible “to change, to re-think, to re-evaluate anything in it” (“Epic” 16) and allows only a single and unified point of view. In sum, the epic is aligned with the centripetal forces of linguistic and national authority, for which celebrating a heroic national past is the subject matter. In contrast, the novel is more flexible and dialogic, with the world still in the making. It is more open to self-critique, heteroglossic voices, and renewed knowledge rather than canonical narration about a glorified memory with a reverent attitude, as in the epic world. Bakhtin’s conclusion for the features of the novel made the point more completely: “(1) its stylistic three-dimensionality, which is linked with the multi-linguaged consciousness realized in the novel; (2) the radical change it effects in the temporal coordinates of the literary image; (3) the new zone opened by the novel for structuring literary images, namely, the zone of maximal contact with the present (with contemporary reality) in all its open-endedness” (“Epic” 11). In short, the indeterminacy and open-endedness of the novel in terms of its use of language, its living connection to current events, and its possibility to reconstruct and reevaluate existing values are opposite to the finality and conclusiveness of the epic. The flexibility



and adaptability of the novel result from its new temporal perspective. This view singles out the consciousness of the present instead of obsessing on the past; it cares about the possibility of the contemporary instead of sticking to the traditional past and authority.

Bakhtin's analysis of these two genres provides us with an interesting perspective from which to elaborate the evolution of Lin's dance creations between the 1970s and the 1990s, especially those related to the representation and interpretation of Taiwan history and cultural identity. In doing so, this thesis draws a parallel between multi-elemented performance art and a multi-stratified linguistic system. If discourse is a dynamic entity within which themes, meanings, speakers, listeners, and speaking tone supplement and engage each other, then the heterogeneous components in modern dance, such as movement, music, costumes, and setting also dialogically interact within the medium. Like the heteroglossic tendencies of language shown in different ways in epics and novels, those components will be controlled or exposed in different ways in different repertoires within a particular socio-political background. By analyzing the ways those multiple elements are organized and arranged in repertoires, this thesis associates modern dance with Bakhtin's notion of literary genres. In the case of *Cloud Gate*, its ways to control and make use of varying theatrical elements manifest its evolution from epic-like choreography to novel-like style, from unity to plasticity, and from singularity to plurality, which gives us a different perspective from which to explain *Cloud Gate*'s evolving processes. In addition, because the trajectory from an ancient epic to a modern novel parallels the struggle of Taiwanese people from the 1970s' unified nationalism to the 1990s' multi-layered postcolonialism, *Cloud Gate*'s transition in its performative and narrative strategies will also contextualize the socio-historical background implied in the

works. Through Bakhtin's lens, we may consider Lin's transition from an epic perspective to a novelistic one in a politically and historically specific context.

Through such an interdisciplinary approach, I do not mean to privilege linguistic or literary studies over the traditional dance studies. This approach would ignore the fact that the methods and instruments of analysis within modern dance itself are quite different from Bakhtin's linguistic concepts. On the contrary, I am fully aware of the differences between two specific media and cautious about the limit of the framework for the potential of modern dance. As I try to bring literary theoretical concepts and methodological instruments to the terrain of modern dance, I will not ignore the distinguishing features of modern dance in my interpretation of Lin's repertoires. Furthermore, a deeper discussion about the significance of artistic motion will be brought out in the conclusion to see how the flexibility of artistic movement transcends Bakhtin's notion of genre.

## Chapter 2

### Reconstruct the National Epic through “The Tale of the White Serpent” and “Legacy”

In order to highlight the postcolonial hybridity in the 1990s, contrasting it with the situation in the 1970s may help us clarify the vicissitudes of Chinese nationalism and Taiwanese consciousness. In the 1970s, historical and social forces limited the dialogic potential of multiculturalism in Taiwanese society. Similar to Bakhtin’s concept of the “correct language” of an epic, which implies “a force for overcoming th[e] heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding language” (Bakhtin, “Discourse” 270), Cloud Gate’s repertoires fell under the single banner of Chineseness and emphasized ideological unification and centralization at that time. Although Lin’s repertoires did not align with any political agenda, the tendency reflected the particular sociopolitical demand for allegiance and solidarity. With an intention to reconstruct the national epic in the face of imminent national crises, Lin’s repertoires at that time showed a stable and unitary inclination. This chapter will focus on “The Tale of the White Serpent” and “Legacy” in the 1970s to reveal the relatively conservative and authoritative strategy of performance in contrast to Cloud Gate’s development in the 1990s.

#### *a. “The Tale of the White Serpent”—Returning to the Root with Modernized Appearance*

“The Tale of the White Serpent” (1975) exemplifies Lin’s original intention to make Cloud Gate a troupe “composed by Chinese, choreographed by Chinese, danced by Chinese, for a Chinese audience” against the Western cultural imperialism in the 1970s.

A series of diplomatic setbacks and perilous national crises such as the Diao-yu-tai sovereignty dispute and the ROC's withdrawal from the United Nations urged the Taiwanese intellectuals to rethink their roots instead of further developing infatuation with Western modernism. The "roots," which were defined variously by different ethnicities from different historical and cultural backgrounds, had roughly developed into two bifurcated directions: One was to reinvigorate Chinese culture, which reinforced the KMT's Chinese nationalism; the other was to pay attention to Taiwanese local constituencies, which gradually forged the concrete Taiwanese consciousness in the late 1970s. Deeply influenced by the KMT's Chinese ideology during his younger years, Lin embraced Chinese culture to express his patriotic position and took its renewal as his social responsibility. "Tale" is Lin's signature work that demonstrates his Chinese complex before the maturation of the Taiwanese native consciousness.

"The Tale of the White Serpent" is a well-known Chinese legend about the love story between a young scholar and a white snake-woman. The scholar, Xu Xian, has not been aware that the beautiful woman, Bai Xu-chen, is a white snake in disguise until a monk, Fa Hai, intervenes in their marriage, reveals the truth, and banishes the white snake under the Leifeng Tower forever. Another important character in the story is a green snake named Qing, who is Bai's loyal maid and a matchmaker for Bai and Xu. According to Lin Ya-tin's research, the story can be traced back to the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) and was not fictionalized as the plot we know today until the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD) (Y. Lin, "Choreographing" 54). Over these centuries, different variations of the storyline and adaptations in various genres appeared. In Lin's version, Qing is attracted by the handsome Xu and becomes Bai's jealous rival in order to

increase the dramatic tension among characters. Later, this thesis will explore how Lin adapted the storyline and changed Qing's personality, a change that may have been influenced by Martha Graham's repertoire.

In her unique interpretation of Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" in the last chapter of *Primitive Passion*, Rey Chow doubted the orthodox status of the origin and empowered the liberal potential of translation, which is useful in examining a Westernized medium's perception of Cloud Gate's reinterpretation of a Chinese literary work. In the essay, Chow saw a problem in the hierarchy between the original and the translation by clarifying that translation for Benjamin was "a 'liberation' that is mutual and reciprocal *between* the 'original' and the 'translation,'" rather than "a unidirectional, one-way process" (*Primitive* 184, emphasis original). Translation is a process to release what Benjamin called "something that symbolizes or something symbolized" in the original text—"a sign that stands for something else," which can only be emancipated from the prison of the original language by a translator's "re-creation of that work" (186-7). For Chow, Paul de Man's deconstructionist interpretation, which confirmed the impossibility for language to grasp the essence of the original, reinforced the priority of the original and neglected Benjamin's liberal implication. To solve the dilemma between the translator's ethnocentrism and an object's refusal to be translated, Chow further proposed the idea of "intersemiotic practices"—"a transportation between two 'media,' two kinds of already mediated data," which creates a third space other than the two extreme positions and transcends the dispute between the translation and the original (193-4).

Chow's idea of translation is useful to free Cloud Gate's version of "Tale" from, firstly, the literary original, and secondly, the original of Chinese culture. Chen Ya-ping and Lin Ya-tin have comprehensively analyzed the transformations from the original literary works to Lin's dance work, including the adaptation of plot and personality of the characters, the incorporation of Peking Opera and Martha Graham's choreographic style, and the symbolic set design and classical Chinese musical creation. All of these elements demonstrate how Cloud Gate enjoys the potential of "liberation" and "complementarity" (Chow, *Primitive* 188) of the translation, which moves beyond the limit of the literary original. From the perspective of "intersemiotic practices," which translate "from one sign system to another," both literature and modern dance are kinds of media that try to interpret the original of the Chinese culture, which has been "lost, cryptic, already heavily mediated, and already heavily translated" (193). The translation between different media, that is, the transportation between different interpretations without touching upon the original, saves Cloud Gate from any claims for authenticity and accusations of betraying native culture when it adopts elements from other cultures in the repertoire. From such a perspective of translation, the modification and innovative vocabulary of Cloud Gate's "Tale" indeed unfetter the imprisoned potential of the originals—both the literary original and that of the Chinese culture.

To be more specific, the adoption of the Western concepts of movement and storyline may be a breakthrough in the process of the translation. Before Cloud Gate was founded, the idea of modern dance had been mediated by Japanese modernity through physical education classes in schools. But under the rule of the Nationalist government, the most urgent mission for dance was to present the audience with imaginative Chinese

images, support its nationalist campaign of anti-communism, and confirm the hope of retaking the Mainland. Through scarce materials and fragmented images about China such as hearsay, remote memories from the mainlanders, and pictures in print media, *minzu wudao* (Chinese national or ethnic dance) attempted to restore an imaginarily authentic motherland and consolidate the ideology of Sinocentric Nationalism. In that case, *minzu wudao*, full of traditional motifs and ethnic representations, became the predominant genre of dance. It is at this juncture that we may realize the liberal significance of Cloud Gate's "Tale," which blends creative elements and revolutionary concepts into the Chinese motif rather than reconstructing and imitating the appearance.<sup>12</sup>

Both Chen Ya-ping and Lin Ya-tin indicated that the adaptation of the storyline, especially the role of Green Snake, was probably been influenced by Martha Graham's "Cave of Heart," which toured in Taiwan one year before the premiere of "Tale." "Cave" is adapted from the Greek mythology on Medea, a woman who takes revenge on her husband for his betrayal. Graham commented that "Cave" is about "passion—an impulse, envy... maliciousness, the untamable fire when the laws of the heart are interfered with." It is about a human's "evil" side and "the curse of jealousy" (qtd. in Y. Lin "Choreographing" 58). Graham's emphasis on jealousy and conflict may have inspired Lin to modify the role of Green Snake from a loyal companion to an envious opponent. Besides that, the new body vocabulary also refreshed the old topic, which had been adapted into Peking opera, television drama, and film. Lin instilled Graham's contraction and release into the Chinese subject, which brought out completely new physical

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<sup>12</sup> For more dance history in Taiwan, see Chen Ya-ping, "Dance History and Cultural Policies: A Study of Contemporary Dance in Taiwan, 1930s-1997."

aesthetics and perceptual experience. The performative energy could no longer be confined by the political agenda.

However, in spite of all those theatrical transformations and Western influences, the liberalization of the Chinese culture was still under the banner of Chinese nationalism. Instead of being domesticated by the KMT's political ideology, Lin's Chinese nationalism came from his personal experience and sentiment in relation to the Chinese culture throughout his formative years. Lin spoke of the early stages of *Cloud Gate*: "At that time, there were no videos, and very few dance companies visited Taiwan. ... So, everything had to start from scratch, from my own environment, so it was only natural for me to adapt to Chinese themes" (qtd. in Nishioka 22). It is true that with a Western cultural medium, Lin inserted an innovative body vocabulary into the Chinese subject, which modernized the Chinese ancient fable and refreshed the eyes of traditional audiences. But such innovation did not discredit Lin's inclination to Chinese culture. Except for Graham's techniques, such as vigorous contraction and release of the body to express strong emotions or psychological conflicts, Lin constructed the story with great help from Chinese Opera in terms of its narrative structure, minimalist set design, music from stringed and percussion instruments, and allusive acting. As Chen Ya-ping has analyzed, the repertoire begins with a brief introductory dance for the three protagonists to imply their personality and identity in the story, which corresponds to "the convention in Peking Opera of having characters introduce themselves to the audience when first appearing on stage" (Chen, "Dance History" 92-3). The simple design of the set, with a bamboo curtain hanging from above and twisted rattan branches, parallels "the spatial aesthetics of Peking Opera, where two chairs and a small table are, as a rule, the only



objects on stage” (92-3). Xu’s walking in brisk steps in circles illustrates the incorporation of allusive acting from Chinese Opera, which “indicates traveling long distances in Chinese theatre” (94). Music composer Lai Te-he manipulated the unique characteristics of Chinese instruments to control the rhythm of the repertoire and depict the characters’ inner world. The function of the music is also similar to that in Chinese theatre.<sup>13</sup> Incorporating many of the elements from Peking Opera into Western modern dance, Lin created a new image of the Chinese culture in order to preserve it rather than to challenge it.

Yu Ta-kang (1907-1977), as one of Lin’s mentors, was an important person behind the curtain and helped Lin establish the mixed body language. Following the May Fourth precursors, Yu tended to solve the conflicts between modernization and tradition, the West and the East, and combination and uniqueness. The modernization of Chinese Opera for the new age became his way to respond to the socio-cultural crisis and return to the root. Influenced by Yu, Lin’s early works, as embodied by “Tale,” were eager to find the balance between the Western medium and traditional subjects. Lin recalled Yu’s instruction and said, “Without those invaluable cultural heritages, Cloud Gate can be nothing more than a copy of U.S. modern dance at best” (*Lung Ye* 9). Thanks to Yu Ta-kang’s instruction about the story and aesthetic of Chinese Opera, Lin and the first generation of Cloud Gate dancers were indoctrinated into the beauty of Chinese Opera and developed the unique modern dance that combined the Eastern and Western cultures perfectly. It was also because of Yu that Lin got the chance to cooperate with Lai Te-he,

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<sup>13</sup> More examples of the echoes between Lin’s modern dance and Chinese Opera can be seen in Chen Ya-ping’s and Lin Ya-tin’s unpublished dissertations.

who, as a young musician in the Taiwan Provincial Symphony Orchestra, tried to find a new way to depict contemporary Chinese life through classical Chinese instruments. As another cultural strand highlighting Taiwanese native cultures gradually cohered to be Taiwanese consciousness, Lin turned his interest from Western tastes to Chinese culture as the first step to contend with the hostile political conditions and secure an unstable identity when the ROC was denied by the international stage.

Lin's Sinocentric obsession may correspond to Tu Wei-ming's concept of "cultural China" in terms of Tu's intention to preserve the tradition at the periphery. Tu's idea of cultural China attempted to create an imagined universe "that both encompasses and transcends the ethnic, territorial, linguistic, and religious boundaries that normally define Chineseness" (Preface v). Such a cultural space aims to disclose the fluidity of Chineseness, which destabilizes the existing scope of inquiry and disassociates diverse Chinese culture from the geopolitically dominant Chinese authority. Through the economic rise of the four Asian dragons and the success of China overseas, Tu confirmed the possibility of declining the center and valorizing the periphery as a new center. In other words, the project can be tenable and justified against the stereotypical claim for authenticity mainly due to the Chinese diaspora's capability to lead the modernization of Chineseness, which rescues the Chinese civilization from being "mired in perpetual underdevelopment" (Tu, "Cultural China" 12). Considering Taiwan's increasing marginalization in the international arena and perceptions of it as a renegade province to the PRC in the 1970s, Cloud Gate's reinterpretation of Chinese culture through a Westernized approach also implied its intention to claim Taiwan politically and culturally as the legitimate heir to a 5,000-year-old tradition, and to challenge the center from the

position of the periphery. Modern dance becomes a means to regenerate the otherwise decayed and hackneyed Chinese culture due to the homeland's short-sighted and less innovative governance. Modernizing Chinese culture through the concept of Western modernity is exactly the point that connects Tu's discourse with Cloud Gate's performance, both of which testify to and support each other.

Even though the liberal potential and ambition of replacing the center discussed above seemingly reveal Cloud Gate's renewed Chinese ideology, from Ien Ang's critique on the limitations of cultural China, we may see that Cloud Gate's "Tale" clearly demonstrates Sinocentric nationalism and its epic narrative. In her "Can One Say No to Chineseness," Ang reminded us that Tu's injunction actually established an "alternative center, a de-centered center, whose name is *cultural* China, but China nevertheless" (287, emphasis original). In other words, although Tu's suggestion emancipated the cultural domination of Chineseness from geopolitical boundaries, he did not forsake the obsession with the root, that is, China. What the Chinese diaspora contributed to the notion of Chineseness, in Tu's sense, was its loyal inheritance of Chinese culture rather than its multiple and dynamic interpretations of identities with the understanding of their diverse experiences. Their qualification to represent China enhances, rather than challenges, the idea that an authentic essence of Chineseness exists. The only difference is that the periphery represents the essence better than the center. If we follow Ang's response to cultural China, we may well also point out the limitations of "Tale." The liberal appearance of "Tale" eventually gets into the frame of an epic-like structure and performative strategy, which adheres to the roots of Chineseness: The adaptation of storyline enriches the dramatic tension but still isolates the legend in ancient times

without connecting with the present. The simple narrative clearly articulates the whole story and does not offer any other possibility for a change. The third person omniscient narrative mode implies an overarching author behind the story, who decides the values and ideas promoted by the work, such as returning to the root of Chinese culture. By following the characteristics of Chinese Opera, other theatrical elements such as the setting, costumes, and music consistently echo the core of Chineseness, which monopolizes the multiple stratifications of modern dance and weakens their dialogic potential. Although the intersemiotic translation of culture promises a more liberal way to interpret Chineseness, Lin's epic-like repertoire ultimately expresses his belief in a certain kind of Chinese essence. In that case, the process of modernization in Lin's repertoire reinforces rather than threatens the obsession with Chinese tradition.

When the myth of "returning to the homeland" was still prevalent in the 1970s, Lin's loyalty to cultural roots may have been a reasonable representation of Cloud Gate's difference from the ideal body determined by the West; it may also have been a feasible way to help anchor the endangered identity in the age of national crisis. Such an underlying longing for roots led "Tale" to be constructed like an epic in terms of its single perspective, closed-ended narrative, and distance from the current society. All of these elements aimed to retain the archetypal quality of the tradition, and the process of adaptation and modernization had no effect upon self-critique or reflection. Furthermore, multiple theatrical elements were uniformly inherited from Chinese Opera, which advocated in chorus a unitary center of Chineseness. Here, the meaning of an epic is not only a genre with a specific definition, but more importantly, a conservative attitude and artistic approach embedded in "Tale," which implies Lin's allegiance to Chinese tradition.

*b. “Legacy”—Taiwanese under the Banner of Chineseness*

“Legacy” has been commonly regarded as the watershed piece for Lin’s emerging Taiwanese consciousness; it is distinguished from his earlier works that are filled with the deeply ingrained Chinese complex. Inspired by the *hsiang-tu* literary movement, Lin started to rethink the questions of identity and became aware of Taiwanese uniqueness. As he explained, “Everyone asked the same questions: Who am I? Where did I come from? ... [W]hile I was abroad, the questions became especially poignant to me. When I returned to my hometown of Chia-I, I knew I must choreograph ‘Legacy’ to tell my own story, and my story is the story of everyone in Taiwan” (Chen, “Legacy” 123). The statement reflects not only the eagerness of root searching for individual subjectivity, but also the self-consciousness about the uniqueness of Taiwan experiences that people who have lived on the island construct. Lin even asked the dancers to trace their own family histories and share the stories with each other during the rehearsal. “To know who your mother is, who your father is, who their parents are, why they do this, how they talk, and to think about all these issues will provide us a bigger world. Then think about what ancestors give you and whether you inherit it” (Yang 126). Those different family histories of the dancers share “the common image of the hard era” (Yang 126), which provides the underlying keynote of the choreography for “Legacy.” In addition, the succession of diplomatic defeats motivated Lin’s social responsibility to unite Taiwanese people tightly together. Through the dance, Lin emphasized the ancestors’ spirit of solidarity and diligence, by which he hoped that the whole society could “gain strength and could be reassured of power through the footsteps of our ancestors” (Yang 130-1). The aspiration of tracing the individual and national past and the patriotic passion to

confront the political frustration in “Legacy” fostered the formation of Taiwanese consciousness, which the KMT’s official ideology had repressed.

“Legacy” tells the story of the Taiwanese predecessors who dangerously crossed the Taiwan Strait from southeastern China and painstakingly developed the uncultivated land in search of a better and more peaceful future. The choreography of the epic dance is chronologically structured with a single perspective—the Han ethnical perspective. The work includes eight sections: “Prologue,” “Call for the New Land,” “Crossing the Black Water,” “Taming of the New Land,” “Blessing in the Wilderness,” “Death and Rebirth,” “Planting of Rice Sprouts,” and “Celebration.” The dance begins with young people dressed in contemporary costumes as they offer incense sticks to pay tribute to their ancestors who settled in Taiwan. Then the young people remove their modern-day clothes and reveal traditional Hakka costumes to represent the image of their pioneers, whose courage and perseverance overcame the dangers of the Black Water and the hardships of living in a desolate island. All of the difficulties and frustrations are accompanied by a bright hope of survival and a better life in the future, which is symbolized by the birth of new life and the celebration of a harvest at the end of the choreography. Through the same group of young dancers that play both modern people and ancestors, the dance highlights the succession of lineage, which connects every single life in the present to the collective history in the distant past. The particular dance vocabulary also shows the endeavors to reclaim a wasteland and the spirit of solidarity—becoming exhausted, jumping, crawling, running, and unison dancing—all of which require togetherness instead of individualism.

The unique dance vocabulary in “Legacy” is created by the dancers’ deep immersion in the ancestors’ struggle for survival in the face of a rugged environment. According to Chen Ya-ping’s analysis, “Lin knew only too well that neither the body language of modernist sentiment... nor the classical Chinese body derived from Peking Opera... was sufficient to convey the image of a ‘Taiwanese body’ molded by an unbending spirit...” (Chen, “Legacy” 122). Lin believed that the “Taiwanese body” should be trained from an affinity with the ancestors’ toil and the hard earth they plowed. Thus, outdoor training on the banks of the Hsin-tien River in Taipei County became the best way for the dancers to release their bodies and souls from the tensions in the urban environment. They attempted to get along with the land and nature closely and harmoniously despite of all kinds of challenges from the hostile environment. The physical training included lying on rugged rocks, crawling over the rocks with bare hands and knees, and carrying heavy boulders. All of these difficult tasks passed on the pain and weariness the ancestors felt when they faced the harsh challenges during cultivation (Yang 117-131). Besides sympathizing with their ancestors’ feelings, physical suffering also aroused the sense of solidarity and spirit of mutual help, which enhanced the consciousness as a group, a family, and a community (Chen, “Legacy” 124-5). Recalling his experience in setting the section of “Crossing the Black Water” at the State University of New York (SUNY)-Purchase with Purchase dancers, Lin remarked that the idea of “togetherness” in “Legacy” is most a foreign concept to Western dancers because it is opposed to “individualists” who “don’t share space with others” (qtd. in R. Solomon and J. Solomon 268) in terms of choreography. “Even when you are doing different movements, you are in that group,” Lin explained (qtd. in R. Solomon and J. Solomon

268). Doing different movements within a group not only featured the spirit of togetherness as Taiwanese characteristics, but it also corresponded to Lin's expectations to unite Taiwanese people with diverse backgrounds and remind them that they were in a boat, as shown in the piece "Crossing the Black Water."

Through images and elements of Taiwanese vernacular characteristics such as folk music, Hakka costumes, and Taiwanese religious rituals and legends in the choreography, Lin embraced the cultural and ethnic heritage of Taiwan. Three interludes of touching ballads sung in Taiwanese by Chen Ta, an illiterate but creative street singer from the southern countryside, Heng-chun, might be the strongest element of all. Chen Ta, whose talent was discovered at the age of 67 by folklore collectors, was a representative figure in the trend of the root-searching movement and the desire to return to the local. Based on the lyrics, Lin constructed the structure of storytelling and choreography for "Legacy." The emotional voice not only expressed love for the island instead of the glorious 5,000-year history of China through the lyrics, but through singing the songs in Taiwanese, it also refuted the KMT's state apparatus which tried to re-sinize Taiwanese in ignoring and downplaying Taiwanese local culture. The costumes of the female dancers originated from traditional Hakka clothes. Because diligence, steadiness, and tolerance were commonly recognized as the characteristics of Hakka women, which corresponded to the virtues of the ancestors that Lin wanted to highlight, the costumes became a good way to juxtapose the images and spirit of the ancestors and Hakka women. In that case, Lin seemed to imply that the Taiwanese ancestors should not be far away from the Taiwanese living experience, but that their image and spirit could be rediscovered through the descendants. Another local element, the cult of Ma-tsu (Goddess of Sea), was also



manifested in the ancestors' heroic adventure. Ma-tsu is the most popular deity in Taiwan nowadays and has played an important role in consolidating the communities and developing Taiwan's unique religious culture. In "Legacy," Ma-tsu is not only a spiritual support for the pioneering settlers but also a symbol of cohesion for contemporary Taiwanese people.<sup>14</sup>

If we realize Lin's intention to highlight the connection and succession of lineage, those Taiwanese elements may carry its significance of resistance only in comparison with the contemporary KMT cultural policy, which oppressed Taiwanese folk cultures and languages as vulgar and primitive. Those Taiwanese elements challenged the KMT's Sinocentric hegemony rather than Chinese culture in a broad sense. In other words, in terms of the unchanged continuity of Taiwanese languages, costumes, or religion inherited from the ancestors who came from China, the Taiwaneseess in "Legacy" preserved alternative Chineseness rather than the official one, instead of shaking off wholesale Chineseness and asserting a unique Taiwaneseess. Those Taiwanese factors were labeled as "Taiwanese culture"—not the "Chinese culture" recognized by the authority—simply because of the KMT's narrow definition of Chineseness, but not because of their severance from Chinese culture. The officially approved orthodox Chineseness was not anything derived from China, but it limited a specific field of authenticity with the violent politics of inclusion and exclusion. "Legacy" questioned the problematic boundary the KMT government drew between the legitimate Chineseness

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<sup>14</sup> Ma-tsu has also served as a symbol of Taiwanese identity after the emergence of Taiwanese consciousness. According to Peter R. Moody's analysis, he believed it is because Ma-tsu, unlike the Jade Emperor, the Buddha, Kuan-yin or Kuan Kung, is not commonly worshiped throughout China, but rather, only by the followers on the eastern coast (58).

and the marginalized Chineseness that also originated in China but was devalued as secondary and insignificant.

Chen Ya-ping's explanation of the evolution of Taiwanese consciousness may be a good way to conclude this situation:

Unlike the political awakening of "Taiwan consciousness" (Taiwan yishi) surfacing in the 1980s, which argued for a distinct historical and cultural heritage of Taiwan separated from mainland China, "the Taiwanese nativism of the 1970s," according to the nativist writer Wang To, "was a nativism that had to be pondered within the premises of Great China [ideology]." In other words, bentu yishi (nativist consciousness) at this stage was enacted as a confrontation between China (the ROC) and Western powers, rather than a conflict between Taiwan and China (the PRC) as in the 1980s and '90s (Chen, "Dance History" 83).

Chen's analysis reveals an ambiguous zone that overlapped the Chineseness and Taiwaneseeness at that time when Taiwanese consciousness remained under the rubric of Chinese ideology, in spite of the awareness of the distinguishing features of Taiwan and the process of localization. In "Legacy," Lin neither simply aligned with the KMT Sinocentric nationalism nor completely endorsed the radical *hsiang-tu* nativism, thus demonstrating an ambiguous tendency. On one hand, Lin promoted the consanguineous and cultural connection between Taiwan and China, as revealed by the Chinese title of the dance "Xin Chuan," which literally means "passing the flame from generation to generation." On the other hand, he tended to highlight their taking roots in Taiwan—their attachment to the island and their separation from China, which implied Taiwan as an independent entity with its own historical development, and was different from the current trajectory that resulted from KMT's Sinocentric imposition. Although the patriotic enthusiasm and emotional connection with China in "Legacy" seemingly corresponded to the KMT's political discourse, which was at odds with the nativist

counter-hegemonic and Taiwan-centered stance, Lin also emphasized the settlement and localization of Chinese culture through the images of sowing, plowing, harvesting, celebrating a newborn generation, and Taiwanese elements similar to but different from Chinese ones. Lin proposed “Taiwaneseness within Chineseness,” which looked after both sides of Chinese ideology and Taiwanese consciousness but refuted Western cultural imperialism and the KMT’s narrowly defined Sinocentrism.

In spite of such an ambiguity of Taiwanese Chinese ideology that the historical contingency constructed, “Legacy” showed a heroic beginning and conclusive past as a stable epic. Taiwanese elements in music and costumes seemingly suggested an alternative to the culturally and politically dominant Chineseness, but the emphasis on inheritance from China integrated the possibility of multiplicity into unification. Instead of marking the distinguishing trajectory of Taiwan history and culture, such as the Japanese colonial legacy or aboriginal culture, Lin provided a Han-centric historical perspective from which to forge a unified collective memory and appease the increasing conflict between mainlanders and native Taiwanese. The perspective also omits the fact that historically, Chinese immigrants and plains Aborigines interacted socially and culturally through intermarriage and business.<sup>15</sup> Tracing Taiwan’s history only back to the Chinese pioneering settlers’ migration oversimplifies the diverse experiences of different ethnicities, downplays the significance of other native cultures, and again, compulsorily responds to the Chinese cultural roots. In other words, the negligence or underestimation of other native potentials outside of the Chinese origin in “Legacy” molded the image of a homogenous Chineseness in Taiwan through which Lin intended

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<sup>15</sup> See Melissa Brown *Is Taiwan Chinese?*

to persuade people from different origins to identify with the island and build national solidarity. When the U.S. declared the cessation of diplomatic ties with Taiwan on the same day that the dance premiered, the Han centrism, a reverent collective memory, and the worship of the root in epic-like “Legacy” indeed conveyed the nationalist passion and solidified Taiwanese identity.<sup>16</sup> However, the hybridity of Taiwan had not yet been opened up, investigated, and explored in the late 1970s. The desperation and uncertainty about the hostile international situation reinforced the sovereign totality of the nation-state, demanded a standardized culture to secure the national identity, and thus postponed the possibility of discovering cultural discontinuity and diversity other than the Han-centric narrative.

To sum up the Chineseness and Taiwanese-ness in the 1970s, “Tale” and “Legacy”—the Chinese- and Taiwanese-oriented works—both prioritized the patriotic emotions, coherent identity, and cultural roots in the Chinese tradition that were broader than the KMT’s definition through an epic-like narrative and performative strategies. The modernization, adaptation, and localization of Chinese culture showed that Cloud Gate had no intention of reconstructing the original tradition or repeating the superficial imitation. Instead, Cloud Gate preserved the tradition by giving it a renewed image. In spite of the innovative interpretation, the main reason to define “Tale” and “Legacy” as epics is their attachment to the Chinese cultural center—either in the proclaimed homeland, China, or in the proclaimed legitimate cultural heir, Taiwan. Both works suggested a unified perspective and heroic past as bases upon which Lin affirmed patriotic nationalism and national identity.

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<sup>16</sup> Sentimental and passionate responses to the premiere of “Legacy” were recorded in Yang 129-131.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Emancipating Novel-like Heteroglossia through “Nine Songs” and “Portrait of the Families”**

After lifting of martial law, the economic miracle and cultural liberalization in the 1980s gradually loosened the totality of the KMT’s authority and cultural uniformity. The 1990s signified a postcolonial and global era of Taiwan in terms of the ongoing projects of reconstructing a native identity, the eagerness of indigenization, progressive democratization, transnational capitalism, and the fluidity of global travel and communication. Tu Wei-ming’s evocation of the term “glocalism” explains the irony of Taiwan in the 1990s: “As nativization has become a dominant discourse, imported cultural products, outgrowths of the ubiquitous transnational capitalism, have inadvertently formulated an alternative discourse” (Tu, “Cultural Identity” 1121). Looking for the balance in the contradiction between nativization and globalization has become critical for redefining Taiwanese identity, which in fact has not yet been defined with consensus. In addition, the coexistence of globalism and localism is further complicated by the unsettled issue with China. The culturally ambiguous relationship with China disturbs the boundary and definition of localism: What is Taiwanese culture, and what is its relation to Chinese culture? Through examining Cloud Gate’s “Nine Songs” and “Portrait of the Families,” I continue to explore how Cloud Gate interpreted Chineseness and Taiwaneseess in the 1990s and what the two repertoires suggested about Taiwanese cultural identity.

##### *a. “Nine Songs”—Chineseness as a Cultural Seed Rather Than a Cultural Root*

Similar to Lin's interpretation of "The Tale of the White Serpent," "Nine Songs" was also adapted from a Chinese classic. However, in the 1990s it no longer promised the unambiguous Chineseness and discrete traits of Sinocentric ideology of the 1970s. In "Nine," Lin brought his talent to explore the liberal potential of translation into full play and gave a renewed interpretation of the old literary text. Furthermore, the adaptation in "Nine" tended to deconstruct the notion of Chineseness rather than preserve and modernize it, as in "Tale." On one hand, the changes in the political situation with China foster the Taiwanese consciousness and undermine the legitimacy of Chinese culture in Taiwan, while the dominance of authentic Chineseness is then reasserted by mainland China. China's military threat and diplomatic suppression of Taiwan deepen the feeling of hostility between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. The negative information about mainland polity, society, and culture through press media, tourism, and investment demythologizes the romantic and sacred image of the homeland. The rising tendency toward a distinct Taiwanese identity promoted by the DPP has forced the KMT to neutralize and even nativitize itself in order to cater to public opinion and win elections. Under such historical and political circumstances, the hegemony of Chinese culture and ideology is further demonized and considered by the nativists to be either political suppression of Taiwanese local culture or a conspiracy for unification with China. On the other hand, the trends of transnational migration and multicultural communication broaden the view of the choreographer and enrich the resources for artistic creations. Sticking to Chineseness as the center of the creation may look outdated in such boundary-blurring, culture-mixing times. How to deal with Chineseness, taking into consideration the domestic politics and global trends, becomes challenging at this juncture. Especially

for those who physically experienced the dramatic migration from China to Taiwan and those who have been indoctrinated with Chinese ideology in the past decades, the issue is never as simple as the nativist suggestion, such as expelling Chineseness to retrieve a purer Taiwanese-ness. In the following analysis of “Nine,” I will elaborate how Lin suggested a more flexible way to reconfigure the identity in relation to Chineseness through interpreting “Nine” as a novel-like work in Bakhtin’s sense.

“Nine Songs” is named for and inspired by a set of classical Chinese poems adapted from ritual verses by Qu Yuan more than 2,000 years ago. As a representative of the literary style of the southern areas, the poems reveal the distinct mystical and lyrical imagery. Distant from central China, the poems also reflect an attitude toward the gods, nature, religious beliefs, and life that is different from Confucianism. Long sections of the poems address different love relationships between gods and female shamans, or between gods and goddesses—romantic and touching, or unequal and disappointing. The second-to-last poem honors the spirit of the warriors who sacrificed themselves on the battlefield, and the last is a short hymn as the end of the ritual. The love verses have commonly been interpreted as Qu’s fervent loyalty to the noble god-like king, and the lament of the poems implies his banishment and unfulfilled political ideals. The conventional interpretation demonstrates how the essentialized Chinese perspective powerfully incorporates the marginal literary work into Confucian tradition in spite of the rich unorthodox literary elements in the work. Through the Western medium, Lin not only liberates the literary canon from the conventional Confucian interpretation, but he expands the classical canon into a contemporary ritual that examines the ethics of politics and consoles the soul suffering in the turbulent history.

Parallel to the poems, Lin starts the repertoire with a female shaman who invokes the gods. Then he introduces the particular gods and goddesses one by one in the following section; in the final part, he presents homage to the warriors and honor their death. However, as in “Tale,” Lin manipulates the theatrical effects and choreographic arrangement to highlight something different from the original: in “Nine,” the brutality and indifference of the lofty gods, the frustration at the endless waiting for the gods’ coming, and the notion of real salvation. Different from the description in the poem, the God of Sun (*Dong Jun*) becomes cruel and uncaring in Lin’s repertoire. He appears on the stage standing on the shoulders of two worshippers. After a sexual duet with a female shaman in front of the group of celebrants, the tyrannical god relentlessly turns away from the shaman and celebrants and leaves suddenly. The Master of Fate (*Si Ming*) embodies the subject of the gods’ manipulation and oppression of the powerless. The gods rudely control the bodies of the worshippers as puppets—they twist their subjects’ bodies, swing their arms, and push and pull their torsos. The human beings are too powerless to disobey and escape such dominant manipulation. The Lord of Cloud (*Yun Zhong Jun*) shows his unrestrained freedom and refined magnificence by dancing aloft on the shoulders of two servants, who struggle to keep balance of the god and support him. Once again, the selfish god does not care about the burden and pain he imposes on human beings but indulges himself by maneuvering his unlimited power. Waiting with no result, even between gods and goddesses, also testifies to the cruelty of the gods. Mrs. Xiang (*Xiang Fu Ren*), who waits for Mr. Xiang at the riverside with loneliness and grief, becomes a symbol of wasted youth (“And Yet”). The distorted facial expressions and furious jumping and crawling declare the melancholy of the Spirit of Mountains (*Shan*



*Gui*) for his isolation and confinement in the dark mountains without the prospect that anyone he expects will come. Subverting the beneficent images of gods, Lin portrays their dark side and conveys the message that the gods are indifferent to human suffering: “The gods don’t come, or come and leave soon” (“And Yet”). As all expectations gradually and continuously become disappointments, Lin interprets the honorable fallen as the real gods who care about people and protect others from warfare and danger with their mortal bodies. He believes that is the reason why Qu wrote the last two poems after a series works about gods (H. Lin, “Elegy”). In the final section, Lin symbolically represents several historical scenes in a ritual of consolation for the dignified warriors; in this scene, honorable lives fighting for peace are sacrificed. Then the female shaman returns to the stage and consoles one of the victims, while the rest of dancers place shimmering candles on the stage. The flames appear like the Milky Way of lights in a ritual to pray for the peace of the fallen. As in “Tale,” the liberal potential of translation is also demonstrated in Lin’s reinterpretation of “Nine,” which leaves the Confucian interpretation and explores the topic of frustration hidden in the beautiful language of the poems.

However, unlike “Tale,” Lin’s version of “Nine” challenges the sacredness of Chineseness in a novelistic manner in terms of its open-ended choreography, eclectic movement, and music. Rather than simply representing a modernized Chineseness with a new image as in “Tale,” “Nine” utilizes the Chinese canon as the springboard to express something beyond Chineseness. The Chinese canon is supposed to preserve the essence of Chinese culture, but here it is polluted by foreign elements and concepts. It is used to criticize the essentialized Chineseness embedded in the conventional interpretation of the

poems. In other words, with the seemingly Chinese appearance, the essence of Chineseness in the poems has been emptied and replaced by something different.

The most obvious novel-like performative strategy in the repertoire is the ending without closure. Echoing the poems, Lin transforms the attention from the gods to the fallen heroes, and from fascination with the supernatural to the human world in the final section. However, the difference is that Lin purposefully associates the repertoire with contemporary society. He mentioned that the Tiananmen massacre was the turning point that impelled him to adapt the poems and depict the brutality and violence of gods. “I found the key after the Tiananmen massacre...I found that the gods never come. There are so many tragedies, so much blood-shedding” (qtd. in Dekle 96). In that case, the heartless gods can be analogous to all ferocious authorities, including emperors and dictators, and the fallen heroes are those noble spirits in history who resist political suppression. By the end, all the deities are gone and historical martyrs appear on the stage instead. They reenact the massacres in recent history, including the 2-28 Incident and Tiananmen. Some images of the specific tragedy are easily recognized (Segal, “Nine Songs” 3; Kisselgoff, “Birth” C3): The figures marching with baskets on their heads refer to the execution of the Taiwanese under Japanese rule. The fallen bicycle and the bright headlights of an unseen tank refer to the massacre in Tiananmen Square. The names of martyrs are recited in Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese, Hakka dialect, and indigenous languages against the sounds of machine guns in the background, which reveals the multi-layered historical turbulence entangled with different ethnicities in Taiwan history. Lin even expands to the recent crisis between China and Taiwan in the interview, saying that “A strong fear of Chinese invasion is very pervasive in Taiwan at this

moment...Every day, there's a dramatic story in the newspaper about [nearby Chinese missile] tests. It's had a tremendous impact. A lot of people have been emigrating" (qtd. in Segal, "Revealing" 55). The statement connects "Nine Songs" not only with the recent history but the ongoing conflict, in which the future is still open to negotiation. The open-ended future corresponds to the set design with an actual lotus pond at the front of the stage, which reminds us about the motif of the cycle of life—death and rebirth. Lin explained, "The lotus is a symbol of eternity, of the renewal of life...a symbol of reincarnation: It buds in spring, blossoms in summer, withers in autumn, and dies in winter, becoming part of the mud. Then it comes back to life" (qtd. in Dekle 96). The hope of rebirth implies a new start after the performance and suggests an open-ended future in which the tragedy may not be repeated.

Lin's intention of associating ancient Chinese culture with the current society and other worlds is not only shown in the final piece of the repertoire. In the seemingly integrated representation correspondent to the sequence of Qu's poems, a time traveler dressed in contemporary costume crosses the stage and occasionally breaks down the temporal continuity and spatial wholeness of the repertoire. Appearing as either a bicyclist, a traveler with suitcase in hand, or a roller-skater carrying a banner, the contemporary images observe all events on the stage indifferently, without intervention or any expression. Huang Yin-ying interprets the figure as the choreographer himself and believes the traveler in the dance "echoes the idea of inserting the painter's voice in a traditional Chinese painting" (194), which explains the innovative arrangement parallel to the concept of Chinese painting—another traditional Chinese art. However, considering the political implications discussed above, I believe the contemporary figure is more like

Bertolt Brecht's "defamiliarization effect," which prevents the audience from becoming immersed in the theater and identifying with the characters but instead provokes critical thinking and reflection. The juxtaposition between the present and the past interrupts the integrity of the repertoire and urges the audience to associate it with the current society, instead of being intoxicated simply with the beauty of the ancient canon.

Representing the Chinese canon with the open ending and associating it with the current world reflects Lin's flexible attitude towards Chineseness. Similar to Tu's project of "cultural China," as applied in the analysis of "Tale," Lin's "Nine" again, from a marginalized position and through a modernized approach, challenges a fixed content defined by the authoritative and uncontested standard within specific spatial and cultural boundaries. However, after a series of political movements and cultural transitions, Lin no longer nostalgically recalls nor firmly embraces any center of Chineseness in which the pure and idealized Chinese archetype is preserved. Instead, Lin examines, inquires, and reevaluates Chinese traditional values from a modern perspective and incorporates them into a local political and historical context. Although Qu and Qu's poems have been consecrated by the Confucian interpretation as paragons of "obsession with China"—to be unconditionally loyal and obedient to the king in support of the stable royalty—Lin refutes such a used-to-be-glorified spirit from a modern Western notion of democracy, which highlights the responsibility of the government and civil rights. The dignified spirit of the scholar-bureaucrat in the poems is replaced by farsighted self-reflection on current politics with no desire to return to tradition. In spite of being inspired by the Tiananmen massacre, Lin's association with recent Taiwan history and the current conflicts with China in the final section of "Nine" assert the process of how the Chinese canon

entangles with Taiwan experiences and develops a unique interpretation from a Taiwanese perspective. In that way, if we interpret “Nine” as a cultural production of Chineseness due to its adaptation of the Chinese literary canon, this Chineseness is no longer inviolable and impenetrable to the infusion of other concepts—either a Western or a Taiwanese view. The core of Chineseness is open to be negotiated, reevaluated, and changed in opposition to the monolithic discourse of Chineseness. The sacredness of the literary canon or the traditionally ingrained relationship between the monarch and the subject in Chinese feudal society are no longer the essence of the Chineseness to which Lin would like to attach. Despite a seemingly Chinese appearance, the essence of the repertoire has been displaced by unconventional Chinese spirit.

Claiming that “Nine” has a Chinese appearance is also problematic because Lin also adopts eclectic music, props, and choreography. This technique shows another novel-like strategy to reinterpret the ancient Chinese culture. Lin incorporates music from Taiwanese aboriginal songs, Tibetan monks’ chants, Indian classical music, and Japanese music; he also includes dance styles from Peking Opera movements and Southeast Asian and modern dance.<sup>17</sup> The rich elements can be explained in multiple ways. As Lin mentioned, “My travels to Bali and India gave me the feeling of how I would present this piece” (qtd. in Dekle 96). The hybridity in “Nine” reveals the fluidity of the travel, cultural exchange, and dissemination of information in the age of globalization. Thanks to the advancements in media and transportation technologies, diverse information and multiple cultures are easily accessible to satisfy an artist’s creative imagination beyond the conventional assumption of cultural representation limited by national borders. Lewis

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<sup>17</sup> See detailed analysis in Jiang Xun’s *Wu dong Jiu ge*.

Segal, a critic of the *Los Angeles Times*, complained that Lin's "generalized, impressionistic adaptations" of wide dance forms "never get inside what he duplicates" (Segal, "Weekend Review" 3). The superficial imitation and appropriation may be regarded as a postmodernist manner of refusing the burden or responsibility of representing authenticity. In addition, Lin copies the images of foreign elements rather than faithful Chinese images, which further leaves the authorial aura of Qu's poems impossible to be achieved. Considering Lin's incorporation of aboriginal music and dance, we may also interpret the hybridity as the product of postcolonialism. The transition from a unitary and coherent cultural identity to a multiple and fluid one uncovers the multi-layered cultural influences that have been ignored by the metanarrative of the historical discourse. The inspiration from his travel experiences out of China and the wide appropriation of foreign cultural elements demonstrate that an orthodox way to interpret and represent the Chinese culture no longer exists, nor does a predetermined authenticity of Chineseness.

The novelistic strategy helps Lin negotiate with both the hegemony of Chineseness occupied by China and the radical nativist discourse that constantly devalues and deconstructs the significance of Chineseness in Taiwan. Through undermining the essential continuity with the center of Chineseness, Lin neither guards the purity of Chineseness nor gives up his right to participate in the project of destabilizing it. In that case, Lin's manipulation of Chineseness as a springboard of artistic creation should not be mistaken as his allegiance and inclination to China or as a betrayal of the hard-won emergence of local cultures. Instead, against China's claim to be the legitimate interpreter of Chinese culture, "Nine" demonstrates the opportunity for Taiwanese people to express

their interpretation of Chineseness as not necessarily consistent with that of China. Chineseness is not a stagnant concept, but an open category that always changes with the political and historical context. In Taiwan, where Chineseness has been systematically introduced, ingrained, and empowered by political imposition in the past decades, its cultural representations reflect not only a process of Sinicization for local elements, but also a process of localization for the original Chinese elements. In other words, Chineseness in Taiwan has developed its own uniqueness under the influence of various local elements—languages, customs, ethnicity, etc. In that way, Chinese culture becomes a cultural seed that freely develops in the soil of Taiwan rather than a cultural root that constantly summons a return. While a cultural root implies that the cultural representations of Chinese tradition outside of China are the branches and extensions of the core of essential Chineseness, a cultural seed grows its own root and fruits nourished by the specific local environment. While a cultural root glorifies the essence valorized by the center, a cultural seed enjoys a broad range of different cultural elements that freely and equally interact with each other. While a cultural root indicates a certain cultural standard, mainstream, and internal hierarchy among diverse cultures, a cultural seed represents only one cultural development among diverse trajectories.

On the other hand, confronting the radical nativists' assertions, which condemn Chinese culture as the colonizer's legacy that stifles local pride in an inferiority complex, "Nine" is inclined to preserve the colonial legacy as traces of Taiwanese multi-layered histories by creating the space of mixing. Depriving the hegemonic influence of Chineseness and mingling it with other cultural elements, Lin tends to recognize Chinese culture as one of the cultural resources of Taiwan. He not only records the historically,

culturally, and ethnically undeniable relationship with China but creates a cultural environment tolerant of those mainlanders or Chinese cultural enthusiasts whose personal adherence to Chinese culture has gradually been isolated from Taiwanese society, like foreigners. In other words, Lin's destabilizing Chineseness exists not to empower nativism but to create a possibility for the peaceful coexistence of local cultures and un-hegemonic Chineseness. The de-centered Chineseness demonstrates the outcome of interaction with Taiwanese society rather than exclusion from it.

In contrast to his previous discourse shown in "Legacy," which promoted Taiwanese-ness within Chineseness, Lin proposes Chineseness within Taiwanese-ness and Otherness in "Nine," which hybridizes the Chinese canon with native and foreign elements. The point is not to dispute the existence of Chineseness in Taiwan, but to redefine and renegotiate the cultural and political significance of Chineseness in relation to Taiwanese-ness. Lin's appropriation of other Asian cultures and the association with Taiwan history in "Nine" destabilize the definition of Chineseness, alter its established cultural dominance, and interpret the Chineseness from the perspective of Taiwanese experiences. In short, the non-essentialized Chineseness in Taiwan not only disengages Chineseness from the accusation of its political complicity and its discourse of pro-unification; but the idea of the cultural seed instead of the cultural root in interpreting the development of Chineseness in Taiwan is more suitable to demonstrate its subversive potential against the hegemony of China.<sup>18</sup> Further, preserving Chineseness in the space

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<sup>18</sup> The challenge to essentialized Chineseness in this chapter also refers to the essays or books from Chun, Shih, and Bové.



of mixing instead of expelling and segregating it may be more helpful for the harmonious coexistence of different ethnicities in Taiwan.

***b. “Portrait of the Families”—Heteroglossic Taiwaneseess***

Thanks to political liberation and multicultural interaction on a global scale in the 1990s, Taiwan has entered a postcolonial age in which cultural heteroglossia and ideological pluralism have replaced a monolithic and cohesive interpretation of history. “Portrait of the Families” (1997), as Lin’s last work concerning Taiwan history, uncovers the traumatic memory of the 2-28 Incident and the White Terror, which were prohibited from discussion and considered politically taboo under the KMT rule until 1987. As Lin wrote, this work was created to “comfort human trauma in those suppressed memories of the colonial years” (“Unanswered”). “Portrait” can be reasonably interpreted as the continuation of “Legacy” because it opens with an auspicious lion dance, which is exactly the final scene of “Legacy.” However, as opposed to the cohesion and unification in “Legacy,” “Portrait” aims to reveal the dissonance and diversity in the socio-historical tensions of Taiwan. Lin explained, “[It is] not a historical dance drama, but the pursuit and sensation of my personal life” (“Unanswered”). “Portrait” attempts to dig out and restore various perspectives of individuals instead of a single dominant version of history.

The work is interwoven with three elements—photos, oral narratives, and dance—which form the heteroglossic discourse on Taiwan history and identity. Through the slide projection of unearthed photos and the voices from taped interviews and oral history, Lin tries to piece together a renewed Taiwan history that is different from any official version. Various family portraits, military pictures, victims of massacre, and group photos from different historical eras with mixed ethnic groups deliver multi-layered

trajectories of Taiwan history. Subjects such as Japanese soldiers mingling with aborigines, Taiwanese intellectuals dressed in Japanese kimonos or Western suits, and elder family members wearing Qing-styled clothing carry strong images for the complex historical experiences and identity puzzle of Taiwan. If clothes imply a certain inclination of identity in those photos, we can distinguish at least three different identities in Taiwan—Japanese, Chinese, and Taiwanese. All of these identities may confuse, conflict, or overlap with one another rather than cohering into the unitary Chinese, as shown in “Legacy.” Such a message is more clearly depicted through various narratives of personal memory and evolving identity. Taped interviews record the oppressive assimilation during the Japanese regime, the hardship of fleeing from the Chinese civil war to take refuge in Taiwan, the poor living conditions during WWII, and family grief from tragic victimization in the 2-28 Massacre.<sup>19</sup> The storytelling from those individuals in different dialects, including diverse aboriginal languages, along with 200 or so photos projected onstage, provide a stage to realize the difficulties and complexity in forging a unified and pure identity for Taiwanese people nowadays. The voice texts extracted below show the entanglement of Taiwanese identity among the Chinese, Japanese, and Taiwanese:

During Japanese colonial period, our parents dared not say we were from China... So after the restoration, we started to know we are Chinese, from mainland China. But of course, the first time I made sense about it was when going tomb sweeping. I saw Grandfather’s tombstone indicating [he was from] Tongshan.

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<sup>19</sup> The online official introduction of “Portrait” describes: “What was it like for the mother whose son was drafted by the Japanese army during World War II? What happened to the young boy who saw his father executed during the political purges of 1947? How does the old veteran feel when he visits his relatives in Mainland China after more than four decades? What inspires a young aborigine to recover his native language so that he can communicate with his mother for the first time in years? How do today’s twenty-somethings, with their fast motorcycles and casual airs, relate to their parents?” (qtd. in “Current Repertoire: Portrait of the Families” in the official website of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, English version).

I had been a Japanese until twelve years old. There is nothing wrong to say it... But when we people said it, we were condemned: “You are Japanese slave. [You should] return to the embrace of the homeland.” But who made us Japanese?

As for patriotism, which country should I love? The Imperial China or the great Japanese Empire?

Those voices imply the indelible connection with China and Japan, the aspirations for harmonious coexistence among different ethnical groups, and the ambiguous boundaries between inclusion and exclusion in identity politics. They demonstrate the uncertainty, confusion, and questions that define Taiwanese identity and Taiwanese history in relation to its previous colonial others, politically or culturally. Although the Taiwanese consciousness desires a de-colonized identity, the new identity is never the same as the pre-colonial one; it has always been haunted by previous colonial influences that inevitably leave the new identity ambiguous and hybrid. Such hybridity in Lingchei Chen’s analysis demonstrates “an ambivalent and unstable power relation with its previous colonial other” because both “an external imposition of the colonizing power” and “an internal imitation of the colonized” help strengthen the dominance of the colonizing culture (20-21). The simultaneous resistance and acceptance complicate the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, as shown in the voice texts above. However, what Taiwanese identity confronts is not only the postcolonial hybridization inherited from the previous colonial states, but the ongoing project that incorporates the colonial others into Taiwanese consciousness while the KMT government and the mainlanders never draw back and gradually identify with the Taiwanese. In other words, the previous colonizers become part of national components; the others become part of the self, not only metaphorically, due to the lasting colonial influence, but literally, due to

the colonizer's eternal settlement. The hybridity and ambivalence in such a particular historical context become not only the consequential products of the struggle of the colonized out of the colonial past. They also become the strategies necessary for encompassing all the different historical trajectories and transformative constellations of identity in order to create a more peaceful and inclusive environment for diverse people.

Displaying multilayered narratives about history and memory, Lin does not intend to make any judgments or conclusions for such an evolving issue of Taiwanese identity. However, he does imply the commonality among diverse ethnicities: They have either settled in Taiwan for a long time or carry the strong emotions of belonging to this island. Unlike "Legacy," which traces a single line of Taiwan history from a Han-centric perspective, "Portrait" emphasizes diverse connections based on the sincere emotions attached to the past and future of Taiwan, which from Ernest Renan's perspective are more powerful than the ethnic, linguistic, or religious community. "The possession in common of a rich legacy of memories" and "present-day consent, the desire to live together, and the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage" become the foundation for ethnicities with different historical and political stances to negotiate a new narrative of Taiwanese identity (Renan 19). This foundation gives consideration to various migratory experiences without dismissing any particular group. In other words, such commonality is based on dynamic interaction with the others rather than any authoritative discourse. Lin explained, "It is the composite of these diversifying ethnicities that completes the term of 'the Taiwanese' on this island" ("Unanswered"). From Bakhtin's perspective, the heteroglossia in "Portrait" is a kind of "internally persuasive discourse," which is always "half-ours and half-someone else's" in a constant state of negotiation, assimilation, and

interaction (“Discourse” 345). Denying any privilege and authority, internally persuasive discourse implies a process of ideological becoming, which allows diverse ideological values to compete with and assimilate each other simultaneously. However, even though different words are more frequently assimilated through the close contact and influence, such competition and assimilation will never be wholly fulfilled. Rather, it will always remain heteroglossic to a certain extent. As a result, an original independent ideology merges itself into others and cannot distinguish between one’s own and another’s discourses that have already become mixed and inseparable. For Taiwan, although identity and interpretation of history are still open-ended categories and people are engaged in an ongoing project of the formation of a new identity, “Portrait” reminds us that the new identity is formed by internally persuasive discourse, which always preserves flexibility for new answers and new insights for its meaning.

Compared to the heroic narrative and movement in “Legacy,” the choreography in “Portrait” highlights self-critique, another novel-like characteristic. The reflection and criticism are not limited to the traumatic history itself but to the attitude that tends to overcome it: What is an honest introspection regarding the disappointments of history, and what is the righteous attitude we should have towards facing the inconvenient past? In this case, national history is not for glorification, but for self-criticism. Against a huge white wall for projecting historical photos, dancers look tiny and powerless in terms of their incapability to determine or change anything in history. Lin conveys the ideas of submission, suffering, confinement, fear, and anxiety through repeating a series of mechanical actions and formulaic movements. The dancers turn around the elbows with straight-faced expressions, count off like robots, and wave their arms at high speed. They

also perform ritual-like movements such as face cleaning, hair washing, tooth brushing, and swimming, which have been interpreted as rituals of purification by most analysts such as Lin Ya-tin and Huang Ching-yi. However, rituals shown in mechanical ways with anxious expressions imply that such purification might only be a politically commanded process rather than a peaceful and sincere one. Politically manipulated purification will only be another kind of violence that controls what should be remembered and what should be forgotten. The forced forgetting won't provide any consolation for the past bloody conflict and injured souls.

A real ritual of purification in the repertoire seems to begin after two-thirds of the repertoire from the sections "Holy Carriage," "A Trance Dance," and "Burning the Sacrificial Boat," to "Washing Faces II" and "Floating Lanterns for the Dead." "Holy Carriage" and "A Trance Dance" show the religious procession of Ma-tsu touring in Taiwan, which is probably the most important religious ritual in contemporary Taiwanese society to dispel disaster and pray for peace. While the wizard acts rigorously, as if he fights against all of the misfortune in Taiwan history, the followers walk by him peacefully and quietly. The boat and floating lanterns not only mourn for the dead but also bring the hope of avoiding adversities in the future. Through the rituals of folk customs—the spiritual power from below rather than the political power from above—Lin demonstrates the folk power to solve conflict and improve communication among ethnicities, which will bring real consolation for the past and peace for the future. In the last round of face washing, the dancers act slowly, smoothly, and gently, which suggests a turning point to console the agony of the victims, audience, and Taiwanese people in general. Dancers even speak, albeit in silence, without disturbing anyone. A more tolerant

space for dissident opinions and personal memories that vary from the meta-narrative of national history seems to be opened by the folk power, which triggers continuous dialogue between the present and the past. By contrast, the enactment of institutionalized power from above only results in mechanical and superficial reflection.

The novel-like elements in “Portrait”—heteroglossia, as shown in the diverse dialects and personal memories through photos and oral narratives; a self-critical attitude to the institutionalized power through choreography; and reliance on folk power in the process of purification—demonstrate a new way to deal with Taiwan history and Chinese influence on Taiwanese culture. The former political taboo is brought to light in the process of political liberalization and cultural hybridization that overturns authority to power that comes from individuals and below. The novelistic potential of mobility, variety, and anti-dogmatism exposes that the illusive coherence is no longer a reality but an elusive excuse for internal tensions and differences in terms of languages, ethnic origins, and living experiences. Compared with “Legacy,” in which Taiwanese consciousness was still included under the rubric of Chineseness, “Portrait” is constructed of multiple voices from diverse perspectives; it pieces the fragmented reality together to form a more comprehensive Taiwan society. The hybridity in such a society accommodates Chineseness as a part of historical and cultural sediment from the KMT’s colonization but is not limited by it.

For example, echoing “Legacy,” the reappearance of Ma-tsu in the ritual of purification in the last section of “Portrait” discloses a process of localization in religious beliefs that originated in China. In contemporary Taiwan, Ma-tsu is not merely a respectable goddess who blesses the sea, as shown in “Legacy,” but she cares about

people's health, careers, and relationships. Besides nearly 1,000 Taiwanese temples dedicated to Ma-tsu, the biggest religious ceremony is held every year for her to tour around each Ma-tsu temple in Taiwan, as shown in the ritual of purification in "Portrait."<sup>20</sup> In "Portrait," Ma-tsu is not so much a symbol of the succession of Chinese culture; she represents the uniqueness of Taiwanese society that enriches the religion of Chinese origin with local color and spirit. Different roles of Ma-tsu in "Legacy" and "Portrait" reveal that the religious practices and development are localized in Taiwan and integrated with Taiwan's indigenous practices. Other elements of Chineseness, in a similar process, will develop a distinct Chineseness rooted in the particular soil of Taiwan and then become a part of Taiwanese culture.

In addition, the key point of the transformation from "the Taiwaneseeness in Chineseness" to "Chineseness in Taiwaneseeness" is the shift of subjectivity from the Chinese-oriented government to the Taiwanese-oriented people. In "Portrait," Lin tends to search for Taiwanese subjectivity more eagerly than to fix the problem of identity. He argued the idea that "Taiwan has been a woman": "From Dutch colonization to Ming-Zheng occupation, from Qing dynasty, Japanese colonial regime, to KMT's retreat to Taiwan, Taiwanese people have had no right to speak. [It is] like a weak woman in an old time who was forced to get married to someone she did not love" ("Unanswered"). Comparing Taiwan to a woman, Lin expressed the misery and anger of the Taiwanese in the brutal and uneven circumstances through three female solo sections. The first is a bride dressed in a traditional red wedding gown; she has bound feet, a veiled face, and a

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<sup>20</sup> During the tour, Ma-tsu inspects the areas under her control, spreads her blessings, and repels misfortune for her worshipers. Pilgrims will organize processions to escort Ma-tsu, and local people will support their needs for food and accommodation during the tour. In doing so, Taiwanese people show their passion, hospitality, and spirit of cooperation. See Lin Mei-rong.



gagged mouth. The image of persecution is strengthened when her hands are tied and manipulated by a red rope sent out from one side of the stage. Even though she is desperate to escape from the invisible force of control, she has no voice or power to combat with such a strong master. The second female dancer, hunted down by a group of men, is forced to dress in a traditional female gown, thrown into a chair, and given a bouquet of peony flowers. She starts from emotionless numbness and begins to slowly tear off the peony blossom's petals one by one. As the rhythm of the music picks up, she speeds up her action of plucking in frenzy and finally collapses feebly in the chair. The third solo dancer impresses the audience by expressing her rich emotion, mainly through the movements of her fingers and an arm. Spotlighting her raised, powerfully shaking, quivering, and twisting fingers and arm, the choreography grabs the audiences' attention in sharing the anger, anxiety, and sorrow. Those gestures convey an accusation of all the injustice, inequality, and suppression in the island's history.

The transformation of female images in these three pieces implies the gradual emergence of Taiwanese subjectivity that further differentiates the unique Taiwaneseess from that in Chineseness. The first two episodes parallel the dichotomous model, in which the colonized is analogous to a weak, irrational, and voiceless female, and the colonizer is a dominant, masculine male. Without indicating any specific historical event, Lin's choreography represents the long-term torment and anguish of Taiwanese people, who were subject to suppression and violence without any chance of escape.<sup>21</sup> Like

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<sup>21</sup> Lin Ya-tin interpreted the first solo as referring to "Taiwan's forced acceptance of Japan as its new colonizer at the end of the 19th century" ("Corporealizing" 95). She quoted Gayatri Spivak's words: "The subaltern cannot speak!" as the conclusion to this section. She continued to interpret the second solo as "the tale of the neglected wife, who only holds the official title but is not entitled to any favors," which demonstrates "the status of Taiwan as the 'Republic of China' under the rule of the Nationalist" (95).

beautiful dancers tyrannized by rude treatment, with flowers scattered all over the stage, people on the beautiful island also carry sad stories. Lin explained, “Facing the sorrow sincerely is the only way for us to expect the future healthily” (“Unanswered”). Dancing out the trauma, for Lin, is the first step to remedy the sadness and claim the reconstruction of subjectivity. In the third piece, the woman is no longer a voiceless victim coerced by an invisible power, but an independent individual who condemns any possible intervention and insists on deciding her own future. How to define Taiwanese identity is determined by Taiwanese people, but no longer by a dominant power from above. The resolution of self-determination and the attitude of anti-totalitarianism through an energetic, powerful, and explosive dance by a female declare the strong consciousness of Taiwanese subjectivity. Such sentiment initiates the consciousness of independent Taiwanese and re-positions Chineseness and other foreign influences in the spectrum of Taiwanese culture.

In spite of its emphasis on Taiwanese subjectivity, the open-ended narrative and heteroglossic performative elements retain diverse political inclinations and cultural influences to keep dialogues about how to define Taiwanese or how to prevent another Taiwan-centric nativist hegemony. In Lin’s attitude in “Portrait,” even though he uncovers the brutal history from the perspective of Taiwanese native people, who may hold a negative attitude toward the KMT government, he neither means to show contempt for the contemporary government nor attempts to worsen the conflict between mainlanders and native Taiwanese. Instead, through space for multiple voices and the ritual-like choreography, Lin intends to recover history not only in a renewed vision, but also with a renewed attitude; that is, to respect history and learn from it in order to build a

more peaceful relationship and mutual understanding in the future. In short, “Portrait” simultaneously denounces and forgives the political violence in history in order to seek a better relationship in the future, which creates a more tolerant, rather than exclusive, Taiwanese consciousness.

*c. The Third Space*

From “Tale” to “Nine,” and from “Legacy” to “Portrait,” Lin shifts the strategy of narrative and performance from the construction of a heroic epic to the exploration of an evolving novelistic world. This shift demonstrates the nuances in Cloud Gate’s evolving process. Even though Chinese and Taiwanese elements both play important roles in Lin’s creations in the 1970s and 1990s, the epic- or novel-like arrangement implies different social ideologies and artistic attitudes toward position, significance, and implication in the various historical backgrounds of Chinese and Taiwanese culture, respectively. In that way, how Cloud Gate organizes the different cultural materials may be more important than what cultural influence it includes and prefers in its repertoires. Like Stuart Hall’s idea about cultural identity, which “is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us on which history has made no fundamental mark” (395), Cloud Gate’s transition reveals that Taiwanese cultural identity has changed from conservative attachment to traditions to active association with cultural hybridity. Paralleling the transformation of the socio-political environment from nationalism to post-colonialism, Taiwanese cultural identity is still flexible enough to adjust itself to changes in the future.

The correspondence of socio-political development does not mean that Cloud Gate only passively reflects social tendencies and records them in an artistic way. Through modern dance—a medium for a creative self-expression—Lin also actively presents his

suggestion for Taiwanese people to move beyond any either-or category set up by the KMT and nativist political interest in the 1970s, and further, beyond the culture and ethnic binarism between the mainlanders and native Taiwanese in the 1990s. In the 1970s, Cloud Gate aimed to challenge the KMT political ideology but agreed with its Chinese cultural identity. The contradictory attitude revealed Cloud Gate's ambivalence to the official position. Although "Tale" modernized a Chinese legend through Western modern dance rather than the KMT's political agenda of imitation, its inclination toward Chinese culture in the face of Western imperialism still met the official requirements. Although the adoption of native elements and stories on the island connected "Legacy" with the revolutionary assertions of the *hsiang-tu* movement, Taiwan's historical and consanguineous relationship with China in "Legacy" also conveyed the spirit of patriotism. In that case, Cloud Gate was neither a KMT follower nor a counter-hegemonic native reactionary. Instead, it tried to find the harmony between the two extreme stances: to preserve essentialized Chinese values in the new land where a broader Chineseness—modernized by Western ideas or inherited from pioneering Chinese migrations—could be found. Rather than fully aligning with the *hsiang-tu* movement or the official ideology, the coherence Cloud Gate emphasized through epic-like repertoires in the 1970s was the harmonious coexistence of Han-centric Taiwanese within Chineseness, which aimed to anchor Chinese identity against Western cultural invasion.

In the 1990s, Cloud Gate demonstrated a more flexible cultural identity in opposition to totalitarian China and ethical fundamentalism in Taiwan. Recognizing the multicultural intersection on a global scale in the 1990s, Lin dissociated with any stable

and fixed point of view—either Chinese-centered or de-Sinicized Taiwanese-centered ideology. He opened up both the Chinese canon and Taiwan political traumas to include diverse foreign elements, dissident voices, and dynamic forces that competed and intermingled with each other. Through novel-like repertoires, “Nine” is no longer a pure representation of the Chinese essence, and “Portrait” is not simply a pro-Taiwanese creation. Both of the pieces fuse Chinese, Taiwanese, aboriginal, and other foreign cultural elements, perspectives, and ideology. Lin deconstructs such a political dichotomy and incorporates diverse cultural influences to forge an inclusive Taiwanese identity. As Shih Shu-mei suggested, in order to solve the puzzle of Taiwan and to “partake of an ethnic Sino-Chinese heritage without having to be part of China”, a new Taiwanese culture “out of the destruction of cultural authenticities” might be a feasible way to create a unique entity (“Globalization” 149). In “Nine” and “Portrait,” Lin deconstructs the existing standard to define authentic Chineseness and exclusive Taiwaneseeness. He broadens the notion of Taiwaneseeness to include pre-colonized experiences, new immigrants, and the other influences from globalization.

The third space in epic-like or novel-like repertoires reveals the ongoing negotiation of Taiwanese cultural identity. Although the transition from an epic-oriented to novel-oriented style parallels the gradually opening socio-political situation, the conflicting ideologies are unwilling to compromise with each other. This inflexibility creates not only political but cultural polarization. Lin believes such binary opposition will limit the abundance of Taiwanese culture and obstruct harmony among Taiwanese people. Through artistic creations, Lin continuously strives for a peaceful balance and coexistence of the two extreme positions. The third space in the repertoires exemplifies

the possibility of incorporating both views and finding a moderate stance to solve the political confrontation in Taiwanese society.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Transcending the Genre: Spirit-Oriented Choreography in “Songs of the Wanderers” and “Moon Water”**

Besides addressing tensions at home, Cloud Gate also faced the challenge of global competition in the 1990s when the transnational incorporation and global market became an inevitable mode of production and circulation for performance arts. In several interviews, Lin repeatedly complained that the Taiwanese government’s lack of policy to organize cultural resources left a terrible environment for the development and circulation of its culture and forced him to sell more performances abroad instead of performing for local people, as he wished. Besides that, without the help and advantages of the diplomatic relationship, it was always more difficult for Taiwanese performance groups to tour around the world. Transnational financial support and incorporation among international organizations became strategies to solve the obstacles created by Taiwan’s ambiguous status. From the perspective of management and operation, participating in the transnational network was also a necessary step for Cloud Gate. Recently, many more international dance festivals have become interested in Asian themes to celebrate energetic multiculturalism in a global age. The tendency was clearly exposed by the theme of “Desiring Asia” in the Avignon Festival in France in 1998. As a group famous for its combination of Chinese images with Westernized choreography, Cloud Gate managed to attract Western hosts and quickly gained success on the international stage.

However, it may be inappropriate to say that Cloud Gate single-mindedly pleases Western audiences by showing off Asian elements without any concern for possible criticism of exoticism or Orientalism. Firstly, for Lin, earning international recognition is

not a primary goal but a strategy to get more financial aid from the government, private funding, and international organizations in order to tour in Taiwan and provide free outdoor performances as frequently as possible. In this case, we must further investigate how Cloud Gate satisfies audiences both at home and abroad, and how Lin intends to tour in Taiwan as often as possible, on one hand, and strives for more cultural capital to achieve this goal through international fame, on the other hand. In other words, Lin tends to attract both local and Western audiences. Lin has to intrigue Western audiences by emphasizing Cloud Gate's Asian characteristics, and to stand the test of local audiences and critics without taking the blame for exoticism. Secondly, for a country with a problematic nationhood like Taiwan, performance becomes an active vehicle to disseminate cultural images beyond the national borders; the troupe acts as a cultural ambassador to articulate images of the nation. Under President Lee Teng-hui's diplomatic politics, termed "flexible diplomacy"—through the use of unorthodox tactics to quest for legitimacy as a nation-state—the KMT government regarded Cloud Gate as one of the culturally diplomatic representatives during the 1990s.<sup>22</sup> Instead of refusing such a political mission, Lin had already taken on the social responsibility long ago when he determined to establish Cloud Gate.<sup>23</sup> Then the questions became: What kind of politics of translation conveys a positive and correct image that helps Taiwanese people earn international recognition? How to insist on artistic autonomy while undertaking a

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<sup>22</sup> For instance, on Aug 12, 1991 in *The New York Times*, the KMT advertised the diversity of Taiwan culture, which deserved to be explored through "mutual cultural exchange." It emphasized Cloud Gate's "international fame for its interpretation of Chinese heritage through modern dance" as an example of "a burst of interest in Chinese culture" with "the creation of new form" in Taiwan ("Cultural Evolution").

<sup>23</sup> Even in the recent report, when Lin mentioned how he felt about winning the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Movimentos Dance Prize in Germany in 2009, he said, "I am happy because it is good for the future of the dance company, and Taiwan is somewhat shown (in the international venue)" (interview by Ma).



diplomatic mission? How to earn the good will of those Western countries without flattering Western Orientalism?

In that case, Taiwan has a very different relationship with the West from China and other formerly Western colonized countries. In her critique on Chinese cultural essentialism, Rey Chow analyzed that sinochauvinism may have come from “the logic of the wound,” which can be traced back to the “past victimization under Western imperialism” in recent world history and the “need for national ‘self-strengthening’” (*Primitive* 4). The historical humiliation urged Chinese intellectuals’ resistance to the Western-centric mode of studies as “a justified reaction to aggression,” and emphasis on the uniqueness of the Chinese dimension as a “means of establishing cultural integrity in defense” (4). Even though Taiwanese people have also been threatened by the Western cultural and political hegemony, Americanism and the ideology of anti-communism during the Cold War kept them in a closer alliance with Western trends. Furthermore, their orphan consciousness from the Japanese colonial period to the current diplomatic predicament pushes them to maintain a good relationship with the Western countries that may help defy China and publicize Taiwan’s plight on an international stage.

The situation also differentiates Taiwan from other formerly colonized countries, such as India and Algeria, which are eager to challenge the cultural legacy of previous colonization and the current Western imperialism. With less intent of resistance, globalization is a necessary strategy for such a marginalized and peripheral country as Taiwan. As Shih Shu-mei suggested, it provides the chance for Taiwan “to keep ahead of the development game” through global capitalism, and “to displace Sinocentric influence and invent new forms of transculture” through globalized culture (“Globalization” 146).

However, it does not mean that Taiwan is willing to be subjugated to Western power.<sup>24</sup> In fact, although Taiwan takes advantage of globalization to transcend the domestic and diplomatic dilemma, it also fights with the power of homogenization that suppresses its own complexity and diversity and leaves the island state unrecognizable, let alone establishing an internationally recognized image to demonstrate Taiwan as a nation-state separate from China. In other words, when enjoying the liberating potential of globalization, Taiwanese people paradoxically desire a certain kind of boundary to contour Taiwan as a visible nation-state. The simultaneous celebration and resistance of Taiwan in relation to globalization might be the background from which to understand Cloud Gate's balance between grasping the attention of Western audiences and resisting the dominance of the Western gaze.

In the following sections, I will explain Cloud Gate's politics of representation on an international stage through "Songs of the Wanderers" (1994) and "Moon Water" (1998). By 2007, "Songs of the Wanderers" had 100 overseas showings, and "Moon Water" had 76; these two Cloud Gate repertoires are the most favored by international venues and festivals. Based on Rey Chow's concept of "primitive passions," with which she analyzes the cultural politics of Chinese cinema in the transnational market, I would like to point out Cloud Gate's strategy through highlighting the different tendencies between Cloud Gate and Chinese cinema in the face of the Western gaze. Even though the two different media within different contexts should not be put on a par, Chow's idea

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<sup>24</sup> Shih Shu-mei suggested that the dissident voices of Taiwan are easily ignored due to its "colonization by Japan and another ethnic Chinese regime" and "connections to the American Right" ("Globalization" 144). Both of these factors exclude Taiwan from the fashion of postcolonial theory and the Leftist scholars' interest in the global academic field.

of primitivism can be a departure point, rather than a conclusion, from which to think about Cloud Gate's politics of representation.

*a. Primitive Passions*

Rey Chow's concept of "primitive passions" begins from a thought-provoking notion of primitivism, which is related to but different from the idea of authenticity. Primitivism implies the process that authenticity is always mediated through a certain strategy of representation. Authenticity refers to the objective truthfulness of the origin and tradition, but primitivism stands for something "phantasmagoric" and "exotic," an "original something that has been lost," or "a fabrication of a *pre* that occurs in the time of the *post*" (*Primitive 22*, emphasis original). While authenticity is always entangled with other controversial issues such as the validation of representation, the legitimacy of interpretation, and so forth, primitivism frankly acknowledges its transformative process of the artificial construction and its intention to showcase the exoticized culture to Western audiences. Authenticity carries the burden (and privilege) of the orthodox inheritance of essentialized culture and national history, but primitivism freely appropriates and even exaggerates those cultural elements as a sign of commodity fetishism without the concern of the cultural depth. However, the two different ideas are often intertwined and inseparable. Primitivism is driven by Chinese intellectuals' or artists' "obsession with China" to search for authenticity at the time of "cultural crisis" (22), which implies a kind of anxiety about the invasion of modernization and aspirations to restore the golden age. Primitivism is also a resistant strategy to claim its subjectivity of cultural representation and interpretation, as opposed to Western anthropological discourse and Orientalist epistemological frame. In other words, primitivism aims to

preserve the authenticity and insist on the authority to represent and value it. Its subversive potential aims to refute Western Sinologists and anthropologists' interpretation of the authenticity, rather than authenticity itself.

Cloud Gate's repertoire may also be categorized as a kind of primitivism in terms of its investment in the ancient and legendary themes, exoticized images in the set design, costumes, and props, and commercial goal. With rare attention to the global and modern images of Taiwan, Cloud Gate focuses on the representation of time-honored cultural canons from literary works, historical legends, and philosophical thoughts. This focus provides a primitive sense to Western audiences and satisfies their curiosity about the Oriental world. Corresponding to the themes, the images on stage also convey a fantasy about a primitive world where ancient costumes, mysterious makeup, and local properties highlight the differences from the homogeneous global culture.

However, the difference between Cloud Gate and Rey Chow's primitivism lies in their respective ways to represent primitivism and proclaim cultural authority. Chow proposed a superficial way to demonstrate primitivism in Chinese cinema, which she believed was an interculturally translatable strategy to circulate widely and successfully in the international market. Further, she suggested that the practice of self-exhibitionism and self-exoticizing visual gestures is to "return the gaze of Orientalist surveillance" (*Primitive* 170). However, such shallowness ignores the expectations and tastes of local audiences; she did not prove how this strategy enlightens and reformulates the Western gaze, or whether Westerners even notice the intent to demonstrate the Oriental's orientalism. By contrast, Cloud Gate is inclined to spirit-oriented themes and philosophically based movements, which successfully impress Western audiences and

local critics. Lin's free appropriation of Western elements into Eastern themes and his challenge to the conventional Western gaze on the oriental world prevent Cloud Gate from the accusation of self-subjugation to the Western taste. Through an analysis of the two repertoires, I will demonstrate how Cloud Gate's spirit-oriented choreography transcends the cultural barrier and challenges the Western way of seeing and knowing.<sup>25</sup>

*b. "Songs of the Wanderers" and "Moon Water"*

"Songs" is a creation about Lin's experience of a pilgrimage to Bodda Gaya, the northern Indian village where Buddha is said to have attained his ultimate enlightenment while meditating under a banyan tree. Several visits to India stimulated Lin's spiritual awakening, which prompted the creation of "Songs" in a short time. In his article dedicated to the creation, Lin recalled how the Neranjra River retained tremendous power of life underneath the seemingly motionless surface of the river, how he admired Buddha's determination to overcome the physical and mental obstacles to enlightenment, and how he found a wonderful peacefulness he had never experienced in such a simple and natural village (Lin, "Journey"). Lin considers it "a work about practicing asceticism, the river's mildness, and the quest for quietude" ("Journey"). While Western modern dance is seldom used for religious and spiritual inquiry, Lin associates such an Eastern theme with Herman Hesse's novel *Siddhartha* as a springboard to develop the choreography. Through connecting to the famous Western novel in which the protagonist explores different religions in search of spiritual serenity, "Songs," free from being exorcized as an Eastern fantasy, highlights "a cross-cultural and interfaith approach to the

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<sup>25</sup> For the dialects of cultural transmission between the West and the non-West, also see Desmond; Franco and Nordera; Goellner and Murphy.

universal theme of pilgrimage” (Carbonneau). Based on the idea of seeking peace, Lin creates a universal aesthetic image rather than a personal experience of a specific religious practice.

Throughout the whole 90-minute repertoire, Lin creates ingenious contrasts on the stage between the evanescent and the permanent, the vagarious and the constant, and the mercurial and the steady. While a monk remains standing downstage in stillness with his hands folded in prayer as a thin stream of rice trickles over his head from above, the rest of the stage shows various trials in the process of pilgrimage against the monk’s image of meditation and steadiness. As an exploration of the idea of pilgrimage, the dance expresses the depression, frustration, aspiration, and ecstasy for enlightenment. It interweaves slow and hasty movements of the dancers such as gliding slowly forward with a bow, diving agitatedly into the rice-made river, flagellating themselves bitterly, and spreading the grains gleefully around the stage. Various other movements include stretches, extensions, waves, twists, and thrusts. In addition to the monk, the presence of a raker, who pulls his rake slowly and steadily across the stage and piles rice at intervals, is another stable element in contrast to the struggle, anxiety, and disturbance during the pilgrimage. The role of a raker comes from the old boatman in the novel. He is Siddhartha’s last teacher, who carries and drops different people with his boat every day but has never been affected by the various stories the passengers have told him. Through the contrast between slow or motionless figures and wild dancers, Lin juxtaposes the transcendence and calmness of those who are enlightened and the annoyance and sufferings of those pilgrims on the stage. In the last section, called “Finale or the Beginning,” the raker steadily rakes the rice into a spiral made of larger and larger

concentric circles, like a kind of Japanese Zen garden. The completion of the spiritual wandering onstage is not a finish, and the circular design implies another good start in the endless cycle of life. Lin highlights a never-ending quest for spiritual enlightenment.

The comment that “‘Moon Water’ is not about meditation but is a meditation in itself” (Kisselgoff, “Syncretism” E.1) points out the deeper concentration of mind and journey of spirituality Lin continues to explore. “Moon Water” refers to two meanings. One is a Buddhist proverb that says, “Flowers in a mirror and the moon on water are both illusive.” Another is the ideal state for tai chi practitioners: “Energy flows as water, while the spirit shines as the moon” (qtd. in an interview in *Moon Water*). The former investigates the essence of life, the boundary between the real and the illusive, and the Daoist philosophy of yin and yang. The latter emphasizes the harmonious relationship between the body and the mind—controlling the energy in the body at ease and keeping the purified state of mind. Lin combines the seemingly different philosophies through the practice of tai chi that focuses on concentration in the spirit, transition of the tense and the looseness, effort and effortlessness in the body. In the 70-minute choreography, the dancers present a poetic, meditative work that impresses the audience with the unique atmosphere related to the spiritual practices of Daoism and Buddhism.

The piece begins with a lone man moving in the style of tai chi slowly and absorbedly, which sets the basic tone of the whole work: low center of gravity, single-minded attention, exquisite and flexible motion, and delicate transition of the body between furling and stretching. The work develops the basic tone with variations in the number and interactions of the dancers. After the opening solo, the choreographies follow, such as the duet and a single dancer in contrast to the group, one after one, with the same

style of movements. As the dance goes on, several mirrors in mid-air and upstage are revealed and reflect the image of dancers' movements and the white ripple-like pattern on the floor. Near the end of the piece, water trickles slowly onto the floor and spreads to a shallow pool of water. The dancers splash the water with graceful movements as steadily as at the beginning; and the water and mirrors reflect the dancing bodies until all leave. Many layers of reflection in this dreamy ending suggest the indistinguishable line between reality and appearance, and fulfillment and emptiness, which corresponds to Lin's concern about the essence of life and the combination of the body and soul.

The theme of Eastern philosophy in "Moon" again finds its perfect counterpart in the Western canon, Johann Sebastian Bach's "Six Suites for Solo Cello" played by Mischa Maisky. Lin explained that it was the "purity" of the music that drew him into it. He further emphasized the specific version played by Mischa Maisky: "While most of the cellists play this music in a very baroque manner, Maisky has a very exaggerated way to emphasize the bass. It draws and extends the musical line, which is something we need, because in Tai Chi you ground it. We can really take root in those very deep basic notes, and then you stretch" (qtd in an interview in *Moon Water*). The compatibility between tai chi movement and Bach's music suggests the possibility for Eastern philosophy to be released from the geographically and culturally specific confinement and connect with Western culture, which, in fact, has something in common with the Eastern one. By incorporating tai chi and Bach's music to demonstrate the similarity in spirit, Lin weakens the Western gaze to only project the curiosity onto the Eastern otherness. Instead, he guides the gaze to discover the association between the West and the East.



The spirit-oriented choreography's blend with Western elements successfully impresses Western audiences and satisfies local critics. The richly philosophical and spiritual connotation in "Songs" is described as "a spiritual journey, quite different than the pace that an ordinary day brings" (Li 8). Various critics from different press media have described it as a "highly theatrical, deeply spiritual experience" (Solomons 86) and used other similar expressions. Anna Kisselgoff, the chief dance critic of the *New York Times*, listed "Moon" as the best dance performance in 2003 and expressed her respect for the "slow fluidity through tai chi exercises" during "a journey toward purification" (Kisselgoff, "Dance" 19). "Moon" was also the only Asian performance group invited to the Olympic Arts Festival in Sydney in 2000 and arranged in the opening program. When Taiwanese athletes can only be introduced as the team of "Chinese Taipei," "Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan transcended the diplomatic predicament and promoted the existence of Taiwan through newspapers, the Internet, and other media" (Y. Lin, "Choreographing" 214). Cloud Gate thus became a "national" representation, a reflection of Taiwan's success in the global cultural arena. Local critics who are familiar with Chinese or Eastern culture also approved of the international acclaim. The famous Taiwanese cultural critic, Jiang Xun, praised "Moon" for investigating the nature of tai chi—"continuously developing and enlarging one's internal psyche and spiritual realm"—that well demonstrated the body in association with the inward-looking Eastern philosophy ("She"). On the international stage, Cloud Gate embodies the nationalist appeal to Taiwanese audiences by fulfilling their craving for international recognition. The troupe satisfies Western audiences and local critics by displaying the exotic images accompanied with spirit-oriented choreography. Through this strategy, Cloud Gate has

garnered more opportunities to tour around the world, gained its cultural capital to broaden its impacts, and most importantly, declared the existence of Taiwan on international stages.

Spirit-oriented choreography is a successful strategy that can enhance the content and depth and remain approachable to Western audiences. On one hand, because spiritual philosophy is formless, spiritual choreography can incorporate elements of various origins into the repertoires that freely penetrate both national and cultural boundaries. On the other hand, because the ancient philosophy indicates certain cultural specifications, it anchors its cultural particularity, as opposed to randomly grasping the cultural elements in the global postmodern trend. Furthermore, Eastern spiritual themes convey more feeling than knowledge, which facilitates its translatability into any cultural context and becomes marketable to the curators of international programs. Because Cloud Gate's spiritual repertoires are popular and influential among Western audiences, those repertoires' resistant potential that challenges the relationship between the Eastern representation and the Western hegemony may deserve investigation. As Anna Kisselgoff said, "Mr. Lin has accomplished what creative artists rarely succeed in doing today: challenging the audience with a work unlike any other" ("Syncretism" E.1). The following section will further analyze Lin's breakthrough in terms of his innovative creation that incorporates Western elements and presents a new dance vocabulary, unconventional cultural communication, and artistic subjectivity for the Eastern troupe.

### *c. Cultural Subjectivity*

Unlike the superficial demonstration of primitivism, the spirit-oriented choreography is not confined to the oriental world through specific oriental images.

Rather, it is free to incorporate other cultures, which implies the potential to blur the cultural boundary drawn by binarism. In the repertoires, Lin's appropriation of Western elements into Eastern-themed repertoires, such as Hermann Hesse's novel *Siddhartha* in "Songs" and Bach's music in "Moon," transforms those Western canons into materials that serve Eastern themes and construct an Eastern-centered multicultural perspective. Against the Orientalists' overbearing construction of the imaginary East by their arbitrary appropriation and interpretation of Eastern cultural elements, Cloud Gate decontextualizes Western arts and blends them into an Eastern topic. This phenomenon tends to reverse the rule that the Eastern native has always been interpreted, but a Western canon is absolutely sacrosanct. Western critics pay more attention to Lin's "Pan-Asian identity" as a strategy to confront Western hegemony (e.g., "Taiwan's Cloud Gate Dance Theatre Stages Poetic Journey" 9) simply because in "Songs," Lin also integrates the choreography with Georgian folk songs and three tons of rice on the stage to form various landscapes through which the pilgrim passes; in "Moon," Asian Daoism and Buddhism direct the concept of the movement. Although those Asian images and concepts indeed play an important role in supporting the spiritual atmosphere and intent,<sup>26</sup> focusing our scope only on Asian images and dismissing Western integrants might limit our exploration of the potential of two works. Instead of confining Cloud Gate to a representation of "Pan-Asian identity" as an antithesis of Western identity,

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<sup>26</sup> Using tons of rice in "Songs" has two meanings according to Lin's explanation. First, he mentioned, "Rice is sacred in Asia...[I]f you were caught playing with it, you really got in trouble because you were ruining the food." Second, he explained the stream of rice pouring over the monk as a reminder of time: "In the pauses between music, the sound of falling rice comes to remind you about time. Just like a river, it keeps going; whatever happens, that is life" (qtd. In Sims 8). A critic noted that Georgian folk music "has its own meditative resonance in this piece" (Kisselgoff, "Path" E.1:6). The life-source symbol of rice, the life image of an hourglass-like rice stream, and meditative music all correspond to Lin's spiritual theme.

Lin's association with Western culture implies a more ambitious goal. His aims are (1) to build a bridge from the Eastern base to the Western side, (2) interpret the Western from the perspective of the Eastern, and (3) present the Easternized Western canon to those Western audiences who used to project the dominating gaze and tended to find fantasies in Eastern cultural productions.

In "Songs" and "Moon," Lin creates a particular body vocabulary in order to find a form to express abstract spiritual rituals that are much different from the narrative mode of previous creations. "Songs" develops from meditation practice that trains concentration in spirit and relaxation in body. For those dancers who are used to shaping their movements into discipline and imitating technical movements from surface gestures, such practice is revolutionary to their concept of "dance." However, what Lin tries to create is neither another amazingly skillful movement nor experimental deconstruction of the notion of movement. Lin explained, "After an hour of sitting quietly, concentrating on your breathing, you move differently. You have a lot of energy, but it is very controlled. I wanted to create a sense of slow, self-aware motion" ("Taiwan's Cloud Gate Dance Theatre Stages Poetic Journey" 9). Lin incorporates the idea of qi gong, a Chinese meditative practice, and requests dancers to focus on the core and detail of the body itself. Suzanne Carbonneau has mentioned that "[Lin] asks his dancers to put their focus on the transitions between more dancerly movements—precisely those moments that are de-emphasized in Western dance...He aims to make each moment count, and he asks the dancers to bring as much luminous energy to slowness and stillness as they do to more obvious technical feats." Lin's complement to the Western notion of dance and emphasis on what Western dance dismisses establish his unique movement vocabulary. Rather than

merely combining Western modern dance and Chinese cultural elements into repertoires, as Cloud Gate has usually done, “Song” declares Lin’s totally innovative body vocabulary in which Western influence, like the contraction and release of Martha Graham, is absent; or to say it in another way, transformed to be invisible. Lin develops a different quality of Eastern body through the practice of meditation and the idea of chi gong, which relates the body to the spiritual pursuit.

In “Moon Water,” Lin deepens the new concept of movement in “Songs” through the practice of tai ji dao yin—a variation of tai chi practice developed by Hsiung Wei, who belonged to the first generation of mainlanders in Taiwan. According to Lin Ya-tin, such discipline of movement integrates the Daoist philosophies of Laozi and Zhuangzi, such as yin-yang and wu-wei. Yin (the shadowy side of a mountain) and yang (the sunny side) refer to “complementary rather than oppositional” binaries such as “night and day, mysterious and straightforward, female and male, weak and strong” (Y. Lin, “Choreographing” 174). For dance, they refer to the binary in “the quality of the movement” (174): Yang indicates “hard, fast strong or clear” moves, and yin shows “softer, slower, or less obvious movements” (qtd. in “Choreographing 174”).<sup>27</sup> Wu-wei literally means non-action, about which Laozi explained, “the way a thing is when its action springs from its own internal Essence” (175). For Zhuangzi, wu-wei implied the idea of xu (emptiness)—“eliminating worldly thoughts in one’s mind” to achieve clarity (175). In terms of movement, wu-wei puts the concept of “effortless action,” or the smooth transformation of motion and stillness, into the foreground (175). Combining the

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<sup>27</sup> The original source is Adam Hsu [Hsu Chi], *The Sword Polisher’s Record: The Way of Kung-fu*. Boston, Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing Inc., 1997, p.23.

concepts of movement and body mentioned above, tai ji dao yin trains the flexibility of the body through breathing meditation, which circulates the energy from the center of the body and achieves harmony between the body and mind. The body vocabulary, as directed by Chinese philosophy, intensifies the differences between Cloud Gate's style and Western modern dance. As Carbonneau analyzed, "In the West, choreography has not often been thought of as a venue for philosophical or religious inquiry... As a medium centered in the body, dance was relegated to the category of the purely sensory." By contrast, Cloud Gate brings the Daoist philosophy, in which body discipline and state of mind are tightly united, into full play. Thus, a new dance vocabulary is remarkably differentiated from that of conventional Western modern dance and impresses Western critics. Critics praised the fluent movement with continuous energy in "Moon" as the combination of "control, beauty and strength, as well as choreography rich with history and meaning" (Wilson 11).

Instead of being satisfied with his innovative body movement that is free from the influence of Western ideas of dance, Lin complicates the notion of "innovation" and "influence": "[W]ho is borrowing from whom? That's a very interesting question. Modern dance, in the very beginning, was inspired by the Oriental Theater and a lot of Oriental things. [In] our generation, Asian dancers are influenced by Western dance theater. It's a wonderful dialogue going back and forth..." (qtd. in an interview in *Moon Water*). While critics pointed out the excellent Martha Graham technique developing in "Moon,"<sup>28</sup> Lin explains that the curved torso is derived more from tai chi exercises than

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<sup>28</sup> Such as the review in Kisselgoff: "As trancelike as they appear, they are professionally trained modern dancers who know how to splice an occasional back fall from Martha Graham's technique without breaking the overall flow" ("Syncretism" E.1).

from the influence of Martha Graham's "contraction." Such a statement seems to argue that the category of modern dance should not be taken as a Western-dominated medium in which Eastern creations are regarded as mimic copies, obedient followers, or gene-mutated products. Instead, Lin proclaims an independent authority to operate such a seemingly Westernized medium by exposing the truth that "modern" dance originated from the ancient Oriental, in which a kind of primitivism is processed. While the "primitivization of non-Western lands and peoples" inspired "the formal innovations of Western modernism" (Chow, *Primitive* 20), Lin's primitivism not only demonstrates how Eastern cultural energy renews the ancient philosophy of Western modern dance, but it becomes a gesture to retrieve the cultural authority from Western appropriation.

In addition, the training in tai chi and meditation changes the relationship between audiences and dancers, the seeing subject and the seen object, the active observer and the passive observed, and, in the Orientalist context, the Orientalist gaze and the Oriental display. In the interviews regarding "Songs" and "Moon," respectively, Lin said, "Nowadays, when Cloud Gate dancers are onstage, they no longer perform for the audience... they are making their own journey in a way" (qtd. in Nishioka 22), and "[t]hey are focused internally—the audience is drawn in, rather than the dancers projecting out" (Ridgway 22). The concentration in the body and mind transforms the performance into self-practice that preserves the dancers' subjectivity in terms of their inward-looking gestures and indifference to the audience's response. Outward effort to impress and cater to audiences becomes less important than inward concentration on spirit and self-consciousness. Non-concrete and philosophically based movements replace the stereotypical and predictable images that Western curiosity expects. Without

stereotypical images that suggest a reliable track to lead Western audiences to Orientalist interpretation, audiences need to investigate the cultural message embedded in the abstract and undecipherable movement carefully, instead of enjoying a superficial fascination. The seen object becomes critical to delivering cultural implications actively, rather than passively accepting the gaze the seeing subject projects. The viewers adjust their interpretation according to the message the object provides. However, instead of suggesting a teaching-learning relationship between dancers and audiences, I would like to highlight the unclear boundary between the passive and active roles. While dancers actively influence the audience's interpretation, the audience's later responses predominantly evaluate the quality of the performance. The relationship between the seeing and the seen is not fixed, and the subjectivity of the dancers and audiences do not conflict with each other. What *Cloud Gate* provides is not an entertaining presentation that allows a one-way interpretation from the seeing subject to the seen object or an ethnocentric work in which dancers impose cultural knowledge on the audience, but a cultural communication that urges the audience to break the conventional assumptions of Orientalism and participate in a reciprocally cultural translation.

However, the negative reviews have also pointed out the difficulty in mutual cultural understanding and the barriers to communication. Because Western modern dance emphasizes critical thinking about the socio-material world, Lin's contrastingly non-narrative and non-argumentative choreography appears quite unfamiliar to Western audiences. Terms such as "spirituality," "feeling," "nature," and "essence" become the key words to understanding Lin's recent works, which are related to the Asian spirit of



Buddhism, Hinduism, and Daoism.<sup>29</sup> For those who stick to the Western way of knowing and seeing, such spiritual topics, philosophy-based movements, plotless constructions, and unusual relationships between the performers and audiences will definitely trouble them. Some critics have impatiently complained about the dull slowness and invariant choreography in “Moon.” For instances, Chris Pasles argued, “Except for occasional bursts of quick movement, the tempo was almost universally slow...It would be hard to find a more numbing, affect-less performance” (E.4). And Sanjoy Roy said, “[T]he dance seems lacking in substance and development—not enough, at least, to sustain interest through 70 minutes” (90). In *Asian Pages*, Sheila Li described her interviews with the audiences about their uneasiness and distraction caused by “Songs”: “As Ros Nielson said... ‘I am conditioned to a fast pace; the slow rhythm makes me feel unsafe, as if it is going to linger forever.’ ...Her friend, Marliss Jensen, agreed with her: ‘My mind drifted around the safety issues in the stage facility; I started to worry if the spotlights were going to drop’” (8). Although those suggestions, to some extent, provide a way for Lin to revise and improve his skill of cultural translation in terms of its accountability and palpability, I would like to apply Rey Chow’s analysis of the binary of shi/xu to tease out one of the real gaps between Western audiences and Eastern cultural productions.

In order to justify the shallowness of primitivism in Zhang Yi-mou’s film, Chow suggested that we “abandon our most deeply cultivated—and most deeply cherished—intellectual habits” (*Primitive* 172), that is, the criteria of oppositional shi/xu structures and the binary opposition between “concreteness” and “emptiness.” In Chow’s sense, shi

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<sup>29</sup> Lin said, “Nowadays we don’t tell stories like [19th century] classical ballet or Peking Opera. Instead, we try to grasp the essence of a story, and what’s most important is how the whole piece evolves to convey a feeling so strong that it affects people” (qtd. in Pasles\_E.4).

is linked to “an approved concreteness of content in any representation, a concreteness that by extension would also be described with metaphors such as shendu (depth) and neihan (inner meaning)” (154-5). Xu is associated with concepts such as “emptiness,” “abstraction,” “shallowness,” or “fakeness” (154). Chow offered the criticism that the criteria which privilege the former over the latter will dismiss “the force of defiance” of the surface, that is, to externalize the “the voyeurism of Orientalism itself” (171). Indeed, the binary structure of the criteria is problematic; for instance, Chow alluded to classifying Daoism into either category because the xu in Daoism has its shi significance. However, it is exactly the controversial Daoism that points out the even more serious dependence on the model of shi/xu for Western audiences, who always expect something concrete and meaningful in the art. While Chow was aware that to categorize Daoism as xu might overlook its shi implication, those Western audiences who do not realize the shi meaning of the abstract movement undoubtedly classify Cloud Gate’s Buddhism- and Daoism-based choreographies as a kind of xu. Non-narrative and non-argumental representations based on Daoism and Buddhism have become the blind spots of Western audiences that prevent them from knowing non-Western culture. In this context, Cloud Gate’s religious rites and spiritual pursuits not only admit the significance of xu, as Chow suggested, but they ask the Western pattern of epistemological understanding to re-evaluate the meaning and significance of xu, and how xu and shi are overlapped rather than separate from each other in Eastern culture.

While the Westerners’ complaints about the slowness of movement and lack of development, and their feelings of uneasiness with emptiness show their appreciation of shi over xu, they fail to recognize the philosophical meaning and spiritual thought that

imply shi's reflection and critical attitude to the world. Lin explains that his focus on spiritual peace and philosophical integrity arose from his anxiety about the increasingly commercial and modernized world, leaving inner peace out of consideration. Traveling in Bali before he choreographed "Nine" enlightened him about "how human beings at the end of the 20th Century have lost contact with nature" (Segal, "Revealing" 55). He began to think about a work "to bring peace to [his] life" (Segal, "Revealing" 55). In India, he found out how simple life is: Birth and death are in the same river of Life, and commercial attraction ceases to be effective (interview by Chen Hao). However, the influences of modernization and urbanization foster conspicuous consumption, commercialization, and fetishization. They indulge human desire and abandon the need for spirituality. In that case, concentration on details, movements, and the tempo of breath becomes the first step in moving toward innerness and self-awareness from spiritual shallowness and emptiness. In the logic of Buddhism and Daoism, a luxurious life without the enrichment of spirituality is xu, but a simple material life with a rich spiritual life is shi. At this point, the connotation of shi/xu is reversed.

However, to point out the limitations of the Western gaze, what Cloud Gate intends to do is not only reverse the connotation of shi/xu but question its opposition. Instead of providing what the Western view is familiar with, as in Chow's superficial primitivism, Cloud Gate, at the expense of possible misunderstanding and complaints, encourages Western audiences to see in a non-Western way. Insisting on the Western view impedes the fluidity of trans-cultural communication and narrows the scope of self-reflection. Lin expresses his concrete concern through the form of xu—non-narrative and non-argumentative structure—and materializes the Daoist philosophy of xu through the shi

practice of tai chi. The flexible transition between shi and xu rather than prioritizing either of them challenges the inflexible Western gaze and promotes a more comprehensible understanding of a different world.

Through the two repertoires, we see Cloud Gate's celebration and resistance to the fashion of globalization. It gains international attention for Taiwan through its culturally unique repertoires and preserves its cultural authority against Western standards through challenging Western dance and assumptions of the oriental world. Cloud Gate's successful balance between exoticism and spirituality satisfies both Western and local audiences without much complaint about its lack of depth. It represents exoticism through its set and props designs, such as three tons of rice in "Songs" and dancers' Zen-like reflections on the water and the mirror in "Moon." Yet, its spirituality brings out a different dance vocabulary, reverses the relationship between seeing and the seen, and promotes a narrative structure combining shi and xu, which challenge the Western standards of aesthetic and artistic values. In terms of its great fame at international festivals and support from the homeland, insistence of cultural authority, and cultural depth, Cloud Gate's spirit-oriented politics of representation achieves the simultaneous goals of taking advantage of globalization to earn international recognition for Taiwan and resisting the Western-predominated globalization that homogenizes cultural uniqueness.

For Taiwanese people, Cloud Gate's success compensates for Taiwan's political frustration and gives confidence to Taiwanese cultural subjectivity. Cloud Gate has become a commonly acknowledged cultural representative symbol of Taiwan, both locally and globally. Cloud Gate has been glorified as a "cultural hero" and "the most

important cultural export the Republic of China has made in the past 20 years” (qtd. in Chao, “Nationalism” 173) for being the most successful cultural ambassador on the international stage in Taiwan culture circles. In the 1990s, Cloud Gate consolidated a sense of the Taiwanese people not by coherent repertoires, as in the 1970s, but by its international fame, which satisfied Taiwan’s desire to be visible in the international arena.

*d. Transcend the Concept of Genre:*

From the perspective of Bakhtin’s notion of genre, Buddhism and Daoism in “Songs” and “Moon” correspond to the idea of novel-like “Nine” and “Portrait” in terms of their unorthodox Chineseness and incorporation of other Asian and Western cultures, which provide them with flexible perspectives and diverse possibilities. Lin’s traveling experience in India and the adoption of Western culture, costume, and setting designed by Pan-Asian ideas tend to make the repertoires transcend beyond the compass of Chineseness. Similar to the strategy in “Nine,” mixing foreign elements into the interpretation of Chinese culture contaminates the purity of Chineseness. But unlike “Nine,” which originated from the Chinese literary canon, “Songs” and “Moon” are based on Buddhism and Daoism. These ideologies are the marginal elements in the pattern of Chinese culture and stand in contrast to the mainstream of Confucian morality and ethical values. The reinterpretation of alternative Chineseness in “Songs” and “Moon” exposes a more liberal potential to undermine the essence of Chineseness itself.

While “Nine” and “Portrait” merely challenge Chineseness as the dominant structure of Taiwanese culture, “Songs” and “Moon” indicate that Chineseness is constructed by dynamic interaction with various brilliant cultures that should not be subject to any single dominant definition. Imported from India to China, Buddhism was

integrated into part of Chineseness as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Daoism, as a philosophical school other than Confucianism during the Warring States period (770 to 221 BC), sprang from an age called the “Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought,” when a variety of thoughts and ideas flourished and were discussed openly. The religious and philosophical heritages in association with Chinese culture demonstrate that the notion of Chineseness is never a consistent and stable unity. Instead, it is an always-changing entity with a porous cultural boundary. In that case, to hold “Songs” and “Moon” under the banner of Chineseness may underestimate their novelistic potential to challenge the totality of Chineseness and its dialogue with local and regional cultures. Focusing on those who are marginalized by totalitarian empires with a single system of values, Lin marks a difference with the totality of China. He also frees “Songs” and “Moon” from falling back to the re-allegiance with the center of Chineseness that the purge of differences maintains. Furthermore, both Buddhism and Daoism, through active religious organizations and the prevalence of tai chi, have become localized and entrenched in Taiwanese society and are vital elements of folk culture in everyday life. While the cultural particularity of such unorthodox Chineseness attracts international audiences, Taiwanese audiences also easily accept it without connecting this Chineseness to any political ideology. In other words, besides incorporating foreign elements into Chineseness, the unorthodox Chineseness is an alternative strategy for Cloud Gate to satisfy Taiwanese audiences, especially those who are radically hostile to any Chinese-related implications. In doing so, Cloud Gate can attract international audiences without giving up the appeal of Chinese culture. The unorthodox Chineseness, which does not fall

into the category of Chineseness or Taiwaneseness, again demonstrates Lin's dissatisfaction with the binary opposition.

The non-narrative structure and spirituality that have no beginning or ending in "Songs" and "Moon" further suggest the dances' potential to defy any existing law of genre. Although the unorthodox Chineseness and mixture of Asian and Western elements in these works gather the potential for a heteroglossic dialogue, those different cultural resources, instead of competing and struggling with each other, integrate harmoniously. They support each other in playing the best role in the repertoires (such as a Western novel in association with Eastern religious experience in "Songs" and the perfect fusion of tai chi and Bach's music in "Moon"). The contention among diverse cultural elements is replaced by peaceful cooperation, which contains multiplicity without surrendering to unitary authority. In that case, the heterogeneous elements do not dynamically stand for discrepant perspectives, as in a novel; however, their orderly harmony does not back up any ideological hegemony, either, as occurs in an epic. Whether they tend to preserve a traditionally crystallized past or open the possibility for the future is also obscured by the non-narrative structure, in which no concrete idea is elaborated and developed. Although, like an epic, their body movements evoke ancient philosophies and values, Lin's critique on the contemporary world reflects its novel-like features. In a non-developing state, the repertoires root out the narrative foundation that crucially distinguishes the novel and the epic. Without narrative structure as a reference point to tease out how multiple theatrical elements interact and develop in the repertoires, whether they are conservatively epic-like or open-ended novel works cannot be well defined. Furthermore, their spiritual orientation transcends the earthly political tensions between Chineseness and

Taiwaneseness, as well as the orthodox and unorthodox. Through spirit-oriented choreography, Lin touches upon the inner stability and spiritual fullness that have been neglected by Taiwanese people amid the political tensions. Having struggled with the controversial issue of Taiwanese identity, Lin attempts to create a free space in which to express personal sentiments and pursue aesthetic accomplishment. In addition, he seeks to deal with the broader issues beyond the two straits, such as the relationship with the West. Lin said, “[After] constantly thinking about how we wanted to define ourselves, and even rediscover ourselves” through “tell[ing] stories,” he realized that “only after washing away the text could the body be free” (qtd. in Mon and Tsou 28). The statement reveals that Lin is eager to find a new space with complete freedom, and without any predetermined framework limited by texts and representational imagery for his works—no matter whether this framework is narrowly or liberally defined.

“Songs” and “Moon” expose the deeper concept of the novel in Bakhtin’s sense, which is “a unity that cannot be identified with any single one of the unities subordinated to it” (“Discourse” 262). Bakhtin’s novel is defined by incessantly problemizing any fixed law and repeated practices of a genre. This view opposes the traditional idea of genre that is classified within rigid, unchanging, and well-defined categories. In that case, even Bakhtin’s definition of the novel should not become a set of rules, but rather a unity that essentially transcends itself and any law of genre. The two repertoires are ambivalent to classification as either epics or novels. They are harmoniously organized but do not domesticate the diverse artistic resources. The spiritual values they support belong to the traditional past but simultaneously react to the current world. The novel, in these cases, breaks with Bakhtin’s definition and becomes a genre that transcends itself. This



transcendence may correspond to Lin's intention to go beyond the categories of Chineseness, Taiwaneseess, or limited hybridity within the mixture of Chineseness and Taiwaneseess.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

By analyzing Cloud Gate's repertoires in the 1990s from Bakhtin's notion of genre, we have discovered two strands of creation in reaction to the socio-political environment of Taiwan and global competition in dance festivals. Although Cloud Gate engages in Taiwanese society in a novelistic way that attempts to undermine any epic-like narrative of Chinese or native Taiwanese nationalism, its international fame satisfies political claims for the existence of Taiwan and a unified "national culture." Cloud Gate's open-minded reinterpretation of Taiwan history leads to a heterogeneous representation of ethnicity, languages, and culture, but its spirit-oriented primitivism against the Western gaze forges a distinctive image of an independent cultural agency. In that way, Cloud Gate solves the dilemma between Taiwanese cultural and political identity. On one hand, a flexible space for multiple voices is necessary for Taiwanese cultural identity, which is still in a dynamic process of becoming. On the other hand, Cloud Gate's international fame materializes a concrete image of political identity separate from China. Cloud Gate fulfills not only ideological flexibility and cultural hybridity for domestic society, but it lends political unity and cultural uniqueness to the international arena, which makes the troupe accepted as a symbol of Taiwanese culture for Taiwanese people and the two conflicting political parties.<sup>30</sup> In conclusion, besides Cloud Gate's international fame and the novel-like strategic arrangement of diverse cultural elements that facilitate this

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<sup>30</sup> Not only did the KMT government praise Cloud Gate as a Taiwanese cultural symbol on the international stage (see note 17), but the DPP government took it as the mirror of Taiwanese society. In his 2003 National Day Speech, President Chen Shui-bien said, "The story of Cloud Gate mirrors the history written by the people of this land," and considered that Cloud Gate's "Legacy" reflects the Taiwanese spirit of "perseverance and dedication" (qtd. in Chao, "Embodying" 16).

success, I would like to highlight how (1) dance as a unique medium helps create the third space and transcend ideological limitations in Lin's repertoires, and (2) dance as an ambiguous vehicle simultaneously delivers a unified image and carries diverse implications.

Regardless of an epic- or novel-like repertoire in terms of the way multiple theatrical elements interact, its narrative structure, and the values it implies, the third space in "Tale," "Legacy," "Nine," and "Portrait," as well as the transcending potential in "Songs" and "Moon" shed light on the instability of the body and the resultant ambiguity of meaning. Literary studies indeed offer a critical and theoretical language to examine the narrative mode and provide a standard of evaluation for dance. However, dance as a specific medium, as it communicates via the body, is quite different from a written or spoken language that has a relatively reliable semiotic system to anchor meaning. In dance, meaning is ambivalently articulated and represented. Political power and ideological tendencies can be simultaneously retained and resisted within the same gesture. Thus, dancing movements can be interpreted as corresponding to or deviating from the legitimacy and norms, simultaneously. Movement may refute what it appears to incorporate; movement may also absorb what it ostensibly opposes. In "The Politics and Poetics of Dance," Susan A. Reed cited the two analyses from different perspectives to elaborate the paradox of agency in dance: Ethnomusicologist John Blacking suggested that "[dance and music in] ritual may be enacted in the service of conservative and even oppressive institutions...but the experience of performing the nonverbal movements and sounds may ultimately liberate the actors..." (qtd. in Reed 521). Cynthia Novack, echoing the idea from the perspective of gender, remarked that "[D]ance may reflect and resist

cultural values simultaneously.” She cited the example of the ballerina who “embodies and enacts stereotypes of the feminine while she interprets a role with commanding skill, agency, and a subtlety that denies stereotype” (qtd. in Reed 521). The two perspectives imply the deconstruction of political binaries between the oppressor and the oppressed, as well as the sexual binaries between male and female. Following their ideas, the ambiguous metaphor of dance may also apply to other binary constructions, as in the context of this thesis’ focus on the cultural identity between Chineseness and Taiwaneseess.<sup>31</sup>

Dance, as a cultural and artistic form of expression, is able to challenge static notions of identity by destabilizing existing binary constructions. Through bodily movements and transformative effects that do not pin the tension on a static relationship, the third space of cultural identity between Chineseness and Taiwaneseess and between the mainlanders and native Taiwanese becomes possible in either epic- or novel-like repertoires. “Tale” integrates the Western and Chinese disposition of body through combining Graham’s techniques and the training of the Peking Opera. “Legacy” bridges the connection between the Chinese and Taiwanese through incorporating Chinese martial arts into Lin’s new body vocabulary, which represents the Taiwanese experience of hardship. Under the political totalitarianism of the 1970s, shifting among different movement elements reveals Cloud Gate’s camouflage that simultaneously retains and resists the Sinocentric political control. “Nine” disturbs the literary orthodox through the protean bodies that integrate Javanese ritualistic dance, Taiwanese shamanic dance, and

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<sup>31</sup> For more discussion and examples of the ambiguity and agency of dancing movement, see also King; Franco and Nordera; and Goellner and Murphy.

religious dance from the Chinese minority and Taiwanese aborigines. When the social atmosphere became increasingly hostile to Chinese culture and the political power it represented in the 1990s, such hybrid movement weakened, but also protected the heritages of Chinese culture in Taiwan. In “Portrait,” the social dynamics and multiple forces are conveyed within the same choreography. The artistic movement not only passively reflects but also actively reenacts and condemns the political violence that repressed the Taiwanese people and culture. The process of purification at the end of the choreography ultimately cures the historical sorrow and suggests a harmonious coexistence between the native Taiwanese and mainlanders in the future. In “Songs” and “Moon,” movement from the philosophical and religious concepts of unorthodox Chineseness also transcends the conventional binary between Chinese and Taiwanese cultures. Movement from the unorthodox Chineseness cannot be fully defined as Chinese culture because its marginalized status is usually excluded from the essentialized Chineseness. However, even if those unorthodox Chinese practices and religions are popularized as the vital Taiwanese folk culture, movement derived from them cannot be categorized fully as Taiwanese culture either. In addition, the flexibility of tai chi emphasizes the shifting relationship between two seemingly opposite concepts rather than a static confrontation or correspondence. Further, dancing movements driven by body energy from meditative practices can be embodied in any form without being pinpointed by specific cultural icons. In other words, the movement in “Songs” and “Moon” not only breaks down cultural binarism but also transcends any cultural category. With the help of the ambiguous dancing movements, the transformative and becoming nature of Taiwanese culture can be appropriately articulated, and its dynamic tensions can be

contained within a unified and concrete choreography. The consistent change, moving appearance, and transient state in dance echo the instability of Taiwanese identity, provide a space for tolerance of all the conflicting ideologies, and negotiate the possibility of integration.

Through the inclusive characteristics of movement, Lin suggests that both Chinese and native cultural stratifications are part of the foundation to construct Taiwanese cultural topography. Furthermore, Taiwanese culture is still open to change by the unexpected influence of globalization and transcultural impact in the future. The flexibility of dancing movement carries unlimited potential to adjust itself to various cultural and political environments; diverse nourishments from social and historical experiences also enrich the vocabulary of the body. In other words, instead of merely reflecting the temporal tendency of cultural interests, body inscribes the process of cultural formation and accumulation in the past and reserves the potential to modify itself to the coming changes. The coexistence of Chinese- and Taiwanese-oriented repertoires in the 1990s implied Lin's refusal to follow the fashionable slogans and ideological trends blindly. He refuses to make a choice between the extreme de-Sinocization nativism and the dominant Sinocentrism but instead provides a more inclusive and tolerant pattern of Taiwan culture. The coexistence and transcendence are possible not only because of Lin's strategic arrangement of Taiwanese, Chinese, and other cultural elements, but also because of the adaptability of movement in which different interpretations with different ideologies can find their counterpart in the same choreography. In sum, heterogeneous elements and ambiguous movements in Cloud Gate's repertoires not only satisfy audiences with different political ideologies, but they

serve as reminders of a possible way to achieve a inclusive view of Taiwanese culture for those who embrace opposite ideologies.

Besides negotiating a possible identity for Taiwanese audiences, the ambivalent features of dance have also successfully created a new relationship with Western audiences. The philosophically based Eastern bodies and choreography both attract and subvert the Western gaze, draw international attention, and yet maintain Taiwanese cultural subjectivity. The shifting between shi/xu in “Songs” and “Moon” challenges Western sensory and spiritual experiences. Dancing movements that contain exotically flexible bodies and philosophical implications both echo and refute the Western aesthetics and perspective on art, life, and the world. As Taiwan heavily depends on Western attention and support to solve its political predicament with China, the ambiguity of the dancing body strives for a balance between international recognition and Taiwanese cultural subjectivity. Taiwanese people eagerly project their political anxiety onto an entity that has gained international recognition, and they honor it as the pride of Taiwan. In response, Cloud Gate not only gratifies Taiwanese desires but carefully controls its artistic subjectivity, which might otherwise be given up for more international interests by pandering to Western tastes. Although Taiwanese people seem to rely on foreign appreciation to realize their own value, Cloud Gate does not privilege international audiences with the right to decide what the Taiwanese cultural representation should be by their applause. On the contrary, its insistence on cultural subjectivity bolsters the tenability of representing the national culture.

Dance, unlike other linguistic and visual arts that are constructed by relatively concrete signs and images, utilizes the ambiguity of the body and other theatrical

elements to contain diverse implications. Besides negotiating the third space in the authoritarianism of the 1970s, the flexible dancing movement has enabled Cloud Gate to develop a novel-like and spirituality-oriented choreography in the 1990s. In addition, through the practice of cultural translation, the idea of primitivism, and the open-ended interpretation of Taiwan history, Cloud Gate has eluded the problems concerning the real heir to the essence of Chineseness and the specific definition of Taiwanese culture. Instead, Cloud Gate asks the Taiwanese people to move beyond any claim on authenticity and binary political options, to open their minds and absorb all kinds of cultural resources in multicultural interaction on a global scale, and not to give up their subjectivity to understand, renew, and interpret those materials in their own cultural context. What is authentic Taiwan culture may be less important than what can become part of Taiwan culture in its dynamic interaction with globalization.

For Cloud Gate's development after the 1990s, a few questions may deserve to be further investigated: (1) Although multi-narratives are released from the political and cultural authoritarianism, does such multiplicity indeed change the power structure of cultural discourse and distribute evenly the cultural capital among those who have been privileged and those who have been suppressed? Will the celebration of cultural diversity mask socio-cultural hierarchy and further silence such minority groups as aborigines and new immigrants from Southeast Asia? (2) Although the international recognition of Cloud Gate consoles Taiwanese people's anxiety at the unrecognized status of Taiwan, will the intention of anti-hegemonic or unorthodox Chineseness—marking a difference from the totality of China—be acutely recognized? Will the Chinese color encourage Cloud Gate's fans to embrace the root of Chineseness and then increase the difficulty of



establishing an independent subjectivity of Taiwanese culture? (3) Since the 1990s, Cloud Gate's international fame has attracted not only foreign curators to buy their performances but also foreign theaters or other organizations to invest Cloud Gate's production.<sup>32</sup> It may deserve to investigate how Cloud Gate's multi-national production and distribution influence its performing style and international reception, how international interests interact with perspectives of local and Western audiences, and how multi-national collaboration affects Cloud Gate's relationship with Chineseness. Unstable and chaotic as it is, the concept of Taiwaneseess that Cloud Gate has attempted to figure out at least reveals problems and offers challenges, which constitutes a necessary step toward possible resolutions in the long run. The repertoires in the 1990s, no longer attached to a coherent and homogeneous society, enable diverse ideas and interpretations to arise and communicate with each other through an inclusive medium of dance, which tends to forge a new identity closer to Taiwanese society.

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<sup>32</sup> According to Y. Lin: "'Cursive' received funding from the Chicago Auditorium Theatre and the Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa" (Choreographing186).

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