

Abstract

EAST ASIAN MODERNISM
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Global? Transnational? Or Planetary? Locating East Asian Modernism in New Modernist Studies

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The study of Modernism tends to focus on the national and/or regional boundaries of production and often reflects the conventional geopolitical dynamic of the power structure. In the context of East Asia, modernism was and is something imported from the West, first to Japan, and then disseminated throughout other parts of Asia through imperialism and colonialism during the first half of the 20th century, and later through the spread of developmentalism During the Cold War. Recent research on modernism attempts to destabilize this unidirectional trajectory of transmission and rearticulate modernism away from the binary East/West or major/minor dichotomies. The emergence of what is now commonly called the New Modernist Studies exacerbated the definitional complications aroused by the global turn in this critical field. The global exploration of modernism affords a comparative space for one to examine the following theoretical perspectives: What counts as modernism when one starts looking for examples from across the globe? What kind of agendas might be encoded in the comparisons required by a global perspective? How does the effort to think about modernism globally affect received time lines for the beginning and end of modernism? My paper will first survey the state of the study of Taiwanese and Chinese modernism in North America, tracing its shift of emphasis from national literary studies to a more comparative transnational approach and how East Asian modernism can fit into the larger context of planetary modernism.

A Research on Modernist Movement in China from the Perspective of *Xiandai*

Zheng LI (Fudan University)

After modernism had been introduced to China in the 1920s, Wu Gui Lie Che (無軌列車), *La Nouvelle Littérature* (新文藝) and *Xiandai* (現代), among many other literary magazines, came into existence, resulting in the widespread influence of modernism and literature movement. Representative figures of the Modernist Movement in China include Liu Naou, Mu Shiyong and Shi Zhecun. One of the main characteristics of the Modernist Movement in China is its drawing inspiration from both Western modernism and Japanese modernism at the same time. The main focus of this presentation is to reexamine the Modernist Movement from the perspective of the literary magazine *Xiandai* (現代).

Chinese Modernism Studies in Japan

Takuya SHIROYAMA (Ritsumeikan University)

In a general sense, Chinese Modernism often refers to the two schools of thought commonly referred to as Xin Ganjue Pai (新感覺派) and Xiandai Pai (現代派), which were formed in the urban culture of Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s. It also refers to Xiandai Zhuyi (現代主義) literature, which is the aim of avant-garde novels, poetry and plays in the China of 1980s. However, many researchers in Japan tried to define Chinese Modernism not in a narrow sense but from a wider perspective of modern Chinese literature. Sympathizing with and opposing modern Western literature at the same time, Chinese literature in the 20th century has the characteristics of modernism in a broad sense in its history of development.

In particular, since the 21st century, many researchers in Japan have been trying to reexamine the originality of modern Chinese literature as modernism from a broader perspective. For example, the researchers discuss what kind of changes has occurred in modern Chinese literature by discovering and reevaluating authors who are on the periphery of the literary history. They also try to understand the uniqueness of Socialist realism, which can be regarded as a symbol of modern Chinese literature.

In this presentation, I would like to summarize the research on Chinese modernism and give an introduction of topics that are emphasized in the Japanese scholarship.

Reception of *Shinkankakuha* by Taiwanese Intellectuals during the Japanese Occupation

Hui-Zhen XIE (Wenzao Ursuline University of Language)

The presentation is to discuss how the literature community of Taiwan cared about the Renaissance in “Naichi 内地” Japan between 1932 and 1936. The theory of literatures from Yang Kui (楊逵) and the fictions by Wu Yong-fu(巫永福) and Liu Na-ou(劉呐鷗) are taken to compare with original texts by Yokomitsu Riichi (横光利一). Firstly, during that Renaissance in “Naichi 内地” Japan, Yang Kui once gave a positive comment to “The Theory of Belles-Fiction 純粹小説論” by Yokomitsu Riichi on Taiwan News, and mentioned that Yokomitsu’s statement towards genre could be promoted to improve realism.

Next, through researching on the relationship between Wu Yong-fu and other writers during his study in Meiji University as well as comparing the activities of other art communities in Taiwan during the 1930s, the process of depicting Japanese style moving forward to originality can be studied in detail. Here, ‘Kubi to Karada’and‘Nemui Shunkyo’ by Wu Yong-fu are taken as the examples.

Finally, Liu Na-ou, who did some literature and filming in Shanghai, is discussed. He wrote *Game 遊戲* by imitating the style of Yokomitsu’s *Skin 皮膚* in a strategic method, and successfully published *Landscape of City 都市風景線*. Through the process, he did put the strategy of the so-called “Three Rewriting” into practice.

This presentation is to examine the background of literature communities in the Japan and Taiwan, to describe the genealogy of reception of “Taiwan Shinkankakuha”, to specify the position and contribution of each writer in the history of literature, and to discuss the establishing process of “Taiwan Shinkankakuha”.

The Excavation of Modernist Poets in Tainan

Kazushige OHIGASHI (Kwansei Gakuin University)

I have been studying the literature of Tainan, the ancient capital city of Taiwan, that was produced the period of the Japanese rule.

In the 1930s, Japanese and Taiwanese writers published literary works in Japanese and Chinese in Tainan. Many Taiwanese were active in writing modernism literature, such as Yang Chi-chang and Li Zhang-rui. They founded a literary circle called the Moulin Poetry Society (Fengche Shishe). They studied in Tokyo for a few years and were influenced by modernism literature, such as Surrealism, while studying there. In the period of Japanese rule, proletarian literary activities dominated the Taiwanese literary world; therefore, their literary activities did not have much influence at that time. However, in the course of Taiwan's democratization since the 1980s, their literary activities have been reevaluated, and the poets are now attracting attentions as one of the few modernism literary works before the World War II. I have just published *Digging Layers of Tainan Literature*, which discusses the literature of Yang Chi-chang and Li Zhang-rui in relation to Tainan.

Based on the past studies of Tainan modernist poets, I would like to present a brief overview and perspective of what kind of research will be possible in the future.

On the Colorfulness of Surrealist Poetry in Taiwan

Yi-Chen LAI (Soochow University)

When Taisho Vitalism was popular in Japan, poetry uses certain words whose meanings are full of “hope” or “vitality,” for example “transparent” or “bright” were often seen in poems by Miyazawa Kenji (1896-1933). In the same period of Taiwan, there is a poet, who wrote, “I think of transparent thought.” in his poem “Flaming Hair: for Festival of Poems” (Fusha vol. 3). His name was Yang Chi-chang (1908-1994), who was one of the representative poets of “Fusha Shisha” (1933), a poetry group of Surrealism in Taiwan. By the same token, other members of “Fusha Shisha” often used such words that represent colors, for example Li Zhang-zui (1911-1952) used purple and Lin Yong-shu (1914-1944) used red, white, blue, or especially yellow in their poems. In this presentation, I will discuss the problem of colors in Surrealism in Taiwan, especially in poems by members of Fusha Shisha. This comparative study has three main topics: (1) influence, (2) surrealist poems in the same age, and (3) poetic words in the social context at that time.

Irish Literature and the Establishment of Modern Taiwanese Literature in 1930s

Peichen WU (National Chiengchi University)

In 1922, Ireland successfully gained independence from England after over 700 years of colonial rule. Irish literature and drama successfully promoted “Irish identity,” as at the Abbey Theatre, known as a base of Irish nationalism through literary and theatre movements. Irish writers and playwrights were the main promoters of these movements with their “native” Irish color and advocated the revival of Irish folklore, art, and traditions through their literary works and plays, forming the “Irish identity.” When the trends of Irish literature and theatre spread to East Asia, the writers in colonial Taiwan were inspired to create their own literature and “national identity,” finding Ireland’s subsequent independence encouraging as fellow colonized territories.

The Japanese-language literary journal *Formosa*, a milestone in Taiwanese literature, was established by Taiwanese writers in Tokyo in 1933. This journal asserted the concepts of native art (*kyôdo geijyutsu*) and Taiwanese native literature (*Taiwan kyôdo bungaku*) and the plays in obvious relation to the “native art” journals in the Irish literature renaissance.

This paper will shed light on how the imagination of Irish literature traversed geographical boundaries toward Taiwan and encouraged Taiwanese writers to create their own “nativism” through art, culture and literature even though they were under the ruling of language policy for Japanese. This study will also examine the relation between Kikuchi Kan (菊池寛), Yano Hôjin (矢野峰人), and Irish literature, and how the trend of Irish literature diffused in colonial Taiwan.

Cinema and the Study of Japanese Modernity in North America

Aaron GEROW (Yale University)

Just as it was cinema that introduced modern Japanese culture to many in the West, it has been cinema that has served as a central means for scholars to understand Japanese modernity. This paper will introduce the history of such scholarship. If early scholars sought to find what was eternally Japanese in the films of Ozu and Mizoguchi, researchers from the 1990s on asked how cinema inflected Japanese modern life, as well as how Japanese cinema posed unique questions for thinking about modernity as a whole. It became common for literature scholars, for instance, to rethink Japanese modern literature by considering how deeply affected it was by cinema and other modern media. While crucial work was done on the history of introducing cinema to Japan, two other periods became privileged in the field: one centered on the war, and its narratives of colonialism, war, and the postwar Cold War and how they shape Japanese modernity; and another centered on the 1960s, a period of “political modernism” in which a New Wave cinema is seen as critiquing Japanese nationalism and capitalist modernity. In recent years, scholars have increasingly investigated the history of Japanese film theory, attempting not only to understand how cinema shapes Japanese modernity, but how Japanese, in contemplating their own modernity, often used cinema to define what modernity was.

Mid-century Modernism, Decolonisation and the Literature of the Korean Peninsula

Janet POOLE (University of Toronto)

Historians have recently called for a rethinking of mid-20th century Korean history, extending the rubric of total mobilization from the beginning of the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 past the dramatic events of liberation from colonial rule and onto the end of active fighting in the civil war in the mid-1950s. Whereas total mobilization refers more commonly to the fascist era of Japanese imperialism, presumed to have ended with Japan's defeat in war, recent scholarship argues for continuity across the colonial/postcolonial/Cold War divides marked by the formation of separate states on the peninsula in 1948. Such provocative polemics are highly suggestive for a reconsideration of Korean literary texts, which have been equally sundered by the history of division—both temporal and spatial—into an implacable contest between realism and modernism, colonial and postcolonial, North and South. The ideological contest is particularly intense in consideration of the work of those authors who literally walked across the divide of the hardening 38th parallel in the late 1940s; their existence and work unsettles the canonical polarities of Korean literary history. I will first introduce North American scholarship on Korean modernism, which has organized around the idea of “colonial modernity,” often eschewing the concept of modernism entirely. I will then ask whether a reconsideration of the concept of modernism can offer strategies to cross the divisions of aesthetics and politics that are so prominent in Korean twentieth-century history. Can mid-century modernism bring the narration of Korean modernist works into a global and/or regional modernism studies?

From Advertising Photography to War Photography:

The Trajectory of the Modernist Photographer Kiyoshi KOISHI

Teruhiko MATSUMI (Nagoya University of the Arts)

Kiyoshi Koishi was born in Osaka in 1908. He joined the Naniwa Photo Club at the age of 20, where his keen sense and excellent technique attracted attention. In the 2nd International Advertising Photo Exhibition held in 1931, he won the first prize with “Club Soap”. While working as an excellent advertising photographer, he published a photo book with a zinc cover titled *Early Summer Nerves* in 1933. This book became a masterpiece representing the emerging photography movement in Japan. However, as the times changed, Koishi devoted himself to the creation of a national photograph policy from 1937. In 1937, he produced the huge “Japan Tourism Photo Mural” for the Paris World Exposition, together with Ihee Kimura, Yoshio Watanabe and Hiromu Hara. In 1938, he became a photographer for the propaganda magazine *Weekly Photo Report*. He was commissioned by the Cabinet Intelligence Department and the Ministry of the Navy, and stayed in China as a war photographer. In 1942, on the 10-year anniversary of the founding of the Manchukuo, he was dispatched as an ambassador photographer. After the war, he moved from Kansai area to Moji, in the Fukuoka Prefecture. Although he was expected to play an active role, he died in 1957 at the age of 49. This presentation follows the production activities of Kiyoshi Koishi, focusing on his masterpiece “Hansekai” (series with 10 pieces) released in 1940 and the war photographs taken around the same time.

The future of the Studies on Japanese Modernist Poetry

Natsuki OKAWACHI (Kyushu Kyoritsu University)

In this presentation, I overview previous studies about Japanese modernist poetry and indicate the prospective issues.

Comparative Literature research played an important role in the development of the studies on Japanese modernist poetry. For example, Ōoka Makoto examined the reception of Western Modernism in Japan and pointed out that the Japanese modernist poets did not comprehend sufficiently the Western modernist ideas. Similarly, in Comparative Literature research, the Japanese modernist poetry was often low evaluated because of its differences from the Western modernist poetry.

But, after 1990's there was an uprising of studies that appreciated the originality of the Japanese modernist poetry. Wada Hirofumi paid attention to the urban culture in which the Japanese Modernism evolved.

We have two prospective issues in the studies on Japanese modernist poetry. First, we need to research more strictly the relations between the Japanese modernist poetry and the foreign Modernism. Especially considering that nowadays we have wide online access to digital data of the modernist magazines and books, that belong to a variety of universities, museums and libraries. Secondly, we have to examine the modernist poetry in post-war, such as the works of modernist poets after 1945, or the influence of modernist poetry on the post-war generation.

Japanese Modernism Literature Research in Korea

Te-Gyung KIM (Gachon University)

In South Korea, several novels of Japanese modernism literature have been translated, but there has not been a systematic introduction of representative works and criticisms to grasp the overall picture. It is necessary to carefully select, translate, and annotate the material that introduces the entire Japanese modernism literature. On this correct understanding of Japanese modernism literature, an analytical study should be carried out to newly illuminate Yi Sang's works as a practicing subject in which the dynamics of imitation and parody, which is not a mere influence relationship. In this presentation, I mainly introduce a research project about the relation between Yi Sang and foreign literature, especially the contemporary Japanese modernism literature.

Modernism and Surrealism in Korea from the 1930s to the 1940s

Jinhee Kim (Ewha Womans University)

This study is to investigate the development and characteristics of surrealism from the 1930s to the post-liberation period based on the point of view that surrealism played an important role in poetic perception, methodology and political avant-garde of Korean Modernism.

In Korea, surrealism began to be accepted and theoretically approached by Kim Ki-rim in the early 1930s. Through surrealism he understood the language, description, and imagination of poetry, and set it as a principle of modernism poetics. He emphasized that literature should have an interest in reality and a sense of criticism through a historical understanding of European surrealism. Since then, the surrealist coterie magazine “*Three, Four Literature* (三四文學 1934), in which poets and painters participated, made its start. They proceeded in the direction where it emphasized experimentalism while succeeding Kim Ki-rim’s theory as well.

Over the mid-1930s, Surrealism expanded geographically from Gyeongseong (Seoul) to north. Surrealism leads to a new poetic methodology and sense of politics in the magazine *La Dislocation* (斷層 1937) of Pyongyang, *Maek* (獐 1938) of Gyeongseong, Northern Hamgyeong province, and *Poetry Reality Coterie Magazine* (詩現實同人 1940) of Xīnjīng, Manchuria.

After the liberation, surrealist poets who have been active in Northern Korea have taken the lead in the creation of Northern Korean society, and the surrealist poets of the Southern Korean literary circle seem to have emphasized the political dislocation traits. Before and after liberation and through Korean War, the term “surrealism” gradually disappeared from the literary circle, and was replaced by the term “modernism”, which encompasses the tendency of new poetry. Since then, surrealism of the 1930s has been buried until Kim Soo-young brought about surrealism as a key part of his participation theory in the 1960s.

Literature as a Mirror: A Study on Korean modern literature and discourse on East Asia

Ye Rhee KIM (Kangwon National University)

Modern times are a system based on ideologies of nationality and capital. Likewise modern literature is a literature as a system. Literature as a system is the premise of the discourses on Korean literary texts after modern times began. Modern literature is inevitably self-referential and self-reflective, and everything in the modern world exists as a reflective object like a mirror image. The literature and art were reborn based on the self-reflection in the the modern world with autonomy free from religion and politics. In short, modernist art is the fruit of modern times.

However modern literature tries to go beyond modern rules. Modernity includes the spirit of self-denial, and modern literature takes the spirit of self-denial as a form for existence, not as content. With the nature literature could have its unique autonomy, and at the same time the nature placed literature “outside” of modern order as the other one that can belong to no systemized academic categories. In this point modern literature is the mirror of the world in another meaning.

Modern literature is based on nation and system. However, it is not included in the system itself and it always tries to pass over the system. A drive to death of literature that dismantles the modern rules includes an opportunity to extend to East Asia and further to the world beyond one nationality. From this perspective, this talk introduces studies on Korean modern literature that are now extending to a discourse on East Asia beyond its past national boundaries.

About Alternative Modernisms of the East Asia

Masato SANO (Tohoku University)

In the recent years, there has been an outbreak of the discussion about the so-called “Modernisms”, which focuses on the peculiar modes of acceptance of Modernism over each region of the world. In other words, there was a switch from a unidirectional perspective of the establishment of local modernism through the reception, imitation and legitimization of European texts, to a perspective that pays attention to the ways that local modernisms were established in each peculiar context, developing the notions of ‘Global Modernism’ or ‘Alternative Modernism’ through the interaction between the different forms.

I argue that the East Asian Modernism of 1930’s, including the modernist writers of Colonial Korea, such as Yi-Sang, Kim Gi-rim, Chong Zhi-Yong, the New Sensationists of Shanghai, such as Mu Shiyong, Liu Na’ou, Shi Zhechun, and Japanese modernists such as Yokomitsu Riichi, formed a network of interactions and intersections, indicating the possibility of a ‘East Asian Alternative Modernism’. This form of Modernism that crossed East Asia in the 1930’s, later in the postwar (postcolonial) period, produced new forms of Modernisms according to different contexts. For example, the Japanese postwar cinema of Akira Kurosawa, Yasujiro Ozu and others, are considered as new developments of the modernist movement. In addition, new schools of modernist literature were also born in the postcolonial period in Korea and Taiwan. Ultimately, I want to observe the development of new Alternative Modernisms of Postwar East Asia, including the internationalization of Hong Kong cinema through the importation of Japanese postwar modernist movies.