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**Readership, Modernity and Literary Historiography:  
The Prose Essay and the Modern Educational System in Taiwan**

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**Readership, Modernity and Literary Historiography:  
The Prose Essay and the Modern Education System in Taiwan**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

### **Readership, Modernity and Literary Historiography: The Prose Essay and the Modern Education System in Taiwan**

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The prose essay, a once dominant genre in pre-modern Chinese literature, is now a marginalized category as compared with fiction in modern Taiwanese literature. This speculation, however, does not apply to the reversed status of these two genres in the middle school literature education. The prose writing, especially the artistic essay, still occupies the largest portion of modern literature education. While universities are commonly seen as a site where literary canons are produced, revised and distributed, and where literary history is debated and constructed, these canons and literary history may be not as influential as one might think. Concurrently, a very different curriculum—which also means a different way of assessing value—is being taught in secondary schools, a place where social relations and structures are reproduced.

This thesis aims to study this disjunction between the literature research and literature education. By examining the crucial moments when the literary genres and selections significantly changed, this study aims to reveal the often-overlooked ideologies hidden behind the adoption of a specific form in contemporary Taiwan's literary

textbooks. By examining the historical contexts, national policies, public consensus and the particular trajectories of the involved intellectuals, this study aims to explore the possible but less perceptible beliefs behind the adoption of a specific literary form, which is often veiled by common presumptions.

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## **Introduction: Readership, Market and Literary Historiography**

The prose essay,<sup>1</sup> a once dominant genre in pre-modern Chinese literature, is now a marginalized category in Taiwan's modern literature. This statement is especially true when one takes a close look at the academic research projects and course offerings in departments of Chinese literature, Taiwanese literature and foreign languages and literatures at Taiwan's universities. The growing importance of modern fiction studies and the gradually decreasing amount of essay studies are often seen as clear manifestations of a strong Western influence in Taiwan's academic institutions. This change is often interpreted as a result of importing writing techniques and critical theories from the West, which began with the introduction of Western literary paradigms during China's New Culture Movement and was reinforced as part of Taiwan's Modernist Literary Movement in the 1960s.

This speculation, however, does not apply to the reversed status of these two genres in the middle school literature education. Despite the fact that Taiwan has claimed to abandon a unitary textbook policy, leaving the right of selecting textbooks to an open market since the late 1990s, the traditionally orthodox genre, the essay, still occupies the

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<sup>1</sup>The concept of the prose essay has been changing over time. In pre-modern literature, prose essay, or *sanwen* 散文 (unrhymed prose), as opposed to *yunwen* 韻文 (rhymed prose), loosely refers to a broad category of writings written in classic Chinese language for diverse purposes. In modern usages, the prose essay, or, *sanwen*, refers to a literary genre written in *baihua* 白話 (vernacular Chinese). This modern genre of prose essay mainly comprises two styles of writings: one is the essay writings with literary and aesthetic values, usually referred as *xiaopinwen* 小品文 (little piece essay) or *meiwen* 美文 (artistic essay)—and the other type of essay writing is *zawen* 雜文 (miscellaneous essays), used for diverse purposes. Owing to lack of communication between the pan-Chinese regions during the past few decades, despite the parallel developments of their literary histories, the use of terminology in the existing criticism sometimes appears inconsistent, if not chaotic. In this project, when using the terms *prose*, *essay* or *prose essay*, I generally indicate a relatively broad definition of this modern literary genre—a prose writing that is opposed to verse, written in vernacular, and having certain literary value; specific annotations will be added in the text or footnotes when the connotations of the terms diverge.

largest portion of literature education in almost all versions of textbooks as before. This disjunction between the literature research and literature education provides some notable materials for one to examine canon formation in Taiwan's cultural field. While universities are commonly seen as a site where literary canons are produced, revised and distributed, and where literary history is debated and constructed, these canons and literary history may be not as influential as one might think. Concurrently, a very different curriculum—which also means a different way of assessing value—is being taught in secondary schools, a place where social relations and structures are reproduced.

This incomplete chain of academic reproduction of literary canons affects not only the construction of literary history, but also the readership as well as the taste of the relevant markets. As a result of the 9-year compulsory education implemented by the Kuomintang government<sup>2</sup> in 1968, the generations that grow up after the 1960s share a similar taste that has been developed by a monolithic and inflexible education system. Whereas the subjects of History and Geography textbooks attract much scholarly attention and often are discussed as important sites for ideological indoctrination, little attention is paid to the homogeneous aesthetic taste and readership cultivated in this literary education system. The central position of a specific literary genre—the prose essay—in literary textbooks has in fact cultivated a significant amount of essay readers in the literature market, as compared to fiction and poetry. This cultivation by the education system to some extent contributes to the gap between the academy and the public within the field of “pure literature.” Despite its odd absence from contemporary scholarly attention and the literary canon, for many years the prose essay actually enjoyed a privileged status in sales and readership in the name of pure literature. The prevalent

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<sup>2</sup> Kuomintang, aka the Nationalist Party. Hereafter will be referred to as KMT.

perception of the prose essay as “pure literature,” which presumably would hurt its marketability among the reading public, nevertheless seems to have helped it to gain a durable position in the literary market, albeit with a less significant status as in the pre-modern times.<sup>3</sup> In other words, there is a disparity between the public imagination and the strict classification of the university scholarship regarding “what pure literature is.” This disjuncture partially results from the different literary paradigms used in the middle school system and higher educational research.

Another issue deriving from the disjuncture between higher and middle literary education is the cultivation of the producers of literary works and their critics. Under the education system at present in Taiwan and during the past few decades, most of the students have graduated from ordinary public middle schools as readers, critics and even writers of essays. Unless they choose to enter literary departments—such as Taiwanese literature and foreign languages and literatures—the formal education system does not provide them a way, as an author or critic, to enter the field of fiction, which is perceived as the most privileged genre in today’s field of literary production. Because the essay-focused school classes do not offer a forum for studying fiction, those who are interested in this privileged literary genre are forced to seek other forums for discussing fiction. In addition to extracurricular student organizations that gather to study fiction, there is also a profitable market for enrichment classes offered by private institutes. The most ostensible example is “the National Touring Art Camp”<sup>4</sup> run by the *United Daily News*. This camp

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<sup>3</sup> An offshoot of the late Ming’s “little-piece essay” and the essay form from England, the modern Chinese little-piece essay flourished in 1920s and 1930s China. However, the popularization of the essay form in that period to a large extent was grounded in a reaction to the revolutionary literature during the New Culture Movement, according to Laughlin. For a more detailed discussion about the little-piece essay in the 1920s and 1930s, see Laughlin, Charles A. *Chinese Reportage: The Aesthetics of Historical Experience*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Namely, “*Quanguo xunhui wenyi ying*” 全國巡迴文藝營.

recruits “people who are interested in art and literary writing,” and classifies recruited students into seven categories: the novel, prose, poem, internet literature, mass media, drama and film. The Cardinal Tien Youth Writing Association<sup>5</sup>, which has been established for 45 years, represents another example of how the privately funded organization fills in the gaps of the middle school literary education. This organization claims that it has “produced” more than two hundred members who constantly publish their works in newspapers or attend literature competitions, including such famous writers as Qiu Miao-jin.

Despite all the issues involved in the inconsistent paradigms adopted in the linear educational system, the major selection in literary textbooks published by different publishers remains limited to prose essays. In other words, despite the retreat of the governmental interference since the KMT announced the “one guide, multiple textbooks” policy<sup>6</sup> in the late 1990s, fiction writings still occupy a privileged position in academic study, while the prose writings continue to perform the function of aesthetic cultivation in middle schools. This situation certainly could be associated with the slow and conservative reaction of education systems that Bourdieu has observed.<sup>7</sup> In the case of Taiwan, several factors might have contributed to this conservative education system. Two of them are especially concerned in this project. Firstly, the state still interferes with the publication of textbooks by the practice of a national curricular guideline. The national guideline not only directs the selections of textbooks, but also makes the publishing houses self-censor the content to avoid costly revisions. Second, the teachers–

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<sup>5</sup> The Chinese title of the Cardinal Tien Youth Writing Association is “*genzi qingnian xiezuohui*” 耕莘青年寫作會.

<sup>6</sup> Namely, the “*yigang duoben*” 一綱多本 [one guideline, multiple textbooks] policy.

<sup>7</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson, (Columbia University Press, 1993), 23.

or even the editors—tend to select teaching materials that conform to their taste, which has been cultivated by the essay-centered Chinese classes. Now the question becomes: how were these conflicting phenomena formed in the evolution of the textbooks?

### **INTERSECTING PRINCIPLES OF LEGITIMACY: FUNCTIONAL LITERATURE**

Selecting proper literary works for middle school textbooks is apparently a task that is, at least in some ways, different from studying literary history in the academy. The process of including and excluding works for teaching involves multiple factors and potentially conflicting principles of legitimacy, which is due to the intersectional nature of the issue in discussion. Three major concerns were often found in discussions of textbooks' literary selection: literature, education and, last but not least, politics.

While in the field of art production, aesthetics is usually seen as the ultimate criterion to sort literary works, this is not necessarily the case in educational systems. Instead, practicability always matters much more than any other principles at the site of teaching. In the intersection between educational policy and building literary canons, the aesthetic rules often submit to practical purposes in classrooms, and thus more or less lose their own autonomy in judging literary works. In such cases, literary works in textbooks are mainly used for language training or information transmission, if not ideological imposition from the ruling class.

A common perception is that for a long period in postwar Taiwan, the unitary textbook policy has been basically used as a top-down apparatus for the KMT government to promulgate its favored views. According to this account, the primary goal of literature education thus was required to fit with the interests of the ruling KMT regime, which considered itself the only legitimate Chinese government and a member of the anti-Communist camp in the Cold War Era. Therefore, the prose works from the

right-wing May Fourth tradition, such as those of Xu Zhimuo and Hu shi, and the nostalgic works that articulate the past on the mainland and the present in Taiwan, such as the work of Chen Zhifan,<sup>8</sup> for decades came to be the preferable textbook selections in postwar Taiwan.

This observation of why Taiwan's textbooks favor nostalgic and right-wing works, however, could only account for certain aspects presented in textbook selection. Admittedly, the topics, materials and themes adapted in literary works are the most evident criterion for the ruling class to decide whether to include or exclude them from canon building. This viewpoint, however, does not provide a proper explanation for why a specific literary genre—the prose essay, as a vehicle that carries the weight of these favored notions—could dominate middle school textbooks for decades, despite the flourishing development of the novel, which could also carry the same government favored ideology outside of this curriculum.

Many sensible reasons could be immediately offered to explain this inverse hierarchy in education. For example, the relatively short length of the prose essay is beneficial for the portability of textbooks in the classroom; learning as many essays as possible might arguably best contribute to students' ability in composition. Alternatively, one could simply trace back the origin of the notion "textbook" and argue that modern textbooks in Taiwan are a legacy of late imperial reading books (*wenxuan*), whose selection was completely based on pre-modern prose writings, when the novel was still seen as a genre that could hardly fit into the notion of *wenzhang*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Chen's essay work "*Shigen de lanhua*" 失根的蘭花 [The rootless orchid] made its debut in the textbook in 1966.

<sup>9</sup> *Wenzhang* is a general term indicating an integrated whole of writings. But this terminology often suggest a traditional view that "writing should convey *dao* (the moral)," which is a responsibility borne primarily by traditional essay writing. In Chapter One, a more detailed discussion is developed about the conflicts between the traditional view of writing and the Western paradigms in the transitional period. For a

While the speculations stated above could explain part of the reason why the prose essay is worth supporting rather than the novel, all of them fail to explain the preference for literary essays in Taiwan's textbooks today. The ready assumption that the essay form's portability, practicability or its imperial legacy decisively contribute to the content of the textbooks, immediately leads to the question: why is it not the miscellaneous essays that overshadow the other genres in the textbooks today? Further, if we are to identify literariness as the most discernable attribute of the artistic essays as compared with the miscellaneous ones, then we should also ask why and how these artistically valuable essays were turned into a genre that is "practical." How does the literariness of the essays become a tool utilized for practical purposes, and what is its justification? Or, ultimately, the most important question may come to be: why does the supposedly disinterested literature come to be a practical subject?

With these questions in mind, a survey that traces back to the origin of modern textbooks is certainly necessary in helping to understand the formation of textbooks. The education system promulgated by the Qing dynasty in 1904 marks a divide between the traditional and the modern systems of education. For the first time, *zhongguo wenxue* (Chinese language and literature) was nationally recognized as an independent academic subject. But the concept of "*wenxue* (literature)" in this system was in obvious contradiction with the modern definition of literature. It is in this contradiction that we detect a time lag that existed in the practices of modernity. The entry of literariness in the educational system is not an inevitable process, but has a subtle connection with the need of the intellectuals in the transitional period from traditional to modern times. It is therefore not surprising that the May Fourth intellectuals are the ones who eventually

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more detailed discussion about *wenzhang*, see Laughlin, Charles, *The Literature of Leisure and Chinese Modernity*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 14-7.

come to engage in the question of whether artistic literature should be regarded as basic knowledge for the people of their nation.

After the controversies prompted by the practicability of textbooks are resolved, my next concern is: how has the form of the textbooks been changed or maintained in the particular historical context of Taiwan? In the martial law period, under the authoritarian regime, the need of politics was always served first. In other words, in the intersection of literature, education and politics, there is also a hierarchy, where the government's priorities come first. All the practical reasons stated above could have been easily overthrown if they had been contradictory to visible or invisible political norms. With that being said, it is however dangerous to see the production of ideologies in textbooks as an absolute top-down process, as this view leads us to overlook the roles that the involved agents could have played. Through a conformity to or resistance of the state-favored ideology, these agents—such as the editor or government head of textbook affairs—actually had a decisive influence on the selections. These conflicting factors, which might have contributed to an essay-centered textbook, also cannot be fully investigated when seen through the aspects of portability in the classroom.

In investigating this hierarchy of literary forms, it is thus far from enough if one only takes account of the function of the form, or conversely, the ideology behind the content, but fails to take the relation between the form and ideology into consideration. My attempt in this study is to reveal the often-overlooked ideologies hidden behind the adoption of a specific form in contemporary Taiwan's literary textbooks. Instead of an overview of the whole educational history of Taiwan, my approach is to look into the crucial moments when the literary genres and selections significantly changed. By examining the historical contexts, national policies, public consensus and the particular trajectories of the involved intellectuals, I aim to explore the possible but less perceptible



beliefs behind the adoption of a specific literary form, which is often veiled by common presumptions.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While the related studies are undoubtedly fruitful in the scholarly fields of education or literature, most of them concern the issues raised from the compulsory language policies, which were imposed either as part of colonial practice between 1895 and 1945, or as part of the KMT's Sino-centric project in the postwar years. Patricia Tsurumi depicts Taiwan's colonial education in her book *Japanese Colonial Education in Taiwan, 1895-1945*, in which she addresses language policies in terms of their relationship with the changes of the imperial assimilation. Another representative work that addressed the compulsory language policy is Huang Ying-che's *Uprooting Japan; Implanting Chinese: Cultural Reconstruction in Post-War Taiwan, 1945-1947*.<sup>10</sup> This book inspects the construction of cultural institutions in early postwar Taiwan; these institutions afterwards came to be crucial sites that facilitated the imposition of a compulsory language policy. These books are all inspiring and serious scholarly works, but are more concerned with the language policy than with literature.

Another work that has associated language policies and literature is Elisabeth Kaske's *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895-1919*. In this book, Kaske thoroughly examined the language policies and debates from the socio-historical context of the late Qing and the early Republican period. The author points out that, though insufficient attention has been paid to it, the education sector was a primary battlefield for establishing a national language at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The relation between language policy and the literary revolution is highlighted in this book, but the practical

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<sup>10</sup> This book was written in Japanese and then translated into Chinese. I consulted the Chinese version.

content of the textbooks is not stressed. In general, this scholarship is still mostly concerned with language issues during a transitional period, while less attention is paid to the practice of literature and literary genres.

The existing research regarding Chinese essays mostly consists of studies on an individual author. In terms of artistic essays, Zhou Zuoren is the most thoroughly studied writer. David Pollard and Susan Daruvala's works both provide extensive discussions about Zhou and his contemporary essay writers. Charles Laughlin's *The Literature of Leisure and Chinese Modernity* delineates and groups the writers of an important form of artistic essays—the little-piece essay (*xiaopinwen*)—in 1920s and 1930s China. His categorization and analyses of the Republican writers provide an important reference for the attributes and styles of various literary writings in this project.

## **CHAPTER OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY**

In my first chapter, I look into the history of how modern literature made its debut in modern textbooks. I begin with an overview of Chinese language readers in early postwar Taiwan. I pay particular attention to a textbook whose selection is drawn from a textbook published in Mainland China during the late Qing's new educational system. This textbook displays content that is far more practical than any literary textbooks today—most of the content was expository articles that cope with modern knowledge. Proceeding from this practical textbook, I then examine the first textbook that consciously adopts literature as a significant component during the New Culture Movement. This textbook, in which Hu Shih had actively participated, turned out to be a textbook that tended to view fiction as a preferable genre for education.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the question of how Hu Shih's blueprint for middle school education, which placed an emphasis on fictional genres, was turned into an essay-

centered textbook when the KMT party claimed to commence its political tutelage of the nation. I identify three factors as being particularly important in the transformation of the primary literary genres in the textbooks: the differentiation between literary and nonliterary writings, the call for a practical education, and the introduction of writing discourses from the Western college curriculum. These factors contributed to a textbook of practical compositions, which, under the rule of the KMT party, was eventually turned into a textbook that was only practical in terms of political propaganda.

Chapter 3 concerns the conflicts within the seemingly unchanged textbooks in postwar Taiwan. After the KMT's textbook was introduced as a standardized textbook for Taiwan's middle school education, the textbooks seemed for decades to remain unchanged, remaining essay-centered and full of governmental doctrines. In the 1960s, even if new selections were added, one could usually find in those essays a sentimental lyricism, which was to conform to the state-endorsed ideology.<sup>11</sup> I identify the textbook reform conducted by Qi Ban-yuan in the 1970s as a turning point, at which the importance of literature seemed again to be increasing in the textbooks. But this was a reform that could not proceed without compromise. Although she managed to bring a bit more fictional selections into the textbook, the emphasis remained on essayistic writings. Through a survey of the textbook selections, I argue that *quwei* (fascination or taste), a concept that she inherited from her teacher Zhu Guangqian, came to be a strategy she used to shift the textbook's emphasis to literariness and, at the same time, to conform to the government-promoted, spiritually uplifting cultural program.

It must be noted here that I do not intend to delineate the whole history of education in this study. What I am particular concerned with is the significant changes in

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<sup>11</sup> This government promoted ideology is basically a "moralist, uplifting, positive cultural outlook." See Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, *Literary culture in Taiwan: martial law to market law*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 76-7.

the practice of literature—especially literary essays—in Taiwan’s modern education system. Unlike the publication of regular books, the publication of a standardized textbook is often much more time-consuming. Sometimes students use textbooks that are almost the same—possibly with some minor revisions—during the whole decade. Instead of looking into these minor revisions, I aim to study the practice of literature in the modern textbooks in a macroscopic sense. I undertake to identify the critical points in the history of the Chinese literary textbook in Taiwan. Proceeding from these critical points, I hope to provide a more general picture on the whole.

In this thesis, I approach my conclusions through surveys of textbook content, relative historical contexts and scholarly discussions. Various textbooks that were published between the 1920s and 1940s on the mainland, and between the 1940s and 1970s in Taiwan, are used as primary sources. As the standardized textbooks are tied closely to the state through educational policies, the curricular standards and guidelines are also taken into serious consideration for a comparison with the selections and an understanding of the government’s stance. Chapter 1 deals with both the content of the textbooks and the influence of the intellectuals. In Chapter 2, I pay particular attention to the promulgation of standardized curriculums and the relative literary debates. Chapter 3 is devoted to the content of Qi’s textbook and her strategy; the primary source for this study comes from the series of textbooks published in 1970s Taiwan and from Qi’s biography.

Junior-high-school teaching materials are adopted as a primary source in this study. Aside from the scope of this research, two reasons contributed to this decision: first, the cultivation of culture or literature is usually considered equally important as language training in junior high schools. The practice of literature is more observable in this period rather than in elementary education. The second reason concerns the number

of people impacted by these middle school textbooks. According to the statistics in existing studies, fewer students received an advanced education in the senior high school relative to those who received a junior high education.<sup>12</sup> By prioritizing the textbooks used in junior high education, this study will hopefully provide a more general picture of the textbook that was most influential on the masses.

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<sup>12</sup> As of 1952, when the unitary textbook policy was promulgated, the enrolled students in secondary schools included 340,972 junior high school students and 82,893 senior high school students. See ROC Ministry of Education, *jiaoyu nianjian [the yearbook of education]*, 1999.

## **Chapter One: Literature and Textbooks: A Historical Perspective**

Literary classes in Taiwanese middle schools today generally bear the responsibility for teaching literature. Despite the disproportionate selections among various writing genres, helping students acquire an ability to appreciate artistic works is perceived to be its fundamental goal. This task, however, is not natural and unproblematic all of the time. As a result of the pragmatic nature of education, the knowledge dispersed by courses changes over time, even if the name of the class remains the same. The *guowen* class, an equivalent of “English” in American schools, which purports to teach national literature, language and culture, therefore has performed several additional tasks that are seemingly unrelated to this objective, and that are contingent on the changing political needs and official interpretations of history in any given period of time.

Due to the textbook-oriented form of teaching, textbooks become a testimony of these changes. Although many English teachers in Western countries teach from a standardized textbook, the teacher plays a greater role in designing the reading list and curriculum. Schoolteachers in Taiwan’s literary classes, however, usually do not hold any responsibility for making curricular decisions, suggesting reference materials or even selecting actual materials. Each textbook has a fixed selection and comes with a handbook for teachers, in which each selected literary text is detailed with an explanation and methods of teaching. Teachers are allowed to assign readings not listed in the textbook based on the need of the class, but only as a form of extra-curricular supplement. Some might associate this system with traditional Chinese schooling, where Confucian classics were used as textbooks. The convention of deifying the text printed in textbooks might have contributed to the textbook-centered approach. As far as

contemporary Taiwan's Chinese literary education is concerned, the primary cause, however, should be attributed to conforming to a system previously developed by the Nationalist government (hereafter referred to as the KMT) during the period of political tutelage on Mainland China before it retreated to Taiwan in 1949.<sup>13</sup> A national curricular guideline was firstly promulgated to take control of the content of textbooks in 1952; in the following year, a state-published standard textbook took the place of all other versions.<sup>14</sup> After 1954, the practice of joint entrance examinations<sup>15</sup> even enhanced the trend of deifying the content of textbooks. A textbook-centered system was thereupon established and is still controlling education in Taiwan today.

In the following sections, I will examine the significant changes in the content of textbooks in early postwar Taiwan, with a special focus on the period between 1945 and 1947. Through a survey of this period, I aim to highlight the pragmatic function performed by middle-school textbooks, which decisively guides the way selections are made. On the one hand, the most important practical demand for the postwar Taiwanese was the acquisition of *baihuawen* (vernacular Chinese) for daily writing, and a cultural identification with the newly reunited "fatherland" China. These two market-driven incentives guided the direction of postwar textbooks, at least until 1947. On the other hand, the national unitary-textbook-system created in 1952 by the KMT party was

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<sup>13</sup> While the studies about colonial practice in elementary-school language education in the Japanese period have many fruitful results, very few of them address the situation in terms of middle school literary education. Through some of these studies, it is observable that elementary Japanese classes also use a nationally standardized textbook. As for middle-school literary classes, I do not have sufficient examples at hand to claim whether there was a change regarding the textbook-centered education here. A more advanced study of the role middle-school textbooks played in the linguistic transition in the postwar Taiwan will be required in the future in order to make a comparison of the textbook policies between the colonial and KMT government. In this project, I will focus on the textbook policies by the KMT government.

<sup>14</sup> Under this guideline, *guowen*, *gongmin* (civics and virtue), History and Geography classes were regulated to use the government-edited textbooks.

<sup>15</sup> The Senior High School Joint Entrance Examination began in 1958, and the College Joint Entrance Examination in 1954. See a more detailed discussion in Chapter Three.

utilized for political purposes. The KMT textbook closely tied literature with political indoctrination, and thus required justification. The postwar Taiwanese textbook, therefore, concerned not only whose knowledge had greater value, but also in what way this knowledge could be legitimized as proper content for teaching.

### A NEW NATIONAL TONGUE AND THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION

It may be asserted that this particular form of textbook-oriented approach used in today's Chinese literary education in Taiwan came with the KMT regime from Mainland China.<sup>16</sup> Yet this system was not transferred without difficulty.

As a result of Japanese colonization (1895-1945), Taiwan already had an established educational system by the time Taiwan was retroceded to the KMT-ruled Republic of China after the end of World War II. For the purpose of assimilation, Japan began to make serious efforts to eliminate the existing “*shufang* (similar to *sishu*, the traditional tutorial class for Chinese children)” and to build modern elementary schools across the island in 1918 and 1919. Abolishing *shufang* was apparently an effort to remove the influence of Sino-centric ideology engrained in classical Chinese learning. In

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<sup>16</sup> The KMT government edited and published a series of temporary literary textbooks in 1946 in response to the special demand of the Taiwanese. But this series of textbooks had little influence, as schools were allowed to adopt other textbooks or readers. In the period between 1947 and 1952, most textbooks used in Taiwan were imported from mainland private publishing houses. These textbooks claimed to follow the national guidelines announced in 1940 or 1948 on the mainland, but the content of these textbooks varied immensely, and their influence on the following textbooks were also small. The most influential one was the unitary textbook the KMT edited and published in 1953. For a more detailed discussion of the temporary literary textbooks in 1946, see Chen Hung-Wen, “Shūsen chokugo Taiwan ni okeru kyōkasho hensan ni kansuru ichikōsatsu – kokumin gakkō chūtō gakkō zeiyō Kokugokahon o chūshin ni” 終戦直後台湾における教科書編纂に関する一考察- 国民学校・中等学校暫用国語課本を中心に [An analysis of textbooks after WWII in Taiwan, based on elementary schools' and high school's interim Chinese language textbooks], in *The Annual reports of the Graduate School of Education*, Tohoku University 55, no. 1, (2006): 15-36, accessed April 10, <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/120001085133>. For a brief introduction of the curriculum and textbooks from 1945 to 1952, see Su Yia-li, “Gaozhong Guowen Kecheng Biaozhun yu Guowen Keben Xuanwen Bianqian zhi Yangjiu” 高中國文課程標準與國文課本選文變遷之研究, 1952-2004 [A study of the changes in senior high schools' *guowen* curriculum and selections, 1952-2004], (MA thesis, National Chengchi University, 2004), 12-39.



the meantime, the promotion of the national language (*kokugo*), namely, Japanese, through the modern elementary school system reinforced the colonial perception that Taiwan was part of the Japanese nation-state.<sup>17</sup> In 1943, a six-year compulsory education was implemented. The enrollment rate in “elementary school of nationals (*kokumingakkō*)”<sup>18</sup> climbed to 80% by the time the war ended. Despite the fact that inequality between Taiwanese and Taiwan-born-Japanese still prevented many Taiwanese from advancing to junior and senior high schools at that time, influences from this modern education system are still discernable in Taiwan’s middle school education today.

The high enrollment rate in the KMT regime, however, also signifies Taiwan’s alienation from the Chinese language. The modern tongue of the majority of local residents in Taiwan was Taiwanese—a spoken language that shared vocabulary and pronunciations with *Minnanhua*,<sup>19</sup> a dialect of southeastern China. However, the KMT

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<sup>17</sup> According to the statistics collected from 1907 to 1940, the number of traditional private schools dropped from 873 to 17, and the number of enrolled students reduced correspondingly from 18,612 to 996. In the meanwhile, the number of modern elementary schools climbed from 565 to 1,074 during 1919-43. See Tsurumi, E. Patricia, *Japanese Colonial Education in Taiwan, 1895-1945*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1977), 246, and Wang Zhi-ting, *Taiwan Jiaoyu Shi* 台灣教育史 [The educational history in Taiwan], (Taipei: Taiwan shudian, 1959), 46.

<sup>18</sup> In 1941, all elementary schools “*shōgakkō* (elementary school)” in Japan were renamed as “*kokumingakkō* (elementary school of nationals).” One of the characteristics of this policy is that “the strong color of nationalism was added to the educational purpose.” In the same year, Taiwan’s elementary schools, including the “*shōgakkō* (elementary schools for Taiwan-born-Japanese and Japanese in Taiwan)” and “*kōgakkō* (elementary schools for Taiwanese)” also followed this policy and were both renamed as *kokumingakkō*. This policy cancelled out the differentiation between schools for Japanese and those for Taiwanese on the surface, but an implicit difference in their use of teaching materials still existed. For more on the school system and *kokumingakkō*, see Japan, Ministration of Education, Monbushō, *Gakusei Hyakunen Shi* 学制百年史 [The History of One-Hundred-Year Educational System], (Tokyo: gyousei, 1972). Also seen in Website of Ministration of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan: [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpbz198101/hpbz198101\\_2\\_114.html](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpbz198101/hpbz198101_2_114.html)

<sup>19</sup> According to the governmental statistics, Taiwanese residents comprise four major ethnic groups as of today: Minnan (67.5%), Hakka (13.6%), aboriginals (1.8%), as well as mainlanders who came after 1945 or 1949 (7.1%). The differentiations among these ethnic groups, however, did not attract public attention until the 1970s. See “*jiushijiu nian keji renkou diaocha*” 九十九年客家人口調查 [A Census of the Hakka Population, 2010], cited from the official website of R.O.C. Council for Hakka Affairs Executive Yuan, accessed April 12, <http://www.hakka.gov.tw/np.asp?ctNode=298&mp=298>.

tried to enforce the use of Mandarin Chinese in official functions as well as everyday life in the name of the “national language,” which as a matter of fact had been adopted by the Republic of China only in the 1920s.<sup>20</sup> The administrator of education had to adopt various strategies to promote and popularize the use of Mandarin Chinese among the Taiwanese population.

After signing a surrender agreement with Japan, Chen Yi, the governor general assigned by Chiang Kai-shek to Taiwan in 1945, wrote a letter to invite his friend to join in the efforts of reconstructing Taiwan. The letter stated:

...One of the important tasks of governing Taiwan is mental reconstruction. Now the sensitive issue is that, the instrument of mental reconstruction-spoken and written language-is in need of reformation first. Existing books and newspapers published by various provinces are mostly not suitable because of the level of Chinese language [of Taiwanese people]. Within two or three years, [we] must edit books and newspapers that are made especially for Taiwanese use....<sup>21</sup>

Chen believed Taiwan must be transformed inside and out, and the first thing to change was its language. He was apparently not the only person who held this belief. At that time, many Taiwanese people were also aware of their questionable identity under the new regime and tried to find ways to come to terms with it. People soon became keen about learning Chinese, as one way to embrace their new identity. The traditional readers, such as *Sanzijing* [Three-character manual] or *Qianziwen* [Thousand-character compositions], were once again extracted from the archives and used by people. The classical writings nevertheless were soon found unsuitable for the need of learning modern Chinese language. The newly published readers, with annotations of Japanese,

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<sup>20</sup> The vernacular Chinese had acquired an authoritative status during the New Cultural Movement and was officially adopted in the national curriculum in 1923; for a more detailed discussion, see Chapter Two.

<sup>21</sup> Huang Ying-che, *Qu Ribenhua, Zai Zhongguohua-zhanhou Taiwan wenhua chong jian, 1945-1947* 去日本化, 再中國化: 台灣文化重建1945-1947 [Uprooting Japan; Implanting Chinese: Cultral Reconstruction in Post-War Taiwan, 1945-1947], (Taipei: Maitian, 2007), 86.

Romanized spelling or newly imported phonetic alphabets for learning Chinese, therefore came to be bestsellers with this tide of fashion.<sup>22</sup> This wave of self-motivated study and the demand for Chinese learning materials lasted at least until the end of 1946, when complaints about the government administration started to appear in newspapers.

The readers that prevailed during these two years had a variety of titles, all indicating learning materials for Chinese that used such terms like “*baihuawen* (vernacular Chinese),” “*Beijingyu* (Beijing dialect),” “*guanhua* (Mandarin),” or “*huayu* (sino-language),” “*hanwen* (Han language)” and national language “*guoyu*,”<sup>23</sup> which as used by businessmen who were sensitive enough to the politics. Two types of readers were most popular: one was for learning everyday conversation, and the other tried to introduce high-quality modern Chinese literary writings into vernacular Chinese. In a reader edited by a Japanese professor specializing in the Chinese language,<sup>24</sup> writings from the May Fourth Movement were introduced in great length, without much attention being paid to what ideology the author might have tried to convey. Hu Shi, Xie Bingxin, Mao Dun, Lao She, Yu Dafu and Lu Xun all appeared in one single reader, with annotations written in Japanese. Besides, the selections were not limited to essays, but also included novels and short stories, including *Luotuo Xiangzi* [Camel Xiangzi] and *Kong Yiji* [Kong Yiji].<sup>25</sup> In other words, within the particular historical context, many readers or textbooks published in Taiwan in the early postwar years were inevitably hybrid products. Teaching materials enjoyed a considerable freedom in terms of

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<sup>22</sup> Cai Sheng-qi, “Zhanhou chuqi xue guoyu richao yu guoyu duben” 戰後初期學國語熱潮與國語讀本 [The upsurge in learning the national language and the national language readers in the early postwar period], *guojia tushuguan guankan*, no. 2 (2011): 60-98.

<sup>23</sup> The Chinese characters of “*guoyu*” are equivalences of to the Japanese Kanji “*kokugo*.”

<sup>24</sup> This reader was edited during the colonial period, and became popular in the early postwar period. See Cai, “*The upsurge*,” 73-4.

<sup>25</sup> Cai, “*The upsurge*,” 73-4.

selections during this period, and the essay-centered textbook system had yet to be established.

Long before this tide of learning Chinese, another influential Chinese language reader, called *Hanwen Duben* [Chinese language reader], also existed in Taiwan. This reader was published by the Lanji bookstore in southern Taiwan. *Chinese Language Reader* had brought a significant profit to its publisher when it was released in the 1930s, and enjoyed another sales boom when Taiwan was returned to China in 1945. This bookstore was known for its extensive Chinese publications alongside Japanese ones during the colonial period. The Japanese government prohibited this bookstore from importing Chinese textbooks into Taiwan, for the textbook was titled “*Zuixin guowen duben* [the latest national language reader],”–which was politically incorrect in the colonial period, when Taiwan’s national language was Japanese instead of Chinese. Suffering a business loss due to the importation of Chinese books, Lanji changed its strategy and started to produce its own Chinese textbooks. Experienced in avoiding censorship from the colonial administration, Lanji copied the format of the Chinese textbook from Mainland China and selected articles from these textbooks as well, filtering out those that would potentially cause trouble. Besides, despite their claim that this textbook was edited and published in Taiwan, it was printed in Shanghai and then shipped back to Taiwan for sale. The title of the book was of course taken care of: *Guoyu* [national language] was replaced by *Chinese Language Reader*, a term that has a connotation vaguely related to not only classical Chinese (*wenyan wen*), but also the Japanese style *kanbun*, and sometimes vernacular Chinese (*baihuawen*).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Lanji changed the titles of “*Chuji hanwen duben*” 初級漢文讀本 [The elementary Chinese language reader] and “*Gaoji hanwen duben*” 高級漢文讀本 [The advanced Chinese language reader] to “*Chuji guoyu duben*” 初級國語讀本 [The reader of elementary national language] and “*Gaoji guowen duben*”

The strategies Lanji adopted contributed to remarkable success during the 1930s and helped the business to reverse its course from loss making to breaking even. When Taiwan's national language switched to Mandarin Chinese after 1945, Lanji once again proved its business acumen. Owing to the fact that post-war China was short of paper and thus could not afford to offer Taiwan Chinese-made textbooks, for a period of time the demand from elementary and middle schools was so strong that Lanji almost could not provide enough supplies. Pirated versions that were copied from Lanji also circulated in the market, as a result of the great demand for Chinese textbooks at the time.<sup>27</sup>

In general, before the 1947 crackdown that created a tense relationship between ordinary people and the state, readers and textbooks for learning Chinese language and literature appeared to be published under market driven forces. Although these forces were suspicious as also being generated from ideologies (from becoming Japanese to becoming Chinese), the use of readers or textbooks during this period was normally for purely practical purposes. Based on an increased demand for readers and textbooks, bookstores adopted increasingly sophisticated business strategies. Textbooks were not taken for granted as an important tool for passing down cultural canons, but were commodities that supplied people's need for cultural nourishment.

Therefore, during this period, people were relatively free from concerns about whether the approach or content corresponded with the often single-minded political theme; instead, they focused on the practical function of those books in helping to learn the language of their "fatherland." The distinction between left-wing and right-wing

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高級國文讀本 [The reader of advanced national language and literature] when the textbook was reprinted after 1945.

<sup>27</sup> Cai, "The upsurge," 79-82. For further discussion of Lanji's *Hanwen* publications, see *Jiyili de Youxiang: Jiayi Lanjishuju Shiliao lunwen Ji* 記憶裡的幽香: 嘉義蘭記史料論文集, [The aroma of memory: anthology of the papers on Jiayi Lanji's historical materials](Taipei: Wenxun, 2007).

ideologies represented by individual authors was not yet emphasized, as Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Guo Muoruo were frequently introduced in different readers or textbooks. Also, the question of whether the literary form of essays or fiction was more suitable for textbooks was not answered under the market rule, as both forms appeared in various readers. The readers and textbooks published during this phase, in general, represented a diverse outlook.

It is worth noting that, under this market-driven tide of publishing, however, modern Chinese works from Taiwan's indigenous writers, mostly written before Japanese as a national tongue prevailed, were not seen in most readers. The obscurity of Taiwanese writers might immediately be associated with the censorship during Japanese rule, which appeared as one of the factors that concealed these writers. However, since Taiwan enjoyed a brief period of market-authored publication of Chinese language readers, to explain the continued absence of modern Taiwanese writers, one must address another question as well: whose literature was perceived as possessing greater value?

For Japanese editors in the colonial period, it seemed reasonable that works from the May Fourth writers best represented modern China. Chinese literary works written in Taiwan should not be put into Chinese learning material, while Taiwan was supposedly part of Japan. Yet for Taiwanese publisher in the early postwar years, this was a question related to cultural identification. After Taiwan's retrocession to China, Taiwanese intellectuals had been seeking ways to cope with the hybridity in their language after the return to China.<sup>28</sup> The obscurity of Taiwanese writers in the early post-war years was therefore a direct result of this search for a "pure Chinese language." The selections thus

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<sup>28</sup> See Chen Pei-fong's discussion for the complex relationship between "*kanji*," "*hanwen*" and "*baihuawen*," and Taiwan's identity and imagination of the empires. Chen, "Riji Shiqi Taiwan Hanwenmai de Piaoliu yu Xiangxiang" [The currents and imagination of the strings of *Hanwen* in Japanese period Taiwan], *Taiwan Shi Yanjiu* 15, no.4, (2008): 31-86.

must be introduced from China. Another reason might lie in the practicability of language. In order to be culturally communicable with Chinese on the mainland, learning vernacular Chinese seemed a compelling reason for why Taiwan's textbooks needed to teach May Fourth writers instead of indigenous writers.

However, if we take Lanji as an example, surprisingly, not only were Taiwanese writers not seen in this textbook, but also there was only limited space assigned to the May Fourth writers. Significant space in the *Chinese Language Reader* was given to explanatory essays written in lucid and simple classical Chinese. These essays were written to elucidate a great deal of new vocabulary drawn from science and modern life; the content contained such titles as: earth (*diqu*), microorganism (*weishengwu*), telegram (*dianbao*) and library (*tushuguan*). It included concepts of the modern nation, like Chinese people (*zhongguoren*), national flag (*guoqi*), our country (*women de guojia*), and virtues based on the need of modern society, like quitting cigarettes and alcohol (*jiexianjiu*), to exercise for a body like steel (*yangcheng tie yiyang de shenti*) and quitting smoking (*jiexiyan*). It appears the practices of scientific knowledge and quotidian modernity were at least as weighty as the acquisition of language and appreciation of literature or moral doctrines in Lanji's textbook.

Therefore, besides the question of whose literature had greater value, should we also ask: was "literature" undoubtedly seen as valuable in these Chinese readers at the time? If not, what was valued in a *guowen* textbook? When and how did literature come to be the essential component of a *guowen* textbook? Could these questions be related to the background of why a specific literary form came to dominate *guowen* textbooks in the following decades?

**NATION, EDUCATION, LITERATURE:  
MODERN CHINESE LITERATURE AS AN INSTITUTION**

Aside from the textbooks that circulated in 1920s China, one of the primary sources from which Lanji obtained materials was the 1906 publication *Zuixin guowen jiaokeshu* [the latest national language and literature textbook]. After the Qing Empire announced the new educational system in the year of *guimao*<sup>29</sup> as the first step toward building a modernized education, *The Latest*, a textbook published by a privately owned bookstore,<sup>30</sup> was the first set of textbooks that aimed to correspond with the new academic-year system.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, the primary source that Lanji attempted to import and later on learned from was actually the first modern national-language textbook in China. This time lag made Lanji a quite different textbook, as compared to other newly produced textbooks in Taiwan, due to the need of reuniting with Mainland China.

*The Latest* was listed as the first modern textbook not only for its attempt to coordinate with the school-year system; more importantly, it was the first textbook published with a pronounced awareness of modernity. Before *The Latest*, even in the very beginning of the *guimao* educational system, traditional cultural readers like *Three-character Manual*, *Baijiaxing* [Hundred Family Surnames] or *Guwen guanzhi* [A Selection of Classical Chinese Essays] were still the primary source for children and teenagers. In the late Qing Empire, as part of the efforts made to emulate Western

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<sup>29</sup> This educational system was named after the year it was announced. The Chinese Zodiac year “*guimao*” corresponds to the year 1904.

<sup>30</sup> *The Latest* was first published by The Commercial Press (*Shangwu Yinzhu Guan*) in 1906 Shanghai. It involved three years of editorial work after the *guimao* educational system was promulgated. The principal editor of this project was Cai Yuanpei.

<sup>31</sup> *The Latest* was edited to correspond with the school year of the *guimao* educational system, in which a nine-year basic education program was mapped out, including six years for the elementary level and three for the advanced elementary level. This is equivalent to elementary school and junior high school in China today. Lanji inherited this principle and published a two-volume textbook in Taiwan: *Hanwen duben* for the elementary level and *Hanwen duben* for the advanced level. The examples in this paper are taken from the advanced level when possible, to correspond with middle school education today. Examples from the elementary level come with annotation when adopted.



civilization, scientific principles started to be brought into the editorial process.<sup>32</sup> The editors began to attend better to the arrangement and annotation of selections. This type of textbook, however, was mostly still characteristic of a traditional perception of knowledge and the world. Language, literature, culture, science and morality were not viewed as independent subjects. Instead, all of them were seen as integral for teaching. This traditional perception, in which everything was seen as part of an integrated knowledge system, led to criticisms of the textbook. These criticisms mostly pointed to its obvious entanglements with traditional moral doctrines.

Thanks to the increasing contact with the West, which mirrored China as an independent cultural unity as opposed to other countries, the concepts of Chinese language, literature and culture (*Zhongguo wenxue*) gradually came into existence. Quite a few of *The Latest's* editors actually were familiar with Japanese or Western education as models, and one of the editors was even Japanese. As part of their efforts to develop a modern textbook, *The Latest* was titled “Guowen,”<sup>33</sup> which was for the first time the concept of Chinese language, literature and culture as an independent subject separate from moral instruction. As the first modern textbook in China, *The Latest* abandoned the traditional worldview and pioneered classifying knowledge in a rather innovative way, as part of systematic reform in the *guimao* project. In *The Latest*, instead of adopting existing materials, the editors wrote most of the articles. Efforts were also made to describe newly imported and rather modern concepts, using the tool at hand: classical Chinese, kept lucid when possible.

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<sup>32</sup> This kind of textbook was generally called “*monxue keben*” 蒙學課本 [the elementary textbook] without a specific title.

<sup>33</sup> The title, a general name known as the combination of Chinese language, literature and culture, was then taken over as the title of Taiwan’s middle school textbook for several decades.

In such a transitional moment, when the traditional culture was questioned and an ideal substitute was yet to be found, the emergence of *The Latest* was quite notable. Although its format does not look much different from the textbooks today—selected short articles for learning—what is called “literature” today was hardly found in *The Latest*. Apparently, even though nowadays the title “*guowen*” means the language, literature and culture of a nation,<sup>34</sup> it was not the case at the time when *The Latest* was published. For *The Latest*, the term *guowen* pointed to a more straightforward connotation: a national written language, which meant literary Chinese (*wenyan*) at the time. According to this understanding, the national language therefore should function as a tool for coping with “the modernity” that the Qing Empire was facing. In other words, literature, or *wenxue*—a term that actually needs a careful definition in dealing with materials between the premodern and modern—was not serious enough to be read in a textbook as today. The reason for this seems also natural enough: literature was not, or not yet discovered as, a proper tool for solving problems in the face of threats brought about by Western civilization.

Regarding the assessment of the late Qing textbooks, it is not surprising to see that the principles of selection changed as the unstable concept of literature (*wenxue* or *wen*) changed. “What literature is” was here a challenging question to answer. In fact, as late as 1904, when the idea of literary history writing was firstly introduced into China and practiced, the term “literature” still allowed diverse interpretations. With the Western imported concepts in mind, there were certainly intellectuals who believed aesthetic value should be the standard for distinguishing literary from nonliterary writings. But this interpretation of literature was not embraced by everyone and invited criticism. There

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<sup>34</sup> The Chinese character “wen” is a pictographic character delineating “beautiful pattern”; it later assumed the meanings of etiquette, Chinese characters, articles, literature, and culture.

were also intellectuals who interpreted literature as a general term, arguing that literature should constitute various writings (*wen*) in the Chinese classics. In a sense, this type of opinion tended to view literature as an integrated whole deriving from traditional culture.<sup>35</sup>

However, neither of these interpretations could satisfy the needs of the Qing Empire. The general humanities taught in traditional education had proved insufficient for dealing with the modern world, whereas literature with aesthetic values was not yet taken seriously. *Guowen*, as discussed earlier, started to be plainly seen as a national language and a tool in a utilitarian sense. *Guowen* here, as a scientific and independent subject, does not carry the burden of passing down “the literature of a nation,” putting aside the notion of what “literature” might mean.

*The Latest* remained the most influential textbook for Chinese learning in the late Qing, until the *guimao* system gave way to another new education system established with the rise of the Republic of China. New textbooks were published to correspond with the Republican program and make a profit, but most of these books focused on the editorial forms instead of the selection of works. With the futile efforts made by the Qing

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<sup>35</sup> In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the definition of “literature (*wenxue* or *wen*)” was actually an unsolved problem. One of the most well-known books of Chinese literary history was written in 1898 by a Japanese scholar, Sasagawa. This book was translated into Chinese in 1903. The Western concept of literature adopted in this literary history challenged the traditional view of literature as general “humanities.” This Western point of view inspired a Chinese scholar Lin Chuanjia to begin his writing of another Chinese literary history from an opposite perspective. Despite the fact that Lin wrote this book as a curriculum for a modern “Literature” class—a whole new university class also created by the *guimao* system, Lin insisted on his view that literature meant the wholeness of classical writings. This literary history was therefore written with less aesthetic judgment, and excluded novels, short stories, dramas and play scripts. With the contentious concept of literature in the beginning of Republican era, the selection of textbooks tended to be traditional. Most of the textbooks had their selections in classical Chinese in chronological order, without focusing on identifying their aesthetic values. For discussion on the first literary history in China, See Milena Dolezelova-Velingerova, “*Literary Historiography in Early Twentieth-Century China (1904-1928): Constructions of Cultural Memory*,” in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China’s May Fourth Project*, ed. Milena Dolezelova-Velingerova, Oldrich Kral, Graham Sanders (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001) 123-66.

Empire to cope with the predicament raised by modern Western civilization, most of the textbooks swung back to the conservative side and again looked for selections in traditional Confucian classics.

It is interesting to note that, probably not surprisingly, the uninspired textbook content during early Republican years was not a result of the government's benign neglect of education or textbooks. In fact, since the establishment of the Republic, the governments, including the warlords, had been keenly aware of the significance of education. Various principles were announced to regulate textbooks. Publishers needed to send the draft to the government for authorization before the book could be used in class. The principles for editing textbooks changed remarkably often, sometimes once every other year. Even so, the textbook market was still one of the most profitable fields and attracted numerous publishers. The publishing industry appeared vigorous, while their selections were scarcely comparable to that of the late Qing in terms of an innovative or pragmatic perspective.

In 1917, six years after the Republic was established, Hu Shih published his well-known treatise “*Some Modest Proposals for Reform of Literature*” in *Xin gqingnien* (*New Youth*), thus triggering the reform of written Chinese language.<sup>36</sup> Yet the more powerful document associating language and literature was his 1918 essay “*On the Constructive Literary Revolution*,” which centers upon the theme of “a national language literature, a literary national language (*guoyu de wenxue he wenxue de guoyu*):”

The literary revolution that we advocate seeks only to create for China a national language literature. Only when there exists a national language literature can there be a literary national language. Only when there exists a literary national language can our national language be considered a true national language. Without

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<sup>36</sup> Kirt A. Denton, ed., *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1996.

literature, the national language has no life, no value, cannot be established, and cannot develop.<sup>37</sup>

This understanding turned the relationship between language and literature into an interdependent bond. In order to establish a written language, the country must first build a national literature as a foundation. The aesthetic sensibilities created by literature came into prominence, as they could be utilized as the foundation of the language. In quoting this passage in his book, Crespi comments on Hu's view:

Literary language draws upon and refines everyday language, and this newly refined art-language draws upon and refines everyday language. Thus two distinct and linguistically constituted national subjects—the popular collective on the one hand and the individualized literary elite on the other—achieve a constructive and progressive unity in the course of ongoing linguistic exchange. But more important, at least for the makers of literature, is the exalted status Hu confers upon them. Given the assumption that a nation cannot properly exist without a national language, and that a national language cannot be generated without a national literature, those who produce national literature are essential to the very making of the nation.<sup>38</sup>

Along “the course of ongoing linguistic exchange” between the art-language and everyday language, education must play a key part. Only after the literary language is transmitted could a national language possibly be formed. Schooling appeared the best place to educate the masses in this literary language. Through the nationwide educational system, this linkage from the literary elite to the popular collective could possibly be completed; a coherent national subject came into being thereafter. What Hu dealt with turned out to be a project concerned with the rise of a modern nation. In this project, the creation of a national language went hand in hand with the birth of a coherent national subject, and education was deservedly a requisite for this linkage.

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<sup>37</sup> Hu Shih, *Hu Shih Lun-hsueh Chin-chu* (Recent Scholastic Writings by Hu Shih; republished in 1953 with certain deletions as *Hu Shih Wen Ts'un*, Vol. 4, Taipei, *Yuan Tung* Book Company), Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1935, quoted in John A. Crespi, *Voices in revolution: poetry and the auditory imagination in modern China*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 33.

<sup>38</sup> John A. Crespi, *Voices in revolution: poetry and the auditory imagination in modern China*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 33.

The dilemma the 1906 textbook *The Latest* had faced but ultimately failed to solve—i.e., how to cope with the modernity brought by Western civilization—thus had a solution here, according to Hu. Since “a nation cannot properly exist without a national language, and a national language cannot be generated without a national literature,”<sup>39</sup> accordingly, modern mass education cannot be carried out without teaching and using the national language; in order to properly teach this national language, a national literature must be introduced into the classroom.

Another concept also worth noting here is the connotation of the term “literature” that Hu used in his essays. What he meant by “literature,” judging from the examples he gave, was literature with aesthetic values. What he had exalted in *On the Constructive* was therefore not only “the makers of literature,”<sup>40</sup> but also the general status of literature in an aesthetic sense. Hence, the status of modern literature was confirmed and soon included into the educational system.

In 1920, merely three years after Hu’s *Some Modest Proposals*, the government demanded that all elementary schools start to teach vernacular Chinese, and that all middle schools adopt some vernacular Chinese materials. To properly teach vernacular Chinese, the publishers and editors started to bring literature into textbooks as a model for language learning. New textbooks were published with the essays, poems and short stories of Lu Xun, Guo Muoruo and Zhou Zuoren, etc. Vernacular Chinese language, literature, education and the nation therefore have gone hand in hand since then.

The entry of literary works into the modern education system, as a result, was never a natural process, even though it might appear so. Literature was not a legacy or spirit that must be passed down to the next generation, but a historical product that

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 33.

resulted from battles and negotiations. Through examining the nuances of textbooks in different periods, one can observe that the entry of literature into the modern educational system through textbooks was in fact closely tied to the rise of nationalism. Since what to include or exclude in textbooks does not always appear to be fair and natural, the question becomes: how did Republican textbooks evolve to the essay-centered form in Taiwan today? Was it entirely a product of censorship from the KMT government? How did the textbooks that flew with the KMT to Taiwan become textbooks in need of reform?

## **Chapter Two: From the Fictional to the Prosaic: The Birth of the Party's Textbook**

In the last chapter, we discussed how Hu Shih's proposal of "a national language literature and a literary national language" could affect the approach to learning vernacular Chinese as a national language. Through Hu's proposal, literature had a pragmatic function in language learning. The legitimization of *baihuawen* as a national language in the Republican educational system, therefore, came with the assurance that literature would be a significant part of the textbook. In this chapter, I continue the discussion of early Republican textbooks in order to explore a few questions that emerged from Hu's proposal when applied to schooling.

The use of textbooks changed traditional views of the valuable elements in education, making the textbooks an inevitable battlefield for both old and new knowledge. Hu's praise legitimized vernacular literature in this new form of schooling, so the next question naturally came to be: what actually constitutes literature? From Hu's view, vernacular fictional writings were the most important component in his blueprint for middle school education. In one of the follow-up articles in *New Youth*, he suggested middle school students should read at least twenty to fifty vernacular novels in order to adapt to vernacular Chinese.<sup>41</sup> But this view soon invited quite a few dissenters. Not all the attacks pointed to the drawbacks caused by using fiction for teaching; in fact, some of the criticisms were rooted in structural problems. But the changes made to pacify the critics eventually led to a reduction in the amount of fiction in textbooks. Some of the strongest dissents came from the unsurprising counterattack of the conservatives, whereas

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<sup>41</sup> Hu Shih, "Zhongxue guowen de Jiaoshou" 中学国文的教授 [Teaching secondary schools Chinese language and literature] in *Hu Shih Wencun*, (Shanghai: Shanghai shu dian, 1989), 303-24.



the others involved deep-seated factors rooted in the unclear boundary between literature and non-literature.

The non-literary writings were often proposed and discussed in two types of occasions. One of the occasions was when the definition of literature was to be clarified. Intellectuals, even those who wholeheartedly embraced Hu's promotion of *baihuawen*, actually soon found literary and non-literary writings should be differentiated. The Western definition of literature was a catalyst to stimulate this attempt at differentiation. The literary hierarchy Hu advocated was in a way a Western imported product.<sup>42</sup> The novel and short stories in this literature thus enjoyed a prestigious status like their Western counterparts. The prose writings (*sanwen*), however, inherited the feature of traditional Chinese writings and therefore appeared ambiguous. The traditional view of "*wen*" did not put special emphasis on distinguishing aesthetic writings from writings without aesthetic characteristics. This was partially a result of the traditional view that, after all, the most important function *wen* must carry out is moral instruction. The aesthetic role *wen* could play was thus oftentimes belittled. This feature of lacking aesthetic value, however, apparently contradicted the Western definition of literature. In order to ally the prose essay with literature, a differentiation must be made to find out what actually belongs to literature and what does not.

In other words, the creation of the category of *yingyongwen* was to a certain extent based on the need to create literary prose writings. The differentiation was part of the move made to re-classify the existing or traditional writings. Prose writings, either those that belonged to the traditional category of *wen* or would be generated by the New Culture Movement to come, must be categorized or re-categorized accordingly to fit in

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<sup>42</sup> Hu considered that literature should be lucid, stimulating and aesthetic. This definition of literature is basically from a Western point of view.

with the Western concept of literature. Without non-literary, practical purposes, literature is thus pure and disinterested. The birth of practical composition was therefore generated from the need to exclude those works that did not fit the new definition of literature. Once practical writings were distinguished from the traditional view of literature—*wen* or *wenxue*, the next question became whether literature was the only or best approach to a new written language. The call for a scientific approach and a practical purpose made practical writing a seemingly preferable category. Eventually, while the making of the category of non-literary writing was meant to prolong the life of the traditional genre, *sanwen*, non-literary writing itself became a welcomed option for language and literary education.

Another discussion about non-literary writing concerned the actual need of ordinary people. The essence of modern education was one of the factors that generated the need to distinguish literature and non-literature in textbooks. The fact that modern education had gone through a transformation from a traditional elite education to a mass education changed the basic need of people receiving education.<sup>43</sup> While during the imperial period, learners received a literary education to pursue a governmental career, modern education was meant for people with more diverse ultimate occupations. The frequent communications between the masses took the place of courteous language between a superior and an inferior, or between both colleagues with great power—or with the potential for great power—in the government. The practical writings that were widely read and taught in imperial China therefore could no longer address the need of modern people. As the literature that was promoted by Hu Shih failed to acknowledge and mend

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<sup>43</sup> Elisabeth Kaske expressed a similar view in *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895-1919*. But she focused more on the reform of the civil examination system and changes in the language policies.

this disparity, categories of non-literary writings were created to meet people's need for their daily life.

The two basic needs for the creation of the literary prose essay and for mass education facilitated the development of new categories. The most useful category to accommodate non-literary writing is practical composition (*yingyongwen*). The logic that supports this categorization is to view literary writing and practical composition as polar opposites. Literary writing has aesthetic value, whereas practical composition does not; literary writing is often disinterested, whereas practical composition must be serviceable. This logical dichotomy later made the practical composition an easy entry point for state intervention. Along the lines of this principle, writings for the political platform, declarations by selected politicians and governmental announcements all became eligible for language learning. The textbook was thereupon subsumed, step by step, under the direct control of the state, and naturally turned into what Louis Althusser might call an ideological state apparatus.<sup>44</sup>

Aside from the creation of *yingyongwen*, the call for a pragmatic textbook also caused a complete paradigm shift in the principles of teaching and the textbook selections. Responding to the call for the daily usage of the masses, the focus of textbooks naturally shifted quietly from reading to writing. A scientific system of writing modes—description and narration, exposition and argumentation—was thus introduced from the Western rhetoric class into China's middle school guidelines for writing as well as selecting works. The introduction of writing modes took the place of traditional belletristic classifications of writings, further reducing the influence of literature in textbooks. As the writing modes originated from the need for spreading scientific

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<sup>44</sup> Louis Althusser, "From Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B Leitch, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2001), 1483-509.

thoughts after industrialization, it naturally became even harder for fictional writing to keep its position in the mapping of the curriculum.

It must be noted here that some of the categorization and re-categorization of writings was not an overnight change and that some changes had taken place long before Hu's proposal. To fully explore this complex transition, many additional efforts are required; this investigation cannot possibly be completed in such a small-scope project. Therefore, instead of examining the full process of re-categorizing traditional and existing writings, I place an emphasis on the following textbook-related questions: what kind of literature did early Republican textbooks end up adopting? To what extent did Hu and his adversaries affect the evolution of the textbook and the significance of literature in textbooks? How did the categorization of fictional writings, literary writings and practical compositions end up affecting the proportion of essays in modern textbooks?

## THE CURRICULUM STANDARD

The promulgation of the Republic's first national curriculum standard in 1923 signified a watershed in China's modern education. In this curriculum, which Hu Shih actively participated in,<sup>45</sup> for the first time national literature (*guowen*) or national language (*guoyu*)<sup>46</sup> was designed as an independent subject with concrete teaching objectives and approaches.<sup>47</sup> The practice of the detailed national curriculum standard

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<sup>45</sup> The major participants of this national curriculum standard included Hu Shih, Ye Shaojun, Feng Shunbo and Mu Jibo. See Gu Huangchu, "Weirao Yuwen Kechengbiaozhen Zhankai de Taolun 围绕语文课程标准展开的讨论," [A discussion centering on the language curricular standards] in *Guhuangchu Yuwenjiaoyu Wenji 顾黄初语文教育文集*, (Beijing: Renmin Jiaoyu, 2002), 556-72.

<sup>46</sup> Both "*Guowen*" and "*Guoyu*" indicate the same subject. During the early Republican period, the title of the language textbook had undergone a few changes. In the 1923 Curriculum Standard, the middle school textbook was titled "*guoyu*," whereas in the 1929 revision, the same textbook was changed back to the 1912 title "*guowen*." The changes of title in part reflected the contending opinions on the vernacular language movement.

<sup>47</sup> In the 1904 Guimao education system, "Chinese Literature (*Zhongguo wenxue*)" had already been treated as an independent subject. However, the concept of "literature (*wenxue*)" in the *guimao* system was

suggested the country's official intervention in textbook publishing. Publishers would still have limited freedom in choosing works, but the teaching goals, proportion between vernacular and literary Chinese selections, and which literary genres should be included were all under unprecedented regulation.

The vernacular literature Hu had promoted was the biggest beneficiary. In line with Hu's scheme, vernacular literary works were recognized as one of the most significant components in this national law. This curriculum divided the subject *Guoyu* into three sections to adapt to the three-year junior high school system. Taking the first-year curriculum as an example, students should read attentively and thoroughly some of "the biography, novel, poetry and essay" selected into the textbook.<sup>48</sup> Although the eras of works were unrestricted, three quarters of the selection should be vernacular. In addition, aside from those printed in textbooks, students must finish skimming through a few novels, short stories, dramas and essays suggested by this curriculum, mostly translations of Western literature or vernacular Ming Qing novels. The second and third year curriculum shared most of the principles of the first year, except that the proportion of vernacular works were gradually reduced to half and a quarter, in order to give room to the advanced language training—reading and writing drills of plain literary Chinese.

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still mostly traditional. Aside from classical language training discussed in the last chapter, Confucian classics are still the most important readings under this definition of literature.

<sup>48</sup> He Huijun and Yao Fugen, ed., "Xinxuezhì Kecheng Biao zhun Chuji Zhongxue Guoyu Kecheng Guanyao," 新学制课程标准初级中学国语课程纲要 [The guideline of the national language for secondary school's curricular standard of the new educational system] in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Zhongxiaoxue Kecheng Biao zhun Jiaoxue Dagang Huibian Yuwenjuan* 二十世纪中国中小学课程标准教学大纲汇编语文卷 [The curricular standards and teaching guidelines of elementary and secondary education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century China], (Beijing: Renmin Jiaoyu, 2001).

Thanks to the prosperous growth of the press at the time, there were actually many public opinions regarding the making of a curriculum standard in newspapers.<sup>49</sup> But it goes without saying that this curriculum mostly underscored the opinion from Hu Shih. The first aspect to be noted in this curriculum is the official prestigious status of vernacular language in national education. Merely a few years after Hu's *Some Modest Proposals*, the vernacular literature accounted for almost half the suggested selections. Another feature worth noting is the suggested proportion of fictional writings. The novel, short story and drama accounted for the primary source of selection, including both selections of careful readings and skimming readings. The essay and poetry, in the meantime, ostensibly lost their dominant position in China's traditional education.

The 1923 curriculum standard to a large extent realized Hu Shih's blueprint for middle school literary education. It turned the *guoyu* class into a literature class. However, this curriculum did not become the prototype for most of the textbooks to come. Right after the party's victory in the Northern Expedition, the KMT government assembled professional meetings and developed another curriculum standard that was much more influential than the 1923 one. Although its title suggested that this standard would be a temporary one,<sup>50</sup> the 1929 announced curriculum turned out to be a continuously used model for several generations of education, and still has its influence in Taiwan today.

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<sup>49</sup> Language education in fact had been an appealing issue for early Republican intellectuals since Hu's proposal of *baihuawen*. Quite a few discussions had taken place in the press around 1923, when the first curriculum standard was promulgated. See the details in Gu, "A discussion," 556-72.

<sup>50</sup> This curriculum standard was titled "The Provisional Curriculum Standard for Junior High School (*Chuji Zhongxue Guowen Zhanxing Kecheng Biaozhun*)." See He and Yao, ed., *The curricular standards*.

Aside from some obvious political interventions from the KMT,<sup>51</sup> one of the evident differences between the 1923 and 1929 curriculum standards lies in the altered views of the significance of literature. In the earlier scheme, the suggested genres and bibliography tended to be fictional writings and works with literary value. “Stimulating students’ interest in studying Chinese literature” was listed as one of three most important goals of this subject.<sup>52</sup> In the 1929 announced curriculum, however, the literary bibliography was dropped. “Appreciation of literature and art” was still an important direction, except that “developing a habit of reading books and newspapers” seemed a more important goal than literary sensitivity.<sup>53</sup> In addition, although vernacular Chinese continued its advantageous status, accounting for more than half the selections in this version, fictional writings were not especially emphasized anymore. As to the teaching plans for each year, belletristic genres were replaced by writing modes and purposive writing. The readings of the biography, novel, short story and drama in the 1923 curriculum gave way to “the narrative and lyric writing for the first year, the lyric and expository writing for the second year, and the argumentative and practical writing for the third year teaching.”<sup>54</sup>

The significant differences between these two curricula might make one wonder whether different members mapped them out with incompatible beliefs about literary education. But the truth is that Hu Shih actually participated in both projects. Although

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<sup>51</sup> One of the principles in the 1929 curriculum is to select works that “include the isms and strategies of the party [KMT], or those not against the principles of the party.” This is in fact the first attempt of the KMT to intervene with textbook content, as shown in official governmental laws of education. See He and Yao, ed., *The curricular standards*.

<sup>52</sup> He and Yao, ed., *The curricular standards*.

<sup>53</sup> “Appreciation of literature and art” is listed behind “developing a habit of reading books and newspapers” as the same principle, whereas the 1923 curriculum listed “Stimulating students’ interest in studying Chinese literature” separately.

<sup>54</sup> He and Yao, ed., *The curricular standards*.

measuring the actual extent of Hu's involvement in both projects is nearly unachievable, the difference between the two curriculums was clearly not a simple result of two groups of scholars with irreconcilable opinions. A more careful consideration of the public opinions thus must be taken in order to further understand whether these contending views could link to Hu's concession of literary education in the 1929 curriculum. The critiques of Hu's blueprint at the time therefore come to be an important clue that accounted for the difference between two curriculums.

Aside from the typical attacks from the conservative parties that defended literary Chinese,<sup>55</sup> one of the noteworthy critiques came from a political and cultural figure at the time, Liang Qichao.

#### **LIANG QICHAO AND THE USE OF FICTION**

The reason that Liang's opinion should be examined in the study of middle school *guowen* education lies not only in his active involvement in this discourse, but also in the fact that his opinions often underlined critical issues in the formation of the new subject. For example, in a recently found manuscript of his speech made around 1922,<sup>56</sup> Liang proposed an ideal *guowen* curriculum that was decidedly different from Hu's proposal for middle school:

[The] teaching materials for *guowen* should focus on practical composition, whereas artistic writings should be subordinate.... I think, in general, practical composition should account for more than eight-tenths of middle school teaching materials, whereas belletristic writing at most should account for not more than one or two-tenths below. Among the one or two-tenths [of the content], the poetry

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<sup>55</sup> For example, for the Xueheng group, literary Chinese was superior to the vernacular as a written language. Their belief was that the literary Chinese might need to be improved, but cannot be replaced. In this project, I focus on the evolution of literary genres adopted in textbooks. Owing to the scope of this project, the disputes aroused by the use of literary or vernacular Chinese will often be glossed over, unless relevant to the issues being discussed.

<sup>56</sup> This is based on Chen Pingyuan's research.



and other antithetical essays also account for part [of the content], so fiction at most can only account for 5% or 6% or less.<sup>57</sup>

This ideal curriculum admittedly was still quite different from the one used in Taiwan today, but already much closer as compared with Hu Shih's perspective that sees vernacular fiction as the primary type of teaching material. Liang plotted a pragmatic course, in which the priority was given to practical composition instead of literature. Also, his assessment of the proportion of fiction foretold precisely the status of fiction in the textbooks that followed.

Coming from one of the most prominent reformists and scholars during the late Qing and the early Republic, Liang's suggestion, in which fiction accounts for only a minimum percentage of the textbook, made him a primary opponent of Hu Shih's earlier educational project. In fact, Liang's critique of the idea of utilizing the novel in literary education appeared in several speeches he gave. In a conversation with his editor, Liang explicitly attacked Hu Shih's plan of literary education:

Some people assert that we take some famous fiction as teaching materials. I think this is not proper. [This is] because, despite the fact that we are not particular about "seeing 'dao' in the writings (*ying wen jian dao*)," the goal of teaching *Guowen* is supposedly to have students obtain some other knowledge, and [have the subject of *Guowen*] facilitated with other scientific subjects mutually. The works of belles-lettres, such as *Water Margin* and *Dream of the Red Chamber*, are in no need of being studied, except for those who intend to be litterateurs....<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Liang Qichao, "Zhongxue Guowen Jiaocai Buyi Caiyong Xiaoshuo" 中学国文教材不宜采用小说 [Adopting fiction as teaching materials for middle schools' Chinese class is not proper], in Chen Pingyuan, "Bashi nianqian de Zhongxue Guowen Jiaoyu zhi Zheng," [A dispute conducted 80 years ago about middle school education in Chinese language and literature] *Zhonghua Dushu Bao*, August 7, 2002, accessed January 9, 2012, <http://www.gmw.cn/01ds/2002-08/07/2002-08-07-Homepage.htm>.

<sup>58</sup> Shu Shichen quoted from a private conversation with Liang Qichao. See "The Foreword to Zhongxue Yishang Zuowen Jiaoxuefa," [The foreword to the middle school teaching approaches to the national language and literature] in *Zuowen Rumu* [The guide book of composition] (Beijing: Jiaoyu Kexue, 2007), 1-2.

In this passage, “some people” allegedly pointed to Hu Shih with his approach to vernacular language.<sup>59</sup> While Hu Shih strived to make *guoyu* a course of literature, in the passage above Liang repositioned *guoyu* (or *guowen*) as a practical subject, meant to teach students practical skills. Liang based his reasoning on the ultimate profession of the students. Since most students do not end up being litterateurs, fiction was not essential to their formal education. Then, what should be taught? In some speeches, Liang clearly expressed a view that literary Chinese should be the primary source for middle school education:

I propose that the elementary school teach vernacular Chinese, whereas the middle school should teach literary Chinese and occasionally mix in some vernacular Chinese. When composing [an article], literary Chinese and vernacular Chinese [can be used] at will. I think the fine or poor [quality of an] article is solely based on its expressivity, and has nothing to do with whether it is literary or vernacular Chinese.<sup>60</sup>

Many interpret Liang’s words as a public support of literary Chinese over vernacular Chinese. Whereas poetry appeared not effective enough for his schooling philosophy, the fact that Liang objected to the idea of teaching fiction and vernacular Chinese seemed to make classical essays, preferably practical compositions, the best choice for middle school education.

As one of the intellectuals who had initially acknowledged the importance of fiction,<sup>61</sup> and also as a forerunner in the reform of literary Chinese,<sup>62</sup> Liang’s objection

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<sup>59</sup> Hu Shih published “Teaching Middle School *Guowen*” in 1920. It proposed reading fiction as the best approach to vernacular language, which was two years prior to Liang’s critique quoted here.

<sup>60</sup> See *The Guide Book*, 44.

<sup>61</sup> Liang Qichao, “On the Relationship Between Fiction and the Government of the People,” trans. Gek Nai Cheng, ed. Kirt A. Denton, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1996), 74-81.

<sup>62</sup> Liang’s writings for his newspaper were called *Xinmin* style. This style absorbed vocabulary and grammar from Chinese classics, slang and foreign languages. It has often been seen as a pioneering writing style that broke with the traditional, classical writing and bridged the vernacular language promoted in the New Culture Movement.

to utilizing vernacular fiction as material for literary education seemed contradictory to his earlier claims. The fact that Liang was also known for his changeable stance might account partially for this contradiction.<sup>63</sup> His support of literary Chinese could be seen as another modification of his stance from a more radical to a more conservative side than before, especially in response to the challenge proposed by Hu Shih. As one of the returned students from the United States, Hu represented a new generation of intellectuals who were well versed in the latest Western thoughts, whereas Liang in his early years often obtained Western knowledge from an indirect Japanese translation. It seems a reasonable conjecture that Liang moved his position to a rather conservative side because of the rise of a new generation of intellectuals in the cultural field, and thereupon he had to stand up for literary Chinese.

Although the possibility that Liang changed his stance to a rather traditional perspective cannot be ruled out, it is worth noting that Liang did not entirely exclude writing and reading vernacular Chinese from education. Given Liang's claim that "[the quality of] an article is based on its expressivity" and "has nothing to do with whether it is literary or vernacular Chinese,"<sup>64</sup> restoring literary Chinese did not seem to be his primary goal. In a manuscript of his speech, Liang even explicitly stated his hope that vernacular Chinese essays would achieve a more mature stage so that middle school education could adopt some of the essay works.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, the reason that Liang stood for classical essays to some extent lies in his belief that vernacular essays were not mature enough at the time, rather than in a complete denial of the idea of teaching

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<sup>63</sup> Even Liang himself had admitted that his arguments are sometimes contradictory because he "had no perceived ideas" in mind and would "publicize his thoughts immediately after he developed it." See Liang Qichao, *Qingdai Xueshu gailun*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji, 2000), 89-90.

<sup>64</sup> See *The Guide Book*, 44.

<sup>65</sup> See Chen, "A Dispute."

vernacular language. Liang's argument here thus was not simply a result of restoring the tradition when encountering the rise of new intellectuals in the cultural field. Instead, his view about literary genres seems more valuable in interpreting his disagreements with Hu Shih's promotion of vernacular fiction.

While a shift in standpoint was insufficient to justify his contradictory views about fiction, an examination of the history and Liang's audience is quite helpful in understanding his opinions regarding literary genres. By revisiting the historical background, one would find Liang's praise and critique of fiction were made under the circumstances of two utterly different eras. Given the fact that when Liang published his well-known "On the Relation between Fiction and the Government of the People" in 1902, the Imperial Examination was yet to be abolished,<sup>66</sup> what Liang faced was two distinct educational systems between the Qing and the Republic. In examining Liang's opinions regarding education, this is apparently an indispensable condition to be taken into consideration. On the one hand, the target of Liang's "On the Relation" was the elitist intellectual during the late Qing. Although Liang focused on "the reformation of the government of the people" that the fiction revolution could bring about, this was a revolution that could only be initiated by intellectuals. Fiction at this point was regarded as a tool of the intellectuals to educate the people. His later rejection of fiction, on the other hand, arose out of a political view that considered the essence of modern education to be mass education. Therefore, Liang made his comments based on the ultimate occupations of the students. Since the masses did not bear the responsibility of reforming

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<sup>66</sup> The Imperial Examination stopped adopting the eight-legged essay in 1901. It then took the Qing dynasty four more years to abolish the examination system entirely.

people, there was no need for them to acknowledge the importance of fiction. Instead, essays were a better food for thought and model for their daily writings.<sup>67</sup>

For Liang, therefore, the novel and short stories were not necessarily better pedagogical tools than the essay. Fiction has the advantage of “four powers to influence the way of man,”<sup>68</sup> which makes it a convenient tool for intellectuals to transform social traditions. The essay, however, has its own advantage for a modern class. As one of the reasons Liang stated, “[W]e cannot [make the decision] without considering economical [use] of time;”<sup>69</sup> in other words, the proper use of class time should be considered. The utilization of fiction or essays, therefore, must depend on the occasion.

This interpretation of literary genres, however, had a hidden assumption. Given that the difference between the genres only lies in the proper occasions for use, both essays and fiction should be vehicles capable of achieving the same goal or of transmitting the same thoughts. The different forms of literary genres only affect their approaches to the masses, while both genres could carry the same content Liang considered appropriate to convey.

As the Japanese scholar Saito Mareshi points out, Liang’s view of utilizing fiction as a tool to educate the masses started with inspiration from his mentor Kang Youwei:

...There are literate people who do not read classics, but there is no one who does not read fiction... Today China has few literate people, and the ones mastering literature are the rarest of all. The essentials and references of classics and history thus should be made widespread through translating fiction.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Liang considered that the teaching materials for middle students should be something as “nourishing as daily food and clothing.” See Chen Pingyuan, “A Dispute.”

<sup>68</sup> Liang, “On the Relationship.”

<sup>69</sup> Chen, “A Dispute.”

<sup>70</sup> Saito Mareshi quoted from Kang Youwei’s *Riben Shumu Zhi*. See Saito Mareshi’s original article “Kindai Bungaku kannen Keiseiki ni okeru Ryō Keichō” in *Ryō Keichō: Seiyō kindai Shisō Juyō to Meijinihon*, ed. Hazama, Naoki, Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 1999. The passage cited in this paper was based on the translated version in Chinese, titled “Jindai Wenxue guannian Xingchenqi de Liang Qichao,” [Liang

Based on Kang's idea, fiction should perform as a carrier that conveys the essentials of classics and history, whereas traditional classics are too difficult for ordinary people to read. Liang inherited this idea and contended that fiction has the power to reinvigorate morality and social customs, and "even remold the human mind and its character."<sup>71</sup> What Liang did not clearly explain is that this power originated from Kang's presumption that fiction can carry the essentials of traditional classics. In other words, despite Liang's statement that "We are not particular about seeing 'dao' in writings,"<sup>72</sup> his claims about fiction revealed his earlier effort to fulfill the traditional view that "writings are for conveying 'dao' (*wen yi zai dao*)." Although Liang and Kang's interpretations differed,<sup>73</sup> "dao" nevertheless signified the truth that could not be replaced. Its carriers, the various writing styles and genres, however, could change with the times and their particular requirements. In order to accommodate China's need to provide its people with a more universal education, Liang and Kang adopted fiction as a new writing style that offered the masses an uncomplicated approach to essential knowledge.

In light of Liang's interpretation of the function of fiction, his changeable thoughts concerning literary genres are now understandable. The artistic form was not an essential part of Liang's discussion, unless it has to do with the effects on educating people. Both essays and fiction were carriers of Liang's *dao*, with a task of communicating thoughts. The essay content that is as "nourishing as daily food and clothing" indicates

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Qichao in the period of the formation of the modern concept of literature] collected in the anthology "*Liang Qichao, Mingzhi, Riben, Shifang*," 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian, 2012), 295.

<sup>71</sup> Liang, "On the Relationship."

<sup>72</sup> Shu, "The Foreword."

<sup>73</sup> While Liang's mentor Kang Youwei still focused on how to convey the traditional classics, Liang was more concerned about fiction's political function. In this sense, each one's version of "dao" has a different definition.

the *dao* that was meant to teach middle school students. Liang's shift from promoting to rejecting fiction, therefore, could not be fully understood unless we juxtapose the systematical changes in the educational context with his constant belief in the traditional view of writing for conveying *dao*.

In Liang's blueprint for middle school education, the content to convey was apparently much more serious than the artistic form to teach. This point of view had a potential conflict with Hu Shih's proposal. While Hu was striving to establish new literary forms by promoting vernacular language, Liang's theory indicated that artistic forms are different only when the situation requires. For Liang, the adoption of fiction or essays was based on a completely utilitarian purpose, while Hu insisted on one genre as a superior literary form for learning. This utilitarian feature of Liang's critique of the middle school blueprint eventually was better suited to modern education, whose essence after all was as a pragmatic subject. The following development of the *Guowen* curriculum thus, unsurprisingly, moved by degrees closer to Liang's stance.

Despite their different incentives, Liang's claim nevertheless reflected the appeal of some contemporary intellectuals for a more effective textbook. In the 1929 guidelines, the two most striking changes both responded to this demand. One is the appearance of practical composition, and the other is the adoption of writing modes as a replacement for the classification of belletristic genres.

#### **FROM LITERARY WRITING TO PRACTICAL COMPOSITION**

The emergence of practical composition (*yingyongwen*) and writing modes marked a noticeable difference between the 1923 and 1929 curricula. The fact that the 1929 curriculum required the *guowen* class to center on *yingyongwen* and writing modes instead of literary genres signified a decline in the status of literature. For the following

*guowen* class, “the narrative and lyric writing [must be taught] for the first year, the lyric and expository writing for the second year, and the argumentative and practical writing for the third year teaching.”<sup>74</sup> The introduction of these pragmatic goals to textbooks, therefore, testified to a departure from Hu Shih’s project of “a literary national language” in middle school education. The space for vernacular fiction was first and foremost minimized. As Liang Qichao foresaw, fiction thereafter could only compete with other belles-lettres writings for the room left by practical writings in textbooks.<sup>75</sup>

In spite of the fact that Liang foresaw this development, little about practical composition was further addressed in his suggestion. In fact, the disputes about practical composition emerged much earlier than Liang’s advice. The creation of this writing was closely tied with the project of establishing modern Chinese literature. Right after Hu’s *Some Modest Proposals on New Youth*, Chen Duxiu, an ally of Hu in the vernacular movement, first differentiated between the categories of literary and practical writings. In his famous 1917 declaration “On Literary Revolution,” Chen attacked the traditional writings in literary Chinese: “...although our literary writings are not worth reading, our practical compositions are even more absurd.”<sup>76</sup> In his personal correspondence with Hu Shih, Chen also expressed his concerns that the distinction between literary and practical writings must be made.<sup>77</sup> Although Hu was not convinced by this view, Chen endorsed and stood up for the vernacular movement, in a belief that both literary and practical writings must eventually use vernacular language.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> He and Yao, ed., *The Curricular Standards*.

<sup>75</sup> Liang Qichao, “Adopting Fiction.”

<sup>76</sup> Chen, “On Literary,” in Denton, *Modern Chinese*, 140-150.

<sup>77</sup> Chen Duxiu, “Da Hu Shizhe,” [In response to Hu Shi] in *Duxiu Wencun*, (Hefei: Anhui Renmin, 1987), 405.

<sup>78</sup> This view is proposed by Ji Jianqing in his research “Baihuawen Yundongzhong de Wenxue” 白话文运动中的文学 [Literature in the vernacular language movement], *Hu Shih Yangjiu Luncong*, ed. Ouyang Zhesheng and Song Guangbo, Heilongjiang: Heilongjiang jiaoyu, 2009.



In Chen's response letters to Hu's "eight matters,"<sup>79</sup> Chen revealed his reason for believing literary works must be separated from practical ones. Expressing his concern that the reformative principle "writing should have substance" would lead to a distortive connection to "writing for conveying dao (*wen yi zai dao*)," Chen asserted that writing does not necessary need substance, especially when the work is valued in an aesthetic sense:

... The survival of literature would depend on other things, should it be [used as] a measure or device.... I consider literary works as different from practical language. I doubt whether there is actually no room for study of aesthetics and skill, which account for the so-called value of the independent existence of literature and art.<sup>80</sup>

In other words, the literature Chen had in mind at the time was different from Hu Shih's. Despite the use of the hierarchy from Western literary genres, Hu's approach to literature was in some ways traditional. The vernacular literature had been employed to secure the status of vernacular language. For Chen, however, true literature should exist independent from any interference, which it could achieve only when it was not seen as a measures or device of anything else.

In the following discussion at the time concerning the separation of literary and practical writing,<sup>81</sup> Liu Bannong's account could be seen as a comprehensive commentary supporting Chen's view of literature. In "My Views on Literary Reform," in order to pursue his explanation of literary essays, Liu discerned the particularity of literary writing in the first half of the article:

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<sup>79</sup> "Eight matters" were proposed in Hu's "Some Modest Proposals," indicating principles that must be followed to begin literary reform.

<sup>80</sup> Chen, "In Response."

<sup>81</sup> According to Ji's research, aside from Chen and Liu, quite a number of scholars showed their support of the differentiation between these two kinds of writing. This included Qian Xuantong, Cai Yuanpei, Chang Naide, Zha Zhaozhong and Hu Xianxiao. The list covers both groups of people who sided with either literary Chinese or vernacular Chinese. The only decisive factor between their camps is their belief in whether literary Chinese should be allowed in literary writings. See Ji, "Literature."

As far as I am concerned, if we are to determine the boundary of literature, [we] should learn from Western literature, which classifies all writings into two categories, language and literature. English explains “Language” as “any means of conveying or communicating ideas” ... As to “Literature,” the definition was clearly provided as “the class of writings distinguished for beauty of style, as poetry, essays, history, fiction, or belles-lettres.” ...<sup>82</sup>

What Liu and Chen had in mind apparently departed from traditional views of literature. Whereas Chen held a vague notion of literature being autonomous, Liu openly borrowed definitions from an English dictionary. One thing they had in common was that their definitions of practical writing were both made for elaborating the definition of literature. To explain what literary essays truly are, non-literary writings must first be separated from originally undifferentiated writings. This distinction was particularly significant for essays, as the essay form was the primary vehicle in the tradition of writing for conveying *dao*. The establishment of literary writing explained the validity of literature and left the responsibility for conveying thoughts, including conveying *dao*, to practical writing. In the making of modern literature, the category of practical composition was a by-product to ensure the purity and disinterestedness of artistic writing. This purity and disinterestedness was a key to justify the existence of modern literature, as it had lost its traditional moral and political functions.<sup>83</sup>

This ramification for the establishment of literature, however, fit squarely in with the need for language education. Liang Qichao was one of the intellectuals who sensed and acknowledged this aspect in a timely fashion.<sup>84</sup> While Liang foresaw Hu’s problem—that he linked literary learning to literature, but failed to acknowledge and mend the

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<sup>82</sup> Liu Bannan, “Wo zhe Wenxue Gailian Guan 我之文学改良观,” [My views on literary reform] *Bannan Yangjiu Ziliao*, ed., Bao Jing Liu, (Tianjin: Tianjinrenmin, 1988), 111-6.

<sup>83</sup> For a detailed discussion of the autonomy of art, see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson, (Columbia University Press, 1993).

<sup>84</sup> Many of Liang’s speeches that addressed educational issues were delivered from 1922 to 1925. In other words, some of them were prior to the 1923 guide. See Shu, *The Guidebook*.

practical function of literary Chinese—Lin Yutang witnessed the effect of overemphasizing the literary side. The influence of the 1923 curriculum became visible during the 1930s, which Lin described in his famously humorous tone:

Today in China, students learn vernacular Chinese, [but] after graduation [they] learn literary Chinese to work; this is the first spectacle. The pro-vernacular literati write articles in the vernacular, [but] use literary Chinese in notes and private letters; this is the second spectacle. The *xiaopin* essays on newspaper were in the vernacular, [but] the news and editorials in literary Chinese; this is the third spectacle....<sup>85</sup>

Lin Yutang's mockery to some extent reflected the impact of neglecting practical writing during the 1920s vernacular education. The vernacular was only popularized in artistic activities, whereas daily writings still heavily relied on traditional formats. In this sense, it was not surprising when the call for adopting *yingyongwen* easily affected the formation of the 1929 curriculum.

Besides the discontentment with the training in vernacular practical composition, another message revealed in Lin's passage is his attention to the writing system, instead of a reading one. The discussion between Hu and Liang still fundamentally centered on what to read, assuming that a massive amount of reading would simultaneously help to improve writing skills. Lin's observation, however, pointed out the consequence of this oversimplification of literary education. In Lin's observation, extensive reading of vernacular literature did not guarantee the ability to apply the vernacular to other types of writing, such as notes, private letters, news and editorials. A more scientific and systematic approach to improve vernacular writing skills was therefore required in the mapping of curriculum. This demand for a scientific method was also embodied in the 1929 curriculum, where a quiet transition from a reading system to a writing one was substantiated in a new classification system for the selections.

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<sup>85</sup> Ji, "Literature."

## FROM BELLETRISTIC GENRES TO WRITING MODES

The 1923 guidelines measured the selections based on a system used to classify belletristic genres. Writings were thereupon categorized into the novel, short story, biography, essay, poetry or drama as appropriate. One of the evident changes in the 1929 standards is a rearrangement of this system. The belletristic genres gave way to the writing modes, a system that classifies writings according to their function or purpose: the Narration, Exposition, Argumentation and Lyric.

The introduction of similar writing modes first appeared in Fu Sinian's 1922 article "How to write vernacular articles (*zenyan zuo baihuawen*)."<sup>86</sup> Aside from restating the importance of linking the written language to the spoken one, Fu claimed that appropriating terms from English was necessary for establishing a vernacular writing system. Fu limited his discussion to essay writing, for he was not an expert in fiction or other literary genres. He then used four categories to describe the types of essays he would like to include: exposition, argumentation, narration, and description.<sup>87</sup> After Fu, there were a few scholars who also advocated similar ideas, but these ideas were mostly more detailed discussions around concepts that were similar to Fu's.<sup>88</sup> As compared to the 1929 curriculum guide, except for "the description" being replaced by "the lyric," the 1929 curriculum accepted Fu's concept as a whole.

The inclusion of writing modes and the exclusion of pure literary genres, as discussed in previous sections, were a response to the demand for a pragmatic approach to vernacular writing. The adoption of writing modes, however, turned out to constrain

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<sup>86</sup> Fu Sinian, "Zenyan zuo baihuawen" [How to write vernacular articles], 1922, in *Fu Sinian Quanj*, vol. 1, ed. Zou Shude (Changsha: Hunan Jiaoyu, 2003), 125-36.

<sup>87</sup> Fu Sinian, "How to Write."

<sup>88</sup> Chen Wangdao, Li Jinxi, Ye Shengtao, Xia Mianzun and Liu Xunyu had proposed similar ideas about writing modes. See Wei Xiaona, "Zhongxi fang zuowen wenti zhishi kaifa de bijiao yanjiu 中西方作文文体知识开发的比较研究." [A study on the comparison of the investigation of knowledge of compositional modes between the East and West] *Kecheng, Jiaocai, Jiaofa* G31, no.1, (2009): 91-6.

the amount of space allotted to literary genres other than the essay. Several reasons contributed to this outcome, but each of them pointed to the appeals, of the intellectuals or the masses, to a sensible and scientific education. In fact, the writing mode itself originated from a need for scientific writing.

Fu claimed his use of writing modes was intended to explain the categories of essay writing. His claim might not provide a comprehensive understanding of the history of writing modes, as the rhetoric and composition pedagogy developed by the Western academy had a long history. Yet his understanding nevertheless reflected the pragmatic essence of the modes he brought back from the West. In fact, the writing modes brought back from Fu's early days studying in Europe were likely a revised system for spreading scientific thoughts. During his European years,<sup>89</sup> Fu had delved into experimental psychology in London, where Alexander Bain had shortly worked during the 1860s. Bain, known as a psychologist and a linguist,<sup>90</sup> reconstructed the enlightenment rhetoric to devise a new system during his stay in London. This improvement was largely an effort made to accommodate the need to cope with scientific knowledge after the Industrial Revolution. In his categorization, writings constituted five discourses: Description, Narration, Exposition, Persuasion and Poetry. It is a widely accepted view that, due to the rapid expansion of colleges, this system was then circulated and adopted in Europe and Northern America during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the analyses of writings were seen as scientific and effective for teaching.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Fu's European period was from 1919 to 1926. During the first three years, he was more interested in psychology; his interests gradually shifted to linguistics in the later years. See "Foreword," *Fu Sinian Quanji*, 18-22.

<sup>90</sup> Other than his expertise in psychology and linguistics, Bain was also known as a philosopher and educationist. See Jon Harned, "The Intellectual Background of Alexander Bain's 'Modes of Discourse'" *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (1985): 42-50, accessed Mar 12, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/357605>.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

Bain's writing discourse was also most likely the system Fu applied in his article, except for removing "Poetry." The revision of the 1929 curriculum standard went one step further, removing the Description category and adding the Lyric as a replacement. This move even enhanced the importance of essay teaching, as the essay is the genre that traditionally embodied the lyrical convention. While narrative writing could still be found in fictional works, expository, argumentative and lyrical writing were skills less likely to be used in fiction. In other words, although the selections and literary genres were not regulated, the redirection from the genres to the functions of writing limited the range of genres in practice.

Another aspect to note about this writing-mode system is the declining influence of a reading-centered system. The traditional literary education in China inclined to emphasize reading rather than writing. Other than a few exceptions—such as the eight-legged essay in the late Qing imperial examination, the traditional Confucian education mostly centered on classical readings. Few theories were seen that addressed approaches to writing. As to the acquisition of artistic skills, most intellectuals still believed the more one reads, the better one writes. The quotation from Du Fu, a famous ancient Chinese poet, is representative of this idea: "[I] wore out ten thousand books in reading; [hence] my brush was always inspired by gods."<sup>92</sup>

This reading-centered approach did not change much in the curriculum that Hu Shih advocated. Hu suggested students read more vernacular fiction in order to acquire the ability to write in the vernacular, assuming that a massive amount of reading would fulfill the need to generalize rules of writing. Moreover, the process of classifying writings through the lens of literary genres itself embodied an oversight of writing

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<sup>92</sup> Du Fu, "Twenty-Two Rhymes To Left-Prime-Minister Wei," Poemhunter.com, accessed Mar. 10, 2012, <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/twenty-two-rhymes-to-left-prime-minister-wei/>.

training. Since the masses did not need to write a biography or short story in their daily life, teaching from the aspect of literary genres inevitably limited literary classes to an appreciation of literature.

The writing modes, however, moved the focus to the techniques of writing. Aside from the fact that these techniques were advantageous to writing articles, the closest style for everyday writing in practice was still the essay form. Thereupon, after the demand for a practical language education modified the reading system to a writing one, the essay selections inevitably came to be a preferable option in textbooks.

### **MAKING THE POLITICAL PRACTICAL: A KMT TEXTBOOK**

The inevitable increase in functional vernacular writings in *guowen* education entered the 1929 curriculum guide, which coincided with the KMT's decision to consolidate its dominion over China. From 1926 to 1928, Chiang Kai-shek stabilized his power by successfully suppressing the communists in the April 12<sup>th</sup> Incident;<sup>93</sup> his triumph in subduing warlords in the Northern Expedition also assured the status of the KMT government. The KMT thus proclaimed in 1928 that the military acts had achieved their end, and the political tutelage period (*xunzheng shiqi*) began in the meantime.<sup>94</sup> A closer tie with nationwide education, therefore, was an urgent need for securing the KMT party's authority over the country.

The principles of teaching practical writing and materials "including the isms and strategies of the [KMT] party, or those not against the principles of the party"<sup>95</sup> entered the educational standard in concert, in order to answer to two different demands from the intellectuals and the party. In fact, the concurrence of both principles in a way helped

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<sup>93</sup> A massacre committed to purge the communist influence within the KMT party.

<sup>94</sup> James R. Townsend, "Participation in Pre-Communist China," *Political participation in communist China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 30.

<sup>95</sup> He and Yao, ed., *The Curricular Standards*.

editors and publishers in dealing with the difficult task presented by the KMT party. On the one hand, the category of practical composition allowed editors to preserve the textbook's literariness; on the other hand, it also opened up a space for party doctrines to enter the textbooks. For example, in one of the most influential textbooks published in 1935, the editors Xia Mianzun and Ye Shengtao placed "the Party Platform of the Chinese Nationalist Party" in the section on "Practical Compositions."<sup>96</sup> In another textbook popular during the 1930s, Chiang Kai-shek's "A Letter to Neighboring Countries" was assigned to the third-year class, also in line with the teaching of practical composition.<sup>97</sup> The dogmatic content required by the party was squeezed into the definition of "practical writing," treated as material that people encounter in their quotidian life.<sup>98</sup> By limiting these dogmatic articles to the category of practical composition, the editors were able to preserve other categories for selections other than KMT-favored writings. In so doing, the neutrality and literariness of textbooks avoided being fully undermined. In the meantime, however, the KMT-endorsed doctrines were

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<sup>96</sup> Xia Mianzun, ed., *Guowen Baibake Diyice* 國文百八課第一冊 [One hundred and eighty lessons on Chinese language and literature], vol. 1, *Guowen Baibake*, (Shanghai: Kaiming Shudian, 1935), 63-74, accessed February 10, 2012, [http://book.chaoxing.com/ebook/read\\_11381914.html](http://book.chaoxing.com/ebook/read_11381914.html).

<sup>97</sup> Fu Donghua, ed., *Fuxing Chujizhongxue Jiaokeshu Diliuce* 復興初級中學教科書第六冊 [Fuxing junior high school textbook, vol.6], vol. 6, *Fuxing Chujizhongxue Jiaokeshu*, (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1934), 19-37, accessed February 10, 2012, <http://www.cadal.zju.edu.cn/book/13071687/>.

<sup>98</sup> According to Li Liangping's research, the most influential textbooks at the time were "*Guowen*," "*Fuxing*" and "*Chuzhong Dongdai Guowen* 初中當代國文 [Contemporary Chinese for junior high schools]." While "*Guowen*" and "*Fuxing*" both created a section for introducing practical compositions, "*Chuzhong*" mixed up all kinds of writings and did not have particular sections for different genres. However, the party endorsed content—such as "A Letter to the National Revolutionary Army from the Nationalist Government" and "A Speech manuscript In the Memorial of Huanghuagang Revolutionary Nationals"—were mostly placed in the fifth and sixth volume. This arrangement was in line with the rules in the national curriculum standard that practical writing should be taught in the third year.

For more on Li Liangping's research toward a modern literature textbook, see Zhongguo Yuwen Jiaocai Fazhangshi 中国语文教材发展史 [The history of the development of the teaching materials of Chinese language and literature], (Chongqing: Chongqing, 2006), 182-9.

On the distribution of different writings in "*Chuzhong*," see Shi Zhicun, Sheng Langxi, Sheng Lianbi and Zhu Bi, ed., *Chuzhong Dongdai Guowen*, Shanghai: Shanghai Zhongxuesheng, 1934, accessed February 10, <http://www.cadal.zju.edu.cn/book/13071480/>, <http://www.cadal.zju.edu.cn/book/13071481/>, <http://www.cadal.zju.edu.cn/book/13071482/>.



also able to penetrate the curriculum. This was partially due to the fact that the neutrality of literature—such as its disinterestedness and purity—disappeared as textbooks became more function-oriented.

After the 1929 curriculum standard established a nationwide acceptance of practical writing as well as state ideology in *guowen* textbooks, the following curricula only exaggerated this tendency.<sup>99</sup> The 1932 standard has been known as the most thorough set of guidelines since the establishment of the Republic, except that its fundamental principles were all inherited from the 1929 standard. As conflict with Japan escalated, the KMT's control over education also tightened. Step by step, even the classes for expository and lyric writing must include some party-favored texts. Starting from 1942, the KMT government took complete control over textbook publishing, requiring all middle schools to adopt the official textbook that was edited by the government and published by private companies.<sup>100</sup>

There was a reader published by a private publisher, however, worth noting for its selections that were free from state intervention. This textbook series was edited and published by Ye Shengtao and his Kaiming bookstore in 1947, when the KMT had already assumed general supervision of textbook publication.<sup>101</sup> To avoid state censorship, the editors claimed in the foreword that this book was created for self-

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<sup>99</sup> After the announcement of the 1929 standard, the KMT government made four additional revisions prior to its retreat to Taiwan. These curriculum standards were instituted in 1932, 1936, 1940 and 1948, respectively. See He and Yao, ed., "*The Curricular Standards*."

<sup>100</sup> Li, *The History*, 242.

<sup>101</sup> During WWII, a few anthologies were published as simplified readers for wartime courses. After the war, the KMT for a period of time engaged in rectifying this use of private textbooks. For example, in 1947, a rule was announced to ban the use or publication of unqualified textbooks. See discussion in Li, *The History*, 243.

study,<sup>102</sup> while in fact, this textbook had been prevalent and influential.<sup>103</sup> The textbook was commonly known for its unique separation of classical texts and vernacular texts into two volumes. But this selection actually also provided a telling example of the ideal intellectual-endorsed textbook compared to the state-endorsed ones. First, practical writings were assured their place in this textbook. The selections included the foreword of a book, the explanatory composition of a phenomenon, and the editorial essays about the news. The *guowen* class was eventually not seen as a class solely for literature, but a practical and scientific subject that helped to train and prepare students for future careers. Second, fiction gave way to the essay form. Even in selecting Lao She or Shen Congwen's works, the editor refrained from their famous fictional writings, and chose to include their lesser-known essay works in the book.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Ye Shengtao, Zhou Yutong, Guo Shaoyu and Xun Bitao, ed., *Kaiming Xinbian Guowen Duben Jiazhongben* 開明新編國文讀本甲種本, Shanghai: Kaiming bookstore, 1947, accessed February 10, 2012, <http://www.cadal.zju.edu.cn/book/07015800/>.

<sup>103</sup> Li, *The History*, 246.

<sup>104</sup> For Lao, the work selected was “Baiping de Xiatian” 北平的夏天 [Beiping's summer]; for Shen, the work selected was “Changde de Chuan” 常德的船 [Boats in Changde].

### Chapter Three: A Matter of Taste: Textbook Reform in the 1970s

In 2009, Qi Bang-yuan, one of the most respected predecessors in the fields of Taiwanese literature and education,<sup>105</sup> published her memoir on her experiences and struggles as a firm believer in literature throughout her eighty-five year life.<sup>106</sup> This book soon became a bestseller and aroused fervent discussion in the pan-Chinese world, while Qi's story once again touched upon issues generated from the split between China and Taiwan after 1949. As a descendant of an influential family in Manchuria, Qi was lucky enough to be able to continue her study during WWII and graduated from Wuhan University with a major in Western literature in 1947. She then came to Taiwan to accept an offer of an academic position left open by the end of war in Taiwan. In the following years of her life, Qi has been dedicating herself to literature and higher education; her most well known contribution is introducing Taiwanese literature to the West by translating and editing anthologies of literature from Taiwan in English.

As one of the significant promoters of Taiwanese literature since the 1970s, Qi's name had hardly been involved with any literary debates that had frequently happened in Taiwan, which was due to its authoritarian politics and unsteady identity at that time. The achievements of this female professor are mostly seen as harmless university literary education and translation of literary works. After her memoir was published, however, a letter from readers was published in newspaper, specifically criticizing Qi's incorrect memory about the "reforms"<sup>107</sup> of middle school textbooks she conducted while working

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<sup>105</sup> Wang De-wei, "Ruci beishang, ruci yuyue, ruci dute" 如此悲傷, 如此愉悅, 如此獨特 [So sorrowful, so delighted, and so unique], *China Times*, Nov 28, 2009.

<sup>106</sup> Qi Bang-yuan, *Juliu He* 巨流河, [The juliu river] Taipei: Tianxia yuanjian, 2009.

<sup>107</sup> Qi used a phrase indicating "reform (*gaige*)" instead of "revision (*gaibian*)" in her memoir. Whether the extent of this revision had reached the level of reform is still in need of further discussion. I generally use the two words interchangeably in the following texts.

at the National Institute for Compilation and Translation during the 1970s.<sup>108</sup> The letter challenged what Qi remembered about the potential danger of being interrogated by the government because of her insistence on selecting Huang Chun-ming's work.<sup>109</sup> As one of the former members who participated in the editors' meetings, Wu Hong-yi, the author of the letter, could not recall such a danger had existed. Wu argues that he himself would have been in a worse situation than Qi if Qi were right about her suspiciousness of the government. He himself used to reject an instruction to put an anti-communist literary work into the textbooks, while what Qi intended to do was merely to promote *xiaingtu* literature.<sup>110</sup> Wu thus asked Qi not to fictionalize the textbook editing and to correct her statement in a timely fashion.

While Qi remained unresponsive to this accusation, Ke Qing-ming, her former coworker and a literature professor in National Taiwan University, stepped forward and defended Qi's version of the details about the textbook revision.<sup>111</sup> In his published diary, Ke attributes the incident to Wu's misreading of Qi's memoir. Ke believes that the author does not hold responsibility for an individual reader's misreading.

Although the controversy seems rather trivial per se, it raises larger questions about another significant point in the history of the textbooks. As Qi and Wu both participated in the editors' meeting, the question of whose memory is more reliable becomes a puzzling one. However, even if Qi was wrong about her memory, her worries are clearly a self-censorship generated from the authoritarian rule under Taiwan's martial

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<sup>108</sup> Wu Hong-yi, "Qi Ban-yuan jiaoshou yu guowen jiaokeshu" 齊邦媛教授與國文教科書 [Professor Qi Bangyuan and the textbooks of Chinese language and literature], *Apple Daily*, Oct 20, 2009.

<sup>109</sup> Huang Chun-ming later on became one of the most representative authors in Taiwan's nativist literature.

<sup>110</sup> *Xiangtu* literature, also known as nativist literature.

<sup>111</sup> Ke Qing-ming, *2009/Ke Qing-Ming: shenghuo yu shuxie* 2009/柯慶明: 生活與書寫 [2009/Ke Qing-ming: life and writings], (Taipei: erya, 2010), 419-21.

law situation. Her fears of the authority therefore should be given enough consideration when one is examining the history of textbook evolution. In the following discussion, what I intend to reach is thus neither a correct answer to this dispute, nor an account of what actually happened in the editor meetings, but rather, a more abstract dimension that stemmed from this incident. I would like to move my focus to Qi's ambiguous stance in 1970s Taiwan, which is revealed from her memoir and this dispute: a woman with her Western literary education in mainland China, attempting to recognize *xiangtu* literature when conducting a "textbook reform" in Taiwan, while she is at the same time self-censoring due to her fears of the authority.

With these clues, Qi's story appears a telling case for examining a few key points in the formation of literary canons. Her appearance and achievements in the revision of literary textbooks may serve as a key to the questions prompted in the evolution of Taiwan's textbooks: while the evolution of the textbooks has usually been driven by the dominant culture at the time and then reversely has fed the culture with hidden ideologies, in what condition was the textbook in need of a "reform" in the 1970s? Why and how did Qi Bang-yuan come to have an essential role in this "reform" at that time? Based on which disciplines did Qi conduct the "reform?" To what extent did this revision change Taiwan's literary education? To answer these questions, it will be necessary to include a brief survey of Taiwan's literary textbook policy during the postwar period in the following discussion.

#### **CENSORSHIP, MORALISM, SINOCENTRISM**

The 228 Incident in 1947 and the KMT's subsequent retreat from Mainland China ended the relatively free market that Taiwan's textbooks had enjoyed for two years. In order to take full control of education, the KMT government continued its unitary-

textbook policy that had been carried out on the mainland. Taiwan at the beginning used the textbook that was developed on the mainland. Starting from 1952, considering the political situation and the need of language training for the Taiwanese people, the government published a series of textbooks that were suitable for middle schoolers. A few changes in the national curriculum standards were also made afterwards.<sup>112</sup> These changes, however, did not play a substantial part in the evolution of the *guowen* class. These textbooks basically shared highly similar features with the textbooks that were edited under the KMT's supervision on the mainland. The textbooks used in postwar Taiwan therefore still featured the essay-centered format and a significant amount of dogmatic articles written by individuals affiliated with the authority.<sup>113</sup>

The conflicting positions between the KMT party and the Communists nevertheless brought about some subtle changes in terms of the state-endorsed ideology. Haunted by the defeat in the civil war, the KMT government was devoted to developing an anti-communist literary and artistic policy in Taiwan. The left-wing works or suspected writings were filtered out from selections accordingly.<sup>114</sup> Addition to the “practical compositions” written by KMT officials, both classical and modern selections

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<sup>112</sup> There were three revised curriculum standards before Qi's participation. They were made in 1952, 1962, and 1968. These revisions did not change the textbooks much, as the basic guidelines still followed the principles created in the 1920s and 1930s mainland. See Su Yia-li, “Gaozhong Guowen Kecheng Biao zhun yu Guowen Ke ben Xuanwen Bianqian zhi Yangjiu,” (MA thesis, National Chengchi University, 2004), 12-39.

<sup>113</sup> Taking one of the textbooks published in 1955 as an example, among the twenty lessons, only one classical short story was selected. The rest of the selections were mostly classical and modern essays, while the poetry accounted for two lessons. Among the 12 modern selections, articles that had a direct connection with the governmental propaganda accounted for six. See Gao Ming, ed., *Zhongxue Biao zhun Jiaokeshu Chu Zhong Guowen*, vol.2, Nantou: Taiwan Provincial Department of Education, 1955, accessed Mar 20, 2012, <http://dat.nict.gov.tw/cgi-bin/eb/browse.cgi?ccd=Qi1Ax5&o=v3-1>.

<sup>114</sup> Aside from ruling out the actual left-wing writings, works of writers who chose to stay on the mainland after 1949 were also eliminated from the selections.

were linked to patriotic sentiments when possible.<sup>115</sup> Besides, according to the KMT's logic, the Republic of China still represented the orthodox China in spite of its defeat in the war and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The legitimacy of the orthodox government of China thus must be manifested in the KMT's inheritance of ancient Chinese legacies. The official textbooks therefore also tended to have selections of classical works, Confucian texts and writings that touched on the glorious Chinese history.<sup>116</sup>

This textbook policy went hand in hand with the practice of the joint entrance examinations. This close connection between the national textbook and the examinational system turned out to successfully direct the *guowen* class for several decades.<sup>117</sup> Almost all students must take the joint exams to enter a less expensive yet better-established secondary school or college. The invited scholars were required to design the exams unexceptionally according to the knowledge allowed in the textbooks. This principle successfully facilitated the state power in limiting the literary class to the state-favored content. On the one hand, the system seemed fair because it allowed for social mobility—students who came from poor families could still succeed by studying hard. On the other hand, the system defined the terms of its own evaluation. As legitimized by its justness in

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<sup>115</sup> Taking the same volume as an example, Du Fu's classical poem "Advent of Spring" and the modern selection "A Speech manuscript In the Memorial of Huanghuagang Revolutionary Nationals" represented this type of patriotic sentiment. Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> These lessons included texts of Confucius and Mencius, as well as articles about the sage monarchs and the courtiers. Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> The Senior High School Joint Entrance Examination began in 1958, and the College Joint Entrance Examination began in 1954. Both joint examinations were conducted under the governments' oversight, in spite of the reluctant attitudes of some universities. See Kuan Mei-jung, "Daxue Ruxue Zhidu yu Jiaoyu Kongzhi: Taiwan Diqu de Lishi Kaocha, 1949-2001" 大學入學考試制度與教育控制: 台灣地區的歷史考察(1949-2001) [The College Joint Entrance Examination and Educational Control: A Historical survey of Taiwan], (PhD diss., National Chengchi University, 2005), 60-102, and Lai Su-ru, "Taipei Shi Gongli Gaozhong Lianzhao Wenwu Guan Jianzheng Liankao Zhidu 台北市公立高中聯招文物館 見證聯考制度," [The Museum of Taipei Municipal Senior High Schools that Witnesses the Joint Examination System] *Taipei Huakan*, January 2003, 66-69.

electing brilliant students—based on its own logic—the system of joint examinations conversely justified the textbooks in use. Even after the restrictions on textbook publishing were lifted later during the 1990s, the joint entrance examination still has an influence on Taiwan’s society as a fair way to promote social mobility.

It was not until the 1990s that the unitary-textbook policy gave way to another project named “one guideline, multiple textbooks.”<sup>118</sup> This policy partially resulted from the call for an educational reform that had gained momentum during the 1980s, under the social atmosphere that yearned for a real democratization in Taiwan at the time. It was admitted that many critical rectifications of educational policies took place under this demand for a reform, but the literary textbooks appeared to be among those that changed less. In the scheme of “one guideline, multiple textbooks,” private publishing houses did regain their rights to edit and put out a textbook in the market. Before being adopted by any schoolteacher, however, the textbooks must pass the examination conducted by the scholars, who were assembled under the governmental administration. Also, the qualifications of this examination lay in the “one-guideline,” which was still a unitary, national instruction about what and how to teach. The state power therefore to a large extent preserved its right to interfere with the content of textbooks.

While the curriculum standard of the “one guideline, multiple textbooks” policy tended to direct the textbook content to a “life-oriented” knowledge, the question of literary forms seemed a minor issue taken into consideration. This reform focused on the topics and content of the selections rather than the forms adopted on the whole. Considering the content of the selections as being responsible for imposing KMT

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<sup>118</sup> This policy was practiced in 1996 for junior high school textbooks, and 1999 for senior high school textbooks. The curriculum guideline made for junior high schools was announced in 1994. See ROC Ministry of Education, *Guomin Zhongxue Kecheng Biaozhun* 國民中學課程標準 [The curricular standard of junior high schools], Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1994.



endorsed ideologies, private publishing houses tended to eliminate the old selections with ostensive doctrines based on the “life-oriented” principle. The articles written by the KMT’s high officials were therefore mostly ruled out, and the themes of the rest of the selections were also carefully restated. The patriotic introductions to a work were replaced with neutral descriptions concerning literary values. While the patriotic doctrines endorsed by the KMT government reduced its influence on the selections, the essay-centered arrangement, however, remained in the format. The writing modes were still the most important criteria of selecting articles, whereas the belletristic genres remained marginalized. Furthermore, seeing that the essay form as the primary teaching resource became conventionalized, instead of a neutral term of “teaching materials (*jiaocai*),”<sup>119</sup> the national textbook guideline applied “model essays (*fanwen*)” to indicate the selections as a whole.<sup>120</sup> Under the restriction of the administration and the convention of selections, the textbooks produced by the “multiple textbooks” policy did include a few more contemporary works, but appeared similar to the old versions in terms of format and the proportion of genres. In other words, in spite of the allegedly more open policy, literary textbooks on the whole did not change dramatically in this stage as compared with the state-published version used during the 1980s.

The seemingly unchanged textbooks under the “multiple textbooks” policy, however, would appear very different as compared with the one used in postwar Taiwan in terms of the selections. Although the proportion of selected genres did not change much, literary writings once again replaced practical writings as a whole and had an

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<sup>119</sup> The curriculum standards during the 1920s and 1930s all used *jiaocai* to indicate the textbook selections.

<sup>120</sup> In spite of the reform of the “multiple textbooks” policy, the principles and terms in the 1994 curriculum standard actually did not change much as compared to the previous one. See ROC Ministry of Education, *Guomin Zhongxue Kecheng Biaozhun* 國民中學課程標準, Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1983.

essential part in education. While the textbooks used in the 1980s and the 1990s seemed analogous, their literature-oriented feature had been quite dissimilar from the KMT endorsed textbooks in the 1950s. Put differently, the change from an education of pragmatic writings back to an education of literature was not an overnight revolution solely caused by the well-known educational reform in the 1990s; rather, it was an evolutionary process during several decades.

In the evolution of a literary textbook, I identify the series of textbooks revised in the 1970s as a landmark version that steered a literary course. It was in this version that, for the first time since 1949, the textbooks included a considerable amount of contemporary works with an emphasis on artistic skills.<sup>121</sup> The redirection to a literary reader, however, did not lead to a revival of the literary class suggested by Hu Shih fifty years ago. Counter to Hu's vision, the proportion of the selections was closer to Liang Qichao's suggestion, except for the expanded amount of artistic essays instead of practical writings. The importance of the essay form still far outweighed fictional genres in the 1970s version.

Conducted by Qi Ban-yuan, a literary scholar with a Western literary educational background, the 1970s reform of literary textbooks appeared a noteworthy case concerning the reemergence of a literary textbook. It would be an easy assumption to make that, since the civil war had ended, the revival of a literary textbook might be a result of a loosening of governmental policy. In reality, the society was still under strict state control on the whole. A series of diplomatic setbacks in the early 1970s brought the KMT government unprecedented pressure regarding its legitimacy to run a country. Counter to the appearance of a rather liberal society through the emergence of dissenting

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<sup>121</sup> Before this version, although the textbooks occasionally included contemporary works—such as Chen Zhifan's "Rootless Orchid (shigen de lanhua)," the content and theme of this type of work were obviously subsumed to the state endorsed ideology.

opinions, the government actually imposed closer surveillance in a way. For example, right before Qi Ban-yuan assumed the team head of the governmental textbook department,<sup>122</sup> the chief editor of senior high textbooks was purged because of the “inappropriate selections” of the new textbooks.<sup>123</sup> In Qi’s memoir, she also expressed her fear of the state surveillance more than one time.

Such a textbook, which looked for reform under the authority’s scrutiny, was therefore doomed to be a product of confrontation and negotiation. The result of an artistic-essay-centered textbook raised questions over why and how this type of textbook was formed under Qi’s leadership and the governmental will. In the following sections, I will continue my discussion of the relationship between the literary forms and ideologies, with a special attention to the position Qi Ban-yuan represented and the choices she made in conducting this reform.

#### **THE POLITICS OF LITERATURE: “*QUWEI*” AS A STRATEGY**

Admittedly, the absorption of new educational theories to some extent affected intellectuals’ view regarding learning. The call for reform of literary textbooks, however, certainly also concerned a protest against the constraint of a “soft-authoritarian” government.<sup>124</sup> Contrasted to Hu Shih’s vision, in which literature was an approach to establish a language—and a nation, the strict political restriction from the government was responsible for the redirection to a textbook of literature. Literature was thus turned into a utopia, where the political doctrines should be excluded.

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<sup>122</sup> Qi entered the National Institute of Compilation and Translation in 1971, and assumed the head of the department of textbooks in 1972. See Qi, “Ju liu He,” 594.

<sup>123</sup> The chief editor of the senior high textbooks at the time was Chou He, a professor of the National Taiwan Normal University. He was forced to leave the position of chief editor under the pressure of attacks from the press—mostly instigated by the government—which asserted the selections of the new textbooks implied accusation of the government. Coincidentally, this series of textbooks were also attempting to bring more literary selections into the textbooks. See Su, “Gaozhong,” 54-60.

<sup>124</sup> Chang, *Literary Culture*, 53.

The reform Qi conducted succeeded in a way. She barred a considerable amount of political articles from her textbook, and replaced them with artistic works. But one question concerning this literature-oriented textbook is immediately prompted by the selections of this textbook: why did Qi choose to produce a textbook with a majority of artistic essays, instead of making a fiction-centered textbook?<sup>125</sup>

Along the lines of the observation made in the previous section, Qi's unique background and the changing social climate had shaped this textbook as a product of negotiations. Although it seemed a reasonable surmise that Qi's Western literary background had helped her in insisting on the boundary between literature and dogmatic articles, she did not bring a corresponding literary hierarchy to this textbook. The convention formed by the government-dominated selections accounted in part for this making of an essay-centered textbook. Since the textbooks had been used for two decades, the teaching methods, evaluations, as well as students' strategies of learning all fell into a pattern. A shift of the literary forms in use thus became very difficult because it would immediately raise problems involving the whole structure. Further, the national curriculum standard played an important part in limiting Qi and her editors' options.<sup>126</sup> The primary principles of the standard still followed the ones developed when the subject of guowen had first been established. The writing modes that were imported during the 1920s still dominated the standard of selecting works, making fiction a genre less likely to meet the criteria of an exemplary text. Given the circumstance above, the artistic essays seemed to be a convenient choice for Qi to focus her energy on the exclusion of

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<sup>125</sup> In Qi's textbook, there were more fictional genres than previous versions, but the proportion between fictional writings and essays was still unbalanced on the whole.

<sup>126</sup> Qi's textbook was edited based on the revised curriculum standard in 1972. Although the primary principles mostly were inherited from its mainland ancestor—for example, the writing modes still dominated the way of selecting and teaching the materials, the standard had become much more detailed as compared with the ones made on the mainland. The course hours and teaching approaches were all under regulation. It was therefore very difficult to change the literary forms in a drastic way.

political articles. The question thereupon came to be: how to justify the artistic essays as a superior substitute for the practical articles?

I argue that an emphasis on the “*quwei* (fascination, enjoyment, or taste)” of literature represented the strategy Qi used to circumvent the situation she was facing. Along with this approach, Qi was able to create a textbook of literature with some necessary concessions to the principles and conventions of politics and education. This strategy of *quwei* not only in part contributed to the proportion of selected literary genres, but also affected the selections in terms of content and topics. Eventually, apart from the ostensive limitations imposed by external circumstances, the strategy Qi adopted to reject the political doctrines also contributed to the making a literary-essay-centered textbook.

Her critique of the previous version of textbooks could best serve as a starting point to comprehend this core concept in her editorial works, and how it eventually fit in squarely with Qi’s need. Prior to taking office, Qi observed the public discontent with the dogmatic articles in the old textbooks as follows:

On the surface [people] only said the selection was not appropriate or the level was not suitable [for students]. Some were more honest in saying that students were not interested [in the content].... They simply continued their circumlocutory plea: save our children! Give them back the happiness of reading! Develop in them a liberal and vigorous personality! But no one dared to straightforwardly criticize: there were too many articles about the party, politics and military. Even if someone dared to utter something, there would be no newspaper or magazine that dared to publish it.<sup>127</sup>

Although the real incentive for these criticisms lay in the discontent with the dogmatic articles, the critics could not publically utter their criticisms because of self-censoring. This self-censoring also prevented the textbooks from going to an extreme pragmatic direction, for which some of the May Fourth intellectuals had hoped. Since the

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<sup>127</sup> Qi, “Ju Liu He,” 408-9.

current political content pervaded literary textbooks in the name of practical writings from the very beginning, a petition for a pragmatic textbook at the time would appear senseless. The critics therefore could only appeal for a textbook that made the children happy, liberal and vigorous. The best approach to this goal was to stimulate the interest of students—who could not benefit from reading because of being uninterested in the dogmatic content. Here, literature came to be the best solution one could resort to, as no one would deny the enjoyment literary works could bring about. In addition, the disinterestedness and neutrality that literature presented would simultaneously exclude the political content from the textbooks and secure the critics from the government’s counterattack. In line with this reasoning, a literature of *quwei* must be included in the new textbook in order to realize these visions.

It could also be observed that Qi contrasted the concepts of “*quwei*” with “doctrines” several times in her recollection of her experience as the head of textbook editors. After she finished the editorial works with her collaborators, Qi evaluated the new selections as “articles of much more interest (*quwei*) than moral instruction.”<sup>128</sup> Also, she described the feeling of the editorial group as “delighted” at their final stage of editing, because they could see from both textbooks’ tables of contents that “the new version was really much more interesting (*youqu*).”<sup>129</sup> Resisting the imposition of boring political doctrines, Qi apparently resorted to the concept of *quwei* to underline the justification of her reform.

It is, however, questionable whether one could simply interpret *quwei* here on the face of its literal meaning of enjoyment. One of the immediate questions is: if Qi simply leaned on interest as a yardstick for the quality of selection, fictional genres should not

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<sup>128</sup> Qi, *Ju Liu He*, 414.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

have been less qualified than essays. Why did the prose essays particularly have the capacity for evoking this enjoyment in Qi's textbook?

One thing that must be kept in mind is that the state hegemony was ubiquitous, and the textbooks were doomed to be a product of compromises. The observably substantial regulations and conventions discussed in previous sections undoubtedly contributed most to the essay-centered phenomenon. However, Qi's textbook also certainly showed a distinct aspect other than a complete surrender to the hegemony. More importantly, judged through the inclination of particular selections in this textbook, Qi apparently did not have the intention to include interesting writings—even interesting essays—unconditionally. Qi's use of *quwei* had its own distinct connotation in a way. A deeper discussion of the genealogy of *quwei* therefore is required to gain a comprehensive understanding of Qi's adoption of artistic essays as a crucial approach in building a literary textbook. But before going any further to investigate the term *quwei*, a detour to some facts about the textbook's favorable writings in the Republican period will be helpful as a starting point to picture the *quwei* Qi had in mind.

#### **UTILIZING THE LYRICAL REPUBLICAN ESSAY WRITING**

Judging from the selections of Qi's textbook, the "*quwei*" she used as the parameter seemed not simply a synonym of interestedness or enjoyment. The first notable aspect in this textbook is the reappearance of a group of Republican writers. Apart from a higher percentage of contemporary literary writings as compared with the previous textbooks, Qi also managed to reserve room for Zhu Ziqing, Xia Mianzun and Xu Zhimuo's essays. A statistic of the differences between the amounts of the three writers' works further underscores the point of "reemergence:" in the 1952 state-published

textbooks, the works of the three writers accounted for six entries;<sup>130</sup> in the series of textbooks published around 1969, the works from the same writers reduced to two.<sup>131</sup> As for Qi's textbook that was published in the early 1970s, essay works from the three Republican authors amounted to eight.<sup>132</sup>

Qi's preference for the Republican writings was also manifested in the unexampled inclusion of Liang Shiqiu's essays.<sup>133</sup> Although Liang was famous as an essayist only after his anthology was published in Taiwan, he actually had engaged in literary activities and debates during the 1920s and 1930s on the mainland. Liang's most welcomed essay collection was published after he came to Taiwan, but mostly written during the 1940s when he was in Sichuan. Aside from these linkages that associated his essays with the May Fourth period, most importantly, his essay works bear a resemblance to the features of the little piece essay (*xiaopin wen*) that developed vigorously on the 1920s and 1930s mainland. All these characteristics made the discussion of Liang's essays inconceivable without associating his style with the influence of the May Fourth period. The inclusion of Liang's essay works therefore increased the presence of Republican writings in Qi's textbooks to ten pieces.

The appearance of works by Zhu, Xu and Xia in the early postwar textbooks had their own unique historical background. The preference during the 1950s for the lyrical essays of Zhu and Xu embodied the "positive outlook" of the state-endorsed cultural values, which scholars had identified as a distinct tradition from the May Fourth

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<sup>130</sup> In the whole set of six volumes, Zhu's work accounted for three entries; Xia's for one; and Xu's for two. The statistic was collected from the website of ROC, National Academy for Educational Research, accessed March 30, 2012, [http://www.nict.gov.tw/tc/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=1](http://www.nict.gov.tw/tc/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1).

<sup>131</sup> Zhu's works accounted for one entry and Xia's for one, whereas Xu Zhimuo's work was not selected at all in this version. Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Zhu's works accounted for three entries; Xia's for three; and Xu's for two. Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Two of Liang's essays were included in Qi's textbooks. Ibid.



period.<sup>134</sup> As to Xia Mianzun, he was actually known by the textbook audience as an educationalist in the beginning. Having his own publishing house, Xia not only wrote a considerable amount of articles to instruct students on how to develop a composition, but also translated foreign books that were well suited to the level of secondary school students. His publishing house had once produced several textbooks popular in the mainland market, which also proved to have great influence on the editorial principles of other textbooks. The inclusion of his articles in the 1952 published textbooks partially reflected the effect of his successful education career. His included articles were mainly vernacular Chinese translations of foreign texts or instructions on compositional skills.<sup>135</sup> In other words, seen through the textbooks published in early postwar Taiwan, Xia was to a large extent recognized as a significant contributor to secondary education, rather than an essayist with a great artistic achievement.

As for the disappearance of these writers in the 1969 published textbooks, the diminishing importance of the May Fourth essays certainly played a part. The modernist aesthetics that were prevalent since the late 1950s Taiwan directly caused widespread introspection about the vernacular writings with the May Fourth lineage. Counter to “the less experimental May Fourth”<sup>136</sup> tradition, Yu Guangzhong pioneered a “modernist prose” project,<sup>137</sup> in which artistic language was the most important criterion assuring the literary value of essays. With the attested success of the modernists during the 1960s,

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<sup>134</sup> See Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, *Literary culture in Taiwan: martial law to market law*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 87-8.

<sup>135</sup> The materials were collected from the website of ROC, National Academy for Educational Research, accessed March 30, 2012, [http://www.nict.gov.tw/tc/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=1](http://www.nict.gov.tw/tc/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1).

<sup>136</sup> Yu Guangzhong, “Xia Wusi de Banqi 下五四的半旗,” accessed March 31, 2012, <http://dcc.ndhu.edu.tw/essay/yu-guangzhong/2008/02/13/%E4%B8%8B%E4%BA%94%E5%9B%9B%E7%9A%84%E5%8D%8A%E6%97%97/>

<sup>137</sup> Yu Guangzhong, “Jiandiao sanwen de bianzi 剪掉散文的辮子,” *Yu Guangzhong QuANJI*, vol. 4, (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 2004), 153-62.

Yu's criticism performed a critical role in redeveloping a parameter to evaluate prose essays. The May Fourth essays were therefore gradually edged out of the mainstream position.

However, the most obvious reason contributing to this retreat of the May Fourth writings in the 1969 textbooks still appeared to be a submission to the tighter state surveillance. Judging from the selections substituted for the May Fourth writings, the modernist essay that Yu advocated was apparently not a preferable choice for the editors. Instead, the political doctrines virtually pervaded the whole series of textbooks. Given the concurrent resignation of the chief editor of senior high textbooks, it seemed a reasonable surmise that the disappearance of these artistic essays actually resulted from a more drastic self-censoring of the editors. Avoiding the same disputes that were evoked by their senior fellow, the editorial group might have selected more serious and dogmatic articles to harmonize with the diplomatic setbacks and domestic protests the KMT was facing. In other words, although Yu's attack against the May Fourth prose writings might have lowered their originally mainstream status, his desirable modernist essay, however, did not manage to take the place left by its predecessors.

The works of Zhu, Xu and Xia then returned to the textbook overseen by Qi during the 1970s. Lyrically sentimental essays accounted for most of Zhu and Xu's selections, and in the meantime, Xia's lucid literary essays were also included. Further, Liang's essays also made their debut in this version of the textbook. Judged through the parameter constructed by the modernists, these essay works could hardly qualify as fine literature. But Qi apparently did not take this modernist standard to evaluate the essay selections. Despite the aim to have more contemporary writings, Qi only selected one of

Yu Guang-zhong's works—a poem—among the whole body of modernist literature,<sup>138</sup> whereas she included at least three representative writers from an opposing camp of *xiangtu* literature.

Apart from their evidently lyrical characteristics, the newly selected Republican essays were distinguished from other prose writings by an emphasis on *quwei*. Examples abound even for the same writer's selections. Instead of taking over Xu Zhumuo's motivational article "To Meet Head-on (ying xiang qian qu),"<sup>139</sup> Qi's textbook replaced it with a vivid travel journal "Zhimuo's Diary (*Zhimuo riji*)."<sup>140</sup> As for Xia Mianzun, the editorial group abandoned his previous selections, such as translations of foreign texts or the moral introspection in the foreword of a book.<sup>141</sup> Xia's writing style was henceforth exemplified by works like "The Art of Life (*shenghuo de yishu*),"<sup>142</sup> in which he depicted Li Shutong's modest way of living; his instructions on compositions were now not directly cited, but instead conveyed in the more interesting form of "A Letter Home (*yifong jiashu*)."<sup>143</sup> The freshly recognized selection of Liang Shiqiu, "The Bird (*niao*)," further demonstrated the *quwei* Qi endorsed: through sketching the lovable images of birds, the author concurrently reminisced about the lovely old times.

Qi's favorable attitude towards the lyrical Republican prose, on the one hand, was a result of a compromise between the state-favored ideology and the autonomous status

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<sup>138</sup> According to Chang, the modernist movement in Taiwan to some extent reflected a protest against the dominant culture under KMT's hegemony. As Qi's stance, instead of a full-fledged resistance, was more inclined to be a compromise between the state and a literary autonomy, her rejection of modernist works in the textbook was unsurprising. For discussion of the modernist protest, see Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, *Modernism and the Nativist Resistance: Contemporary Fiction from Taiwan*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 24-26.

<sup>139</sup> Selected in the 1962 published Guowen textbook, vol. 3.

<sup>140</sup> "Zhimuo's Diary" made its debut in the 1974 published Guowen textbook, vol. 2, and was thereafter inherited by the following textbooks for decades.

<sup>141</sup> "The Foreword of *Heart*," in the 1957 published Guowen textbook, vol. 6.

<sup>142</sup> Selected in the 1975 published Guowen textbook, vol. 5.

<sup>143</sup> Selected in the 1974 published Guowen textbook, vol. 4.

of literature. Seeing that the sentimental prose appeared harmless to the state-sanctioned cultural values, Qi utilized a return to the Republican and May Fourth essays to safeguard herself from governmental surveillance. On the other hand, her preference for writings during this period to a certain extent manifested the May Fourth lineage of Qi's tactics of *quwei*. In fact, *quwei* had been a concept used by the May Fourth writers and critics to elucidate the aesthetics of literature, especially the prose essays. Zhu Guangqian, one of Qi's most important mentors during her university education on the mainland,<sup>144</sup> offered an example of how the May Fourth intellectuals developed *quwei* from the perspective of individualism to become a valuable element in evaluating literature.

#### UNADULTERATED *QUWEI*: A MORAL PRACTICE OF INDIVIDUALISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Although the discussion of *quwei* might call to mind an immediate association with “humor”—a term introduced into China during the 1920s by Lin Yutang—the *quwei* Qi bore in mind was closer to her former teacher's idea, rather than Lin's. Dissimilar to Lin's interpretation of *quwei* as a plain fascination that served to inspire or motivate,<sup>145</sup> Zhu Guangqian focused more on the cultivation of personal taste, which eventually would lead to an “unadulterated *quwei*.” Zhu defined the *quwei* of literature as follows:

Literary works have differences in terms of their artistic values. [One] will have likes and dislikes when discerning their different values; this is so-called *quwei*.... The cultivation of literature can be said as equal to be the cultivation of *quwei*.<sup>146</sup>

Based on Zhu's account, it appeared that he tended to discuss *quwei* in the more complex sense of taste, rather than in the sense of the qualities in a work that the reader could appreciate. Zhu subsequently related the formation of taste to one's experiences,

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<sup>144</sup> Qi, *Ju Liu He*, 176-230.

<sup>145</sup> Lin described “*qu*” as an important incentive, inspiring all activities, including studying and artistic activities. See “Lun Qu” 論趣 [On “*qu*”], Youyou Renjian, (Xian: Shanxi Shifan, 2007), 132-3.

<sup>146</sup> Zhu Guangqian, “Wenxue de quwei” 文學的趣味 [The *quwei* of literature], *Tan Wenxue*, (Shanghai: Kaiming, 1946), 28.

the tradition, and, most importantly, one's natural instincts. In other words, the cultivation of *quwei*—as well as literature—is almost equivalent to developing personality. As these factors affect the cultivation of the personal taste at different levels, Zhu admitted that *quwei* could vary individually. In another article on *quwei*, he explained:

As one cannot take two paths simultaneously, you can only take one when you set out... [People who work on artistic activities] cannot avoid developing a narrow interest first... This is to say, although learners of literature and art cannot help leaning [to one side] at the beginning, in the end they must be able to be impartial, detached from sectarian divisions, and able to see the defect of partiality.<sup>147</sup>

According to Zhu, since everyone takes a path that inevitably leans to one side, which decides the *quwei* one can possibly enjoy, there is no point arguing whose *quwei* is superior. Zhu was in this sense allying himself with his predecessor Zhou Zuoren, who, according to David Pollard, viewed *quwei* as an extension of personality.<sup>148</sup> With the individualism hidden in the recognition of *quwei* as personality, Zhou was able to justify his interest in the trivial rather than the constructive writings.<sup>149</sup> This reasoning in a way justified the lyrical essay genres simultaneously, as fiction genres were the ones seen as tools for political battles during the Republican period. However, Zhu's *quwei* still did not completely resemble that of Zhou's. While Zhou stopped at where *quwei* varied individually—people could be “tasteful,” “tasteless” or having “low-class taste”—<sup>150</sup>Zhu asserted that the narrow *quwei* one acquired at the beginning should eventually be overcome. The best approach to this aesthetic impartiality is to cultivate oneself to the status of “unadulterated *quwei*.”

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<sup>147</sup> Zhu Guangqian, “Tan *quwei*” 談趣味 [On “*quwei*”], *Zhu Guangqian meixue wenxue lunwen xuanji*, ed., Chen Wanheng, (Changsha: Hunan Renmin, 1980), 20-4.

<sup>148</sup> David Pollard, *A Chinese Look at Literature—The Literary Values of Chou Tso-jen in Relation to the Tradition*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 74-5.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-71.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

The “unadulterated *quwei*” indicates an aesthetic taste that is “able to be impartial, detached from sectarian divisions, and able to see the defect of partiality.” To achieve this status, according to Zhu, one must expand one’s field of vision by as much reading as possible. But Zhu missed one point here in his approach to cultivation. Based on his own theory, the writer and the reader’s personality should also receive this cultivation, as *quwei* is the extension of individual personality. The “unadulterated *quwei*” therefore could not possibly be achieved without pursuing a spiritual or moral purity. The emphasis on the positive personality explains Zhu’s view on “low-class *quwei*.” In an article on bad tastes in literature, he listed five vulgar plots and five unfavorable attitudes of the author to delineate “low-class *quwei*,” including detective stories, pornography, the dark side of the society, the humorous or ostentatious attitude of the writers, etc.<sup>151</sup> Although Zhu did not provide examples of his “unadulterated *quwei*,” his account on the low-class *quwei* reflected that the best *quwei* he bore in mind was a spiritually, if not morally, positive taste.

The “unadulterated *quwei*,” a concept that embraced personal idiom, sincerity, individualism, and, meanwhile, a spiritual or moral purity, therefore came to be a solution for Qi Ban-yuan to negotiate between the state power and literary autonomy. The emphasis on the elements discussed above, on the one hand, allowed essays that are both artistically skilled and morally positive to dominate the selections. The inclusion of Liang Shiqiu and the exclusion of Lin Yutang can be seen as a result of this filtering system, as humor—or sarcasm—was traditionally not seen as a virtue. On the other hand, this parameter seemed to edge out the modernist selections to a certain extent. As discussed in previous sections, the modernist works were almost unselected except for one of Yu

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<sup>151</sup> Zhu Guangqian, “Wenxue shang de diji quwei” 文學上的低級趣味 [The low-class *quwei* in literature], *Tan Wenxue*, (Shanghai: Kaiming, 1946), 33-57.

Guangzhong's poem, whereas *xiangtu* works had three entries. One of the possible explanations could be the emphasis of *quwei*, which tended to be on the interaction between the writer and reader's personalities through literary works. This is apparently a task less possible to achieve in modernist fiction. Another possible reason is that, as compared with the *xiangtu* writers, the modernist writers less frequently depicted the bright side of humanity, even in their essay works.

## Conclusion

Through this study, one can see that teaching artistic essays in the literary class in Taiwan today is closely associated with the legacy from the Republican period in Mainland China. Literature in the textbooks was first utilized as a tool to help the elite class to communicate with the masses, so that the nation-building project might proceed through the establishment of the national language. This viewpoint was valid until the nation-building project—which was regarded as being achieved by the success of the Northern Expedition from the stance of the KMT—gave way to the demand for practical writings. The practical writings then became a weak point that allowed the government to interfere with the content of the literary textbooks.

Qi undertook the reform of the propagandized textbooks. The result manifested both her resistance against and conformity to the state surveillance. On the one hand, she managed to bring literariness back to the textbook selections; on the other, the literary selections were subject to the principle of unadulterated taste. This unadulterated taste, a terminology proposed by Qi's teacher, somewhat rejected plot—a crucial element in fictional writings—and appeared more to favor the artistic essays. It is therefore not surprising that the literary essays then evolved to be the main component in the textbooks after Qi's reform.

It is true that the evolution of the modern textbook, with an emphasis on the essay writings, mostly concerns the principle of pragmatism. However, in what way can one define what is practical, and what is not? Or, we should also ask, who gets to define it? For the Qing Empire's officials, undertaking the task of coping with Western civilization was the most practical thing to do. For the May Fourth intellectuals, however, literature—especially fiction—could help to establish a new vernacular language, which bore the



responsibility to save the nation from collapsing. This also seemed practical. But for those who cared about the essence of mass education rather than the establishment of vernacular language, it was the practical composition that could best serve students' interests. For the KMT government, propaganda about the legitimacy of its authority is practical. For the intellectual who believed in the artistic value of literature in postwar Taiwan, however, a compromise was the only practical approach to take. The inclusion or exclusion of certain selections in textbooks is therefore never natural or inevitable.

## Chinese Character Glossary

- baihua* 白話  
*baihuawen* 白話文  
*Baijiaxing* 百家姓  
Beijin *yu* 北京語  
Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培  
Camel Xiangzi 駱駝祥子  
Chang Naide 常乃德  
Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀  
Chen Yi 陳儀  
Chen Zhifan 陳之藩  
Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石  
*dao* 道  
*dianbao* 電報  
*diqu* 地球  
Du Fu 杜甫  
*fanwen* 範文  
Feng Shunbo 馮順伯  
Fu Sinian 傅斯年  
*genzi qingnian xiezuohui* 耕莘青年寫作會  
*gongmin* 公民  
*guanhua* 官話  
*guimao* 癸卯  
Guo Muoruo 郭沫若  
*guoqi* 國旗  
*guoyu de wenxue he wenxue de guoyu*  
國語的文學和文學的國語  
*guoyu* 國語  
Guwen guanzhi 古文觀止  
*Hanwen duben* 漢文讀本  
*hanwen* 漢文  
Hu Shih 胡適  
Hu Xianxiao 胡先嘯  
Huang Chun-ming 黃春明  
*huayu* 華語  
*jiaocai* 教材  
*jiaoyu nianjian* 教育年鑑  
*jiexiyan* 戒吸煙  
*jieyanjiu* 戒菸酒  
Kaiming 開明  
Kang Youwei 康有為  
Ke Qing-ming 柯慶明  
Kong Yiji 孔乙己  
Kuomintang 國民黨

Lanji 蘭記	<i>weishengwu</i> 微生物
Lao She 老舍	<i>wen yi zai dao</i> 文以載道
Liang Qichao 梁啟超	<i>wen</i> 文
Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋	<i>wenxue</i> 文學
Liu Bannong 劉半農	<i>wenyan wen</i> 文言文
Lu Xun 魯迅	<i>wenzhang</i> 文章
Mao Dun 茅盾	<i>women de guojia</i> 我們的國家
<i>meiwen</i> 美文	Wu Hong-yi 吳宏一
<i>Minnanhua</i> 閩南話	Wuhan 武漢
Mu Jibo 穆濟波	Xia Mianzun 夏丏尊
<i>niao</i> 鳥	<i>xiangtu</i> 鄉土
Qi Bang-yuan 齊邦媛	<i>xiaoping wen</i> 小品文
Qian Xuantong 錢玄同	Xie Bingxin 謝冰心
<i>Qianziwen</i> 千字文	Xin gqingnien 新青年
Qiu Miao-jin 邱妙津	<i>xunzheng shiqi</i> 訓政時期
<i>quwei</i> 趣味	<i>yangcheng tie yiyang de shenti</i> 養成鐵
<i>sanwen</i> 散文	一樣的身體
<i>Sanzijing</i> 三字經	Ye Shaojun 葉紹鈞
Shen Congwen 沈從文	Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶
<i>shenghuo de yishu</i> 生活的藝術	<i>yifong jiashu</i> 一封家書
<i>shigen de lanhua</i> 失根的蘭花	<i>yigang duoben</i> 一綱多本
<i>shufang</i> 書房	<i>ying wen jian dao</i> 因文見道
Sichuan 四川	<i>yingyongwen</i> 應用文
<i>sishu</i> 私塾	<i>youqu</i> 有趣
<i>tushuguan</i> 圖書館	Yu Dafu 郁達夫

Yu Guangzhong 余光中

*yunwen* 韻文

*zawen* 雜文

*zenyan zuo baihuawen* 怎樣作白話文

Zha Zhaozhong 查釗忠

Zhimuo *riji* 志摩日記

*zhongguo wenxue* 中國文學

*zhongguoren* 中國人

Zhou Zuoren 周作人

Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛

*Zuixin guowen jiaokeshu* 最新國文教科

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## Japanese Glossary

*kokugo* 国語

*kokumingakkoo* 国民学校

*kanbun* 漢文

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