Mapping Formosa: Settler Colonial Cartography in Taiwan Cinema in the 1950s*

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Abstract
This paper suggests a methodological intersection of cultural geography and settler colonial criticism to critique and reflect on the Han settler colonial structure in Taiwan by examining two representative but rarely studied propaganda films made at the inception of the Nationalist rule in the 1950s, Bai Ke’s Descendants of the Yellow Emperor (1955) and Chen Wen-chuan’s Beautiful Treasure Island (1953). More specifically, by investigating the discursive function of maps and mechanisms of mapping, it will be demonstrated how these two films construct a form of “settler colonial cartography” through the cinematic visualization of space and the use of multimedia, and how the Han settler colonial consciousness is formulated and expressed in cinema. To further differentiate the narrative and discourse of settler colonialism from classic colonialism, I compare these two films with another imperial policy documentary from the Japanese colonial period, Southward Expansion to Taiwan (1940). By doing so, this paper argues that the comparative analysis between the two modes of colonial domination can allow us to envision more effective ways of decolonization practices to “unsettle” the Han settler society. That is why settler colonial criticism matters, particularly for Taiwan at this point in its history.

Keywords
settler colonialism, cultural geography, map and cartography, spatial justice, Descendants of the Yellow Emperor, Beautiful Treasure Island, Southward Expansion to Taiwan

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Maps appear in most of the movies we see. Even if a film does not display a map as such, by nature it bears an implicit relation with cartography. A map we see in a film may concern locale, if the film is a documentary, or, if it tells a story, an itinerary. It may belong to the places in which a viewer experiences a film. Like an intertitle or a sign that tells us where the film is taking place, what it is doing, or where its characters are going, a map in a movie provides information; it whets the imagination.

—Tom Conley
*Cartographic Cinema*

Mapping is an interpretive act, not a purely technical one, in which the product—the map—conveys not merely the facts but also and always the author’s intention, and all the acknowledged and unacknowledged conditions and values any author (and his/her profession, time, and culture) brings to a work.

—John Pickles
“Texts, Hermeneutics and Propaganda Maps”

**Cartography as Methodology, Taiwan as Settler Colony**

In the last few decades, humanities scholarship has witnessed a methodological shift that has been called a “spatial turn.” At least two emerging methodologies brought about this turn. The first, as the human geographer Edward W. Soja explains, has to do with the critical reflection on the tendency of social sciences and philosophy to privilege history over geography, stressing the significance of time over space. By reconsidering the hierarchical stratification between temporality and spatiality, recent scholars argue that “spatiality, sociality, and historicality are mutually constitutive,” and are interwoven in a “mutually formative and consequential relation” (Soja 18). Meanwhile, the study of conventional geography also went through diverse forms of “cultural turns” due to the reconfiguration of Marxism and the impact of British cultural studies which “placed culture in the spotlight and made it a central focus of struggles over identity, belonging, and justice in the contemporary world” (Barnett 38-48; Scott 24). Under these circumstances, transdisciplinary fields such as “cultural geography” and “human geography” took shape and developed over the past decades.
The academic transformation and emergence of these new approaches enable us to re-conceptualize a fundamental and commonly used geographical object—the map. The map has long been taken for granted as a graphic representation or diagram which “mirrors” or “imitates” the objective world in a scientific way through its medium specificity. However, as J. B. Harley has expounded, the map should not be regarded as “a mirror of nature,” but must be viewed as “an image of the social order as a measurement of the phenomenal world of objects” (158). Although the map is constituted out of nonlinguistic elements, it can be interpreted as a “graphic text” in which the rules of society and the rules of measurement and classification operate through its cartographic representational system. Thus, we have to “read” between the “lines of technical procedures” and the “topographical content” in order to understand the “textuality” of the map, namely, the “narrative qualities” of cartographic representation (Harley 156-58). The map is not just geographical or directional equipment but a text that must be read and deciphered by map-readers. By the same token, Graham Huggan proposes that the map is “both product and process: it represents both an encoded document of a specific environment and a network of perpetually recoded messages passing between the various mapmakers and map-readers who participate in the event of cartographic communication” (4). The map is thus a medium where the interpretative interplay between the mapmaker and map-reader takes place.

Consequently, the map is not a mirror of nature. Maps are, as Denis Wood describes, “engines” that convert social energy to social work by connecting objects in space. The linkages of objects and territories brought together onto the map, he further explains, “enter the social realm as discourse functions. . . . The fact that a map is a discourse function also means that it has a regular role in the discourse, in the talk, that shapes our world” (Wood 1-2; emphasis in original). This can also be seen in Harley’s elaboration that maps “state an argument about the world” and employ “devices of rhetoric” to express a discourse of world view (163). Hence, the map is a “nodal site” that interweaves humans, objects, ideas, places, territories, and the world together. The map, rather than an object merely waiting to be deciphered, is a text in which a network of discursive formations is forged.

If the map is a nodal site that brings things together, then the act of mapping, as Denis Cosgrove writes, is “creative, sometimes anxious, moments in coming to knowledge of the world, and the map is both the spatial embodiment of knowledge and a stimulus to further cognitive engagements” (2). John Pickles notes that in the process of mapping, “objects to be represented are transformed and reconstituted as signs and symbols substantially different from the objects they communicate” (221).
The act of mapping is a claim to certain sets of knowledge and can produce particular forms of belief or ideologies that are directly related to politics, in which different forms of power relations are engendered, and contrive specific effects that manipulate people and act back onto the material world. Huggan, for instance, considers that maps, especially in genres such as “adventure novel” and “frontier narrative,” have directly conspired with the act of colonization and conquest, serving the aims of imperial expedition and territorial dispossession (21-33). To investigate how “power works through cartographic discourse” and its effects in the process of mapping and mapmaking—the mechanisms of selection, omission, simplification, symbolization, signification, rhetoricalization, hierarchization, and above all, politicization—is especially crucial to understanding socio-political structures in a society (Harley 163-64).

Drawing upon the above insights of cultural geography and the politics of cartography, this paper probes maps as texts and nodal sites of discourse and examines their function and meanings in cinema and their relation to settler colonial structure in Taiwan. Settler colonialism, according to theorists including Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, is a distinct mode of domination that differs from classic colonialism with its specific emphasis on settlers’ replacement of indigenous population and land dispossession. The objective of settler colonialism is to acquire “land” as the intention of settlers is to stay permanently and transform new colonies into “homeland.” While classic colonial narratives evince a “circular form” in which colonizers explore, invade, and interact with colonized “others” in foreign colonies but finally return to where they are from, settler colonialism is characterized by a “linear narrative” as settlers move to new territories without envisioning a return home (Veracini, Settler Colonialism 96-100). As a theoretical framework, the notion of settler colonialism further complicates our understanding of the classic colonial dualistic structure between the colonizer and the colonized by delving into the “triangular relations” between colonizers, settlers, and indigenous peoples in a transnational context that moves between the colonial metropole, settler colony, and indigenous population (Veracini, Settler Colonialism; The Settler Colonial Present; Shih 737-40; Hirano et al.).

If the occupation of land and strategies of territorialization constitute the characteristics of settler colonialism, and the conception of maps and the act of mapping as a semiotic system and political acts that claim and demarcate territories manipulate and transform the readers’ view about the world, then to investigate how maps are represented in cultural productions and to consider cinematic visualization as a process of cartographic communication are both productive ways to understand
and critique settler colonial structures. Cinema and cartography, as Tom Conley theorizes, can be sensed and perceived in similar ways in terms of their epistemological functions and sensorial effects upon the spectators because they share “many of the same resources and virtues of the languages that inform their creation” and oftentimes work “in consort with each other” (1-2). A film, like a “topographic projection,” can thus be construed as a map that “locates and patterns the imagination of its spectators” (1). To conjoin the critique of cinematic representation through the lens of “cartographic methodology” via settler colonial criticism is therefore a “deconstructive reading” that begins to decolonize settler colonial mapping.

My deconstructive reading which attempts to decolonize settler colonial mapping is also a practice of seeking what Soja has termed “spatial justice.” According to Soja, space that humans live in is “not an empty void,” but an imbricated and multidimensional construction which is “always filled with politics, ideology, and other forces shaping our lives and challenging us to engage in struggles over geography” (19). Moreover, “justice, however it might be defined, has a consequential geography, a spatial expression that is more than just a background reflection or set of physical attributes to be descriptively mapped”; therefore, the spatiality is “an integral and formative component of justice itself, a vital part of how justice and injustice are socially constructed and evolve over time” (1). The theoretical intersection of cultural geography and settler colonial criticism can thus shed light on “spatial justice,” which serves as a pivotal part of “transitional justice” in a settler society like Taiwan. Due to large-scale Han migration from China to Taiwan since the seventeenth century, Taiwan, an island whose indigenous inhabitants are Austronesian, is a de facto settler colony. However, the prevailing discourse in Taiwan has been “postcolonial,” articulating Taiwan in terms of either the end of the Japanese colonial rule (1895-1945) or the lifting of martial law (1949-87), neither of which acknowledges the continuous colonization of indigenous peoples. Settler colonial criticism thus serves as a

1 “Transitional justice” has become a momentous topic recently in Taiwan, especially after President Tsai Ing-wen’s formal apology to the indigenous peoples of Taiwan on August 1, 2016. The notion of transitional justice, as defined by Ruti G. Teitel, refers to a conception of justice “associated with periods of political change, characterized by legal response to confront the wrongdoings of repressive predecessor regimes” (69).

2 The postcolonial discourse was introduced to Taiwan by Chiu Kuei-fen’s seminal essay “Discover Taiwan: Constructing the Postcolonial Discourse of Taiwan” published in 1992, which later triggered a series of academic debates among scholars including Chiu Kuei-fen, Liao Chaoyang, Liao Hsien-hao, Chen Chao-ying, Chen Fang-ming, Chen Yingzhen, and others, during the 1990s and the early 2000s. Taiwan’s postcolonial discourse is a “contested field” as
critical framework to fill in the discursive blind spots of (post)colonial studies in Taiwan.

Generally speaking, physical map-making and cartographical development monopolized by the Nationalist authoritarian government during the period of martial law, as Bi-yu Chang investigates, were restricted to those used for military or educational purposes. The quality of maps and cartographical knowledge were relatively stagnant and deficient (67-106). Beyond actual maps, I argue that settler cartographical ideology of the Nationalist regime can also be found in other media. Drawing upon Conley’s analogy between cartography and cinema, I extend the concept of the politics of cartography to cinema, considering films as constructing a form of “cinematic cartography,” not only by their representation of maps but also by their visualization of filmic space as an act of mapping, through the lens of settler colonial criticism. This paper will look into how Han settler colonial consciousness has been expressed in cinema by examining two representative but rarely studied propaganda films made at the inception of the Nationalist rule in the 1950s, Huangdi zisun 黃帝子孫 (Descendants of the Yellow Emperor, 1955, hereafter Descendants) and Meili baodao 美麗寶島 (Beautiful Treasure Island, 1953, hereafter Island). More specifically, the two films demonstrate the “Nationalist settler colonial consciousness” in the construction and formation of settler mentality of the new wave of Han migration in the early postwar era through their spatial and cartographical articulations. To further differentiate the narrative and discourse of settler colonialism from classic colonialism, I compare the two films with another imperial policy documentary from the Japanese colonial period, Nanshin Taiwan 南進台灣 (Southward Expansion to Taiwan, 1940, hereafter Expansion).

different groups from different ethnic backgrounds or cultural identities in Taiwan may embrace different versions of postcolonial historiography. From the perspective of the orthodox Nationalist historiography, Taiwan entered the postcolonial phase right after the end of Japanese occupation in 1945. But for most of the early Han settlers who lived through the Japanese colonial period and suffered from the KMT’s authoritarian rule, 1987, the year in which martial law was lifted, should be regarded as the beginning of the postcolonial era. However, for indigenous peoples in Taiwan, postcoloniality is not just “belated” (as described by Ping-hui Liao and Liang-ya Liou), but rather, has “not yet” come into being, as in the eyes of indigenous peoples all Han people (be they the early Han immigrants since the seventeenth century or the new wave of migration in the late 1940s) are settler colonizers. That is why Patrick Wolfe argues that settler colonial invasion is a “structure,” not an “event” (163). For more discussion of postcolonial discourse in Taiwan, please see the scholarship of Liao and Liou.
“Descendants of the Yellow Emperor”:  
Nationalist Settler Pedagogy

The year 1945 marked a climactic moment in world history. In the final year of World War II, atomic bombs dropped by the United States on Hiroshima and Nagasaki terminated the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45). The Japanese government announced its unconditional surrender to the Allies on August 15, and Taiwan was “returned” to Chinese authority, the Republic of China (ROC), after fifty years of Japanese colonization. On October 25, Chen Yi (陳儀, 1883-1950), the governor of Fujian province, was appointed to Taiwan as the official delegate of the Nationalist government by Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975). Chen signed the instrument of surrender with the last Japanese governor-general of Taiwan, Andō Rikichi (安藤利吉, 1884-1946), in Taipei City Public Auditorium (known currently as Zhongshan Hall in honor of Sun Yat-sen [1866-1925]). October 25 was declared “Retrocession Day of Taiwan” to commemorate the end of Japanese colonialism and the handover of Taiwan to the ROC.

The official ceremony of Taiwan’s handover to the ROC was documented by a Japanese and Taiwanese film crew organized under the instruction of Bai Ke (白克, 1914-64), a film director who arrived in Taiwan on October 17 with the Nationalist delegation. Bai was born in Xiamen (Amoy) in Fujian province, and worked at Nanning Film Studio in Guangxi and later Diantong Film Company in Shanghai. He participated in the production of Dushi fengguang (Scenes of City Life, 1935) and Fengyun ernu (Sons and Daughters in a Time of Storm, 1935), directed by Chinese actor-filmmaker Yuan Muzhi (袁牧之, 1909-78). Serving as one of the propaganda committee members under the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office, Bai was authorized to take over the film associations (including the Taiwan News and Photograph Association and the Taiwan Film Association), film facilities, and equipment from the Japanese government in 1945. Bai later combined the two Japanese film associations into Taiwan dianyi shezhichang (台灣電影攝製場 Taiwan Motion Pictures Studio) and became the manager of this state-owned film studio. With the support of the Nationalist government, in its earliest phase Taiwan Motion Pictures Studio produced newsreels and documentaries for propagandistic purposes. Jinri zhi Taiwan (今日之台灣 Today’s Taiwan, 1946, dir. Bai Ke), for instance, documents Taiwan’s landscapes, including Sun Moon Lake, Ali Mountain, and the everyday life of aboriginals to map Taiwan in a new settler colonial imagination (Huang and Wang; R. Huang; Lishi de jiaozong).
Descendants was not only Bai’s first feature film but also considered the first officially produced Taiyu pian (台語片 Taiwanese-dialect film), also dubbed into Mandarin, at the direct request of Chiang Kai-shek.\(^3\) Set in 1950s Taiwan, this film revolves around a group of elementary schoolteachers who hail from different provinces of China and Taiwan. The theme of the film is present from the opening, as it begins with the lecture of the protagonist narrating the history of the mythological founder of Chinese civilization, the Yellow Emperor. By doing so, this film announces that everyone who lives in Taiwan, even with different backgrounds, is the “descendant of the Yellow Emperor.” The second half of Descendants depicts the schoolteachers’ trip from the north to the south, featuring various historic sites in Taiwan. During this trip, the teachers pair up and fall in love. In the finale of the film, they organize a group wedding ceremony at Zhongshan Hall. In what follows, I scrutinize the visualization of space and the use of multimedia, as cinematic devices, that are deployed to construct the settler colonial cartography in Descendants.

The opening scene presents a group of students singing with their teachers in school playground in front of an instructional building. The image of Chiang Kai-shek occupies the center of the building, along with a typical Nationalist propagandistic slogan lining both sides of the portrait that reads, “Reclaim the mainland; Restore the nation” (反攻大陸；復興民族 fangong dalu; fuxing minzu). The female protagonist Lin Xiyun’s (林錫雲) classroom and her lecture on the Grand History of Chinese civilization together define the tenor of this film. Asking the students, “Whose descendants are we?”, Xiyun opens her lesson with the mythological figure of the Yellow Emperor, and then introduces a chronology of Chinese history with a series of illustrations. Chen Leng (陳稜), a general from the Sui period in Chinese history who landed in Taiwan, is mentioned to emphasize the historical connection between China and Taiwan. The story of how Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功, a Ming loyalist who defeated the Dutch colonizers and reclaimed Taiwan as his anti-Manchu military base) expelled the Dutch colonizers in 1662 is amplified in Xiyun’s lecture. She reminds students of the cession of Taiwan to Japan after the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 and the founding of the Republic of Formosa (台灣民主國 Taiwan minzhuguo) during the same year. Then Xiyun turns to another medium, a film projector, to proceed with her lecture on the second Sino-Japanese War, punctuating her narrative with a reminder of the

\(^3\) Another famous film Xue pinggui yu Wang baochuan 薛平貴與王寶釧 (Xue Pinggui and Wang Baochuan, 1956), directed by Ho Chi-ming (何基明) and released months earlier than Descendants, is generally believed to be the first “self-produced” Taiwanese-dialect film.
Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek’s contribution to the anti-Japanese resistance.

In addition to Xiyun’s lecture, the spatial layout of the classroom affects how this history is understood. The portrait of Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the ROC, is placed on the wall in the very front of the classroom. Both sides of the classroom are decorated with the images of Chinese loyalists and patriots from different periods, including Su Wu (蘇武, a Han diplomat who remained loyal to the Han imperial government in his captivity), Yue Fei (岳飛, a Chinese general who defended the Song court against the Jurchen in northern China), Wen Tianxiang (文天祥, a Southern Song official who determinedly refused to yield himself to the Yuan, a non-Han regime founded by Mongols in the thirteenth century), and so forth. In the back, the portrait of Chiang Kai-shek anchors the classroom. The layout reminds us of what Michel Foucault has termed “panopticism,” a space in which disciplinary dynamics operate through different forces of power relations in conjunction with knowledge formation and spatial formulation (“Panopticism” 206-13). Although the spatial layout of the classroom seems different from the original design of the panopticon as theorized by Foucault, the “disciplinary gazes” of these historical figures on the walls represent the Nationalist discursive formation of knowledge, ideology, and historiography. They function as the apparatus of ubiquitous surveillance, especially the images of Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, the political icons standing for the Nationalist authoritarian rule.⁴

Additionally, the domestic spaces presented in the film, such as the living room, the dining hall, and the family worship shrine, also operate as pedagogical apparatuses. In order to solve the quarrel between two students regarding their different “provincial origins” (籍貫 jīguàn),⁵ Xiyun visits one of the students’

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⁴ After the end of World War II, Taiwan, an island colonized for fifty years by the Japanese Empire, was “returned” to the ROC. Resolving the cultural, linguistic, social, and political gaps between China and Taiwan was a difficult task for the Nationalist government. To borrow Huang Ying-che’s words, how to de-Japanize the Taiwanese and make them “Chinese” and how to integrate Taiwan into China through the education system became the top priority. Bi-yu Chang points out that the standardization of the spatial arrangement of school spaces and the layout of classrooms manipulated by the KMT played a crucial role in shaping students’ minds to fulfil the end goal of establishing national identity and patriotism (186-89). According to Chang, leaders’ photos, the map, the national flag of the ROC, quotes or slogans from political leaders’ writings or speeches, the daily routine of raising and lowering the national flag, and so forth, were employed to regulate the behavior of students and indoctrinate patriotic sentiments, as can be seen in Descendants.

⁵ Jīguàn is a social construct used in Taiwan to classify a person by “province of registration,” relating an individual’s ethnic identity to the origin of his or her father. After the “handover” of Taiwan to the ROC, a new ethnic category, “mainlanders” (外省人 waishengren), was coined to
families and discovers that the student’s grandfather, whose surname is also Lin, happens to be her distant relative. The living room of the Lin family then becomes another “lecture room,” where the grandfather narrates his story of migration from China to Taiwan. In a flashback sequence the hardship of the grandfather’s journey is underscored by images of barren land and sterile trees in China, as well as navigation of the terrifying waves of the Taiwan Strait. These are contrasted to the fecund rice fields after they arrived in Taiwan. The student soon joins them, sitting between Xiyun and his grandfather to listen to the story. Grandpa Lin’s lecture and their familial kinship connect the three characters across generations, expanding on the core tenet of the film: all people in Taiwan today were originally from China and they share the same cultural and ancestral root—they are all “descendants of the Yellow Emperor.” Later, a ritual at the ancestral shrine of the Lin family is organized to reunite all of the Lin families in Taiwan. In a sense, this ritual reunion effectively expands the Lin family unit to a much larger social network, by which this film iteratively thematizes the ideology that all people in Taiwan share the same consanguineous and cultural root and thus Taiwan is undoubtedly Chinese territory.

*Descendants* utilizes different narrative modes of visualization to accentuate the historical continuity and unbreakable tie between Taiwan and China. While domestic spaces facilitate deepening interpersonal relationships, the film presents public spaces as spaces of art, which play a pivotal role in pedagogical spatialization. Theater is the most prominent public space in the film. Two historical figures—Koxinga and Wu Feng (吳鳳)—are presented on the stage. The story of Koxinga is performed as “shadow puppet theater,” one type of traditional theater originating from China. Despite its relatively small scale, the shadow puppet theater accentuates the heroic image of Koxinga through the dramatic lighting and

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refer to people who moved to Taiwan from China during the early postwar years (1945-49), as opposed to the so-called “Taiwanese locals” (本省人 benshengren), the descendants of early Han settlers since the seventeenth century. The population of Han settlers in Taiwan can therefore be roughly divided into two waves of migration: the early Han settlers since the seventeenth century and their descendants, and later the majority of “mainlanders” who arrived in Taiwan from 1945 to 1949, which constituted at least two different modes of settler mentality, respectively. The February 28 Incident in 1947 intensified the tension between “mainlanders” and “Taiwanese locals” and resulted in the so-called “provincial complex” (省籍情結 shengji qingjie) which deeply influenced Taiwan’s society. In the 1990s, the discourse of the “four main ethnic groups” (四大族群 sida zuqun) was formulated, further categorizing the inhabitants of contemporary Taiwan into Holo, Hakka, mainlanders, and indigenous peoples. Currently, due to more “new immigrants” (新移民 xin yimin) from China, Southeast Asia, and other places to Taiwan, this discourse is no longer efficient to describe the multiethnic and multicultural reality of Taiwan. Please see scholarship by Chien-jung Hsu, Hsiau A-chin, Wan-yao Chou, Stéphane Corcuff, and Robert Marsh.
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stylistic mise-en-scène, especially in a scene of the naval battle between the Dutch forces and Zheng’s troops. The play of Wu Feng is staged in the local Han theatrical form called “Gezai Opera” at Grand China Theater. Wu Feng was a Han merchant from the Qing period who, according to popular tradition, sacrificed himself in order for the indigenous people to abandon their tribal practice of headhunting. Predictably, the contrast between the benevolent and self-sacrificing Wu Feng and the uncivilized and wild indigenous “raw savages” (青番 qingfan) is overtly dramatized through the design of costume and make-up in the performance. The play even sanctifies Wu in the last scene. The dying Wu Feng stands still at the center of the stage, surrounded by a crowd of regretful aboriginal characters kneeling down and mourning for him, as Wu is transformed into a sacred martyr. More notably, this sequence intercuts back and forth between the “play within the film” and the diegetic audience who are watching the performance, consciously suturing the non-diegetic audience, the spectators outside of the filmic text, into this pedagogical world of cinema.

By deploying two types of theatrical performances, one from China and another from the local context of Taiwan, Descendants not only hybridizes the two generic modes of performing arts but also rearticulates the artistic territories of China and Taiwan through cinematic remediation. As Guo-juin Hong points out, by means of the cinematographic design of the frontal and plastic representation in “still images and illustrations that offers an eye-level visual field” (44), this film seeks to emulate an effect of “operatic viewing experience” through cinematic representation. In Irina O. Rajewsky’s terminology, the film creates the cinematic device of “intermedial reference” to the operatic mode of visualization in that it not only makes use of another medium but also generates “an illusion of another medium’s specific practices” through its own media qualities, relating a given media product to another (54-55; emphasis in original). In addition to visual and theatrical devices, the soundtrack is equally crucial to Descendants as it further complicates the inter/trans-media construction of the film. Toward the end of the film, Descendants “airs” the linear and orthodox narrative of Chinese civilization again, highlighting the rigid connection between China and Taiwan, by broadcasting a performance of “singing and telling arts,” a traditional form of storytelling synchronized with singing and instrument-playing, from “Taiwan Radio.” This radio scene is followed by a shot of a man listening to the radio, and later a scene of the Lin family members dining together, implying the accessibility and popularity of the broadcast program. This sophisticated inter/trans-media interplay between the videoscape and the audioscape effectively underpins the
pedagogical spatialization in *Descendants*.

The journey of the schoolteachers to southern Taiwan in the second half of the film not only extends its instructional route from the capital Taipei to the south of Taiwan but also brings the cinematic settler colonial cartography of *Descendants* to the forefront. The trip begins with a train scene where the teachers cheerfully view the fascinating landscapes of Taiwan. Before getting to the south, they stop by Changhua and visit the Babao irrigation system, the oldest irrigation system established by a Han settler Shi Shibang (施世榜) in the eighteenth century. Then they spend time in Chiayi, where the story of Wu Feng’s sacrifice took place, and visit the Wu Feng Temple. Finally they reach Tainan, the oldest city in the south with the longest history of settlement, where they pay a visit to the Temple of Zheng Chenggong and the Chihkan Tower (also known as Fort Provintia, a Dutch outpost built in the seventeenth century and later used as the administrative center by Zheng). These physical monuments not only correspond to Xiyun’s lecture in the first half of the film but also embody and actualize the settler colonial ideology with material fragments of history.

Specifically, the film employs the cinematic device of spatiotemporally linear “continuity editing” to exhibit the historic sites: from panoramic establishing shots of the architecture to close-up shots of tablets inscribed with the names of the sites, and then to sequences of the interior spaces as well as architectural details within the buildings. The tablet of Wu Feng Temple, inscribed with the characters “laying down life for righteousness” (捨生取義 *shesheng quyi*) in Chinese calligraphy, is spotlighted with a close-up, with the signature of Chiang Kai-shek on the left side. In the scenes of the Temple of Zheng Chenggong and Chihkan Tower, the statue of Zheng, calligraphy on the tablets, scrolls, walls, and columns of the temple, the illustrations and oil paintings visualizing the sea battle between Zheng’s army and the Dutch forces, as well as other historical documents exhibited inside the buildings act as multimedia interventions into the film. The architecture in these sequences, together with the historical fragments and details as represented in close-up, manifests how knowledge is spatialized in ideologically manipulated and discursively constructed locations for specific political purposes, just as Foucault described.6

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6 Foucault theorized the political importance and disciplinary function of architecture in many of his works and interviews. To Foucault, there is no distinction between “discursive formations” and “architectural construction,” and it is important to examine how “discourses enter into construction” and how “building or planned environments become statements” (Hirst 53). See Hirst.
A meta-cinematic moment in the film can help us unpack how the spatialization of knowledge as seen in architecture further involves spectators in the milieu of power relations. In addition to the schoolteachers, the student who previously quarrelled with his schoolmate over the issue regarding “provincial origins” also participates in this tour, and paints pictures of what he experiences during the trip. His artwork, not surprisingly, impresses the teachers. In his art, the student re-visualizes, or “remediates” what he has learned and perceived while (re)visiting the historic sites, through multiple forms of media (architecture, illustrations, calligraphy, and so forth), by creating another medium (his painting), and this act of remediation is further (re-)remediated in a larger framing—the cinematic frame of Descendants. Accordingly, this intricate sequence articulates a multilayered process of transmission: Xiyun’s verbal history lesson is materialized through physical monuments and conveyed first to the young student, and then through his painting transmitted to his teachers, the diegetic spectators within the cinematic frame, and finally, further delivered to the non-diegetic audience outside of the silver screen. The diegetic and non-diegetic worlds are therefore sutured through the film’s layered remediation. History, along with the settler colonial ideology engraved in the materiality of those historic sites, becomes tangible, perceivable, and transmittable to the audience.

Their journey to the south is not merely an intensive multimedia exploration, but more importantly, a territorial extension/expedition from the north to the south—a political claim of the Nationalist post-1945 settler project. After a brief stop at the Caogong irrigation system in Kaohsiung, the tourists end their journey by taking a train back to the north. By linking the history of Han settlement with the train as a symbol of modernity (both a symbol of modernization in the industrial revolution since the eighteenth century and a metaphor of visual modernity in film history), Descendants further develops its settler colonial cartography with spatial and temporal continuity, mapping the trip from the north to the south while traveling back and forth between the past and the present. Thus, the use of multimedia and the cinematic remediation in Descendants is a claim of “reterritorialization,” an authoritative force that solidifies the Han settler spatial consciousness, revealing settlers’ intention to control land. As Veracini notes, settler colonialism “turns someone else’s place into space and then into place again” (Introduction 5), or, to put it in a Deleuzian context, it deterritorializes indigenous land and reterritorializes it as the settlers’ own. The multiple forms of media—architecture, illustrations, oil paintings, calligraphy, audioscape, technologies of modernization and industrialization—are remediated as
supplements to accomplish the film’s settler colonial cartography. As formulated by Foucault, the “project of docility,” or “the mechanism of discipline,” is a “multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another, distinguish themselves from one another according to their domain of application, converge, and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method” (“Docile Bodies” 182). In this vein, remediation and reterritorialization in Descendants, as mechanisms of mapping, support one another and serve the similar political and pedagogical purposes, namely, the territorial expropriation in the realm of media and of the island of Taiwan.

Descendants ends with a stately group wedding of the schoolteachers at Zhongshan Hall on October 25, the Retrocession Day of Taiwan of the ROC. This spatiotemporal setting of the ceremony unquestionably symbolizes a new page for the four couples and the rebirth of the ROC in Taiwan after fifty years of Japanese colonization. All people in Taiwan, be they “mainlanders” from China after 1945 or descendants of earlier Han people since the seventeenth century (the so-called “Taiwanese locals” as explicated in the film), will be welded together and brought into harmony under the Nationalist rule. This view is coupled with Grandpa Lin’s lines: “Under the Nationalist regime, Taiwanese locals can also serve as officials in the government the same way mainlanders can. That is because everybody in Taiwan is the descendant of the Yellow Emperor.” The issue regarding the “provincial origins” between “Chinese mainlanders” and “Taiwanese locals” among students at the beginning of the film has been successfully solved. The artistic student takes the initiative to create a collective painting with other schoolmates—an image of a smiling Maitreya Buddha, the Buddhist deity regarded as the Buddha of the future, surrounded by a group of children, representing the traditional Chinese value of lineage continuity. More important, this painting crystallizes a typical settler mentality termed “animus manendi,” the intention to “stay” in the new territory, and the settler strategy to displace the indigenous population by demographic proliferation (Settler Colonialism 53). While the settlement of the past that was revisited during their journey to the south buttresses the ideological settler narrative to justify the settlers’ presence, the demographic reproduction, one of the typical strategies of settler colonial population economy, will then guarantee permanent residency for settlers in the future.

A seeming contradiction to the ideological aims of the film, there is no intermarriage between Han and indigenous characters in the wedding. This remarkable detail, I argue, reveals the Nationalist strategy to resolve, or to smooth
over the “provincial conflict” between “mainlanders” and “locals” after the February 28 Incident in 1947. Indigenous peoples during this phase were regarded as “excluded insiders,” if not entirely outsiders, in the Nationalist settler colonial blueprint—they were part of the “people” who lived within the geographical boundary of Taiwan, but were neglected by the cinematic cartography formulated mainly from the perspective of Han settlers’ ideology. Examining the mechanisms of selection, omission, symbolization, and hierarchization in the making of the settler colonial cartography of Descendants is therefore a critical step for us to historicize the formation and complexity of Han settler colonial consciousness in Taiwan.

The harmonious ceremony and the message conveyed through the finale in Descendants, in hindsight, seems more like the prelude to a cacophony. The Martial Law declared in 1949 and later the White Terror of the Nationalist party intensified the tensions and conflicts between different ethnic communities (mainlanders, locals, indigenous peoples, and so on) in Taiwan. After finishing Descendants, Bai became a faculty member of the National Academy of Arts (currently known as National Taiwan University of Arts) and continued to make well-received films, such as Fengnu shiba nian 瘋女十八年 (Mad Woman, 1957) and Longshan si zhi lian 龍山寺之戀 (Romance of Longshan Temple, 1962). Yet, Bai’s success as a filmmaker and his early record of being associated with the Chinese Communists caused him to be a victim of the White Terror—he was arrested by the Taiwan Garrison Command in 1962, brutally tortured, and executed in 1964.

“Formosa,” My Eternal Homeland

Island, directed by Chen Wen-chuan (陳文泉) and produced by Taiwan nongjiao zhipianchang (台灣農教製片廠 Taiwan Agricultural Education Studio), is another example of Han settler colonial cartography in the 1950s. If Descendants

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7 I would like to clarify that what I argue here does not mean there is no interethnic marriage between Han and indigenous characters in postwar films and novels of Taiwan. In fact, this seemingly self-contradictory phenomenon (the denial of the existence of indigenes and the promotion of interethnic marriage between settlers and indigenous peoples) is a crucial component in the formation of Taiwan’s settler colonial structure. What I want to emphasize here, as can be inferred in Descendants, is that in the early phase of Nationalist rule, the provincial dispute was a more urgent issue for the KMT to tackle while indigenous affairs were temporarily put aside. Darryl Sterk’s work provides a comprehensive analysis centering on the narratives of interethnic romance between Han and indigenous characters in filmic and literary texts from the 1950s to the present.
sketches its settler colonial cartography by binding the island of Taiwan to China, then *Island* foregrounds Taiwan to be the eternal “homeland” for “overseas Chinese communities” not only in Southeast Asia but also around the world. After the KMT’s retreat to Taiwan, the main priority for the Nationalist government was to present itself as the only legitimate and authentic “Chinese regime” domestically and internationally, opposed to Communist China during the period of the Cold War. Equating the island of Taiwan with the notion of “homeland” became a convenient and efficient discourse to consolidate its own political status, especially for the overseas Chinese communities. In this vein, the “beautiful treasure island Taiwan” is treated as the equivalent of the entire territory officially claimed by the ROC in this film. The story of *Island* is about an overseas Chinese journalist Ke Xingrong (柯興榮) from the Philippines who comes “back” to his “homeland Taiwan” with his newly married wife Ai Zhen (艾珍) for their honeymoon. After returning to the Philippines, the couple organizes a screening in an auditorium of an overseas Chinese association, showing the audience the development, modernization, and industrialization of Taiwan as well as the landscapes they shot during their trip.

The curtain of the screening segment is unveiled with a close-up shot of the national flag of the ROC. Commonly called “Blue Sky, White Sun, and a Wholly Red Earth,” these colors of the flag signify the Nationalist state ideology, “Three People’s Principles” (nationalism, democracy, and people’s livelihood), coined by Sun Yat-sen. The national flag is further accessorized with an exquisite golden frame engraved with plum blossoms, the national flower of the ROC. This work placed in the front of the auditorium draws attention with both its political implication and its eye-catching embellishment. Before the screening, the young couple, dressed in elegant Western-style outfits, warm up the audience with two songs, “Love for My Homeland” (祖國之戀 *Zuguo zhi lian*) and “An Ode to the Treasure Island” (寶島頌 *Baodao song*) accompanied by piano. A dragon-headed pedestal with a Chinese-style lantern, signifying the illumination of Chinese civilization, imperial power, and heritage, stands behind the piano. The spatial and audio setting—the national flag adorned with golden plum blossoms, the dragon head reflecting the light from the fluorescent lantern in the auditorium permeated with the music—serves as the prelude and the motif for the screening segment that follows.

The film within *Island* opens with a splendid map of Taiwan and with a voiceover indicating that Taiwan is a mighty and radiant island located in the western Pacific Ocean, concurring with the message of the two previously performed songs. Structurally, the film includes two parts. The first part, entitled
“Treasure Island Industry” (寶島工業 baodao gongye), introduces the audience to an industrialized Taiwan with various kinds of manufacturing and corporations, including the sugar factory, salt evaporation pond, coal mining field, timber land, paper mill, oil refinery, as well as corporations for textiles, cement, and ships. Rather than merely glancing over Taiwan’s industrialization, the film details the machinery and equipment of each factory, as well as the scale and process of production. Furthermore, it emphasizes at length how prolific and productive the land of this island is, how excellent the quality and quantity of the products are, and above all, how modernized and improved Taiwan is under the Nationalist rule. By articulating improvement in terms of technology, production, and export distribution, Taiwan is portrayed as an industrial and commercial center of Asia—a highly developed and advanced “homeland” that overseas Chinese communities around the world should be proud of.

The second part, “Treasure Island Scenery” (寶島風光 baodao fengguang), turns to another facet of Taiwan, the picturesque landscapes of the island. Just as we have seen in Descendants, Island displays the scenery of Taiwan from the north to the south, which allows us to investigate the construction of the settler colonial cartography of the film in depth. Most prominently, this film explicitly shows the audience animated road maps before the segments of actual scenery. In other words, it directs the audience with cinematic maps and invites them to participate in the process of settler colonial mapping. The film sets out from Keelung, a major port city in the northeast of Taiwan where the Nationalist troops firstly landed in 1945, mirroring the progress of the Nationalist control of this island. After skimming through tourist spots in northern Taiwan, such as Bitan, Wulai, and Taipei city, it zooms in to the central part of Taiwan, presenting us with fruit farms and a park in Taichung, Sun Moon Lake, and Musha (霧社 Wushe) in Nantou County. This sequence features images of indigenous people narrated with an undisguised discriminatory tone: the indigenous people are called “mountain compatriots” (山胞 shanbao) and represented like exhibits, “performing” their daily lives and culture for the audience as the two protagonists can be found in these shots watching the “performance.” Special attention is paid to the historic site of Musha, an aboriginal village where the Musha Rebellion took place in 1930. The Musha Incident Memorial Park and the stele in memory of the leader, Mona Rudo, are constructed in Chinese architectural style. The Chinese idiomatic phrases used to italicize patriotism and loyalism—such as “royal blood; heroic spirit” (碧血英風 bixie yingfeng) and “loyal liver; righteous guts” (忠肝義膽 zhonggan yidan)—can be seen everywhere in the memorial park. The KMT government utilizes the image
of Mona Rudo as a propagandistic model and rewrites the indigenous rebellion into an anti-Japanese uprising that fits in with the Nationalist orthodox historiography. What is more, indigenous “performers” are called “dancing girls” who are to “present dance” to the tourists by the voiceover. The voiceover even kindly clarifies that these indigenous “performers” are no longer “savages,” but are being “educated” by the Nationalist government and have become “civilized.” This again points to this film’s settler consciousness of Han-oriented supremacy and the Nationalist assimilation project towards the indigenous people. The aboriginals here are not treated like humans, but instead are made into exhibits and commodities, or a “spectacle” functioning as scenery for the tourists to appreciate and gaze at. Indigenous people represented in this film, to borrow Veracini’s formulation, are regarded as “part of the landscape”—one of the settler colonial discourses used to undergird the notion of “terra nullius” and disavow the “ontological connection linking indigenous peoples to their land” (Settler Colonialism 37-43). Indigenous images, as well as their history, are deployed to serve the interest of the Nationalist settler government to create particular historical narrative and support official ideology.

*Island* proceeds with its settler colonial mapping toward the south via Changhua, Xiluo (with special focus on the Xiluo Bridge, a bridge that connects Changhua and Yunlin, established during the Japanese colonial period and reconstructed by the Nationalist government in the 1950s with financial aid from the US), Chiayi, and Tainan. Although the second part of *Island* seemingly centers on the *fengguang* (風光, literally sights and scenes) of Taiwan, in fact it complements the first half of the film, placing emphasis on the magnificent scale of the Xiluo Bridge, “the longest highway bridge in the Far East.” A shot of the US and ROC national flags suspended on the beam of the bridge underscore the cooperation between the US and the ROC in building this structure. Further, the Chianan Irrigation System is shot to illustrate technological and industrial improvement in Taiwan, although it was actually designed by Hatta Yoichi (八田與一), a Japanese engineer from the colonial government.

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8 The Musha Uprising has been rewritten to serve different political agendas in both modes of Han settler narratives mentioned earlier. In the period of the Nationalist authoritarian rule, this incident was rendered as an anti-colonial rebellion. Yet, after the localization movements beginning in the 1970s and the lifting of martial law in 1987, it has become a source of “a new Taiwanese identity” promoted by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The rewriting and revisiting of the Musha Uprising therefore provides a good example to investigate the transformation of Han settler consciousness in Taiwan that I cannot fully address here. See also Berry, especially chapter 1.
Island also presents historic sites including the Temple of Wu Feng in Chiayi, the Temple of Koxinga, Chihkan Tower, and Fort Zeelandia. As in Descendants, the film spotlights Koxinga and his contribution to Taiwan. The camera also zooms in on a specific plant called “seven-string bamboo,” which is believed to have been grown by Zheng’s consort Madam Dong in the Kaiyuan Temple. The instruction shows that the seven-string bamboo originated in Henan province and was transplanted to Tainan hundreds of years earlier, and that it continues to flourish. The province of Henan is considered the “birthplace” of Chinese civilization and served as the cultural, political, and economical center of China for centuries. Bamboo is usually taken as a trope to represent good virtues of a person, such as integrity, indomitability, and loyalty. String, in classical Chinese music and poetry, is a common metaphor to express feelings or sentiments of love, sorrow, or nostalgia. Hence, the seven-string bamboo not only alludes to Zheng’s loyalty for the Ming court but also suggests that the regime in exile established by Zheng would continue to flourish in Taiwan.

Next, the film-within-a-film and our tourists arrive in the Fongshan district, an administrative and military center located in Kaohsiung. By inserting a series of military parades at which Chiang Kai-shek is inspecting the troops, cavalry, and tanks marching into this sequence, Island integrates the Nationalist military attempt with its highly politicized representation of Taiwan’s fengguang, characterizing Taiwan as the military base from which China will be re-taken and the country revived. The segment ends with the scene of the lighthouse located on Cape Eluanbi, the southernmost point of Taiwan island. An animated map of Taiwan with brilliant rays of light in the background, accompanied by the voiceover, “Taiwan exists as the cast-iron guarantee to reclaim China,” echoes the motif of the film at the beginning of this segment—Taiwan, a beautiful treasure island with rich natural resources and advanced industrialization, has always been and will continue to be the “lighthouse” and eternal “homeland” for all Chinese people, be they domestic or overseas communities around the world, and the one and only legitimate regime representing the political entity called “China.” In sum, the settler colonial cartography constructed in Island invokes the audience’s national and cultural identity by positioning Taiwan at the center of the world map so as to hail all “Chinese communities” worldwide in the name of nationalism.
To differentiate the narrative and discourse of settler colonialism from classic colonialism, it is useful to compare *Descendants* and *Island* to a more conventional colonialist film, *Southward Expansion to Taiwan*, made during the Japanese colonial period. *Expansion* is one of the Japanese imperial documentary films rediscovered and digitalized by the National Museum of Taiwan History in collaboration with National Tainan University of the Arts as part of the film preservation project, released in 2008 and available online for wider circulation. To briefly explain the historical background, the making of *Expansion* was one of the consequences of colonial discourse—specifically of the *nanshinron* (南進論) or the “southward advance concept”—the Japanese imperial policy which advocated advancing economic influence and expanding territories toward the *Nan’yō*, the “South Seas,” so as to supply raw materials for Japan’s domestic industrialization and compete with other world powers during World War II. In 1936, the seventeenth governor-general of Taiwan, Kobayashi Seizō (小林躋造, 1877-1962), launched three conceptions as his main principles for presiding over Taiwan: industrialization (*kōgyōka* 工業化), southward expansion (*nanshinka* 南進化), and Japanization (*kōminka* 皇民化, the assimilation policy which aims to “transform its colonized people into imperial subjects” [Ching 92], officially implemented from 1937 to 1945). As the first colony of Japan which occupied a pivotal geopolitical position between Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, Taiwan thus became a critical military base and economic front for the Japanese government to stretch its imperial impact and invasion toward Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands, so as to establish the so-called “Southern Co-prosperity Sphere” (*Nampō kyōeiiken*) (Tsai 170).

As an imperial policy film or “national policy film” (*kokusaku eiga*),

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9 The “southward advance concept,” according to Mark R. Peattie, was initially an ideology or public trend advocated by navy enthusiasts, civilian publicists, and other Japanese expansionists in prewar Japan, promoting the concept that Japan had “a destiny to advance its influence toward the *Nan’yō*” (“Nanshin” 189-90). This concept was adopted as an official policy by the Japanese imperial government during the mid-1930s and further evolved into the political and military penetration of Southeast Asia and other Pacific islands in 1940. For more detailed discussion of the “southward advance concept” and the Japanese Empire’s southward expansion, please see Peattie’s work.

10 The term “national policy film” (*kokusaku eiga*), firstly coined in the mid-1930s, was derived from a proposal by a Japanese parliament member, Iwase Ryō, in which he urged the state to steer film production and regulate film industry in wartime Japan with “national policies of
Expansion portrays Taiwan as a “model colony” after the Meiji Restoration (the Japanese Empire’s reform of modernization and Westernization during the nineteenth century). This singular status propagates the ideology that Taiwan is the most valuable and indispensable colony for Japan to complete its “Southward Expansion Project.” At the inception of its colonial rule, the Japanese government launched a series of “colonial engineering” to integrate “the local into the bureaucratic structure” and foster “the development of a modern economy,” including the land survey, the unification of currency, the standardization of measurement units, the establishment of schools, railroads, banks, public health organizations, and so forth (Tsai 119-25; Chou 210). Most notably, a very thorough, “island-wide” land survey of Taiwan was accomplished in 1903 by the colonial government, and this colonial achievement can be clearly seen in Expansion.

Expansion undertakes a colonial mapping from the north to the south, offering a panoramic view of western Taiwan while also turning its “colonial gaze” to eastern Taiwan. Taiwan’s bounteous natural resources, agricultural production, and colonial infrastructure including railways, harbors, modernized transportation, electricity, administrative buildings and systems, are all exhaustively displayed with particular attention to details and data. As an economic and military battlefront with its geopolitical potential for the Japanese Empire to expand southward, the Taiwan that is rendered in Expansion, as Chiu Kuei-fen astutely points out, is an entity that can be objectified, anatomized, and quantified through concrete and scientific survey (“Kanjian Taiwan” 13). Moreover, the film provides the audience with a series of frontal snapshots of prefectural governors in each city and district, establishing the penetrating and omnipresent colonial control and authoritative power of Japan in its colony. The film ends with an ambitious slogan: “Expand southward! Move toward the reservoir of infinite treasury, with Taiwan as the only foothold and path to expand the Empire. . . . In order to maintain Japan’s right to life and its peaceful developmental strategy, there is no other way but southward expansion.” By circling around the entire island in the cinematic medium, Expansion potently demonstrates the Japanese Empire’s accomplishment in governing its colony, and substantiates the notion that Japan is fully modernized film,” aiming at producing “appropriate national representations” of Japan (Hori 6). This term is used by scholars to categorize a large body of wartime Japanese films that were deployed as propagandistic tools to mobilize Japanese people and evoke national identity by exhibiting “an idealized, official picture of Japanese life and behavior” of the time, as well as to reinforce an idea of traditional Japan through the “historical period drama” film genre (Davis 4). In this paper, I adopt a more inclusive phrase, “imperial policy film,” to address Expansion, as issues of production, distribution, and reception of this film expand beyond the concept of the national.
and able to keep pace with Western powers.

At first glance, it is clear that Expansion has something in common with Island and Descendants. A train scene that symbolizes modernization and expresses a visual effect of movement and speed occurs at the beginning of Expansion. Through this the fundamental ideology of the film—the urgent need for Japan’s southward expansion and the active role Taiwan plays in attaining this imperial policy—is effectively articulated. More tellingly, a map of Taiwan, as well as the well-designed directional route from the north to the south and then to the east that links all of the places together as seen in Island, is also visualized in Expansion as an instructional device for the audience to have a better spatial sense of the geography of Taiwan. Famous tourist spots and historical figures also appear in many of the sequences. For instance, the lighthouse of Cape Eluanbi in Expansion, as the voiceover points out, serves as a “landmark” for the Empire of Japan to expand southward for its economic purpose, shining majestically alongside “Nisshōki,” the formal name of the national flag of Japan (literally, “sun-mark flag”). Mapping, governing, and filmmaking are all equivalent to one another and function for the same ideological and political purpose of colonial control.

Despite these similarities, the colonial geopolitical diagram formulated in Expansion differs from the settler colonial cartography in Island and Descendants in a number of ways. First, while the Nationalist settler colonial cartography attempts to strengthen a kind of a priori (yet in fact discursively constructed) “ancestral affinity” between the metropole (China) and the settler colony (Taiwan) in terms of cultural, ethnical, and historical continuities, the classic colonialism of Expansion draws attention to the successful transformation of the previously undeveloped, less civilized colony into a modernized and progressive place under the Japanese colonial rule and their colonial administration. Compared with settler colonial discourse that emphasizes the “inherent continuity” between the metropole and the settler colony, classic colonial narrative exaggerates the historical “discontinuity.” Expansion suggests Taiwan was treated merely as “terra incognita” (“unknown land” that is beyond authorized control) by the Qing Empire, but has been elevated and cultivated under Japanese governance. The film notes that in Taipei most of the Chinese-style buildings were destroyed due to a disastrous typhoon in 1911, and that it was the Japanese colonial government who took the opportunity to renew the cityscape through urban planning. In contrast, Japanese-style buildings, including both the traditional and Westernized ones, such as the Shinto shrines, the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan (currently known as the Presidential Office Building), and several others are totally invisible
in *Island* or *Descendants*, and are instead accentuated in *Expansion*. In short, *Island* and *Descendants* promote the message that everything in Taiwan is the same as it “was” (not “is”) in China, whereas *Expansion* asserts that many things have changed for the better under Japanese colonialism.

Second, in this Japanese colonial cartography, Taiwan is represented as a colonized “other” and can only be a periphery of mainland Japan, a front for the imperial power to expand southward. In both *Descendants* and *Island*, the island of Taiwan under the ROC is depicted as the political, cultural, and economic “center,” the “eternal homeland” for all Chinese communities worldwide, and the only legitimate and authentic polity representing “China,” always tightly bound to mainland China in a cultural sense. Toward the end of *Expansion*, a more extensive map encompassing Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands emerges on the screen, together with a voiceover indicating that the size of land in *Nan’yō* (Southeast Asia) is a dozen times larger than Japan, and that this area possesses numerous kinds of natural resources that Japan needs. This broader geographical mapping reveals the ultimate goal of Imperial Japan. Although it seems to be given “a central position in economic, military, and ideological terms,” as Yu-lin Lee writes in his article centering on the digital archivization of *Expansion* (125), by positioning Taiwan in this way in Japanese colonial cartography, Taiwan merely serves as a “steppingstone” for Japan to achieve southward expansion. This Japanese colonial cartography in *Expansion*, as pointed out by Hui-yu Tsai in her discussion on the imperial discourse of the “Co-prosperity Sphere of Greater East Asia,” is hierarchically constructed in a concentric diagram, in which “Japan proper” is placed at the center, surrounded by “overseas territories and colonies,” and other “outer territories” under direct or indirect control or influence of the Japanese Empire (170-71). Taiwan, in this colonial cartography, was never the central focus of Japan’s imperial project.

Furthermore, the dichotomy between the colonizer (Japanese mainlanders, 内地人 *naichijin*) and the colonized (Taiwanese islanders, 本島人 *hontōjin*) in *Expansion* is absolute and unbreakable, which confirms Veracini’s argument about the “dualistic relationship” in the classic colonial discourse. Unlike the scenes of Japanese-style architecture, the sequences concerned with the lifestyle of Han people and other indigenous peoples in Taiwan are often shot in an exotic mode. These include the representation of indigenous peoples; scenes documenting local customs such as “Dragon dance” and the “Black and White Impermanence”; and a series of snapshots of Han females in “cheongsam” which remind us of those amorous portraits in pictorials or monthly calendars, implying that these local
women are reified objects in the colonial gaze. As Tsai further notes, the dualism of “Japan proper” versus “overseas territories” (naichi [內地] versus gaichi [外地]) divulged the “overt or assumed superiority of the colonizer over the colonized,” which constituted a fundamental part in the process of Japan’s empire-building (173). In brief, settler colonialism and classic colonialism as modes of mapping exercise very different spatial distributions and express distinct spatial consciousness in terms of geopolitical positions and power relations between the colonial metropole, colony, settler colony, and indigenous peoples vis-à-vis the larger world.

The distinction between settler colonialism and classic colonialism also lies in their strategies of rationalization. The settler colonial discourse justifies settlers’ permanent residency, either by revisiting the history of settlement in the past as seen in Descendants or by evoking the national identity of the “overseas Chinese communities” in Island. However, in the colonial discourse, Japanese colonizers attempt to defend their imperial invasion and colonization in the colonies. Expansion, on the one hand, advises the domestic audience in mainland Japan that the act of colonizing Taiwan (and other areas) is imperative for the empire to become the most competitive world power during World War II. On the other hand, by foregrounding Taiwan’s development and advancement, it advances the position that what the colonial government is working on should not be considered an immoral violence of exploitation, but a benevolent action improving an undeveloped place and civilizing its people. According to this logic, Taiwan has a responsibility to serve the Empire by aiding its expansion. Hence, the audience that Expansion is targeting include not only domestic Japanese but also colonized Taiwanese peoples as part of the Japanization campaign. In other words, settler colonial justification in the Nationalist orthodox narrative declares the settlers’ ownership of the territory by claiming the historical continuity and territorial integrity between China and Taiwan, whereas colonial rationalization asserts that the colonizers should possess the colony because they make it a better place and its residents civilized and modernized.

Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that settler colonialism and classic colonialism, as Veracini alerted us in The Settler Colonial Present, can never be neatly separated in reality, but are instead “frequently co-present in normal environments,” as the two forms of colonial phenomena “often coexist and mutually support each other, even though at times they can inhabit their respective

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11 Kuo Li-hsin also discusses how Expansion manifests its “colonial gaze” by creating a contrast with the colonial “other,” the colonized Taiwanese islanders.
operations,” because all the settler colonies were “established and flourished within a globalizing context fundamentally shaped by colonial relations” (26-29). The Japanese immigrant villages in Expansion, for instance, exemplify the Japanese government’s aspiration to further develop its colonial project into the structure of settler colonial governance by encouraging more domestic Japanese to migrate and settle in the colony. The Taiwan Settlement Corporation (台灣拓殖會社 Taiwan takushoku kaisha) glimpsed in Expansion was founded to recruit migrants to discover and open up new frontiers that have not yet been cultivated in Taiwan, which is, needless to say, a typical settler colonial project aiming to displace the indigenous population (toward the end, the film boldly states that Taiwan has far more uncultivated land waiting to be “settled,” especially in eastern Taiwan). It is fair to say that the Japanese colonizers could have been the potential settler colonizers of Taiwan, if Japan had not surrendered and returned Taiwan to the ROC after World War II. On the other hand, although settler colonialism, as in Veracini’s theorization, characterizes a “linear move” without envisioning a return, the Nationalist settler narrative at this phase intriguingly wavers between “two Chinas” (mainland and Taiwan) with its insistence on “reclaiming the mainland.” Veracini has termed the “conflicting tendencies” of settler mentality as “settler colonialism’s inherent ambiguity,” an ambivalent sentiment between the old metropole and the new settler colony. It is also obvious that the Nationalist narrative has converted this ambiguity into a form of justification for settler colonialism: we should settle here since one day we will reclaim China and once again integrate Taiwan into the greater territory of the ROC.

Some of the resemblances among the three films deserve further analysis. For example, Expansion also mentions the historical figure Koxinga, but rewrites his story from a different perspective: it underscores Zheng’s birthplace in Japan (Hirado in Nagasaki Prefecture) and his Japanese mother. Moreover, the conflict between the Dutch and the Japanese merchant Hamada Yahyôe in the seventeenth

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12 Veracini also takes Japanese colonialisms in Taiwan and Korea as examples to reason that “settler projects can also operate as a function of enabling colonial regimes” (Settler Colonialism 69; emphasis in original). Also see Chang Su-bing’s monograph about the Japanese immigrant villages in Taiwan.

13 This “settler colonialism’s inherent ambiguity,” as Veracini indicates, usually operates “at the same time on the settler collective” when he discusses the cases of European settler societies: “one striving for indigenization and national autonomy, the other aiming at new European replication and the establishment of a ‘civilized’ pattern of life.” (Settler Colonialism 21) This ambivalent settler mentality very much resembles the two types of settler colonial consciousness between the early Han settlers (Taiwanese locals) and the new wave of Han settlers (mainlanders), as mentioned earlier in this paper.
century is brought up while introducing Anping. Neither Descendants nor Island mentions these details because those advocating the Nationalist settler narrative seek to construct a linear and continuous Han-centric historiography. More intriguingly, a “bamboo scene” is shot in a sugar factory located in Pingtung in Expansion. The voiceover notes that bamboo flourished during the reign of the Japanese Emperor Hirohito, implying a connection to the thriving regime of the imperial government. These examples show the same/similar figures, images, and fragments of history in both classic and settler colonial narratives. Yet the way these elements are selected, deployed, and adapted are based on different political purposes and ideologies of settlers and colonizers. Settlers may also appropriate elements of colonial discourse or narrative devices to consolidate their own discursive formation or enrich certain settler colonial metaphors. Several cinematic languages and metaphors seen in Expansion including the map and the directional route of Taiwan, Koxinga, the bamboo scene, the image of the lighthouse of Cape Eluanbi, and the indigenous peoples, are adopted in Island to construct a distinct settler colonial cartography. Similarly, the Nationalist government seen in Island usurps the industrialization achievements of the Japanese government in Taiwan, reformulating the Chianan Irrigation System and the Xiluo Bridge as if these were the contribution of the settler regime. Only through a comparative analysis between the two modes of colonial domination can we fully examine how settler colonialism distinguishes itself from classic colonialism, and how colonial and settler colonial discourses at times overlap, intertwine, or supplement one another according to different historical and social contexts.

**Conclusion: Toward a Redistribution of Cinematic Cartography**

The methodological intersection of cultural geography and settler colonial criticism sheds insightful light on the way in which we can read cinema as cartography and allows us to theoretically reflect on the settler colonial structure of Taiwan in more critical and productive terms. The Han settlers in Taiwan on the one hand stress their cultural legacy and genetic connection with China, and firmly claim their legitimate ownership of the territory. On the other, Han settlers distinguish themselves from the metropole by disavowing the regime established by the Chinese Communist Party of the time, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and by presenting the ROC as the only legitimate and “authentic” Chinese polity. Unlike the Japanese colonial spatial distribution in which the dualism between the
metropole (“Japan proper” as the center) and the colony (Taiwan, as an economic front located on the margin of the Japanese Empire) is reinforced, Han settler cartography centralizes Taiwan as the eternal homeland to justify the legitimacy of the Nationalist rule and Han settlers’ permanent residency.

Nevertheless, the similarities between settler colonialism and classic colonialism, as well as the way by which they are co-constituted in reality, are equally important. Most significantly, the distributional inequality and imbalanced spatialization of indigeneity is apparent in both Japanese colonial and Han settler colonial cartographies, echoing Huggan’s argument that maps are “insidious mechanisms that justify the dispossession of minority peoples” (29), even in metaphorical and fictional manners. In Expansion, indigenous people appear at the beginning of the film to represent the primitive past of Taiwan, with their custom of headhunting and “barbarism” overstated by the voiceover, in contrast to the “civilized” colony under Japan’s colonization that resembles what we see in Descendants and Island. However, Expansion distinctly asserts that these people are no longer interested in practicing their tribal customs (neither headhunting nor dancing), and are instead eager to move toward a more economy-oriented and capitalistic lifestyle. This emphasis on economic development underscores the different features of the two modes of domination: classic colonialism gives priority to the economic exploitation of native labor, rather than the territorial dispossession as stressed in settler colonialism. Compared with Han settlers, although both oppress indigenous peoples, the Japanese colonizers “needed” the indigenous population (as well as other colonized Han people) as labor to define themselves as colonizers and accomplish the imperial project of expansion.

If they usually coexist and sometimes appropriate one another in reality, why does the differentiation between settler colonialism and classic colonialism matter? In The Settler Colonial Present, Veracini argues that the analytical distinction between colonial and settler colonial domination is required in that it will help us imagine “more effective ways of theorising and practising the decolonisation of settler colonial formations” (29). In light of this, investigating the settler colonial distribution of cinematic cartography is a prerequisite for challenging and unsettling unjust spatial practices, and thus necessary for a move toward what French philosopher Jacques Rancière called “spatial redistribution.” Politics, as Rancière states, “is the construction of a specific sphere of experience in which certain objects are posited as shared and certain subjects regarded as capable of designating these objects and of arguing about them” (3). The moment of politics begins, Rancière proclaims, when “impossibility is challenged” and new possibilities of
“objects and subjects” are introduced. The “politics of literature” means that “literature intervenes as literature in this carving up of space and time, the visible and the invisible, speech and noise,” and most importantly, intervenes in “the relationship between practices and forms of visibility and modes of saying that carves up one or more common worlds” (4). We must extend Rancière’s insights of “politics of literature” and “redistribution” in approaching the “politics of cinema.” To critique and interfere in the domination of settler colonial mapping and unjust spatial distribution as represented in cinema in any given settler society will bring forth new possibilities for the redistribution of cinematic cartography, a milestone for spatial justice, and a point of departure toward transitional justice. That is why settler colonial criticism matters, particularly for Taiwan at this point in its history.

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