Colonial Reminiscence, Japanophilia Trend, and Taiwanese Grassroots Imagination in Cape No. 7

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Abstract

In just two months after its debut in theaters on August 23, 2008, Cape No. 7 (海角七號) generated a whopping 450 million NTD in box office sales, pulling the Taiwanese cinema market out of the slump it had been stuck in for so long. This film brought adolescents which had nearly abandoned the Taiwanese cinema scene flocking back to the theaters. From August to October, viewing Cape No. 7 became a national pastime for web citizens.

This paper will investigate the film and its social and cultural phenomena from three directions: First, the cultural transference between Taiwan’s Colonial Reminiscence and the Japanophilia Trend in the wake of glocalization. If we said that Cape’s cultural phenomena and trend are due to the interactive course and a cultural imagination stirred up by complementary works in and out of the movie, rousing the furthest depths of the Taiwanese unconscious, we should try to enlarge the scope of space-time and investigate the following under a globalization frame: how does director Wei De-Sheng utilize cinematic symbols to link together the Taiwanese older generation’s nostalgia, the younger generation’s fetishes, and Japanophilia? How do we illustrate the complex cultural ambivalence present between Taiwan and ex-colonizing nation Japan through film symbols and camerawork that belong in a post-modern time-space compressed environment?

Second, post-modern simulacrum and the cultural phenomena of Cape No. 7. From the viewpoint of cultural production in the wake of glocalization, we can see from the marketing strategies or the social and cultural effects Cape evoked after its release that there is a separate meta-narrative out of the film, and we can discuss: (1) how do the director and his production crew manipulate historical memories, local grassroots force, and story-telling skills through simulacrum logic to create a historical and anthropological space, turning “history” into a nostalgic object and cultural fetish? (2) How can the fictional movie plot be interwoven with the non-fictional local people and events, combining movie sets and actual scenery to encourage Hengchun’s local cultural imagination, reinventing Hengchun’s local particularities and symbolic meaning?
Third, an open, tolerant, multi-dimensional grassroots imagination as an emancipatory power in a place-based transnational social sphere. If we view “re-discovering” Hengchun trend ignited by the intertextuality between the film and its context as a quest for “Taiwanese,” we might find that there is no such thing as a “genuine” Taiwanese variety, because Taiwanese has already been mixed with American, Japanese, Chinese, and several other aboriginal tribal genes. The quest for “Taiwanese” cannot be separated from Europe-American modernity and capitalism-centered globalization. Is it possible to propose a new way of imagining modern nation as the more complex transnational landscape and to move the monolithic narrative from the nationalist boundary to the “place-based transnational spheres” of social life? Looking at the film and its context from a viewpoint of Taiwanese in the wake of globalization, the time-space scope of Taiwanese grassroots imagination can also be expanded. In the globalization process, the mixed cultural genes of each different stage of modernization in Taiwan can be thought over and new groupings of ethnic groups and cultural inheritance can be reconsidered, so that we can overcome the binary divisions of Japanese love/hate, unification/independence, and north/south. As the political ideology confronts and turns to stink into social life, the collective grassroots imagination works its way from the bottom-up and remodels a community that “accepts others and appreciates diversity.” In the place-based transnational social sphere where we encounter the colonial reminiscence and the emergent ethnicities, myriad stories can be told through the memories, narrations, and desire in the course of individual, and the marginalized people can be included in the collective grassroots imagination in designing diverse modes of identification and living.

**Keywords**

Taiwanese cinema, *Cape No. 7*, transnational, Japan, colonial, postmodern, grassroots, imagination
Cape No. 7, the Taiwanese Miracle

In just two months after its debut in theaters on August 23, 2008, Cape No. 7 (海角七號) generated a whopping 450 million NTD in box office sales, pulling the Taiwanese cinema market out of the slump it had been stuck in for so long. Director Wei De-Sheng (魏德聖) spent fifty million NTD on this film, going so far as to force his family into debt by thirty million NTD during the production process. The success of Cape came as an unexpected surprise to all. In recent years, the only films to have had ticket sales above the two hundred million dollar mark in Taiwan are Stephen Xing-Chi Chow’s (周星馳) Kung Fu Hustle and Ang Lee’s (李安) Lust/Caution. Cape quickly became the highest-grossing movie in Taiwanese cinematic history. With a purely Taiwanese-funded production budget of only fifty million, Cape must count as a miniscule production compared with the expensive motion pictures of Hollywood, yet its total gross is enough to rival theirs: in the two months after its release, it had already ranked third in Taiwanese box office sales, losing only to Titanic’s (1997) 775 million NTD and Jurassic Park’s (1993) 450 million NTD. This film brought adolescents which had nearly abandoned the Taiwanese cinema scene flocking back to the theaters and countless moviegoers watched it in theaters again and again. From August to October, viewing Cape No. 7 became a national pastime for web citizens. Rave reviews spread like wildfire on the internet during premiere week. Film discussion corners on PTT, Taiwan’s largest online bulletin board system, were packed with conversation about the film and members even began to compete with each other to see who could pull in the most viewers, quickly becoming “Cape Publicity Corners.” Web citizens even adopted a “piracy ban” movement: all Cape movie file seeds shared on P2P software, forums, or any websites that provided streaming video of the movie were all banned by young web citizens in an attempt to discourage pirated versions from appearing online (Chen Zongyi).

What is more astonishing than Cape’s staggering box office numbers are how the director and the cast managed to create such a Taiwanese sensation. The film has been described by many reviewers as “a departure from the Taipei for southern borderlands with a new perspective.” Cape No. 7 opens with shots of a frustrated band singer, Aga, who, after smashing up his guitar and cursing Taipei, leaves the city in which he has tried unsuccessfully for fifteen years to make a name for himself to return to his old hometown Hengchun. Soon after this, he finds himself the lead singer of an amateur local band, drawn into a series of stories about the nobodies in the band who finally fulfill their dreams.
In real life, the director and cast of the film are all part of the “non-mainstream” crowd. Director Wei Te-Sheng had long aspired to produce his own cinematic production and he held fast to his ambition while working on and off in the entertainment business. Before he made Cape, he had spent 2.5 million NTD on a five-minute trailer he intended to use to find sponsors for a planned movie project Seediq Bale, which he was forced to give up. Cape is his first attempt at directing a feature film. Van Fan, who portrayed the main character Aga, was long packaged as a “handsome and student-like” singer by his management company and had almost nearly disappeared from the entertainment scene. Chie Tanaka, the Japanese actress who plays Tomoko, had been unsuccessful in trying to further her career in Taiwan. The actors who portray the Town Council Representative couple, Ma Ju-Lung and Pei Hsiao-Lan, were popular Taiwanese dialect actors who had found themselves lacking a performance stage. Ming-hsiung, the actor who played Rauma, had trouble keeping food on the family dinner table. Ma Nien-hsien, who plays Malasun, was originally the singer of the band Sticky Rice but was forced to change professions when they disbanded. These and other actors, like Old Mao (Li Jong-ren) and Dada (Yang Chiao-An), found themselves popular overnight, signing contracts and getting offers left right and center for commercials and TV shows (Chen Zongyi). In short, the director and all cast involved in Cape found their lives drastically transformed as a result of the movie’s success, a development that was even more dramatic than that experienced by any of their cinematic counterparts.

Whether it is the character in the film or the actor and actress that portrays the protagonist, everyone seems to have found his or her new life after leaving Taipei for the southern borderlands. The box office record set by Cape and subsequent social cultural effects raised the hopes of numerous moviegoers, who have displayed hopes for a surge of “Taiwan Post-New Wave Cinema” works to wake the Taiwanese film industry from its long period of hibernation. Whether Cape is a special case or the beginning of a new Taiwanese movie era still needs further observation. Putting Cape in the history of Taiwanese cinema, to a certain extent, the content matter of Cape shares some similarities with the Cinema of Healthy Realism¹ which arose in 1963 as a government-sponsored cinematic genre designed to promote “the bright side of social realities” and “the virtues of sympathy, kindness, and helpfulness” in countering “those high-in-the-sky and airy martial art films and indoor romance films that have nothing to do with people’s

¹ Li Hsing’s (李行) 1963 film Our Neighbors (街頭巷尾) was the first work of the Cinema of Healthy Realism.
real life” (Chen Ru-Shou 33). Somewhat in the manner of Healthy Realism films like Li Hsing’s (李行) Oyster Girl (蚵女; 1964), and Beautiful Duckling (養鴨人家; 1965), Cape is an encouraging comedy portraying those plebian people who work tenaciously to make a living, never give up hope in the face of hardship and always aspire for a better tomorrow. Like the earlier films, it foregrounds country life, beautiful landscapes, mutual support and social harmony. On the other hand, Cape differs from the Healthy Realism model in terms of national identity. Li Hsing’s Healthy Realism films tended to see Taiwan in terms of a unitary Chinese nationhood as all the characters speak standard Mandarin, the major protagonists exhibit a positive attitude toward government policies, and the family survives with government loan, while Cape portrays a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society by compounding Taiwanese grassroots consciousness with Japanese nostalgic aura and Japanophilia chic (elaboration ensue).

In terms of cinematic form and style, compared to those films of Taiwanese New Wave Cinema arising in the 1980s, Cape offers nothing innovative. In those films of New Wave Cinema, the directors developed their unique personal style to trace the historical past through personal memoirs (Hou Hsiao-hsien’s [侯孝賢] A Time To Live And A Time To Die [童年往事; 1985], A Summer At Grandpa’s [冬冬的假期; 1984], Dust In The Wind [戀戀風塵; 1986]), to excavate collective traumas to interrogate Taiwanese identities (Hou Hsiao-hsien’s A City of Sadness [悲情城市; 1989], Wu Nien-jen’s [吳念真] A Borrowed Life [多桑; 1994], Wang Tung’s [王童] Banana Paradise [香蕉天堂; 1989]), or to make a parody of the urban lives in the wake of Taiwan’s modernization (Edward Yang’s [楊德昌] In Our Times [光陰的故事; 1982], and The Terrorizers [恐怖份子; 1986]) (Chen Ru-Shou 47-9). Directors of New Wave Cinema like Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang contributed to Taiwan’s cinema with auteur films, which are permeated with the directors’ personal taste and unique styles. To get closer to ordinary people’s everyday lives, their films made use of natural light and a limited camera movement (e.g. Hou prefers to use a long take and a deep focus and Yang strongly resisted the use of zoom); sometimes they emphasized the dialectical or incongruous relationship between images and sounds in order to present multiple view points; the cinematic diegesis was developed in an ambiguous, non-linear way—either via putting together the fragmented episodes of everyday banalities or via multiple story lines.

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2 According to Chen Ru-Shou, the movement of Taiwanese New Wave Cinema began in 1982 with Edward Yang’s In Our Times (光陰的故事) and ended with Hou Hisao-hsien’s A City of Sadness (悲情城市) in 1989. See Chen Ru-Shou 47.
blurring the boundary between the real and the fictional. In fact, the audience of the New Wave cinema is often required to be actively involved in putting the pieces of the puzzle together. In a way that therefore distinguishes it from the high-brow art works of the New Wave cinema, Cape utilizes a more commercial approach by weaving together three separate storylines (the friction between Aga and the rag-tag band, Aga and Japanese PR Tomoko’s romance, and the seven un-mailed love letters written to the Taiwanese Tomoko sixty years ago by a departing Japanese middle school teacher due to Japan’s defeat in WWII) which progress at a brisk tempo. As a director and scriptwriter, Wei Te-Sheng is an effective storyteller in the Hollywood style. He has clearly paid a great deal of attention to the fast-paced viewing habits of the younger generation and is able to predict how the audience will react to individual lines. In terms of representing Taiwanese identity, Cape’s light-handed touch contrasts with those works of New Cinema that excavate historical memories and trauma to probe into the complicated ambivalence on both Taiwanese and Mainlanders toward each other (Banana Paradise), and Japanese as well (A Borrowed Life and A City of Sadness). Though still a film about the quest of self-identity, the issues of identities and ethnicities are handled with humor, and, in particular, the half-century-long, ambivalent and thorny relationship between Taiwanese and Mainlanders is totally evaded in this film. Cape can be said to be an encouraging comedy. During an interview with film critic Lan Tsu-Wei (藍祖蔚), Wei De-Sheng discussed his motivation to shoot a feel-good musical film along the above mentioned three story lines. According to Wei, the trope of seven Japanese love letters was accidentally inspired by the news he read from the newspaper that a Taiwanese postman spares no effort in trying to deliver a letter sent by a Japanese 60 years ago to a now non-existent address. Moreover, the trope of Japanese letter also pushed him to extend the impulse from his unfinished dream of filming Seediq Bale in exploring the relationship between Taiwanese and Japanese during the period of Japanese colonization. Consequently, he took Japanese expatriation from Taiwan as the entry point into Taiwan’s history because the incident touched him with its peacefulness compared to Japanese expatriation from Korea. Then he thought of adding musical elements by using a rock concert in the movie in order to make it more accessible to younger audiences. Finally, as the story takes place in Taiwan, he intended to depict beautiful landscape and grassroots culture of Taiwan. When facing the turning point or the end of an era of history, Director Wei emphasizes in his interview with Lan Tsu-Wei, an attitude of tolerance and accommodation is essential. A central theme in Cape is ethnic reconciliation, but Wei tried to avoid making it into a big issue or lecturing about it, rather opting for
an approach that is closer to everyday life, letting his characters’ emotions and their dialogues communicate his message (Lan).

Besides its differing cinematic aesthetics, Cape’s most obvious departure from New Wave Cinema is its advertising strategies. Most films of the New Wave became famous after they won awards and recognition at international film festivals; the news of foreign plaudits is then used for marketing the film in Taiwan. Cape’s advertising plan used not only the usual commercial strategies of advertising but also the long-established word-of-mouth approach. As has already been mentioned, because of its popularity among younger viewers, web citizens voluntarily promoted the movie online. In particular, before Cape’s publicity run, a small survey was conducted, and a large portion of those surveyed stated that they would not be buying tickets because they had lost faith in Taiwanese cinema. But a few brought up, “if a friend recommended it, then I would go see it.” Therefore, the distributor Buena Vista understood the importance of “word of mouth” in Taiwan. Ten days after the initial screening, the company set up large screenings for ten thousand people in towns large and small, inviting people of all classes to view the film for free. Eventually, word began to spread and box office sales also increased (Chen and Ping).

Why is Cape as popular as it is, given it offers not much innovation in subject matter or film style? From the viewpoint of the whole environment of Taiwan, Taiwan first began down the road of democratic freedom after the lifting of martial law in 1987. In the end of 2008—the year Cape was released—the issue of unification or independence from China was still unsolved and Taiwanese society was becoming unmanageable, as globalization-stricken China quickened the pace of its economic reform and swiftly became a strong competitor against Taiwan in the global market. The economic crisis that swept the globe also occurred in mid-2008, reducing export trade and seeing large numbers of unemployed on the streets. These events induced a never-before-seen anxiety and despair in the Taiwanese public for politics and economy. At this very moment, an inspiring, heart-warming comedy (of course, some have deemed it trivial and superficial) in the form of Cape No. 7 appears on the scene—a film that depicts the course of a few discouraged unknowns fulfilling their dreams, and one, moreover, that, though the use of Mandarin, Taiwanese, Japanese, and Hakka, which all appear in the film, seems the epitome of the lively, animated, and multi-lingual film borne of an apparently successfully integrated multi-ethnic society. The average Joes that make up the cast are of all ages, classes, and ethnicities, making it easy for audiences to find a target to identify with. When asked to comment on Cape’s success, film director Wu
Nien-Jen (吳念真) said, “Cape No. 7’s content has a lot of local color, conforms to public opinion, and is performed in a rasher, and more straightforward manner, unlike earlier films which only centered on fixed traditional ethical content matter.” As for the reason behind its remarkable box office, Wu believed “it has to do with the depiction of a reality—that many Taiwanese have not had an emotional outlet in this past half year” (Wang Hong-Guo). The sociologist Lin Wan-Yi (林萬億) said of the contextual factors that influenced “Cape No. 7 fever”: “Cape No. 7 was released at a time when Taiwan was experiencing an economic slump, citizens were depressed, and politics was in a state of flux as the returning-to-power KMT was not fulfilling the promises they pledged before elections, and ex-president Chen Shui-Bian’s (陳水扁) presidential scandal was unresolved; Taiwanese citizens were made anxious by the constantly changing situation of the country” (Zhang Qianwei). Documentary director Yang Li-Zhou (楊力洲) described Cape as “reminiscent of a supermarket, where people from all walks of life are searching for the products they want” (Chen and Ping).

The ordinary characters from all ethnic groups and classes display the generic Taiwanese hardworking, tenacious spirit and the refusal to take defeat lying down. The brash, calculating Town Council Representative is resolved to take back the natural environment of Hengchun from the clutches of hands of syndicate companies, and plans to do so by attracting the children back to their hometown to become its rightful owners; he refuses to back down and assembles a local band to perform as the opening show of their rock-and-roll music festival and to compete with the Japanese idol singer, demonstrating Taiwanese’ determination and how they hate to lose; Hakka liquor salesman Malasun greets his customers with a large smile and a deep bow, only showing his weariness when he is hidden in the bathroom, splashing water on his face to keep himself alert; Frog is so infatuated with his employer’s wife to the point that he is willing to bring his triplets to the band audition, illustrating an offbeat example of a relationship; Aborigine policeman Rauma, who has been hurt during his delivery in Taipei and has just got divorced, asks to be reassigned to a post in his hometown to recover from his wounds; national treasure postman Old Mao is equally enthusiastic while playing his yueqin (a moon-shaped four-stringed plucked instrument) or sending the post, and he does not mind that the younger members do not want him to be a part of the

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band, going so far as to vie for the spotlight during the concert. All of these eccentric yet ordinary characters are not only capable of invoking all kinds of memories in viewers of all ages, ethnicities, and classes, but can also reflect the growing levels of attention placed on the issue of Taiwanese localization in recent years. The lively depiction of a small yet hard-working southern Taiwanese village, the cultural gap between the old and the new and the suburbs and the countryside, and the cinematic treatment of a person’s everyday happenings, all have struck a chord with the audiences.

**Cultural Transfer between Colonial Reminiscence and the Japanophilia Trend**

If we said that Cape’s cultural phenomenon and trend is due to the interaction and cultural imagination stirred up by complementary works in and out of the movie, rousing the furthest depths of the Taiwanese unconscious, we should try to investigate the following questions under a globalization frame: How does director Wei De-Sheng utilize cinematic symbols to link together the Taiwanese older generation’s nostalgia, the younger generation’s fetishes, and Japanophilia? Is it possible to illustrate the complex cultural ambivalence felt in Taiwan towards the former colonial power (Japan) through an analysis of film symbols and camerawork that belong to a postmodern time space compressed environment? What is the paradoxical and dialectical relationship between cultural artifacts, the general populace, historical memories and social fetishes in the postmodern time-space compression (Harvey 305-7) environment of the film? “History” is paradoxically generated by the flow of memory in the push and pull between globalization and localization which leads to the particularization of a location to combat the abstraction of time and space caused by global modernization, while becoming a product of nostalgia and encouraging cultural fetishes to flourish.

Through cultural artifacts (an old map, the seven letters, a yellowed photograph, Schubert’s folk song “Heidenroeslein”/“The Wild Rose”), the film Cape calls upon the spirits of times past (the deceased Japanese lover or memories of colonialism) to bring out an “anthropological place” filled with local recollections and historic nostalgia (Augé 54) (the Keelung quay where the Japanese captives were repatriated and the location addressed with “Cape No. 7”),
in an attempt to negate the isolated and strange “non-places”4 (Hengchun’s mountain and ocean BOT projects, etc.) brought about in the spreading of modernity. In Cape, Aga struggles but fails to make a name for himself in Taipei and returns to Hengchun. He becomes a substitute postman and finds himself holding a bundle of love letters that were penned sixty years ago yet never reached their destination, and thus begins his search for Cape No. 7 in southern Taiwan/the southern borderlands. The love letters written sixty years ago by the deceased Japanese teacher for his Taiwanese student seem to have hastened Aga and the Japanese PR Tomoko’s romance through transference; from the Keelung quay where the Japanese captives were repatriated sixty years ago to the beaches of Kenting where the Taiwanese-Japanese music concert is held, all of these items and locations have to do with the time-space alteration and cultural transference between the Taiwanese older generation’s nostalgia, the younger generation’s fetishes, and Japanophilia.

The seven un-delivered love letters that depict the Chinese-Japanese romance appear in the form of Japanese narration throughout the film and have invoked two opposing reactions from viewers. Some audiences viewed this as a depiction of the still-existent ghost of the Japanese colonial empire, as the letters hint that the Taiwanese still wish to be under Japanese colonial rule. Hsu Jie-Lin (許介麟) offered heavy criticism in connection with this matter in his review “Cape No. 7: The Haunted Colonial Subculture”: “Hidden in Cape No. 7 is the shadow of a Japanese colonial culture. A love letter written by a Japanese person displays a nostalgic longing for the previously colonized Taiwan, an internationally-renown song sung in Japanese is inserted into the film, and even the ending song “Heidenroeslein/The Wild Rose” (a German folk song accompanied with poetry by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe) is repeatedly sung in Japanese. Taiwan cannot free itself from the clutches of Japanese culture” (Hsu).

Chen Yi-Chung (陳宜中) in his article, “Cape No. 7’s Bitter Taiwanese-Japanese Romance,” directed his criticisms at the representations of two Taiwanese women deserted by Japanese men (grandmother Tomoko and Mingchu) and “the young man [male protagonist Aga] [who is] thoroughly willing to follow

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4 If we define “place” as a locale in everyday life in which people establish social relations, then “non-places” are where continuous social organic relations are not established, spaces unaffected by social relations and historical significance. See Augé 78. Conversely, anthropological places are locations which are endowed with local memories and historical significance. See Augé 54. Paradoxically enough, non-places are more or less the simulacra of anthropological places. See also Tomlinson 110.
[the young Tomoko] to Japan”: “Strictly speaking, the main theme of Cape is not ‘Taiwanese-Japanese reconciliation’ but rather a ‘bitter Taiwanese-Japanese romance’... especially the bitterly romantic feelings Taiwan has for Japan.” Chen Yi-Chung believes that this bitter relationship veils “the desire to be colonized” in addition to “a guilty charge against the Republic of China/KMT rule after 1945.” Chen further elaborates: “The absent Mainlanders seem to be the ‘intruder/third wheel’ obstructing the relationship between the Taiwanese (women) and the Japanese (males)... they seem to be the largest constituent in ‘Taiwanese people’s sorrow.’” He sees Cape as a national allegory that has gone through a reversal of genders, “from the unification of the Taiwanese male and the Japanese female’s bodies and spirits to the Taiwanese-Japanese chorus ending number, allowing for salvation from this sorrow.” But Chen also calls into question: “What exactly is the subject matter of the Taiwanese? Can the Taiwanese only play the part of the passive ‘Orphan of Asia’ that lays in wait to be saved by others?” (Chen I-Chung)

After the publication of Hsu Jie-Lin and Chen I-Chung’s articles, online supporters of Cape No. 7 immediately offered heavy condemnation of their words. Whether the seven Japanese love letters or the German folk song “The Wild Rose” sung in both Japanese and Chinese are viewed as a catalyst for Japanese nostalgia or capable of evoking ghosts of the previous colonial era, they both reflect the cultural ambivalence and anxieties that remain between the colonizer and the colonized.

As for the Taiwanese love-hate attitude toward Japanese, it is also a reflection of the progression of Taiwan’s ideologies and historical experiences, from being colonized by Japan, to being freed from Japanese colonial bonds, in addition to the individual’s alteration in subjective experience and position. Besides, for both Taiwanese and Chinese mainlanders living in Taiwan, their love-hate attitude toward Japanese has also been complicated by different historical memories and experiences. Many elderly Taiwanese who grew up during Japanese colonization feel nostalgic for Japan, considering it a symbol of modernization, progress, and fashion, though their nostalgia is mixed with the bitterness of having being once treated as second citizens. However, many elderly mainlanders who came to Taiwan after the civil war in 1949 have been filled with Anti-Japanese sentiment due to their memories of the eight-year Japanese military invasion and massacre in the mainland China (1926-1934). In fact, many Taiwanese and mainlanders growing up during the KMT government’s authoritarian rule from 1949 to the mid-1980s tend to alienate, isolate, or deny the influence of Japanese culture in forming Taiwanese identity, considering it a predator or invader, which comes as a consequence of the KMT government’s uprooting of all signs of Japanese influence (more in-depth
analyses ensue).

In Taiwan, though the cultural imaginary of the nation-state has been sustained by the monolithic narrative of either Chinese nationalism or Taiwanese nationalism, Japanese culture plays a large part in Taiwan’s globalization. When formerly-colonized third world countries are in the process of accepting/refusing globalization, the colonizer must not only act as the oppressor or the ruler—it also stands as a bridge or medium for colonialism, capitalism, modernism, and the third world country’s local history and environment, becoming a “transformer sub-station” for cultural production. Chen Kuan-Hsing, in discussing the association between Taiwanese cultural formation and cultural colonialism, stresses that we must also take into account the structural experience shared by the third world countries that have undergone colonization, decolonization, internal colonization and new colonization:

Taiwan’s form of mainstream culture needs to be viewed from the structural experience shared by all third world countries: the entire capitalism movement process from colonization to decolonization to internal colonization to new colonization. Without this historical direction, cultural colonization becomes a moral noun, unable to seize any traces of history and unable to explain how the nation-state’s capitalist machine built up its national culture in the past or how they suppress subject-groups from establishing autonomy, and further incapable of explaining how come the form of mass culture is imbued with the genes of American and Japanese commodity culture—it is only on this axis that the local and global can be dialectically linked together. (13)

The role played by Japan in the Taiwanese cultural imagination is actually connected to the dialectical relationship between globalization and localization compounded by the empire/nation-building project, a relationship that can be roughly split into three periods as follows.

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5 Further analysis ensues in the last part of this article—“An open, tolerant, multi-dimensional grassroots imagination.”

First, the period of Japanese colonial rule: In the fifty years from 1895 to 1945 of Japanese colonial rule, the Japanese colonial government led by the Governor-General of Taiwan persistently used high-handed tactics to persecute the rebellious and adopted an unfair method of treatment, looking down on the Taiwanese as second citizens. Yet on the other hand, the Japanese colonial government was also the medium for Western modernization as it completed several modern facilities in Taiwan: “In order to match the pace of Japan’s economic development, the Governor-General of Taiwan began to fervently execute a series of economic reforms and architectural projects. . . . The development of Taiwan’s academic studies was started through colonial reforms, so it could be said that the foundations of modern Taiwanese humanities, sciences, and technology were set during this time.” The reforms and constructions put forth by the Japanese colonial government include “the architectural reform, the increase of rice harvesting, the establishment of the championing sugar industry, and the spread of industrialization. Social changes made in this period, aside from the explosion in population, include the popularization of the act of releasing women’s bound feet and cutting off men’s long braids and the establishment of such concepts as punctuality, observing the law, and modern sanitation.”

Second, the period of the national KMT government’s cleansing of the manifestations of Japanese influence: In an attempt to cleanse Taiwan of the Japanese legacy, from the 1949 onwards the national KMT government banned Japanese from mass media and strictly curbed the amount of imported Japanese multimedia. However, Japanese culture was still spread amongst citizens. Lee Ming-Tsung (李明聰) points out that not until the 1970s had the Japanese culture been spread underground during as Japanese culture became popular throughout Asia. At the end of the 1970s, Japanese multimedia products and TV program began to make their way into the Taiwanese household through the VCR player. The Japanophilia trend actually began early in the mid-1980s amongst Taiwanese youth,

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9 In sharp contrast to their Japan-loving parents and grandparents and the Japanophilic younger generations, the people born between the 1940s to 1960s tend to feel aloof from Japanese culture, even going so far as to treat it as an invader or predator.
as evidenced by the popularity of the Japanese young girls’ fashion magazine *Non-no* on school campuses, and “Wan-Nien” in *Ximending* was becoming a hotspot for buyers of Japanese merchandise (Lee 49).

Third, the globalization period when global capitalism held sway over the nation-state’s political power: With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the falling of the Berlin Wall, and China’s conditional acceptance of capitalism, capitalist globalization sped up drastically and overruled the nation-state’s control and domination in the third world countries, Taiwan included. Japanophilia continues to grow with the abolition of the parts of martial law relating to the media near the end of the 1980s. Lee Ming-Tsung points out the following factors as also relevant to the continual spread of Japanophilia: in November 1988, the Legislative Yuan officially sanctioned satellite television; in November of 1992, the ban on Japanese media was lifted; and in July of 1993, the cable television law was passed, making it wholly legal for audiences to watch foreign media. Due to the culture proximity between Taiwan and Japan, Japanese dramas and variety shows were welcomed more easily into Taiwanese households than American programs (50). Japanese dramas were especially popular because, due to their length, they can transport the audience to “a prolonged, continuous, detailed, and expanded living space from a different culture” (30). Along with the escalated trend of Japanophilia in Taiwan, a term “*hari*,” meaning Japanophilia,\(^\text{10}\) was coined in 1997 and was soon widely used to indicate the obsession with and envy of anything Japanese.

The Japanese nostalgia of the older generation and the Japanophilia of the newer generation both stem from the same sentiment: these groups believe that Japan symbolizes modernization, progress, and fashion. The elderly who received a Japanese colonial higher education still diligently read the monthly periodical *Bungeishunjū* (文藝春秋), tune in to NHK programs, and many have learned about how to appreciate classical Western music or art as a result of the Japanese imperial royal education of the time. Fifty years of colonial history has left behind the impression that “Japan is what created modernized Taiwan,” that, compared to Japan, Taiwan is at a lower level of development, and that Japan’s transnational capitalist merchandise sells because once-colonized countries like Taiwan still envy Japanese culture.

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\(^{10}\) The term “*hari*” was coined by a Japanophilic author Hari Xingzi, in her comic book, *Good Morning Japan*, in 1997. Since then, the term *hari* and *harizu* (Japanophilic people) have been widely used to indicate the craze for Japanese culture and consumer products and those fans who are obsessed with Japanese fashion and merchandise. Cited directly from Li and He 18.
Following the acceleration of capitalist globalization in the 1990s, the myth of “the pursuit of modernization” caused developing countries to look to Western societies as an example, which is also an endorsement of Japan’s leading role of the Asian countries. Japanese scholar Tsunoyama Sakae (角山榮) suggests that, in the 1990s, Japan became the translator or medium between “Asia” and “the West,” playing the role of “transformer sub-station”. The Japanese have the ability to localize a Western product to fit the tastes and needs of Asian consumers. Taking into account Japan’s role of “transformer sub-station”, we see that because of the close proximity of Taiwanese and Japanese culture, the comics, animations, popular music, drama series, idol singers, accessories, concerts and concert goods that have been elaborately packaged and marketed by the Japanese cultural industry have resulted in Japanophilia.

Riding the Japanophilia trend, a number of Japanese songs and music have been utilized in Taiwan’s films not only to depict the older generation’s nostalgia for Japan as seen in Happy Rice (無米樂; 2004) but also to display the Japanophilic chic in anticipating the young generation’s fashionable life style (touring around the island by bicycle) as seen in Island Etude (練習曲; 2007). Likewise, Cape appropriates the Japanophilia trend while making it one of the central themes. It caters to a young audience’s taste by portraying Aga and Tomoko’s romance and the rock concert on the beach attended by the Japanese singing idol, in a way that makes the film conform to the habits of Japanophilic chic, thus making it more than just a “film about the banal rural life.” Cape’s combination of the Japanophilic chic and the beautiful rural landscape of Hengchun helps recycle the image of “Hengchun” as well. As a result, Young adults and Japanophiles can project their desire and identify with the Taiwanese band member Aga, Japanese idol singer Kousuke Atari, Japanese PR Tomoko, and ten-year-old keyboardist Dada; the mimic Kenting’s yearly Springscream rock concert and the ups and downs of Aga and Tomoko’s relationship at work (their drunken one-night stand after the wedding banquet presents to younger generations an everyday likeness of themselves). With the increasing popularity of the film, not only Van Fan who plays Aga attract lots of fans, but also Chie Tanaka who plays Tomoko, and the minor Japanese singer Kousuke Atari continue to arouse heated discussions among young bloggers and media attention, becoming big idols within popular culture and acquiring the currency of household names. Moreover, the seven un-mailed love letters

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articulating Japanese nostalgia and Japanophilic chic have been recycled as a trendy downloadable product on the web. Cape not only attracts young audience but also evokes fond memories of the Japanese colonial period in the older generations with the unfinished romance between the deceased Japanese schoolteacher and the 80-year-old Taiwanese Tomoko. Director Wei recalls, after the premiere of Cape, an audience requested that his mom take a picture together with Director Wei. The audience told him that his mom burst into tears when seeing the movie because the unfinished romance in Cape reminded her of the unfinished love story between her mother-in-law and a Japanese soldier during Japanese colonization.

The National Allegory of Cape No. 7

If Cape No. 7 is analyzed from the perspective of national allegory, the assembly, rehearsals, and performance of the local band in addition to the Taiwanese-Japanese produced rock concert all demonstrate the paradox of transnational cultures interacting in a post-modern time-space environment. On the surface, due to transnational cash flow and technological advancements, post-modern time and space have been compressed, allowing both a Western commercial photo shoot and a Japanese idol singer’s concert to take place simultaneously in Hengchun as though there were no difference between them. But is this type of transnational cultural contact really going on without gap? As a matter of fact, how the different characters perceive Hengchun and the local band can reveal the relative statuses of the previous colonizer and colonized and also demonstrate the gap between the urban and the countryside. These differences in status lie in the values of western modernity and modernization stressed as the superior symbol, of which the Japanese colonizer plays the role of “transformer sub-station”. The Japanese PR Tomoko still views the southern Taiwan countryside through Japan’s “Colonial Eye,” seeing only underdevelopment, laziness, a lack

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12 Fredric Jameson considers that third-world texts necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situations of the public third-world culture and society. See Jameson 319.

13 The term “Colonial Eye” comes from Stuart Hall’s “English Eye.” Hall’s “English Eye” is used to describe the love-hate relationship between the self/other and the colonizer/colonized. Hall points out that the English Eye has grown accustomed to placing itself in the center of the urban city, colonial nation, and the world, and “It becomes coterminous with sight itself” but is unable to recognize its own perspective, making it just another in the numerous viewpoints. The all-encompassing “English Eye” places the colonized at the border of the urban center to
of orderliness, and a “rough un-developed” condition. At the beginning of Cape, Tomoko is headed for a photoshoot on the Azure Shores in a bus with a group of Western models. Ignoring the driver’s advice, she forces him to drive through a narrow ancient city gate and down an alleyway, causing the entire bus to become stuck and unable to move forward or backwards (symbolizing how the power of modernization is incompatible with the local surroundings). On returning from the more “modern” Taipei after fifteen years, Aga, who takes in everything from a professional Taipei musician’s perspective, sees only coarse and amateur musicians who cannot keep up with his tempo and only manage to make a “racket,” which is why, during rehearsals, fuming and loathe to continue, he continually calls for them to stop playing. Conversely, he must face pressure from the Japanese record company’s “upper supervisor” representative Tomoko, forcing him to write two new songs by the deadline and to successfully complete rehearsal. Tomoko stands for the Japanese cultural industry’s efficiency, intricate division of labor, and standard operation procedure, and the request to follow a routine schedule. Of course she would find it impossible for the random, unorganized, grassroots, and brash southern Taiwanese band members to complete a product fit for the stage in time. She blatantly displays her arrogance and contempt, raging at Aga and the audience, calling Frog an “insect,” and failing to understand why and how “out-of-date antique” Old Mao and his yueqin, an instrument unfit for Western rock, can perform on stage. Tomoko’s arrogant and pompous attitude does not change until her one-night stand with Aga and after she has viewed the seven un-mailed Japanese love letters.

The relationship between national allegory and gender in Cape No. 7 is dissimilar to the traditional national allegory that links the colonizer/dominator with the male and the colonized-dominated with the female; Cape clearly reverses the gender roles. What meaning does this gender reversal have in the dialectical relationship between globalization and localization? The feminization of the previous colonizer denotes the changing form of “cultural colonization” in the post-colonial period affected by capitalist globalization. During the colonial period the colonizers typically used their military and armed forces to forcefully obtain
enormous profits; now, in the post-colonial era, the strong are those who are willing to cooperate economically and exchange cultural traditions, utilizing “soft power” to pull in the distance between partners so that both sides are willing to partake in trading. The character Tomoko in Cape constantly vexes, pouting and complaining, “You’re bullying me, you’re all bullying me.” Her adopting of a victim’s stance often wins compassion from others and they forgive her for her previous dominating and rude behavior. Tomoko represents Japanese culture’s exported “soft power,” according to Japanese culture scholar Tsunoyama Sakae (角山榮) and Honda Shiro (本田史朗). These two scholars suggest that during and after the 1990s, Japan utilized a method of cultural export that emphasized “mukokuseki/no nationality” (無國籍) to other Asian countries, wiping out the old conception of Japan’s oppressive nature. The elements and characteristics of American popular culture were all altered and remodeled by Japanese cultural brokers and translators to fit the tastes of the younger generation and urban lifestyle of Asian countries. This “gave the populace in East Asia a common topic to discuss and also showed the modernized environment and liberated side of Japanese society.”

In Cape, the import of a “mukokuseki/no nationality” and “unscented” Japanese culture industry appears in the form of the youthful, spirited rock festivities taking place on southern Taiwan beaches. The import of post-colonial era culture is not only capable of diminishing the perception of being “dominating and intrusive” but is also able to assimilate local specialty and localizing cultural products—this is Roland Robertson’s notion of “glocalization.” As he sees it, “globalization is still a specialized universalization, a universalized specialty” (73). Stuart Hall maintains this concept and analyzes glocalization more in depth:

What we usually call the global, far from being something which, in a systematic fashion, rolls over everything, creating similarity, in fact works through particularity, negotiates particular spaces, particular identities and so on. So there is always a dialectic, a continuous dialectic, between the local the global. (“Old and New Identities” 62)

In other words, in the complex process of cultural flow and economic trade, the export of cultural products does not only involve the dominator and the dominated, but also involves the exchange of desire of both parties and whether the “Local

“Eye” is adopted to replace the “Colonial Eye.” Tomoko’s change in attitude towards the local people and her love-hate relationship with Aga specifically reflects the complexity of the cultural imagination and “coupling” desire during the process of glocalization. The two bicker together, even hate each other, secretly brew sentiments, engage in a drunken one-night relationship, and then wake up the next morning fighting again over the blanket to cover up themselves to avoid being seen by each other. This foreign romance encompasses all the wonder, curiosities, setbacks, and friction characteristic of transnational cultural encounters, and also illuminates the love, fear and envy of the cultural exchange process. Eventually, Tomoko wins Aga’s love and also changes her attitude towards those “others” she used to despise. She presents a gift to Frog, Old Mao, Rauma, Dada and Malasun to express her cordial friendship. These gifts are necklaces made of glass beads in the aboriginal Pai-wan style; each necklace is made according to a different pattern symbolizing an auspicious blessing for an individual person’s situation. As Tomoko begins to accept others and appreciate difference by looking at things through “the other’s eye,” she wins their friendship and cooperation as well.

**Cultural Artifacts that Link Together**

**Nostalgia for Japan and Japanophilia**

Aga and Tomoko’s one-night relationship does not mature into a full-blown relationship until the two read the seven Japanese love letters. Tomoko is touched by the lingering unfinished romance that has lasted for sixty years. After she earnestly explains her emotions, Aga overcomes all obstacles to deliver them to their rightful owner. Their shared effort in successfully delivering the letters also strengthens their promises towards each other. These seven letters not only accomplish their “sentimental education” function but also achieve the effect of transference, allowing for the one-night stand relationship that was initially only for venting sexual desire and frustration to root itself in Aga and Tomoko’s emotions, leading the two into the understanding and empathizing stage. Besides achieving transference in another generation’s foreign romance, the love letters also hint at the synchronic and diachronic of the combined desires of glocalization: fetishes and Japanophilia are extended and strengthened versions of the traces of nostalgia for Japan; the combined desires of cultural exchange do not only affect the absorption of the synchronic local specialty but also influences the diachronic displacement of historical situation and the fetishization of nostalgic objects.
In *Cape*, Taiwanese’ cultural imagination of and envy for Japan have been intertwined with the love letters and the Japanese idol singer concert, in an attempt to illustrate the elder’s nostalgia and the younger era’s Japanophilia. These two storylines intersect when “Heidenroeslein”/“The Wild Rose” is sung in Chinese and Japanese at the rock concert.\(^{15}\) The folk song is a cultural product of a mixed cultural environment. This folk song made its way from Europe to Japan and then Taiwan, and from the route of this cultural routing we can prove that Europe is the center of glocalized cultural exchange. The song “Heidenroeslein”/“The Wild Rose” was written by Mozart and the lyrics were by Goethe, then was spread to Japan,\(^{16}\) and then during Japanese rule the imperial education imported it into Taiwan, making it a household song that even elementary school children could sing by heart. The circulation of the song also illustrates how Japan became the medium between Western modern culture and Taiwan’s local culture.

The director never displays outright the colonized history in the duration of the film, preferring rather to use flashbacks to link together the two different historical environments, profiling the marks left behind on the older generation’s lives during the wartime and the imperial education to make the nostalgic aura for the younger generation’s Japanophilia stand out. At the beginning of *Cape*, Old Mao is riding his motorcycle down a small road to complete his mail deliveries and the song he is humming is “Heidenroeslein”/“The Wild Rose.” When the crowd calls for an encore at the concert, Old Mao picks up his *yueqin* without hesitation and plays the same song, and, apart from Aga, the other members of the band seem cooperative: Frog plays the drums, Rauma plays the harmonica, and Dada plays her keyboard. Aga is, at first, taken aback, but slowly joins in by singing in Chinese, and the Japanese singer, knowing this song by heart as well, passionately joins in by singing in Japanese. When Aga sees the Japanese singer beginning to sing, he tries

\(^{15}\) Wei Te-Sheng speaks of “Heidenroeslein/The Wild Rose” as the film’s fated main theme. He says there was a time when he went on a pilgrimage to see Kurosawa Akira’s movies but he fell asleep. He awoke with a start when he heard “Heidenroeslein/The Wild Rose.” The song seemed to have awoken in Wei Te-Sheng’s unconscious the wish to create a movie that is known by all and that is easily accessible (See Lan).

\(^{16}\) Wikipedia says this: Heidenröslein [we can use the modern—oe spelling] (Rose on the Heath or Little Rose of the Field) is a poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. It has been set to music by a number of composers, most notably by Franz Schubert as his “D. 257,” the NDH-band Rammstein in their song “Rosenrot”. There are also settings by Carl Friedrich Zelter and Heinrich Werner. The Japanese singer Shiina Ringo entitled D.257 of Schubert [i.e. renamed Schubert’s piece] “Nobara” and covered it. Wikipedia contributors. "Heidenröselin." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 16 Apr. 2010. 2 May. 2010 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heidenr%C3%B6slein>.
to let him have the spotlight, but Kousuke Atari invites him to sing along with him instead. This Chinese-Japanese chorus scene seems to be the director’s way of expressing Japan and Taiwan’s friendship and a symbol of the mending of relationships between different ethnicities. Besides representing transnational and trans-ethnic cultural exchange, the melody of “Heidenroeslein”/“The Wild Rose” can profile the long-lasting, universal romantic love of different generations and smooth over the transitions between the two different time-spaces. As Kousuke Atari continues to sing “Heidenroeslein”/“The Wild Rose” in Japanese, the camera has already cut away from the youthful beach concert to the 80-year-old Tomoko quietly sitting in the darkened courtyard of her house, sewing clothes. She discovers the wooden box that Aga has soundlessly placed on the bench. When she opens it, a yellowed photograph of the two lovers on the beach floats to the ground. Grandmother Tomoko picks up the letters with her withered hands and reads them; we can only see her back but her face is obscured, leaving us more imaginative space.

At this point we are brought back to the Keelung Quay, where the Japanese captives were repatriated in December 1945. Hordes of Japanese carrying their belongings are boarding the ship that will take them back home. The Japanese schoolteacher continually looks left and right, searching the crowd, as if he is waiting for someone to appear, but eventually boards the ship alone, making his way to the railing to take one last glance at the harbor. At this instant, Tomoko arrives wearing a white sweater, white shoes and socks, and a white knitted cap. She holds a suitcase, anxiously looking around for her lover with whom she plans to elope. The camera moves downward and we see that Tomoko is caught amongst the crowd that has come to see the Japanese off. The steam whistle blows, the ship pushes off to sea. Tomoko suddenly lifts her head and the camera switches to her viewpoint, so that we see the Japanese schoolteacher half obscured behind the other passengers behind the railing. Their eyes meet, and Tomoko can only watch as her lover abandons her. The camera focuses on her face; her face is fixed in a stunned

17 In August 1945, the Japanese lost the war and were forced to leave Taiwan. The national government came to Taiwan without delay to take over, and the first issue they had to deal with was the repatriation of the Japanese in Taiwan. Taiwan’s provincial governmental chief executive issued a series of measures collectively called the “Overseas Japanese Policy,” which included the repatriation of the Japanese in Taiwan, freezing Japanese property and businesses in Taiwan, and allowing Japanese to carry only simple luggage and no more than one thousand Japanese yens in cash back to Japan. The repatriation shown in Cape No. 7 is a reproduction of the December 1945 incident. For further information, consult Ou 204.
expression as her lips tremble and a tear rolls down the curve of her cheek. In the background, the cheerful voices of children singing the Japanese version of “Heidenroeslein”/“The Wild Rose” ring out, as if nothing occurred. The innocent and pure tone of the children’s singing seems to give the impression that this scene has nothing to do with fateful farewells or historical grief. The contrast between the soundtrack and the scene emphasizes the cruelty of war and the mercilessness of Heaven and Earth.

During the course of this farewell scene, the director chooses to use a yellow tint and switches between close-up and long, low-angle and high-angle shots, alternating between the perspectives of both the Japanese schoolteacher and Tomoko, paralleling a difficult desolate feeling with the plebeian memory of parting and death at war. A scene like this being paired up with such an unfitting melody as “Heidenroeslein”/“The Wild Rose” composes the film’s structure of feeling and “non-verbal” metanarrative: on the one hand, the culturally-complex folk song is used to symbolize the universal romance that crosses national boundary; on the other hand, it is also a metaphor for the predictable future: as time passed, the historical grand narratives related to war and colony become abstract and hollow, while the song “Heidenroeslein/The Wild Rose” and the seven love letters, which bear historical residues and plebeian personal memories, collect the scattered pieces of historical debris. The affecting reverberation of “Heidenroeslein”/“The Wild Rose” and the poignant whisper of the seven love letters touch a chord in one’s life, simulating and re-establishing the forms of war, love, and plebeian life within the one-way historical flow.

**Post-modern Simulacrum and the Cultural Phenomena of Cape No. 7**

From the viewpoint of cultural production in the wake of glocalization, we can see from the marketing strategies or the social and cultural effects Cape evoked after its release that there is a separate meta-narrative outside the film, and we can discuss: (1) how do the director and his production crew manipulate historical memories, local grassroots force, and story-telling skills through simulacra logic to create a historical and anthropological space; (2) how does one change “history” into a nostalgic object by encouraging the production of cultural fetishes through post-modern simulacrum logic and the intertextuality between the film and its contexts? How can the fictional movie plot be interwoven with the non-fictional local people and events, combining movie sets and actual scenery to encourage
Hengchun’s local cultural imagination, reinventing Hengchun’s local particularities and symbolic meaning; (3) what are the dialectical contradictions between cultural production and the subjectivity of local people.

In Harvey’s discussion of cultural identification in the post-modern time-space compression environment, in addition to the international cash flow and the aid of technological advances, media culture with an image orientation also has a large part to play. Identification—regardless of whether we are talking about an individual, a company group, or an entire city—is based around an image; because the visual media has blurred the boundaries between the real and fictional worlds, local specialties and historical progress have given way to the homogenous process of globalization. Due to the abstraction and hollowing of time-space, individual or group cultural identification has gone in two separate directions: one the one hand, an embracing of the utopia constituted of simulacrum in an attempt to escape; one the other hand, a strong emphasis being put on the place-bound identity, to uncover the historical traditions and specialties to fight back against the anxiety brought forth by time-space abstraction and hollowing. Even so, the discovery of historical traditions and local specialties more often than not turns into a cultural fetish, since, compared to an abstract, already non-existent history, a document or an old picture is a tangible piece of evidence; it can be used to replace an illusionary history, and the “history” that is produced through the cultural fetish is changed into a nostalgic object (Harvey 302-3). Harvey brilliantly points out the paradox around historical nostalgia, place-bound identity and the cultural fetish in the post-modern time-compressed condition, splitting identification into a simulacrum utopia and place-bound identities, but this is not enough to express the complexity of the post-modern time-space compression condition: in actuality, the simulacrum utopia and place-bound identification manufactured by the media have already developed into an interacting, relative relationship. This allelopathic situation, with the manipulation of historical nostalgia and local specialization, begins the production of cultural fetishes. The mutual influence and intertextuality between the film of Cape and its social and cultural contexts can be used to verify the above.

The largest historical scene in Cape is the Keelung quay where the Japanese captives were repatriated. This was shot in a beer brewery in Taichung. In order to create an authentic historical feeling, director Wei De-Sheng and scenery producer Chiu Ruo-Lung (邱若龍) gathered information from that time period, and, even under the pressure of using up their budget, they still spent a large sum on recreating an anthropological place filled with local memory and historical nostalgia. In order to build the ship, Chiu Ruo-Long consulted the data of all ships
constructed before 1930, compared the designs to those of the Japanese vessels, and then sketched out a design for the interior and exterior of his ship. “The turbine and the small life preservers were all simulated and then made into an animated picture, which was then turned into a 5-meter long model, the figure of the naval vessel in the movie” (Zhang Jingru). The Taichung beer brewery was altered into a harbor and vessel deck set that could fit roughly a hundred extras, and “[we] first drew up our concept and then created props as we needed, even the clothes worn by the Japanese men, women, and children were first researched and then sewn” (Zhang Jingru). In this anthropological place a historical scene was recreated through the manipulation of simulacrum symbols, and during the film’s publicity run its historical accuracy was constantly stressed.

The intertextuality between the Cape film and its contexts also combined the real with the fictitious and movie sets with live scenery, and their representation of marginalized characters imbibes the local space with ample narrativity and symbolic meaning. The inspiration for Cape came from a real postman’s story. Wei De-Sheng reveals in an interview that, in July of 2004, when he was at the lowest point in his career, he saw a news report about Ding Tsang-Yuen (丁滄源), a postman who had worked at the Huwei (虎尾) Post Office for thirty-seven years. Ding had received a letter addressed to a recipient living at “Cape No. 145-1, Cape Village, Huwei County” (虎尾郡海口庄海口 145-1 号), written in the old colonial fashion, written from “Osaka Kansai Electric Power, Co., Ltd.” (大阪關西電力株式會社). Ding Tsang-Yuen spent two days and used his days off to ask around and finally delivered the letter to its rightful owner. It was not a love letter, but rather a notification of the lease earned from stocks owned during the colonial era. The recipient Chen Chi-Yen (陳祺炎) had already passed away, but his seventy-odd year old son was still touched to have received the letter. It was this story that inspired Wei De-Sheng’s idea for the seven love letters that were never delivered and the creation of Old Mao (Liao Xue-Xian).

What’s interesting is, Wei De-Sheng combined real and fictional stories and then broadcast and advertised his final product through simulacrum logic (time-space compression, the usurpation of the real by the virtual, the reversal of the original and the copy, the displacement of the signifier and the signified) to influence the real world and blur the boundaries between fact and fiction. He also created a story and local memory for the marginalized Hengchun, initiating business opportunities in the area. Every day for the next two months after Cape’s release, hundreds of letters addressed for the non-existent “Cape No. 7” flooded into Hengchun’s postal office. The postal service had the idea to create a Cape No.
7 memorial postmark. After two months, around eight thousand letters had been received by local postal office in order to obtain the Cape No. 7 memorial postmark. Old Mao’s “replicate”, 60 year-old Liou Mao-Xiong (劉茂雄), lent Old Mao his motorcycle and uniform during filming (Cai). After the success of Cape in Taiwan, Hengchun put out a six postcard collection of Liou Mao-Xiong posing in real locations used in the film, but also some of him mimicking scenes from the movie, such as when Old Mao falls off his bike into the fields. And Liou Mao-Xiong apparently now finds himself constantly being called over by tourists to have his picture taken with them while delivering his mail (Yang).

Another paradoxical phenomenon is that most tourists, who are mostly unfamiliar with Hengchun’s local history, are flocking to Hengchun, which was previously regarded by them as a hollow transitional space detached from their social connections and human relations. However, now Cape’s rich storyline and scene compositions imbue the actual locations with cultural imagination and symbolic meaning, and through simulacrum logic, they are turned into anthropomorphic spaces. Fans of the film bring with them a passion for “digging up history” and go in search of these locations that originally had no meaning for them. The formerly unimposing concrete buildings, upon becoming “Aga’s home,” “Old Mao’s home,” and “Grandmother Tomoko’s home,” suddenly become hot spot tourist attractions. In an attempt to handle this “architectural rush,” the Tourism Bureau of the Ministry of Transportation and Pingtung County Government worked with Pingtung’s local transport to plan a one-day Cape No. 7 packaged tour. Starting from October 25th of 2008, buses have been shuttling tourists from the houses of Aga, Old, Mao, and Grandmother Tomoko to the locations where the banquet and rock concert were shot (Ye). Mancho Village, where “Grandmother Tomoko’s house” is located, is a distant and isolated area with over two thirds listed as part of a national park. Although it is deemed “Taiwan’s little Sweden,” it has a severe population outflow problem. In October of every year the gray-faced buzzard hawks pass by on their migration route, bringing in a small amount of business, but this does not even compare with the massive amounts of tourists the minute-long appearance of “Grandmother Tomoko’s house” in the film has brought

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18 A one-day package includes movie locations and local scenic areas: start off at Ximen, Hengchun Old Street, Aga’s home, Old Mao’s home, Cape No. 7, Harbor Bridge, Long-pan Park, have lunch at Hsadu Hotel, then continue on to Maobitou, Baisha Beach, Shanhai (the port Aga delivered mail to), Wanlitong (where Aga gazed at the sea), Checheng, Dai-Xing Temple at She Liao Village (where the banquet was held), Fu-An Temple (where auditions for the band were held). See Ye.
to the area. The township has also announced plans that would allow fans of the film from all over the island to join them in festivities hosted by “Grandmother Tomoko” (Song).

The Untold Story behind Cape No. 7

*Cape No. 7* combines the stories of marginalized characters and their local sentiments, stirring up grassroots cultural imaginations through the use of simulacrum logic and image media, creating a new form of place-based social culture with internet and symbolic meaning. Hengchun or Mancho Village, places that were once compelled to exist on the edges of Taiwan’s modernization roadmap, are now forcing their way back to the center of “Taiwanese representation.” As a result of the business it has generated, the *Cape* trend has attracted attention from environmentalist circles (will the throngs of tourists flocking to “Grandmother Tomoko’s home” do harm to the natural habitat of the gray-faced buzzard hawk?), local sustainable business (will local residents, after earning quick cash from tourists, be left with only trash and unaffordable housing price?) and some other groups, and has also ignited many arguments concerning the monopolization of cultural product and cultural ownership. Following the success of the movie, related products such as the aboriginal rice wine and glass beads that are part of aboriginal cultural tradition sold well as well. The rice wine “Malasan” (which is a word for “drunk” in Amis aboriginal language) sold in *Cape* sold out in its original place of production in Nanto County’s Shinyi Township, and all farmer’s markets that carried the wine in Kaoshung had their phones ringing off the hook (Zeng and Zheng).

The glass beads that Tomoko gives to Aga, Old Mao, Rauma, Frog, and the other members of the band also provoked a fierce battle over the origins of these glass beads. Copycat versions appeared after vendors saw how well they were selling, causing the original glass bead sponsor Dragonfly Ya-Ju (蜻蜓雅築) to post a message on its official website asking customers to boycott all beads not made by them. This action made “the Father of Glass Beads” (Umass Zingdur 巫瑪斯·金路兒) very unhappy, and he publicly announced that, when he asked his elders to teach him the art of making glass beads and then chose to publicly share the technique, he had done so because he believed glass beads were the cultural artifacts of the Pai-wan tribe. He could not accept the monopolization of glass beads by Dragonfly Ya-Ju and felt his tribe still had the right to create and sell their own glass beads. Dragonfly Ya-Ju were forced to alter their original statement: “Please
refrain from advertising your glass beads with the Cape No 7. label without notifying the film company” (Zou). Because of Umass Zingur’s strong protest, the people of the Pai-wan tribe can share the wealth and interests of this cultural artifact.

*Cape No. 7* tells the touching story of several marginalized characters that can be detected in its emergent form in a now-famous speech made by the Town Council Representative character: “The mountain is being BOT-ed, the beaches are being BOT-ed, everything’s being BOT-ed. How come we locals aren’t allowed to see the beautiful ocean that has been reserved by the hotels? Are only foreigners who live in the hotel allowed to see it?” His complaint actually voices the concern of many Taiwanese. Although Taiwan is surrounded on all sides by the ocean, its citizens may not always be able to see the most beautiful ocean-side. Before the lifting of the martial law, long portions of the most beautiful ocean-side locales were cordoned-off in the name of national defense. After the law was revoked, the coasts were slowly opened up to the public but were then eaten up by big businesses to use as building sites for hotels or villas. What’s ironic about the Representative’s quote is that one of the main locales in *Cape* is the Chateau Beach Resort, an example of a mountain-beach BOT. Owing to the *Cape* sensation, Chateau Beach Resort saw a 45% increase in its occupation rate when the film was released in August 2008. In an online article entitled “*Cape No. 7*’s untold story—Hengchun Peninsula’s modern actual scene”, the Taiwan-based blogger, “Munch,” pointed out how *Cape*’s locations (Hengchun, Nanwan, Dawan, etc.) had long seen ecological destruction and how BOTs had taken away much of the rights of the locals to enjoy their natural environment. Munch points out that Hengchun’s old city walls were erected in 1875, even earlier than Taipei, making it the oldest still-standing wall relic in Taiwan and a landmark from rammed earth walls to stone walls in Taiwanese history. Yet because of the newly established historical tours, inappropriate wall battlements were added onto the old wall; the four million or so tourists that come to Kenting’s Nanwan each year produce high levels of pollution and waste; Dawan beach is being loaned out to companies through the Taiwan Forest Bureau, the government is paying for hotel construction, then lending them out to contractors and refusing to let the public enter these beaches (Munch). The mountain-sea BOT projects that have occupied the coastline are not only endangering the area’s eco-system but have also brought to the public’s attention questions about whether natural scenery should belong to the people and, if these shared assets are loaned out to companies, how these companies ought to repay the locals. How we manage to maintain a balance between the interests of the
companies and the interests of the locals is one problem that we cannot afford to overlook when exploring Cape’s cultural production and spinoff products.

An Open, Tolerant, Multi-dimensional Grassroots Imagination

If we view the “re-discovering” Hengchun trend as a quest for “Taiwaneseness” ignited by the prodigal sons’ returning to their hometown, the declaration of a local band, and the intertextuality between the film and its context, we might find that there is no such thing as a “genuine” Taiwaneseness, because Taiwaneseness has already been mixed with American, Japanese, Chinese, and several other aborigine tribal genes. The quest for “Taiwaneseness” cannot be separated from European-American modernity and capitalism-centered globalization, and hence we have to face the structural issue that all third world countries must confront: we are unable to fully detach ourselves from an envy and combined desire for the Western and Japanese culture; through the image media’s manipulation of simulacra logic, the formation of cultural identities is coupled with cultural fetishes; historical memories, local particularities, and the production and marketing of cultural products are paradoxically entangled with one another; and cultural identification and cultural inheritance are challenged with the problem of cultural production monopolization.

The director of Cape, for either narrative purposes or for the scenery, chose Hengchun town, a location that became desolate after the gap between city and country grew out of proportion, but then came back to life through the establishment of a tourist industry and a yearly concert. Reflecting the film and its social impact, we bring ourselves to look at this southern town in a new perspective, to mull over its cultural political significance in a more nuanced way than before. In the historical development of Taiwan’s modern layout, the south and the country once played the same important role as the north and the city; in the process of absorbing American, Japanese, and Chinese culture, the south once took over the central position. Sun Rei-Sui (孫瑞穗) analyzes Hengchun’s importance in Taiwan’s modernization process and discusses its cultural political significance:

If we could rewind to sixty years ago, Hengchun was most definitely not a desolate town. The weather felt like spring all-year long with breathtaking scenery and it was the Japanese colonizer’s front line in Taiwan as well as the “Glory of Japan” during Japanese rule. It used to be the wealthy fishing village accompanied by local musician
Chen Da’s *shamisen* performances and the beautiful countryside depicted in Taiwanese poet Song Ze-Lai’s “Ode to Formosa” . . . . The wake of modernization from the ocean was first brought in by the Japanese colonizers through Kaohsiung and Hengchun; the Chinese modernization was introduced by the KMT through Taiwan’s west coast and Keelung after the Chinese Civil War. Taiwan absorbed different forms of modernization from its different colonizers before and after WWII, and also demonstrated the exact opposite of island’s historical north-south narratives and geographical imagination. These two types of “colonizing modernity” still affect the trajectory, content, and dynamics of “Taiwanese identification.” (*China Times*)

The “rediscovering Hengchun” movement sparked by *Cape* is still incapable of evading history’s fate of becoming a nostalgic product or cultural fetish (in the manner discussed above). However, when masses of *Cape* fans, unfamiliar with Hengchun or Taiwanese history but educated on the mixed fact-fiction story of the film, swarm into Hengchun to find places imbued with symbolic meaning such as “Cape No. 7” or “Grandmother Tomoko’s home,” isn’t it a good opportunity for us to rethink the following: how can we connect Hengchun’s historical memory with its place-based identification, to affect the complicated culture genes in the lowest depths of the Taiwanese sentiment, so that we can begin a new map of alternative modernity and Taiwanese identification? How can we free or re-create different historical cultural heritages to establish a new community of “accepting others, appreciating differences”. Sun Rui-Sui analyzes the cultural imagination touched on in *Cape* and lays out a possibility for a new way of imagining the community:

If viewed from this perspective, it’s easier to understand why your feelings peak when you see Old Mao plucking away on his Japanese *shamisen*, the young keyboardist from the Presbyterian Church, and the symbols of post-war Western culture guitarist Rauma and bassist Malasun performing together on stage for the sake of Hengchun’s local culture. That’s because the director has “started up” your historical memory and identification with the place, “creating” a new way of imagining the community, an imagination open to various modes of recreating and reconstructing historical and cultural legacies. (*China Times*)
The new shared imagination sheds some light on the quest for Taiwaneseness, which does not dawdle in the clean split between China unification/Taiwan independence or love-hate for the Japanese, but departs from the resistance and sad pleading of ideology to cut into daily life, to uncover the lower classes of society and the stories of the marginalized. The encounter between the residual colonial reminiscence and the emerging ethnicities in the film Cape and its meta-narrative (including the social impact and the heated discussions of the film) disrupt the national allegory told in a unitary nationalist)—be it Chinese nationalist or Taiwanese nationalist)—narrative, suggesting an alternative way of imagining “nation”.

For more than a half century, the national allegory of Taiwan has been intertwined with the meaning-making of the nation-building project, suppressing differences with a linear, hegemonic narrative. The nation-building project, be it top-down or bottom-up, involves “myth making,” “selectively reclaiming historical memory,” and “social construction” in shaping the cultural imaginary of the “nation” (Anthony D. Smith; E. J. Hobsbawn; Anderson Benedict). Since 1949, the KMT government has launched a top-down nation building project compounding Chinese nationalism and anti-communism. Through Ideological State Apparatuses and various levels of cultural practices, the national narrative sustains a coherent historical memory of the origin of the people (Emperor Huang, Yao, Shun, etc.), a shared culture of five-thousand-year glories (Han dynasty, Tang Dynasty, the victory of the Anti-Japanese war, etc.), and past stigmas (the Communist Party’s usurpation of the Mainland China) (Wang Fu-chang 146). Beginning with the promulgation of the Martial Law on May 19, 1949, the KMT nation-state has (as previously mentioned in this article) cleansed the cultural space of Japanese influence as well as Taiwanese grassroots culture. Beginning in 1946, a nation-wide Mandarin-speaking movement was launched and, in subsequent years, the Taiwanese dialect was banned on official occasions and on campuses. In 1955, the government made a brief attempt to ban large-scale religious festivals with outdoor indigenous rituals because they were considered “superstitious” or capable of “disseminating separatism”. In particular, the cleansing of cultural space culminated in the “White Terror” of the 1950s. To sustain the coherence of a monolithic national allegory, any “cacophony” of communism, Marxism, and Taiwan Independence have to be sealed off as political and cultural taboos. Publications either by left-wing mainlanders or Taiwanese writers during the Japanese colonization were banned. An extensive network of quasi-military secret agents was built island-wide, and tens of thousands of suspicious dissidents were arrested and
persecuted (Chang 18). Another wave shaping the cultural imaginary of the nation arose in the “Chinese Culture Renaissance Movement” launched in 1966 to counter the ongoing Cultural Revolution on the mainland China (1966-1976). For a double claim of political and cultural legitimacy, the KMT propaganda machinery placed the national president, Chiang Kai-shek, in a genealogy of cultural and moral paradigms including “Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen King, Wu King, Confucius, Mencius . . . Sun Yet-sun and Chiang Kai-Shek.” The exclusion of Taiwanese consciousness and native culture can be detected from the guidelines of this movement: five items dealt with anti-communist strategies, ten items concerned promoting Chinese orthodox culture, while the only item related to Taiwanese native culture was “preserving historical sites and objects in order to promote tourist business” (Wei 102).

Ironically, turning to the 1980s, the populist bottom-up Taiwanese nation-building project fell in the same logic of exclusionism. The Taiwanese nation-building project burgeoned with the rising opposition movement in the early 1980s and culminated in the first Taiwanese national presidency, that of Lee Teng-hui (李登輝; 1996-2000), and was thoroughly implemented during the DPP’s accession to government (they were the ruling party between 2000 and 2008). In the “myth-making” and “social construction” of a unitary Taiwanese national narrative, a shared immigrant history began with those mainlander Chinese who came across the strait to Taiwan in the 17th century while the KMT regime was cast in the image of an alien regime and a colonizer ensuing Japanese (Chang 25), and the historical traumas of the oppressed Taiwanese such as the 2/28 Massacre of 1947 and the political persecution of the White Terror were wielded aloft as totem and taboo again and again in street demonstrations and election campaigns. In representational apparatuses, Taiwanese grassroots consciousness (the inclusion of farmers and workers as Taiwan’s social base; the collective consciousness rooted in the love of the people and the land) was excavated with strengthened political implications while Taiwanese’ sadness and resentment at having been oppressed and colonized have been compounded with ethnic conflicts between Chinese mainlanders and Taiwanese (43-44).

In regards with the quest of national identity in the film Cape, director Wei provides light-handed touch and easy solution. In handling the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, he aestheticizes the Japanese-Taiwanese romance

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19 This is quoted from a propaganda pamphlet by the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement Commission in 1967. In my childhood memory, it appeared in all media and in textbooks.
of different generations; in dealing with the multiethnic community, he evades the decade-long thorny relationship between mainlanders and Taiwanese and smoothes out the frictions among Taiwanese, Hakka, and aboriginal with a banquet and a rock concert. Nevertheless, the colonial reminiscence and ethnic reconciliation represented in the film, together with the discussions and debates ignited by them, provoke us to rethink an alternative way of imagining “nation”: in the irresistible and irreversible wake of globalization, as the residual colonial reminiscence and the emergent ethnicities cause a temporal disjuncture to disrupt the coherent narrative of modern nation that excludes the other to the periphery in consolidating its constituent boundary, is it possible to propose a new way of imagining modern nation as the more complex transnational landscape and to move the monolithic narrative from the nationalist boundary to the “place-based transnational spheres” of social life?

Even though Cape’s director put more weight on commercial success and entertainment factors to the point that he only gave brief glimpses of grassroots characters, he, nonetheless successfully captured the everyday sentiments of these characters’ lives, demonstrating a multidimensional and tolerant lifestyle attitude at the contact zone between the colonial reminiscence and the emergent ethnicities. It presents how locals continue to thrive tenaciously and displays all the emotions and sentiments of plebian life, and departs from the “gloomy, ostracized” Taiwanese stereotype in search of a more tolerant, multi-dimensional image. The grassroots imagination renovated from the bottom up paves way for the vantage ground of Arjun Appadurai’s “emancipatory imagination” as a politics of “grassroots globalization.” Appadurai explains:

The imagination is no longer a matter of individual genius, escaping from ordinary life, or just a dimension of aesthetics. It is a faculty that informs the daily lives of ordinary people in various ways: It allows people to consider migration, resist state violence, seek social redress, and design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across national boundaries. (6)

In the “disjunctive flows” of globalization, Appadurai proposes an emancipatory politics with an emphasis on the role of imagination in social life. This view of the imagination as popular, social and collective emphasizes a place-based instead of place-bound identity articulating with transnational civil consciousness. On the one hand, it does not totally do away with the state power but
it is in and through the imagination that modern citizens are disciplined and controlled by states, markets, and other powerful interests. On the other hand, it is also the faculty through which collective pattern of dissents and alternative modes of thinking and living emerge.

Imagining a new community in the wake of glocalization, we may propose a “place-based transnational social sphere” in which the citizens, immigrants and the marginalized people resist state violence, seek social redress, and negotiate their identities as well as modes of living in the interstices between the colonizers, the nation, and the emergent ethnicities. In the transnational sphere of social lives, as the colonial reminiscence and the emerging ethnicities return from the boundary of the nation, the cacophonies of the (ex)colonizer and the ethnic groups disrupt the monolithic national narrative by re-articulating hidden histories and silenced stories. Exploding the unitary national narrative were the microhistories composed of myriad stories told through the memories, narrations, and desire in the course of individual experiences. Stuart Hall points out that in the acceptance of/resistance to globalization, the biggest “cultural revolution” of the 20th century is the gradual dampening of a historical narrative centered upon the colonizer or colonialism, being replaced by the representation of the marginalized. He emphasizes:

Paradoxically, marginality has become a powerful space. It is a space of weak power, but it is a space of power, nonetheless. . . . New subjects, new genders, new ethnicities, new regions, and new communities—all hitherto excluded from the major forms of cultural representation, unable to locate themselves except as decentered or subaltern—have emerged and have acquired through struggle, sometimes in very marginalized ways, the means to speak for themselves for the first time. (Hall, “The Local and the Global” 183)

Emphasizing the power of marginality and “new ethnicity,” Hall proposes that hidden histories and myriad stories should be rediscovered and retold in order to entrench the denied individuality. As a story-teller, Wei De-Sheng is skilled at developing the narratives of marginalized characters and capturing their everyday life, depicting them through lively images, thus capturing the hearts of viewers. Furthermore, the film touches the viewers with a humorous, open, and tolerant attitude as a result of its dealing with “difference”. This perspective reminds us that an open, tolerant, multi-dimensional grassroots imagination can overcome the divided views on political identification, can take root in society’s cultural levels.
and everyday life details, pacify foreigners and people of different ethnicities, and accept differing lifestyle paces and values, giving people the opportunity to look at cultural differences from the other side. Shu Guozhi (舒國治) shows how Cape uses a tolerant yet ironic attitude to illustrate a grassroots imagination where ethnicities and city-country differences are resolved:

Van Fan’s [Aga’s] character has too many expectations of life and is filled with too much anger; therefore he is too uptight and unhappy with life. The members of his band, randomly playing off-beat rhythms, although lazy and laid-back, are living a happy and undisciplined life. This is the contrast that naturally appears when you compare the civilized people of the north with the remote life of the south. For a director/script-writer to be able to come up with and notice such a detail takes a certain “tolerance.” Old Mao makes a fuss about wanting to be a member of the band, and the director gladly tolerates him. Maitze plays at their own slow pace, the director tolerates that. “Clip” Shiao Ing is in love with his boss’ wife, he tolerates it. Tanaka Chie’s character spends the night at Van Fan’s and then creeps down the stairs, only to be seen by his mother, who smiles, because the director lets this mother be tolerant as well. (United Daily News)

An open, multi-dimensional grassroots cultural imagination may not only be the key to resolving differences between city-country and ethnicities, as it can also accept different lifestyle choices that have to do with marriage, love, and gender relations. Bih Herng-Dar (畢恆達) approves of Cape’s tolerant attitude towards these unique ways of life:

The director intentionally and unintentionally portrays several non-traditional households and romances in a tolerant and neutral manner. There are rarely any scenes in which you can spot a sweet and happy nuclear family with a mother, a father, and their children. Male protagonist Aga’s father has passed away and his mother has re-married (or is living with a new partner); hotel maid Mingchu has a gloomy romantic past and she brought up her quick-to-mature daughter Dada by herself; Mingchu and her grandmother have broken all ties, so even though they live near each other they never contact
each other; although the motorcycle shop family consists of parents and triplet boys, we never see them together at once, rather only seeing Frog and the boss’ wife flirting and Frog taking care of the triplets. . . . Lastly, when Aga embraces Tomoko before their performance, he doesn’t just say, “Stay,” he says, “Stay, or I’ll go with you.” (United Daily News)

The intertextuality adhering to the film Cape No. 7 and the social cultural phenomena and heated discussion it has induced indicate that the Taiwanese local cultural imagination is already progressing forward on the tracks of glocalization, and on the one hand it can hardly break free of Western modernity and the cultural envy brought about by numerous colonizers, while being manipulated by the post-modern simulacrum logic of cultural fetishes; on the other hand, the time-space scope of Taiwanese grassroots imagination can also be expanded. In the glocalization process, the mixed cultural genes of each different stage of modernization in Taiwan can be thought over and new groupings of ethnic groups and cultural inheritance can be reconsidered, so that we can overcome the binary divisions of Japanese love/hate, unification/independence, and north/south. As the political ideology confronts and turns to stink into social life, the collective grassroots imagination works its way from the bottom-up and remodels a community that “accepts others and appreciates diversity.” In the place-based transnational social sphere where we encounter the colonial reminiscence and the emergent ethnicities, myriad stories can be told through the memories, narrations, and desires flowing from individual experiences in a way will entrench the denied individuality, and the marginalized people can be included in the collective grassroots imagination in designing diverse modes of identification and living.

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