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Publishing the New Culture:

Singapore's Newspapers and Diaspora Literature, 1919-1933

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Introduction

For Chinese intellectuals, the years immediately before and after 1919 represented an exciting period of change. The most influential individuals of this era called for a new literature, a new system of thought, and a new orientation toward modern life. Commonly known as the New Culture Movement, this intellectual momentum spilled beyond China into the overseas Chinese communities. The Chinese residents of Singapore, in particular, became increasingly caught up in intellectual currents coming from the mainland.

At this time, Singapore's most active forum for the discussion of new ideas was the newspaper. This is not surprising in that the newspaper industry in Singapore had already enjoyed a long and rich history. In fact, some of the earliest Chinese language newspapers were printed there. During the 1920s, Singapore's newspapers actively promoted a "new culture" for the Chinese people. For this reason, some scholars view the New Culture Movement in Singapore as a reflection, or even an imitation, of the New Culture Movement in mainland China. While there are many similarities between the movements in China and in Singapore, there are also some

very distinct differences. These similarities and difference can in part be explained using the concept of a diaspora community. An analysis of the history, organization, and contents of Singapore's newspapers not only provides a better understanding of the intellectual contours of the New Culture Movement as a whole, but also demonstrates the applicability of the movement's ideas in an overseas environment.

The May Fourth Incident and the New Culture Movement

China historians have provided many definitions of the New Culture Movement. Most scholars believe the movement is inextricably tied to the May Fourth Incident of 1919.[1] On that day approximately 5,000 students descended on Peking to demonstrate against the Versailles Peace Conference. The day's events included marching, the shouting of slogans, and eventually the ransacking and burning of the house of foreign minister Ts'ao Ju-lin. Demonstrators participated in similar protests throughout the nation, and the "May Fourth Incident" quickly assumed increased significance. Since these protests were prompted by many of the ideas that would later be manifest in the New Culture Movement, namely anti-imperialism, cultural rejuvenation, and independence, the May Fourth Incident and the New Culture Movement are difficult to separate.

Multiple factors led to the May Fourth Incident. During World War I, Japan took advantage of Germany's predicament in Europe and occupied German-held territories in China and the Pacific. China, in the throes of warlord politics and civil war, was in no position to counter Japan's territorial claims. In fact, the government in Peking, which at the time was controlled by Japan-educated officials, "gladly agreed" to Japan's claims in exchange for a loan of 20 million yen from Tokyo.

While attending the peace treaty at the end of the war, China's delegates assumed that Wilsonian ideals would help them to re-acquire control over those territories occupied by the Japanese. Japan's delegates, on the other hand, believed that the various secret treaties they had signed with the European powers would ensure their continued dominance in China. In the end, Japan's realpolitik triumphed over China's faith in the principles of democracy and self-determination. Japan, the European powers decided, would retain control over those parts of China it had occupied during the war.

The popular response in China was swift and impressive. On 4 May 1919, thousands of students protested the decision. The target of their anger was China's foreign minister Ts'ao Ju-lin. Carrying placards that read "international justice" and "down with the traitors," the crowd marched first to T'ien-an-men, and then to the home of Ts'ao. After finding that Ts'ao had escaped, the group assaulted one of his house guests. Unbeknownst to the attackers, their victim was Chang Tsung-hsiang, the Chinese official responsible for "gladly agreeing" to Japan's demands. In the end, the government arrested thirty-two students, but following tremendous public outcry, they were released.

The Singapore reaction to these events was profound. Chinese living in the city commiserated

with the protesters in Peking and responded to the call of their compatriots on the mainland. Singapore's newspapers took action by printing news of boycott activities in China, inciting the local population to take similar action. Plans for Singapore's boycott were made in secret, with wealthier Chinese immigrants taking the lead and encouraging their fellow residents to avoid anything Japanese. Not only did the boycott leaders urge local consumers to reject Japanese products, but they also encouraged all Chinese workers in Japanese factories or businesses to quit their jobs. When necessary, boycott organizers used intimidation and threats to convince others to honor the boycott. A popular method of "persuasion" was the anonymous letter. One such letter was reprinted in the *Singapore Free Press*. It read:

Dear Sir:

We know that at the Paris Peace Conference our foreign delegates announced their failures. We overseas Chinese deeply fear that from this point, it will not be long until our nation is destroyed. The students' indignation and the businessmen's boycott are [each] fine examples of a patriotic activity on the part of our countrymen. You are part of the Chinese people. We believe that you must endorse our tactics. A few days ago we already informed you that you should resign [yourself] to the boycott. But till now you still have not listened. We are giving you a last warning, limiting you to less than one week to comply. If not, in the future we will use ruthless measures to oppose you. [We] hope you accept our warning. Otherwise, in the future we will use blood to report to you.[2]

Such methods naturally incited the local population, and Singapore became a simmering pot of antagonism and suspicion which finally boiled over on 19 June 1919.[3] That night at about 8:30, a group of students broke into the business of a Chinese merchant and demolished all Japanese merchandise in the store. Their brashness only provoked others to join in, and soon students and workers were destroying much of the surrounding neighborhood. Eventually merchandise and property of all kinds, Japanese or otherwise, was ruined by the ever-increasing crowd. Even a neighboring brothel was set ablaze, adding to the already emotionally-heated atmosphere. "The mob," the Straits Times reported, "made bonfires in the middle of the roads, and with the air filled with piercing screams and shouts, scenes of wild confusion reigned. Gangs of Chinese rowdies entered the brothels in Tan Quee Lan Street...and persuaded the women to assist them in throwing Japanese articles into the street where they were smashed up by the crowd." [4] Residents of the neighborhood, hoping to avoid further destruction to their property, took it upon themselves to throw their own wares into the street.

As the crowd traveled from house to house in search of their targeted products, the police attempted to control the situation. In the ensuing scuffle, the demonstrators pushed four policemen into the surrounding flames, killing two of them. Another officer fired into the crowd, causing a momentary dispersal, but by no means dissuading the protesters. By 3:00 in the morning the throng still consisted of approximately two-hundred people.

Although at one point some local Japanese youths emerged to confront the rioters, most

Japanese residents remained locked up in their homes, fearing to open their doors. One group of older Japanese women took shelter in a local museum. Amazingly, by night's end not one Japanese resident had been killed.

Eventually, the Governor called on the sailors of the warship "Manchester" for support. They began to patrol the city, and by the early morning hours the riot petered out. In its wake lay several thousands of dollars of damage. Four individuals had been killed, two Chinese and two Indians. There were at least eight serious casualties, and over 130 arrests.

Like the May Fourth Incident in Peking, the demonstrators in Singapore were motivated by many of the same concerns that influenced the next decade. For the following several years, both of these protests provided inspiration for a wide variety of social and political movements. In fact, some historians refer to the years immediately surrounding 1919 not as the era of the New Culture Movement, but as the May Fourth period.[5] Regardless of their terminology, most scholars find it difficult to separate the larger intellectual movement of the 1920s from the specific incidents of 1919.

Actually, the Singapore New Culture Movement extended beyond the 1920s, including the years between 1919 and 1933. Not only was 1919 the year of these important protests, but it was also the year the editors of the newspaper *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao* (New People's Daily) first printed their influential literary supplement, the *Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih* (New People's Magazine). For the next 14 years, this supplement, and others like it, called for a new culture for the Singapore Chinese. The ideas of this and other similar publications retained public attention until the late 1920s and early 1930s. By this time British authorities in Singapore became more domineering in their control of the press, and the newspaper industry became increasingly censored. Consequently, by 1933 the New Culture Movement in Singapore had come to an end.

The Singapore Chinese as a "diaspora"

Analyzing Singapore's newspapers does not simply provide a textual supplement to the study of China's New Culture Movement. Singapore's New Culture Movement existed within a very different context than in China. Despite the fact that many of the residents of "Nan-yang" (or the "South Seas") spoke, ate, and dressed similarly to their relatives on the mainland, it would be inaccurate to refer to them as "Chinese." I believe the Singapore community can be more usefully analyzed as members of a "diaspora" community.

Recently, scholars have helped define and clarify the concept of a diaspora. For example, James Clifford suggests that members of a diaspora maintain such characteristics as:

1. dispersal from one center to at least two peripheries,
2. a "memory" of the homeland,

3. a belief that they will never be fully accepted in the host country,
4. a belief in returning to their ancestral home,
5. a commitment to the maintenance of their homeland, and
6. group consciousness and solidarity.[6]

Clifford goes on to explain that not all diaspora groups maintain each of these characteristics but usually maintain at least a few.

Helpful to understanding diaspora communities are the recent works of individuals such as Paul Gilroy and Homi Bhabha. These scholars suggest that neither "culture" nor "tradition" constitute the essence of an unchanging national identity. As Gilroy explains, "Tradition [is] a way of conceptualizing the fragile communicative relationships across time and space that are the basis not of diaspora identities but of diaspora identifications. Reformulated thus, [tradition] points not to a common content for diaspora cultures but to evasive qualities that make inter-cultural, trans-national diaspora conversations between them possible." [7] These "identifications," Gilroy suggests, are the result of contested and negotiated socio-cultural processes. [8] Furthermore, these are ongoing processes, which are informed by societal and discursive relations of power. For these reasons, some of Gilroy's associates have labeled him an "anti-antiessentialist." [9] The diaspora, for Gilroy, is in a constant state of flux, yet persistently there. It is, in Gilroy's words, the "changing same."

Bhabha's ideas in many ways complement those of Gilroy. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha develops the notion of "hybridity," which is "neither the One nor the Other but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both." [10] The hybrid, for Bhabha, is not simply a combination of its constituent parts, but is something new that articulates the contradictions between them. He goes on to explain that the nation is "a liminal signifying space that is internally marked by the discourses of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference." [11]

For the Chinese in Singapore, this "discourse of minorities" was especially acute, leading to the formation of a hybrid that was "neither the One nor the Other but something else besides." Instead, the Singapore Chinese can be most accurately defined as members of a diaspora community. Interestingly, during this period the Singapore Chinese referred to themselves as hua-ch'iao, or overseas sojourners. Wang Gungwu has explained that the term hua-ch'iao eventually applied to all overseas groups, regardless of their dialect, class, family, or village background. [12] The experience of displacement and marginalization, he suggests, was sufficient to forge a community consciousness strong enough to overcome, at times, other more divisive factors.

In short, studying the New Culture Movement in Singapore does not simply provide a textual

supplement to the mainland movement, for the "new culture" of the Singapore Chinese was both similar to and different from the "new culture" of the mainland Chinese. Thus, an understanding of these similarities and differences will illuminate the intellectual concerns of both the New Culture Movement as a whole, as well as those of the diaspora community of the 1920s and 30s.

Singapore's newspapers during the New Culture Movement

Newspapers have long been an important aspect of the Singapore community. With the arrival of the British in 1819, publishers began disseminating Western style newspapers throughout the city. From meager beginnings, the industry grew to involve not only the English-speaking population, but eventually Chinese, Malay, and Tamil segments of the population as well. Not surprisingly, newspapers played an active role in Singapore's New Culture Movement.

By the time of the New Culture Movement, Chinese language newspapers had a significant audience.[13] Higher literacy rates, a growing Chinese population, and improved typesetting techniques made the newspapers of this period accessible to more people than ever before. As writers began using more punctuation, men and women with lower levels of education could read the newspaper with less difficulty. At the same time, journalists attempted to reach a greater number of people, which should be expected, since many of the newspapers of this era intentionally sought to educate the common man. As a result, stories dealing with education, prostitution, commerce, and other day-to-day themes became common. Corresponding with this growing audience came a growth in the number of newspapers. In 1918 there were four major Chinese language newspapers in the city. By 1933, five additional newspapers had appeared with a combined circulation of over 30,000.[14] Such growth represented a nearly 400% increase in readers over this 14 year period.

In addition to new papers and readers, Singapore's news editors experimented with increased coverage. Whole sections were added to each paper, focusing on topics from entertainment, to sports and finance. By far the most important addition was the fu-chang, or "supplement." Actually, Singapore's first "supplement" appeared in 1907, and throughout the 1920s, each major paper introduced similar inserts. Sometimes, a particular literary club would rent the use of a newspaper's printing equipment to produce its own fu-chang, and consequently, the tie between it and the sponsoring newspaper was tenuous. Other times, the fu-chang was directly under the control of the newspaper's editorial board. Between 1919 and 1938 dozens of such inserts appeared in Singapore's newspapers, containing, among other things, short stories, poetry, and translations of various foreign works. Naturally, these supplements were able to influence the course of literary reform throughout the New Culture Movement. At the same time, since many of the contributed essays, poems, and stories discussed current social and political problems, these periodicals affected more than just literature.

In order to understand the significant role newspapers and their supplements played throughout the New Culture Movement, it is necessary to have some understanding of the various publications of the period. While they shared many characteristics, each newspaper had a unique function in the propagation of the "new culture" of its time.

The *Le Pao* (Singapore News)

The first commercial Chinese language newspaper in Singapore, the *Le Pao* (Singapore News), was founded in 1881 by Su Yu-li, a pioneer in the Singapore community.[15] Despite lagging circulation numbers, Su remained committed to providing news for the Chinese-speaking community. His early editions were a collection of imperial rescripts, reprints from other Chinese and English language papers, local government announcements, advertisements, and short stories of "hearsay" or gossip.[16] The *Le Pao* generally presented a pro-Chinese, conservative point of view, and throughout its history, the paper was never targeted for censorship by either the reigning government in China or the colonial authorities in Singapore.

The *Le Pao's* circulation was never extensive, leading some to believe that Su maintained the paper more for its social and political value rather than its financial potential.[17] Su was a local-born resident well-connected within both the Chinese and English communities. By managing and financing a newspaper, he was able to pose as both an educator as well as a power-broker within Singapore.

Despite its conservative stance, the *Le Pao* introduced innovations that would later become extremely important in the course of the New Culture Movement. In 1907, the *Le Pao* became the first Chinese newspaper to offer a fu-chang (known simply as the *Le Pao Fu Chang*, or "Singapore News Supplement"). This fu-chang carried folk stories, poems, "farcical writings" and other humorous works, as well as advertisements, imperial rescripts, and other information that previously was placed in the main portion of the newspaper. Perhaps because the attachment was not considered part of the serious news section, many of the writings were in the Kuang-tung and Fu-chien dialects, as opposed to the official Mandarin of most Chinese newspapers. The *Le Pao Fu Chang* was published for sixteen years, making it one of the longest running inserts in Singapore's newspaper history.

This first supplement served as a model for other similar ventures of the 1920s, and while later *Le Pao* inserts were not always as progressive as those of other papers, they still deserve much of the credit for inspiring Singapore's New Culture Movement. In 1923 the original *Le Pao Fu Chang* was replaced by a newer version entitled the *Le Pao Chü Le Pu* (Singapore News Club, or *Chü Le Pu*). The *Chü Le Pu* contained both old and new style literature, as well as translations of foreign works. Through these translations, the *Chü Le Pu* helped introduce new political and literary ideas into the Singapore community.

Building on the success of the *Chü Le Pu*, the *Le Pao* launched other literary supplements. One of these, the *Hsing Kuang* (Starlight), became an active voice in the crusade against "feudalism." [18] Founded in 1925 by T'an Yun-shan, the *Hsing Kuang* served as a forum for the ideas of his literary club. In reality, the *Hsing Kuang* had little to do with the *Le Pao* other than using the newspaper's printing equipment for the production of an independent and free-spirited public forum.

By 1928 the *Le Pao* management was ready to unveil another supplement. However, instead of simply allowing an outside literary group to use its presses, the editors of the *Le Pao* decided to create an insert themselves. The resulting literary page, entitled Yeh Lin (Coconut Grove), was one of the first fu-chang published directly under the auspices of a newspaper editorial board. [19] The Yeh Lin occupied a full sheet of newspaper and was printed daily. Although this fu-chang was published for only two years, this accounted for 406 issues. [20] As such, the Yeh Lin provided more space for various writers to display their work than had ever before been possible. Furthermore, the editors of the Yeh Lin rejected clippings or abridgments from other mainland papers, choosing instead to reserve space for the original work of Singapore writers. These policies made the Yeh Lin an influential forum in the community.

Table 1 Literary Fu-chang (supplements) of the *Le Pao*[21]

<i>Le Pao Fu Chang</i> (<i>Le Pao</i> Supplement)	1907-1922
<i>Le Pao Chü Le Pu</i> (<i>Le Pao</i> Club)	1923-1928
<i>Hsing Kuang</i> (Starlight)	1925-1926
<i>Yeh Lin</i> (Coconut Grove)	1928-1930

***Kuo Min Jih Pao*/Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao (New People's Daily)**

Although the *Le Pao* was the first successful Chinese newspaper in Singapore, it was certainly not the only one. In 1914, Ch'en Hsin-cheng, a newsman from Penang, decided to establish a new daily in Singapore. His paper, the *Kuo Min Jih Pao* (People's Daily), became very popular as the news-hungry community sought information from the war front. By 1918 it had a circulation of approximately 2,000. Immediately following the May Fourth Incident of 1919, the paper strongly advocated the boycotting of Japanese products. Fearing that the newspaper added to public unrest, the local British authorities shut down the *Kuo Min Jih Pao*. One month later it resumed publication, but changed its name to the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao* (New People's Daily). This "new" paper not only survived this trying period, but by 1930 had built a circulation of over 5,400, and eventually peaked at over 8,000 copies. [22] Like nearly all newspapers during World War II, Japanese occupation authorities forced the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao* to suspend publication. Following the war, its editors never resumed operations.

In the first edition of the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao* the editor announced the creation of a literary insert, the Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih (New People's Magazine). This fu-chang was only the first of several such attachments that would accompany the newspaper over the next decade. Although the Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih was not the first supplement in Singapore, it was innovative and progressive. As early as 1919 its editors began publishing experimental literature known as pai-hua. Pai-hua writers avoided the use of classical forms and vocabulary, opting instead for more vernacular language. Their goal was to make the written language accessible to the masses, or in other words, to "democratize" literature. The pai-hua movement originated on the Chinese mainland, but it was the Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih that imported this movement to Singapore.

Between 1920 and 1922, approximately half of all the supplement's articles used the new vernacular forms.[23] By the end of the decade, nearly all of its contents were written in pai-hua.

In 1925 the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao* again broke new ground with another literary attachment, the *Nan Feng* (South Wind/Customs). The *Nan Feng* was one of the first journals dedicated to solely printing pai-hua literary works, especially those written by local writers. In the inaugural edition, one of the editors included his own poem to serve as a model for later submissions. In the poem, the writer Shih Ko exclaimed:

Two by two beautiful people walk back and forth,
Elegant and graceful they pace up and down;
Listen carefully to the river's gurgling,
Hear closely the love tide's surging,

Listen carefully to the river's gurgling,
Hear closely the love tide's surging;
Forget reality,
Plundering, warring, trading.

Forget reality,
Plundering, warring, trading;
South wind, south wind, south wind,
Blow quickly! Blow throughout the world!

South wind, south wind, south wind,
Blow quickly! Blow throughout the world!
All people are like us,
We joyfully love such as this![24]

While this poem is of debatable literary quality, *Nan Feng's* commitment to pai-hua literature had a profound effect on the local population. Furthermore, by encouraging local writers to submit articles, the insert facilitated the growth of local literature.

In 1927 the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao* editors took another step toward the promotion of local literary talent by creating the *Huang Tao*. They dedicated this new fu-chang to literature with a "Nan-yang se-ts'ai," or "South Seas color." For this reason, the *Huang Tao* can be considered one of the most important journals in the development of a truly new local literature in Singapore. Early in its history, the writers of the *Huang Tao* argued that "the Nan-yang environment is rich and beautiful," and therefore a perfect setting for literary inspiration.[25] Tin mines, coconut trees, and rickshaw pullers were excellent material sources for a local literature, they explained, and did not depend on mainland China for substance. Through the publication of poems, essays, and short stories, the *Huang Tao* helped involve greater numbers of local writers and readers in the basic elements of the New Culture Movement.

Before the end of the decade, the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao* produced three additional supplements. Each of these, the *Lü i* (Green Ripples), *P'u pu* (Waterfall), and *Ch'ang hsü* (Lasting Sunlight), furthered the ideas of a "new culture." The *Lü i* editors modeled their journal after the Huang Tao, but hoped to provide more substantive pieces.[26] The *Lü i* lasted less than a year, after which its contributors launched a new insert, the *P'u pu*. The *P'u pu* appeared only sporadically, with approximately 35 issues spanning a period of five years. The last insert, the *Ch'ang Hsü*, ran from May 1929 to September 1930. None of these three supplements had the same impact as did their predecessor, the Huang Tao. Despite their short publication lives, these inserts demonstrate the interest and activity that permeated the news industry.

**Table 2 Literary Fu-chang (supplements) of the
Hsin kuo min jih pao[27]**

<i>Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih</i> (New People's Magazine)	1919-1936
<i>Nan Feng</i> (South Wind/Customs)	1925-1926
<i>Huang Tao</i> (Desert Island)	1927-1928
<i>Lü I</i> (Green Ripples)	1927-1928
<i>P'u Pu</i> (Waterfall)	1928-1933
<i>Ch'ang Hsü</i> (Lasting Sunlight)	1929-1930

Nan Yang Shang Pao (South Seas Commercial News)

The *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao*, like the *Le Pao*, appealed to a variety of people. In 1923, however, Ch'en Chia-k'ang launched a more audience-specific newspaper, the *Nan Yang Shang Pao* (South Seas Commercial News, or *Shang Pao*).[28] Ch'en earned his fortune in the rubber business, and relied heavily on advertising to sell his products. At the time there were only three viable advertising papers in Singapore. Perhaps Ch'en believed that starting his own paper would provide him with unlimited advertising space and would be a better investment than advertising in the existing papers. Not surprisingly, the first page of the *Shang Pao's* inaugural edition was filled with advertisements.

Besides advertising Ch'en's products, the *Nan Yang Shang Pao* promoted economic activity among the Chinese community, and educated its members about current economic practices. As such, the *Nan Yang Shang Pao* was the first of its kind, and represents the changing nature of the Chinese population in Singapore. Businessmen and entrepreneurs increasingly constituted a larger percentage of Singapore's residents at the expense of the laboring community. At the same time, Ch'en apparently hoped to use the paper to support the Chinese Nationalist government in Nanking. The paper's overt political involvement aroused the colonial government's suspicion, and the publication was forced to suspend operations for one month. Early in 1924, the colonial government allowed the *Nan Yang Shang Pao* to resume publication, and it served the Singapore community for the next eighteen years, until World War II, when Japanese occupation officials discontinued it. At war's end, the editors of the *Shang Pao* revived the daily, and it continued uninterrupted until 1982, when it merged with its rival, the *Hsing*

Chou Jih Pao (Singapore Daily).[29]

Although the *Nan Yang Shang Pao* appeared later than either the *Le Pao* or the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao*, it did not take long before it too launched its first literary insert. Known as the *Hsin Sheng Huo* (New Life), this fu-chang quickly joined the pai-hua movement. In fact, the *Hsin Sheng Huo* soon exceeded even the *Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih* in the amount of space it dedicated to pai-hua literature. Whereas the amount of space given to the older classical writing style and the newer pai-hua remained nearly evenly split in the *Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih*, the *Hsin Sheng Huo* was wholly dedicated to the newer colloquial language.[30] In 1924, a year after its debut, the *Hsin Sheng Huo* changed its name to the *Shang Yü Tsa Chih* (Profit Magazine), but the fu-chang remained otherwise unchanged. The *Shang Yü Tsa Chih* continued to play an important role in Singapore's literary community for most of the next decade, printing its last edition in 1933.

The *Nan Yang Shang Pao's* next major attempt at a fu-chang involved the *Wen I Chou K'an* (Literature Weekly). Under the leadership of Tseng Sheng-t'i, the *Wen I Chou K'an* competed vigorously with the Huang Tao, with each trying to provide the most innovative forum for "South seas colored" literature.[31] In most aspects, however, the two inserts were very similar. Like the Huang Tao and Yeh Lin, the *Wen I Chou K'an* was greatly responsible for fostering local literary talent. In 1929 the *Wen I Chou K'an* stopped publication, but the following year the *Nan Yang Shang Pao* started a new fu-chang entitled *Ya Chüeh Chou K'an* (Claustrophobia Weekly). Though this new supplement was under different leadership, it was basically a continuation of the *Wen I Chou K'an*. After only 24 editions, the *Ya Chüeh Chou K'an* also ceased publication.

**Table 3 Literary Fu-chang (supplements) of the
Nan Yang Shang Pao[32]**

<i>Hsin Sheng Huo</i> (New Life)	1923-1924
<i>Shang Yü Tsa Chih</i> (Profit Magazine)	1924-1933
Hung Huang (Vast Wilderness)	1927
<i>Wen I Chou K'an</i> (Literature Weekly)	1929
<i>Ya Chüeh Chou K'an</i> (Claustrophobia Weekly)	1930

Hsing Chou Jih Pao (Singapore Daily)

With the coexistence of the *Le Pao*, the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao*, and the *Nan Yang Shang Pao*, Singapore's news market was well-covered. Despite this, a fourth paper appeared near the end of the New Culture Movement, the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao*. [33] The writers of this paper claimed that their mission was to "enlighten the vision of the general public and to supplement the inadequacy of formal education." [34] Since the paper was the creation of Hu Wen-hu, it also served to promote the Hu family Tiger Balm oil industry. [35]

Regardless of his motives, Hu's paper quickly became a success. By the end of 1929, the year the

paper was founded, the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao* had a circulation of around 7,000 copies, and it soon became one of Singapore's most popular dailies.[36] The *Hsing Chou Jih Pao*'s success is partly attributable to the Hu family's financial investment. Overseas reporters, advanced printing techniques, better cable communications, and a Sunday edition set the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao* apart from its competitors, forcing them to either adapt and compete, or go out of business. Consequently, the introduction of the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao* caused a great change in the Singapore newspaper industry.

While the Hu family maintained control of the paper, they hired outside members to write and to manage the day-to-day affairs. Hu chose Lin Ai-min to work as the paper's manager and Ch'uan Wu-men as editor.[37] Under the direction of these two men, the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao* continued to expand its audience, diversify its coverage, and provide new features for its readers. The paper included sections on "local news," "Malaya news," "Nan-yang news," "Kuang-tung and Fu-chien news," "foreign news," and "news commentary." Beyond these, the Sunday edition had additional sections dedicated to commentary, economics, women's affairs, international problems, exercise, literature, and travel. These additions reflected the growing interests of the local community, and increased the popularity of the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao*, helping it to maintain its competitive position from the time of its inception up to the 1970s.[38] In 1982 a government sponsored merger brought about an end to the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao* as it joined with the *Nan Yang Shang Pao*. [39]

Despite its late appearance in Singapore's news market, the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao* still played an important role in the New Culture Movement. Two of its inserts, *Yeh P'a* (Country Blossoms) and *Liu Hsing* (Falling Star), had a large influence on Singapore literature. Under the leadership of Mao Ch'eng-po, the *Yeh P'a* evolved from a small weekly publication to a well-respected journal.[40] Because it generally only included two articles per issue, the *Yeh P'a* provided longer essays and stories. This made it possible for the supplement's editors to present an entire essay, story, or even a play in fewer serialized issues. Since lengthier pieces were becoming increasingly popular, the *Yeh P'a* was able to publish some of the most well-known stories of its time.

While the *Liu Hsing* was ultimately not as successful as the *Yeh P'a*, it nonetheless attracted the attention of respectable writers. *Liu Hsing* was originally the product of a group of students from the Singapore Overseas Chinese Middle School, and its contributors were generally young and ambitious.[41] They initially called their journal *Liu Chan* (Miscarriage), and distributed it with the *Le Pao*, yet it lasted only one month before it was dropped in early 1930. The serial resurfaced four months later as a fu-chang to the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao*, re-titled *Liu Hsing*.

The Straits Times

It would be inaccurate to suggest that only Chinese language newspapers influenced the course of the New Culture Movement in Singapore. After all, in addition to reading the above mentioned papers, many Singapore Chinese also perused the English-language press. One paper in particular, the *Straits Times* (or simply, the Times), was read by Chinese, Malays, and

Indians, as well as the English. Furthermore, since Singapore was part of the British colonial system, any study of the Chinese community there must also be informed by this British colonial context. Consequently, an introduction to the predominant English language paper of the 1920s is necessary for an understanding of the New Culture Movement in Singapore.

Throughout the nineteenth-century the *Straits Times* maintained a dominant position in the English-speaking community. By the time of the New Culture Movement, the *Straits Times* was the most respected and widely read English paper in Singapore. As such, it is an important source of information regarding this era. While it did not always record the activities of the Chinese community, it nevertheless provides a glimpse into the reactions and attitudes of the ruling colonial government and other Western residents.

Immediately prior to the May Fourth era, the *Straits Times* claimed to be the "Thunderer of the East," or the Asian version of the London Times. Alexander William Still, editor of the paper, believed that the *Straits Times* had the duty to investigate and expose corruption in both the business world and in government. He explained:

For our own part, we cherish the liberty of the press simply for its value to the community as a whole.... In the modern constitution of society, the press has great functions to perform. It is the chief safeguard against corruption.... Our business is to do what we deem right and necessary in the public interest, and no law court can be the keeper of our conscience.[42]

From 1908 to 1926, the Times was known for its attacks against unethical business leaders and their companies.[43] At the same time, the *Straits Times* was hesitant to criticize the colonial government. For example, in comparing politicians to businessmen, Still suggested, "the simple truth is that statesmanship is not very often found under the silk hat of a company director.... The instinct of the company man is to think from one declaration of dividends to another, but the statesman has to think in decades or generations." [44] Not surprisingly, the *Straits Times* took the official government position during such major political crises as World War I and the Indian Mutiny of 1915.

Perhaps the best way to gauge the relationship between Still's *Straits Times* and the Chinese residents of Singapore is to examine the paper during the period between 17 June and 23 June 1919, the week of the anti-Japanese riots. Even before the events of 19 June, Still was highly critical of the Chinese boycott efforts. In writing about anti-Japanese agitation in Shanghai, he explained:

We should doubt whether half of those Chinese who express resentment quite know what all the trouble is about. China is a land where the charlatan flourishes and the noisy talker commands the public ear. The public in China...is very easily led by agitators, and we should suppose that there are some very clever agitators behind the trouble in Shanghai and elsewhere in China. Only the other day we read of Chinese labourers who had returned from Siberia and Europe "infected with

Bolshevist ideas" daily making roadside speeches in order to stir up strong anti-Japanese sentiments....[45]

Predictably, the *Straits Times* was critical of the Singapore riots on the night of 19 June. The Chinese and Japanese residents of the city, the paper chided, "shall not fight out their battles here. They must be taught that they shall not with impunity disturb the peace of the Colony nor interfere with the liberty of any person. This is not a time for mincing words. Lives have been lost, property has been wantonly destroyed and a salutary lesson is needed to put a check once and for all upon manifestations of this kind." [46]

Interestingly, despite the tragic loss of life and property, the *Straits Times* focused on the "inconveniences" endured by the European community due to the riot. For example, the paper of 20 June states:

Many hundreds of people were inconvenienced this morning by the absence from the streets of the greater number of rickshas. Why these vehicles should have been called off the streets is obscure, unless it was intended as a protest against the use of vehicles made in Japan. The result of this action was to throw an extra load on the trams, which are most inconveniently crowded as it is, and hundreds of workers were therefore forced to walk to work.[47]

The next day's paper focused on another similarly "troublesome" incident:

Chinese hooligans gave a considerable amount of trouble all day long yesterday and perpetrated impudent acts. For instance the lunch of a gentleman, employed in the Eastern Telegraph Company, while being carried by his Chinese boy, was nearly thrown out on the road by some Chinese because forsooth it was being carried in a Japanese made carrier. On the protestations of the servant the hooligans said they would allow him to take the lunch to his master, but the next time they found him with a Japanese carrier, they would throw carrier and contents into the dust bin.[48]

As can be seen from such accounts, the *Straits Times* under Still's leadership remained far removed from the concerns of the local Chinese population.

Still retired as editor in 1926, and for the following two years, the editorship of the *Straits Times* passed through the hands of four different men. In 1928, George Seabridge took the editorial reigns of the paper and guided it for the next eighteen years. During his tenure, Seabridge helped change the Times from an influential editorial paper with an elite readership of 5,000, to the "common man's" paper with a circulation of over 25,000.[49] Many of the changes instituted by Seabridge were necessitated by increased competition in the newspaper business. In 1915 the *Malaya Tribune* came into existence, and since the Tribune's subscription rate was approximately half that of the Times, the Tribune's circulation numbers steadily increased.[50] At the same time, the Tribune actively sought to attract the growing number of English-speaking

Asians. In July of 1930, the Tribune printed a list of "100 Reasons Why You Should Subscribe to the *Malaya Tribune*." Within this list, the Tribune writers explained that their paper provided "frank discussion of Malayan affairs" and "weekly articles by special and well-informed writers, for Chinese, Indians and Muslims." [51] Perhaps most importantly, the *Malaya Tribune* hired promising young local journalists, Malayan and Chinese, to write for the paper. Not surprisingly, by 1932 the Tribune's circulation exceeded that of the *Straits Times*. [52]

Seabridge realized that the *Straits Times* had to make radical changes to compete against the Tribune and attract the "common man." His answer was to make the Times' layout more attractive with the use of pictures, comics, and other eye-catching elements. He also provided more coverage of events in Singapore and Malaya. His most important innovation, no doubt, was the creation of a Sunday paper, which immediately became popular. By the end of the 1930s, the *Straits Times* management cut the price of the paper to match the *Malaya Tribune*, which led to a drastic and immediate increase in subscribers. For these reasons, Seabridge is credited with changing the Times from an influential and well-respected paper, even if it was not widely read, into a popular medium for not only the European community, but for the Asian community as well. Consequently, the Chinese newspapers of the New Culture Movement had to compete with the Times for their voice to be heard.

Similarities with the mainland New Culture Movement

Each of these publications--the *Le Pao*, the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao*, the *Nan Yang Shang Pao*, the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao*, and the *Straits Times*--helped spread the new ideas of their era. Each of them, and their accompanying supplements, helped portray and define the Singapore version of the New Culture Movement. From literary reform to iconoclasm and anti-feudalism to anti-imperialism, Singapore's newspapers transplanted and re-debated verbatim many of the core ideas of China's New Culture Movement.

Perhaps the most common denominator in both China and Singapore's New Culture Movement was the ubiquitous emphasis on "newness." Many leading intellectuals felt they were witnessing the dawn of a "new era," with myriad unforeseen possibilities ahead. They used terms such as "enlightening" and "emerging" to describe the world in which they lived. Singapore's newspapers and inserts helped spread this belief in a new era. In one story, for example, two students aboard a ship spend the night discussing marriage, family, and the characteristics of the "modern woman." By night's end, one of the students is extremely discouraged. His friend encourages him saying:

Dear friend, do not be sad! This deep night and vast sea will pass. Do you not see the reddish light already [emerging] in the northeast? At the extreme end of that sky and water, the coast is already appearing. Everyone should pass through and understand [such a] deep night and vast sea. So long as you do not lose heart and diligently break through night's curtain, the ship will pass over this expansive sea. Upon reaching the other shore, [you] will then see the bright and beautiful morning light. This is the path of light and happiness. Friend, do not be sad! Diligently push

ahead![53]

As previously mentioned, literary reform played a large role in the New Culture Movement both in mainland China as well as in Singapore. The first newspaper fu-chang to actively incorporate vernacular literature was the *Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih*. As early as 1920, approximately half of the *Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih*'s contents were in the pai-hua style, and over time the number continued to grow. By 1925 over 70 percent of all contributed material in the various newspaper supplements utilized the colloquial pai-hua language.[54] An early example of a poem in this style is "Happiness and Diligence" from the *Hsin Kuo Min Tsa Chih*. It reads:

There are innumerable things on this earth that bring happiness to man,
There are innumerable things on this earth that bring happiness to man,
Must you use an "equivalent price" to buy it?
No, you must use your own diligence as the price.
There are innumerable roads on this earth that bring happiness to man,
There are innumerable roads on this earth that bring happiness to man,
However, your own road of happiness
Is measured by way of your own hard work.[55]

Poems such as this one flew in the face of conventional literature. Not only did the writers of these poems use colloquial terms, but they ignored the previously accepted standards of balance, sentence structure, and rhyming patterns, yet in each case, mainland poets had already displayed these characteristics in their own poetry.

The call for literary reform was not limited to the promotion of pai-hua. Singapore's newspapers also reflected other evolving literary trends in China. For example, as early as 1925, Kuo Mo-jo and other members of China's "Creation Society" (Ch'uang-tsaoshe) called for a new literature that would lead to socialist revolution, calling such work "proletarian literature.[56] This literature, they explained, would be realistic, critical, and didactic. In essence, proletarian literature was based on the idea that all literature is propaganda. Within a few months, proletarian echoes were heard among the Singapore writers. For example, Ch'eng Li suggested that "Literary works must draw close to life in [our] society. Writers must use ardent enthusiasm and a calm and cool intelligence to depict life. The writer should use an enthusiastic cry to call the pained, the grieved, and the weak to rise in a righteous fight." [57] Yu Yu, in his essay entitled "Concerning the direction of literature," explained his views toward the concept of "positivist" literature. "[I am not opposed to] 'positivism,'" he stated, "but...if it is a bourgeois 'positive' literature, then that is a great mistake. At the same time we must also have 'negativism.' [We must] 'negate' feudalistic, bourgeois, and petty bourgeois literature." [58] The Creation Society and other proletariat literature advocates on the Chinese mainland had previously made similar suggestions.

Like their contemporaries in China, Singapore writers called for an end to feudalism. Feudalistic social elements included, but were not limited to, sexism, Confucianism, paternalism, familism, hierarchy, and exploitation. Usually, feudalism referred to the exploitation and distress of the

working class. In the story "Suffering," Ch'en Chia-fang writes of a man who is forced to work in the factory day and night. When he complains of his exhaustion to his factory manager, the manager simply grabs him by the nose, and threatens his job dismissal. Later the man collapses with fatigue and injures himself, and the factory manager, as a member of the "petty bourgeoisie," refuses to lend him money to pay for his medical care. As a result, the man, his wife, and his two children are left to "suffer." [59]

In a similarly depressing story entitled "Life and Crime," the writer Tseng Sheng-t'i tells of another impoverished father. Overwhelmed at the responsibility of caring for his five children, the father compares them to five bullets pointed at his heart. His situation becomes especially acute when an automobile crushes his rickshaw, his only source of financial support. Desperate, he hides along a dark pathway waiting to rob unsuspecting passers-by. In his first attempt, his victim turns out to be penniless. His second attempt becomes even more disastrous when he realizes his chosen victim is a policeman. Before the father understands what has happened, the policeman's handcuffs are placed on his wrists. [60] Singapore's writers used stories such as these to critique the "feudalistic" world in which they lived.

These are only a few of the characteristics common to New Culture literature in both China and Singapore. Looking at these similarities, many scholars suggest that Singapore's literary supplements were nothing more than poor imitations of China's New Culture magazines. [61] No doubt, in many instances the literary quality of Singapore's newspaper inserts was inferior to that of similar publications in China. Still, this does not mean that Singapore's writers were simply copying the work of their mainland contemporaries. Since Singapore's New Culture Movement occurred within a different context--a diaspora context--it produced some unique results. A look at some of these differences further illuminates the New Culture Movement in Singapore.

Unique aspects of Singapore's New Culture Movement

Beginning in 1927, as a new wave of Chinese immigrants arrived in Southeast Asia, the Singapore version of the New Culture Movement took a novel turn. For the next several years, Singapore's writers made a self-conscious effort to break the intellectual moorings that held them to their mainland Chinese counterparts. Between 1927 and 1933 there was an almost incessant demand on the part of Singapore's intellectuals to develop a more purely indigenous literature that they termed "Ma-Hua wen hsüeh," or Malay-Chinese literature. The opening salvo in this new battle was fired by the Huang Tao. In April of 1927, a writer by the pen name of "Yan" wrote an essay entitled "The South Seas and Literature." In this essay Yan pointed out that the Chinese had been in Southeast Asia since the Yüan dynasty, yet over the course of several centuries, had failed to produce any writers comparable to those on the mainland. He claimed:

To the present time it is most unfortunate that of all the works of [our] artists, it is impossible to find one that portrays the spirit with which the people of Nan-yang [or the South Seas] currently struggle to obtain a living. [There are those] who say "this land is not our home land, so why should we trifle with the wriggling worms

here." Nan-yang is not an indescribable mass of mud and flesh. Nan-yang is like the paradise admired by the Palestine people after the flood. In the schools in Peking... scholars have said, "the scenery of Nan-yang is tremendously rich and beautiful," and in years past the artists that have come to Nan-yang have emphasized to the colonists saying "the great achievements of our ancestors are not unlike those of the Spaniards in the New World." Alas! How rare it is to find a realistic portrayal of [our] background and people. Will we find it? Diligently describe! Bravely portray! Nan-yang literature must display its unique colors in the world of literature.[62]

Several writers heeded Yan's call, and soon a whole genre of "Ma-Hua wen hsüeh" emerged. Titles such as "Singapore Artists, Awake," "Literary Culture and the Overseas Chinese," and "Literature and Local Color" splashed across the front pages of Yeh Lin, *Wen I Chou K'an*, and Huang Tao.[63] In each of these cases, the writers urged that environment and local culture be more prominent in the works of Singapore artists. Only then, they argued, could their art forms achieve true excellence. For example, in a thinly veiled allegory entitled "A Discussion of the Fervor of South Seas Literature," Ssu Shih told the story of an old painter. According to the story, there was a certain old painter whose work was widely sought after. Interestingly, he used only one color in his paintings, an unusually brilliant red. Other artists, jealous of his acclaim, hoped to copy the old painter's methods. They traveled far to the east in search of precious dyes, but to no avail. As for the old painter, the story continues:

He... continued to paint. With time his paintings became even more brilliant, and with time, [he] became more old and gray. One day they found that he had died in front of his painting. They raised him up and were going to bury him. Some people secretly looked in all of the color jars in his studio, but they could not find the thing that they were lacking.

When they took off his long coat, they found a scar on the left side of the old man's chest. It was an old scar, and must have been there his whole life because its edges were old and hard. But, death is an envelope that seals up all affairs...

When they buried the old man, people naturally all asked, "Where did the dye for his color come from?"[64]

Having recounted this story, Ssu Shih explains that true art work requires a tremendous effort on the part of the artist, and that he or she must use a part of themselves. This is only possible, he suggests, when they use their own environment, language, and culture for their inspiration and for their "color."

Some historians and literary theorists suggest that this emphasis on "local color" represents an important step in the cultural transformation of overseas Chinese.[65] In many ways, it appears that these writers, and the audience they wrote for, were assimilating their new environment. Throughout this same period, however, other works suggest just the opposite. Various short

stories describe the injustices the Chinese immigrants experienced as a marginalized segment of society. Others refer to the "temporary nature" of their Nan-yang, or South Seas, experience. And nearly all writers allude to China as their "ancestral home." For example, in the pages of Yeh Lin the writer Ch'en Lian-ch'ing laments:

Life is really so senseless. Look farther afield and we see our motherland lying under a dark cloud.... Nan-yang is not our final resting place. Life is just senseless. The situation in our motherland resulted from such senselessness and such senselessness has made us come across the vast seas. Now, [for the same reason,] we take shelter in this coconut grove. ...However, since we are human and have to live such a life, ...we should seek some temporary happiness in the senselessness.[66]

In another story, Wang T'an describes the ongoing discrimination and segregation that continued to plague the Chinese in Singapore. Wang tells the story of two boys, Yü-nan and Tan-mi. Yü-nan is a European boy that befriends Tan-mi. Because of their youth and innocence, neither understands the discrimination and prejudice of the world around them. Yü-nan's father forbids them to play together, but his warnings fall on deaf ears. Angrily, Yü-nan's father yells at him:

You stupid boy! I do not know how many times I have warned you! Yet everyday you still associate and play with Tan-mi. If you associate with those kinds of humiliated people it will destroy your honorable status. Nobody will look up to you. His father is a slave, and when he is grown he will never be more than a slave. His body stinks like excrement and is as dark as the dirt. Furthermore, he has never been to school. He is like a swine. There is absolutely no benefit to being with him. I really cannot even guess the intentions of a stupid boy like you, wanting to be friends with a humiliated friend like that... You loafer! You scamp! Do you not know, Tan-mi is from a shameful, humiliated, and weak people![67]

Despite the desire for "local color," it seems that the Singapore Chinese were still very much aware of their "outsider" status in Singapore. This apparent contradiction should not be unexpected within a diaspora context. The members of the diaspora community in Singapore were, after all, neither "Chinese" nor "Malay," and therefore their literature can not be analyzed as either a symbol of Chineseness nor an indication of assimilation. As Stuart Hall explains:

Cultural identity... is a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being." Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.[68]

In the case of Singapore, the Chinese immigrants positioned themselves within at least three different "narratives," the narratives of China, Malaysia, and Great Britain. Each of the three is associated with the narrative of nationalism and the nation-state, and as such is intrinsically problematic. Each of the three helped in forming a Chinese diaspora, or as Homi Bhabha would suggest, a hybrid identity in Singapore. This diaspora phenomenon explains, to a large degree, both the similarities and differences between the "new cultures" of China and Singapore in the 1920s.

A diaspora community can be defined both positively as well as negatively.[69] Discrimination and exclusion made it such that the Chinese of Singapore saw themselves as "neither" British nor Malaysian. Official discrimination as well as less formal social segregation made the Chinese realize that complete assimilation was, at least at that time, impossible or undesirable. At the same time, discrimination does not necessarily imply economic disparity. After all, Chinese businessmen in Singapore were often very wealthy and influential. Yet, the knowledge that such wealth depended on the sometimes capricious consent of other sources of power made even the wealthiest Chinese aware of their precarious position.

A diaspora can also be defined positively. Genealogy, territory, and language were just some of the positive characteristics held in common by the Singapore diaspora community. Each member shared a past that eventually linked them to a "homeland." A diaspora "homeland" is not necessarily a sovereign nation-state, but is at least an "imagined community." Furthermore, each member of Singapore's diaspora shared the experience of displacement from China and relocation to Singapore, with all of the difficulties of adaptation and survival that this required. Even among second and third generation Singapore immigrants, this "tradition" was part of their common "heritage." This does not mean that all the immigrants wanted to return to their "homeland." In fact, actual trips to China were frequently disheartening and disappointing. Still, as Hall explains, "symbolic journeys are necessary for [all diaspora]. This is the homeland we must return to--but 'by another route': what [the homeland] has become..., what we have made of [the homeland]: [the homeland]--as we re-tell it through politics, memory and desire." [70]

It is not surprising, then, that the literature of Singapore's New Culture Movement did not exactly mirror the work of mainland writers. Though Singapore's intellectuals were participating in the movement of their "homeland," this homeland had been recreated and refashioned within the interplay of competing nation-state narratives in Singapore. For this reason, Singapore's writers could emphasize their "local colors," and at the same time resist becoming indigenous. Their narrative(s), which in many ways opposed the narrative of the nation-state, can best be described as belonging to a diaspora community.

Conclusion

From 1919 to 1933, the Chinese community in Singapore participated in the New Culture Movement. As in China, the movement included debates on such topics as "newness," literary reform, and an end to feudalism. In short, Singapore's movement reflected current events and

trends in China.

As in China, literature played a large role in Singapore's New Culture Movement. In China, student magazines were often the vanguard for new ideas, while in Singapore, newspapers and their accompanying literary supplements provided the most active forum for discussion. Throughout the 1920s the *Le Pao*, the *Hsin Kuo Min Jih Pao*, the *Nan Yang Shang Pao*, and the *Hsing Chou Jih Pao* were the most dynamic participants in the spread of this new culture.

Around 1927 the Singapore movement began emphasizing "local colors" in literature, instead of merely imitating Chinese models. Nonetheless, this emphasis does not mean that the immigrants were assimilating the local culture. Their literature can be best described as the product of a diaspora community.

Instead of understanding "China" as an easily defined geo-political package, diasporas complicate and call into question our accepted objects of study. "Chinese studies," "Japanese studies," or even "Asian studies" rely, to some degree, on the essentialization of a cultural identity, and for these disciplines diaspora studies can be problematic. For the historian, however, the study of the particular and local characteristics of a diaspora can be an enlightening, exciting, and worthwhile pursuit.

Notes

1 For more information about the specific events of 4 May 1919 see any of the following sources: Y.C. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West, 1872-1949* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1966) 306-361; Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) 12-54; Wang Shih-han, *Wu ssu yün tung chien shih* (Peiching: Chung kuo she hui ti hsüeh ch'u ch'u pan, 1979) 106-120; Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960) 84-116.

2 *Singapore Free Press*, 6 June 1919, as quoted in Ts'ui Kui-ch'iang, "Hai hsia chih min ti hua jen tui wu ssu yün tung ti fan hsiang," *Nan yang hsüeh pao* 20 (1965-66): 17-18. All translations in this paper are my own, unless otherwise noted.

3 This account of the events of 19 June 1919 is taken from the *Straits Times*, 20-23 June 1919 and Ts'ui Kui-ch'iang, "Hai hsia chih min ti hua jen tui wu ssu yün tung ti fan hsiang," 13-18.

4 *Straits Times*, 20 June 1919.

5 There are several interpretations and approaches to the May Fourth Period and its connection to the New Culture Movement. The best known interpretation, with its encyclopedic coverage, is undoubtedly Chow Tse-tsung's, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). Other notable accounts include: Arif Dirlik, "Ideology and Organization in the May

Fourth Movement: Some Problems in the Intellectual Historiography of the May Fourth Period," *Republican China* 12.1 (Nov 1986): 3-19; Joseph Chen, *The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai* (Leiden: Brill, 1971); Merle Goldman, ed., *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977); Vera Schwarcz, "Remapping May Fourth: Between Nationalism and Enlightenment," *Republican China* 12.1 (Nov 1986): 20-35; Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Laurence Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Hu Wen-pen, ed., *Wu ssu yün tung tsai Shan tung tzu liao hsüan chi* (Chi nan: Shan tung jen min chu pan she, 1980); T'ien chin li shih po wu kuan, Nan kai ta hsueh li shih hsi, comps., *Wu ssu yün tung tsai T'ien chin li shih tzu liao hsüan chi* (T'ien-chin: T'ien chin jen min chu pan she, 1979).

6 James Clifford quoting William Safran in "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9.3 (1994): 304.

7 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) 276.

8 Clifford suggests that "we should attempt to think of cultures not as organically unified or traditionally continuous but... as negotiated, present processes." James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) 273.

9 Clifford, "Diasporas," 320.

10 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 28.

11 Bhabha, 148.

12 Wang Gungwu, *Community and Nation: Essays on Southeast Asia and the Chinese* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981) and Wang Gungwu, *China and the Chinese Overseas* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991) 22-40.

13 For information regarding this period and the changing audience of Singapore's newspapers see Chen Mong Hock, *The Early Chinese Newspapers of Singapore, 1881-1912* (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967) 54-110.

14 Ts'ui Kui-ch'iang, *Hsin chia po hua wen pao k'an yü pao jen* (Hsin chia po: Huo hua wen hsin wen yeh chi chin tsan chü, 1993) 15.

15 "Hsing chia po hua wen pao yeh chien shih," *Hsing chou jih pao*, 4 October 1969.

16 He Shu-min, *Hsin chia po tsui tsao ti hua wen jih pao--le pao, 1881-1932* (Hsin chia po: Nan

yang pien i suo ch'u pan, 1978) 15-16.

17 For more information on the *Le Pao's* circulation see Chen Mong Hock, 39.

18 Cheng Wen-hui, 49-50.

19 Cheng Wen-hui, 52.

20 Mo Yimei, *Local Colour in Malayan Chinese Fiction: A New Approach, 1920-1937* (Germany: Brockmeyer, 1992) 25.

21 He Shu-min, 79-83.

22 Ts'ui Kui-ch'iang, *Pao k'an yü pao jen*, 15 and Cheng, 39.

23 Fang Hsiu, *Ma hua hsin wen hsüeh shih kao*, 2 vols. (Hsin chia po: Hsing chou shih chieh shu chü yu hsien kung ssu, 1960) 1: 9-16.

24 Shih Ko, "Nan feng chih ko," *Nan feng*, 15 July 1925. Reprinted in Fang Hsiu, *Ma hua hsin wen hsüeh shih kao*, 1: 50-53.

25 Yan, "Nan yang yü wen i," *Huang tao* 1 April 1927. Reprinted in Fang Hsiu, comp. *Ma hua hsin wen hsüeh ta hsi*, 10 vols. (Hsin chia po: Hsing chou shih chieh shu chü yu hsien kung ssu, 1972) 1: 119-121. Hereafter, Fang's *Ma hua hsin wen hsüeh ta hsi* will be cited as "MHTH."

26 Fang Hsiu, *Ma hua hsin wen hsüeh shih kao*, 1:87-93.

27 Fang Hsiu, *Ma hua hsin wen hsüeh shih kao* and Cheng Wen-hui, 46-55.

28 Ts'ui Kui-ch'iang, *Pao k'an yü pao jen*, 29.

29 Tan Yew Soon and Soh Yew Peng, *The Development of Singapore's Modern Media Industry* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1994) 14.

30 Cheng Wen-hui, 47-48.

31 Tseng Sheng-t'i often wrote under the pen names Ta Chi and Ting Lang. His work from the *Wen I Chou K'an* is included in Fang's MHTH.

32 Fang Hsiu, *Ma hua hsin wen hsueh shih kao* and Cheng Wen-hui, 46-55.

33 Ts'ui Kui-chiang, *Pao k'an yü pao jen*, 31.

34 Tan and Soh, 14.

35 K'ang Chi-fu, *Hu Wen-hu chuan* (Hsiang-kang: Lung men wen hua shih yeh kung ssu, 1984) 56-57.

36 Tan and Soh, 14.

37 Cheng Wen-hui, 45.

38 Ts'ui Kui-chiang, *Pao k'an yü pao jen*, 32.

39 Tan and Soh, 15 and 24-26.

40 For examples of Mao Ch'eng-po's work see Fang's MHTH.

41 Fang Hsiu, *Ma hua hsin wen hsüeh shih kao*, 1:173-177.

42 *Straits Times*, 27 November 1913.

43 See, for example, the *Straits Times* editorial of 21 May 1912.

44 *Straits Times*, 15 May 1912.

45 *Straits Times*, 17 June 1919.

46 *Straits Times*, 21 June 1919.

47 *Straits Times*, 20 June 1919.

48 *Straits Times*, 21 June 1919.

49 C.M. Turnbull, *Dateline Singapore: 150 Years of the Straits Times* (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings, 1995) 157.

50 Turnbull, 87. The daily rate for the Times was ten cents, while the Tribune was only five cents.

51 Turnbull, 87.

52 Turnbull, 92.

53 Chou P'i-ch'eng, "Ch'uan chung chih i yeh," *Shang yü tsa chih*, 25 April 1925. Reprinted in

MHTH 3:64-69.

54 Fang Hsiu, Ma hua hsin wen hsüeh shih kao, 14-15.

55 Lin Tu-pu, "Hsing fu yü nu li," Hsin kuo min tsa chih, 20 September 1922. Reprinted in MHTH 6:4.

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63 See MHTH 1:119-149.

64 Ssu Shih, "Shuo shuo nan yang ti wen i shu," Huang tao, 18 October 1927. Reprinted in MHTH 1:122-123.

65 See, for example, Wang Jun-hua, "Lun hsin chia po hua wen wen hsüeh fa chan chieh tuan yü fang hsiang," Wong Yoon Wah and Horst Pastoors, eds., Tung nan ya hua wen wen hsüeh / Chinese Literature in Southeast Asia (Singapore: Singapore Association of Writers, 1988) 56-66; and Wong Yoon Wah and Wong Meng Voon, "The Changing Identity of the Chinese as seen in Singapore-Chinese Literature," Theresa Chong Cariño, ed., Social Change and Southeast Asian Chinese Literature (Philippines: De La Salle University and Philippine Association for Chinese Studies, 1989) 65-78.

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69 James Clifford has used this approach in his article entitled "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9(3):302-338.

70 Hall, 399.