A Brief Summary of the NATSA 2012 Annual Conference

By The NATSA 2012 Preparatory Committee



THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL NATSA CONFERENCE was just held on June 8-9, 2012 at the Indiana University-Bloomington Maurer School of Law, with the theme, "*Taiwan: Gateway, Node, Liminal Space.*" More than seventy scholars, including 25 faculty-level participants, from various disciplinary fields such as Anthropology, Sociology, Political Science, Law, History, Film Studies and Literature, gathered on the beautiful campus to discuss issues in Taiwan Studies.

The North American Taiwan Studies Association (NATSA) is an US academic organization run mainly by graduate students who are interested in and committed to Taiwan Studies. The primary mission of NATSA is to organize an annual conference every year to discuss and exchange ideas regarding social, political and cultural phenomena and developments in Taiwan from multiple disciplinary perspectives. The NATSA annual conference has become one of the largest and most focused academic events on Taiwan Studies in North America since its first conference took place at Yale University in 1994. Such an annual event not only provides scholars in Taiwan Studies a regular forum to meet and to exchange insights from their latest research, but also provides a reliable intellectual forum for assessing the direction of Taiwan Studies.

In the past, NATSA's annual conferences have been mainly designed for both Taiwanese and international graduate students. The NATSA 2012 annual conference, however, was significantly different from its past counterparts in that it had more than 20 faculty-level participants. Starting from NATSA's 2011 conference at the University of Pittsburgh, the committee members made a strong commitment to transforming NATSA's annual conferences from a graduate-level event to a graduate student-faculty forum. The committee had noticed the fact that despite there still being a decent number of scholars in US and Canadian institutions running research projects involving Taiwan, there were very few attempts to bring together those scholars together in North America for mutual support and cooperation. This, the committee believed, is one of the reasons why many contemporary scholars are discouraged from picking Taiwan as one of their research subjects, as there was a perceived lack of a community within which to participate. NATSA's decision to widen participation to faculty-level scholars brings the already latent community into the open.

In addition to increasing faculty participation, the NATSA 2012 annual conference was also purposefully designed to invite all participants to reflect on the definition, methodology, and research approach of Taiwan Studies. These concerns could be elucidated as the following questions: First, is Taiwan Studies a sub-field of area studies, or is it a network of scholars in various disciplines who share their research interests in Taiwan? How could we broaden the Taiwan studies research community to include scholars in social sciences and humanities whose research actually involves Taiwan but do not associate themselves with Taiwan Studies? Also, what is the role of NATSA in such an endeavor? Second, does Taiwan Studies presume a Taiwan-centered approach, or is it also open to an alternative approach wherein Taiwan itself may be decentered as the only object of Taiwan studies, and instead be embedded in broader research schemes that, as Jonathan Sullivan suggests, have "the potential to contribute to the theoretical and empirical corpora of the social sciences and humanities." For example, many scholars are trying to raise awareness of the value of doing comparative research, which they see as a way to (re-)connect Taiwan to the international academic community. Last, but not least, how should the Taiwan Studies community respond to its perceived marginalization due to the academic interest towards China? Is there a way through which Taiwan and China Studies could mutually contribute to each other's growth and development, regardless of how one interprets the kinetic relationships between the two?

In order to provoke discussions on these critical issues, the NATSA 2012 annual conference organized a series of special events, including the Opening Remarks, a Lunchtime Feature Presentation, the Keynote Speech, the Roundtable on "Is Taiwan Studies Dead?" and the Roundtable on "Taiwan as Method and Modality." Details of these events are provided below. In addition to these issue-specific activities, the NATSA 2012 annual conference also

included a new book session, two anthropology panels, and five student panels consisting of two panel presentations and three individual paper presentations.

Opening remarks: From Marginality to Liminality: An Enquiry into The specificities of Taiwan's Relation to China

The theme of this year's conference, *Taiwan: Gateway, Node, Liminal Space*, was partially inspired by Professor Stéphane Corcuff's use of the term "liminality" to describe cross-strait relationships, something he has done both in keynote remarks delivered at NATSA 2011 and in his recent book *Zhonghua linguo: Taiwan yujingxing* 中華鄉國一臺灣園境性 (China's Neighbor: Taiwan's Liminality). Corcuff is the first scholar to apply the anthropological concept of liminality to the re-emerging discipline of geopolitics. In his speech this year, Corcuff further articulated his analysis. The concept of liminality, he argued, tries to reframe an understanding of Taiwan that is commonly, according to each respective political program, simplified to fit an ideology revolving around a certain idea of the nation. It tries to accommodate better the plurality of dimensions of Taiwan's relation to China (and, perhaps, by extension and after substantial adaptation, to the world). Corcuff concluded by pointing out a remaining limitation to his concept to be further addressed was the exclusion of indigenous perspectives.

Lunchtime feature event: Democratic Nation-building via Denationalization Strategies: Certain Experiences from Taiwan

Professor Bruce Yuan-Hao Liao, a distinguished alumnus of Indiana University-Bloomington Maurer School of Law and currently a member of the faculty at National Chengchi University in Taiwan, delivered a speech entitled "Democratic Nation-building via Denationalization Strategies—Certain Experiences from Taiwan." Liao described Taiwan's efforts and problems in pursuing democracy and identity. By first questioning the idea of the inalienability and indivisibility of national sovereignty, he challenged the conventional concept of one top-level, central government within a territory. Liao argued that the ROC constitution and the delicate dynamic system of the cross-strait relationship is proof that there is an alternative approach to the conceptualization of national sovereignty. Liao further talked about the innovative "domesticization" approach developed by the Ma administration in response to The United Nations' denial of depository applications for the ratification of international human rights treaties. Using these examples, Liao articulated how Taiwan has been fighting for democracy, human rights, and national identity under various international constraints, and concluded that Taiwan does not hesitate in pursuing democracy and identity merely because its "national" status is contentious; instead, the case of Taiwan demonstrates

that the traditional State theory should not be the sole answer to the question of how international norms can be developed and realized.

Keynote speech: Whither the State in Taiwan? Blind-spots in the Contemporary Welfare State

Professor Joseph Wong's description of Taiwan at NATSA 2011 as a "gateway" economy also inspired the theme of this year's conference. During that conference, he challenged the economically-deterministic fear that closer economic ties with China inevitably leads to an independent Taiwan's marginalization, arguing instead for a constructive debate in Taiwan society about the political and economic advantages of being an independent and autonomous gateway economy to China and the rest of the world. In this year's keynote speech, Wong embedded the story of Taiwan within a larger, comparative and more global discussion of the future of the welfare state. Wong challenged the conventional paradigm of welfare state, which tends to privilege a supply-side logic to welfare protection that assumes universal entitlements and coverage will automatically lead to universal utilization. He argued that such a paradigm fails to factor in the growing inequality in the global economy, and more specifically, the problems of invisibility and poverty, as well as the runaway grey income. These challenges, Wong argued, are not fundamentally unique to the global south as conventional wisdom tends to believe. Instead, in today's global capitalism, the welfare apparatus in both developed and developing countries are facing similar challenges, and the lessons from the global south have the potential to benefit policy makers in the global north. Such a global demand for welfare innovations also offers scholars of Taiwan studies unique opportunities to transform the role of Taiwan as a research subject. Instead of continuing to follow the traditional theory-taker approach, in which researchers simply take existing theories and models developed by scholars in Western countries, Wong indicated, Taiwan should strive to be a theory maker, for Taiwan's experiences in dealing with institutional frictions may eventually offer constructive and innovative lessons to researchers and policy makers around the globe.

Roundtable: "Is Taiwan Studies Dead?"

Scholars of Taiwan Studies increasingly speak about the decline or even "death" of Taiwan studies as a sub-field of Area Studies. The precise dimensions or implications of this perceived academic marginalization, however, are still debatable. In what ways have changing geopolitical circumstances, particularly the rise of China, affected Taiwan's position as an academic topic? Do such changing circumstances signify the demise of the field, or do they actually present new opportunities? Both these and related questions were addressed in this roundtable discussion featuring by established Taiwan studies scholars,

Professor Murray Rubinstein and Professor Shelley Rigger, along with Professor C Montgomery Broaded, the Director of International Programs at the Center for Global Education of Butler University, serving as the chairperson. The presence of these speakers was particularly fortunate given that they have all recently addressed the fate of Taiwan Studies. In 2009, Rubinstein, one of the pioneers of the field, delivered a paper asking whether Taiwan Studies is dead. Also last year, Rigger, one of the top experts on Taiwan's politics, argued affirmatively for studying Taiwan in her book Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powerhouse (2011). All these speakers brought their respective expertise and insights into the discussion, and the intellectual exchange was vigorous and highly constructive. For instance, during the discussion, Rigger argued that Taiwan studies has always been very vivid and well-developed compared to similar-sized countries in the world (i.e. Ghana) and she encouraged newcomers to the field, for that Taiwan is unique in many aspects and will continue to draw attention from the international academic community. Also, Broaded indicated that the sustainability of Taiwan Studies will depend on the following three decisive factors: job opportunities, publication resources and associations to promote research. He also summarized the main ideas for the audience from the paper "Is Taiwan Studies In Decline?" written by Dr. Jonathan Sullivan of the University of Nottingham, who was also scheduled to present in this panel, but for an unexpected emergency, could not attend this conference. Dr. Sullivan's main points were: 1) Taiwan Studies is neither dead nor marginalized; instead, it remains important, if not mainstream, to academia; 2) Taiwan-related research actually accounts for a significant portion of all publications in major China Studies journals; 3) the main problem with Taiwan Studies now, for Dr. Sullivan, is that scholars in this field rarely cooperate with each other trans-nationally.

Roundtable: "Taiwan as Method and Modality"

The intellectual project of Taiwan Studies in the 1990s was to center Taiwan as the object of a new sub-field of area studies. Prior to this, Taiwan had been traditionally subsumed within China Studies, even serving as an ethnographic proxy or gateway for western scholars studying China during the Cold War. The emergence of Taiwan Studies, however, occurred at exactly the same time the entire paradigm of area studies itself was coming under attack. Critics of bounded culture, territories and nation-states emphasized transnational flows, hybridity and contingent historicity of national belonging. Area studies scholars themselves began engaging in comparative and interdisciplinary projects. Taiwan Studies, almost just as soon as it was conceptualized, was compelled to reevaluate its own assumptions and categories. In 2004, Professor Leo Ching argued for inverting "object and the method, so that the object becomes the method [and] Taiwan thus becomes not just an area to be studied, but becomes a means to expose the limits of hegemonic knowledge and enable a more complex reflection on changing global conditions." The prescience of Ching's argument has been

echoed by Chen Kuan-Hsing to treat "Asia as method" (2010) and Corcuff's understanding of Taiwan's "liminal" political geography, the inspiration behind the theme of this year's conference. For this roundtable, NATSA was delighted to have Leo Ching join in a discussion with Professor Bert Scruggs, Professor Kuo-Ch'ing Tu and Professor Howard Goldblatt. These experienced and renowned scholars debated and discussed the possibilities, limitations and stakes of inverting the object and method for the very concept of "Taiwan Studies."

Two general observations regarding the future of Taiwan studies can be made from the NATSA 2012 conference. First, during several occasions at the conference, discussions emerged regarding whether Taiwan Studies could become a theory maker, a method, a modality, or simply a place capable of answering pressing issues in the social sciences and humanities. Second, it became increasingly clear that the future of Taiwan Studies, particularly in North America, will hinge upon how successful young scholars in this field are at producing quality scholarship that speaks to a range of paradigms and frameworks. The NATSA 2012 preparatory committee believes that the need to 1) make Taiwan Studies an active contributor to social sciences and humanities scholarships and 2) improve the job market for Taiwan Studies should be top priorities for all people who hope to see this field succeed. However, to really change the challenging landscape for Taiwan Studies and ensure its long term prosperity requires the collaboration of various entities across public and private sectors in both Taiwan and the North America. As a student-run organization, NATSA has very limited resources compared to other institutions or foundations. The goal of creating more job opportunities for Taiwan studies scholars and sponsoring their research projects, therefore, should be pursued by organizations or institutions with greater resources, in particular, the Taiwanese government. NATSA's status as a student-run organization, however, allows it the freedom and flexibility to quickly identify new niches for the field and change the organization's course accordingly: the NATSA annual conferences can be easily transformed into a venue in which scholars are encouraged and incentivized to devise research schemes that, as this year's keynote speaker, Professor Joseph Wong put it, answer pressing questions in the social sciences and humanities scholarships, without being confined by traditions or academic politics that often limits an individual institution's capacity to support Taiwan Studies. Furthermore, many believe that NATSA's current organizational status is unique and well-positioned to serve as the hub with which all scholars, research centers, programs, and foundations dedicated to Taiwan Studies in North America could be linked together. Carrying on the tradition of organizing an annual intellectual gathering and maintaining a regular academic networking venue for diverse scholars in and related to Taiwan Studies demonstrates NATSA's commitment to ensure and invigorate the sustainable development of Taiwan Studies on a translocal and international basis.

NATSA 2012 Conference Schedule

June 8-9 (Fri-Sat), 2012 Maurer School of Law, Indiana University-Bloomington, Bloomington, IN, USA

	June	8, Friday	
07:30-08:10AM	I v		
	Front Desk		
08:10-09:10AM	Opening Remarks Moderator: Derek Sheridan (Brown University) Speaker: Prof. Stéphane Corcuff (Lyon Institute of Political Studies) From Marginality to Liminality: An Enquiry Into the Specificities of Taiwan's Relation to Chin		
09:10-09:20AM	Break		
09:20-11:40AM	Roundtable on Is Taiwan Studies Dead?	Special Panel on Legal Studies	
	Chairperson: Prof. C. Montgomery	Moderator: Wan-tsui Chiang	
	Broaded	(Indiana University Maurer School of Law)	
	(Butler University)	Presenter 1: Ching-Fu Lin	
	Discussant 1: Prof. Murray Rubinstein	(Harvard University Law School)	
	(City University of New York)	SPS-Plus and Bilateral Treaty Network:	
	Discussant 2: Prof. Jonathan Sullivan	A "Global" Solution to the Global Food Safety	
	(University of Nottingham)	Problem?	
	Discussant 3: Prof. Shelley Rigger	Presenter 2: Jui-Chien Cheng	
	(Davidson College)	(Indiana University Maurer School of Law)	
		Fiduciary Duty in Taiwan—Focusing on the Lost	
		Duty of Care and Exculpation of Damages	
		Arising from such Duty Presenter 3: Chao-Tien Chang	
		(University of Pennsylvania Law School)	
		From a Healthy Individual to a Healthy	
		Community: A Comparative Study of the US	
		Wellness Program and the Japanese Metabo Law	
11:40-12:00PM	I	Break	
12:00-1:30PM	Feature Event (Lunch Provided):		
		University-Bloomington Maurer School of Law)	
		National Chengchi University College of Law)	
	Democratization, Human Rights, and East Asian Experiences		
	Discussant: Prof. Sara Friedman (Indiana University-Bloomington)		
1:30-1:50PM	Break		
1:50-4:10PM	Anthropology Panel #1	Panel Presentation # 1	
	Chairperson: Hsun-Hui Tseng	Situating Political Change in Taiwan	
	(University of Washington)	Moderator: Chung-En Liu	
	Presenter1: Prof. Scott Simon	(University of Wisconsin-Madison)	
	(University of Ottawa)	Presenter1: Winston Wen Lii	
	Presenter2: Yi-Tze Lee	(University of Chicago)	
	(University of Pittsburgh)	Ecological Engineering, Political Discourse and	
	Presenter3: Christy DeLair	Cultural Governance in Post-921 Earthquake	
	(Brown University)	Taiwan	
	Presenter4: Matthew E. West	Presenter2: Ching-Fang Hsu	
	(Columbia University)	(University of Chicago)	
		Legal Professionals as Political Actors in Taiwan	

	Presenter3: Kevin Wei Luo	
	(University of Chicago)	
	Constructing the China Imagination: Public	
	Discourse and Political Rhetoric in Taiwan	
	Presenter4: Yuan-Ming Chiao	
	(University of Kassel)	
	Approaches to Imaginaries and Narrative	
	Discourse: The Identity Politics of	
	Competing Naturalizations of Economic	
	Integration in the Taiwan Strait	
4:10-4:30PM	Break	
4:30-5:30PM	Keynote Speech	
	Moderator: John Chung-En Liu (University of Wisconsin-Madison)	
	Speaker: Prof. Joseph Wong (University of Toronto)	
	Whither the State in Taiwan? Blind-spots in the Contemporary Welfare State	
5:30-6:00PM	NATSA Committee Report	
	Election for President	
	A Guest Talk: President Chung Shih of the Taiwanese Association of America	
6:00-6:20PM	Break	
6:20PM	Dinner Reception	
8:30PM	Film Screening	

		June 9, Saturd	ay	
07:30-08:00AM	Check in			
	Front Desk			
08:00-09:45AM	Roundtable on Taiwan as			New Book Session
	Method and Modality		Moderator: Derek Sheridan	
	Chairperson: Prof. Kuo Ch'ing Tu			Brown University)
	(University of California, Santa Barbara) Discussant 1: Prof. Leo Ching		Presenter 1: Prof. Joseph Wong (University of Toronto)	
	(Duke Universit	9		ech: Innovation and the Limits of
	Discussant 2: Prof. Bert Scruggs		Asia's Developmental, Cornell University Press	
	(University of Californ	00	(September, 2011)	
	Discussant 3: Prof. Kuo	Ch'ing Tu	Presenter 2: Prof. Stéphane Corcuff	
	(University of California, S		(Lyon Institute of Political Studies)	
	Discussant 4: Prof. Goldblatt Howard		中華鄰國-臺灣閩境性 - Zhonghua linguo -	
	(University of Colorado)		Taiwan yujingxing (Zhonghua linguo / Un pays	
			voisin de la Chine. La liminalité de Taiwan),	
			7U/i	曼文化 (Taipei, 2011)
			National Id	And entity and Economic Interest:
				Competing Options and Their
				for Regional Stability, Palgrave
				llan (February 14, 2012)
09:45-10:00AM		B	reak	
10:00-11:45AM	Roundtable on	Individu	al Paper	Individual Paper
	Taiwan Cinema	Presenta	tion #1	Presentation # 2
	Chairperson: Prof. Kevin Tsai	Moderator: Chi-ting Peng		Moderator: Ling Han
	(Indiana University-Bloomington)	(University of Califo		(University of California, San Diego)
	Discussant 1: Prof.	Presenter 1: Chinghua Lu		Presenter 1: Xingyi Wang
	Guo-Juin Hong	(Dongfung Design University)		(Brandeis University)
	(Duke University) Discussant 2: Prof.	Okinawan Immigrant Villages		Religious-based Civil Society and Sacred/Public Space: An
	Sylvia Lin	in Taiwan under Japanese Rule Presenter 2: Lingyu Hsiao		Investigation of Taiwan
	(University of Notre Dame)			Presenter 2: Chih-Ying Huang
	Discussant 3: Lunpeng Ma	Fear, Terror and Political		(University of Sussex)
	(Stony Brook University)	Stigma: The Making of Political		
		Victims on The Politically		transformation in digital public
		Victimized Fam		cultural service design and user
		Presenter3: Do		participation in Taiwan
		Hsuan	_	
		(University of Br		
		The Great Mainland Exodus to Taiwan: Sojourn, Nostalgia, Return, and Identity Formation		
11:45-1:20PM		Lunch & Docun		ing
1:20-3:40PM	Panel Presentation #2			Individual Paper
	Visual Culture and	Chairperson: Hsun-Hui Tseng (University of Washington)		Presentation # 3
	Performance Arts in			Moderator: Chengpang Lee
	Taiwan	Presenter 1: Prof. Sara Friedman		` ,
	Moderator: Laura Jo-Han Wen	(Indiana Universi		Presenter 1: Yoshihisa Amae
	(University of Wisconsin-Madison)	Presenter 2: Silverman & Sh	-	(Chang Jung Christian University) Construction of a Postcolonial
	Presenter 1: Ting-Wu Cho	Silver man & Si		Space: Recollections, Rituals and
	(New York University)	(California Sta		Ceremonies Commemorating the
	Hou Hsiao-Hsien's Cinema of	,		Japanese Dead in Postwar Taiwan
	Translocality	(University of	_	

	Taiwan as a Critical Node Presenter2: Chu-Chiun Wei (City University of New York) Surviving and Sharing: Taiwanese Diaspoic Contemporary Art, 1978-2009		Discussant 3: Chung-En Liu (University of Wisconsin-Madison) Discussant 4: Huai-Hsuan Chen (University of Wisconsin-Madison) Discussant 5: Ling Han	
	Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere:		(University of Wisconsin-Madison)	
	Reconfiguration and Liaison of Han Poetry in the Cultural Context of the		Discussant 2: Po-Yi Hung	
	(University of California, Irvine)		Discussant 1: En-Chieh Chao (Boston University)	
	Presenter 1: Hsin-Chien Li		(University of Wisconsin-Madison)	
	(University of California, S	/		rator: Chung-En Liu
	Moderator: Chi-ting Peng		Input from Social Scientists in other fields	
4:00-6:20PM	Individual Paper Prese	ntation # 4	Reflection on	Taiwan Studies Roundtable:
3:40-4:00PM			Break	
	Kanoko's Works in Taiwan			
	Dancer-choreographer Hata-			
	cultural Experiments in Japanese			2011
	(National Taiwan University) "Taiwanese" Butoh: The Cross-			Cross-Strait and Interaction, 1987 - 2011
	Presenter 4: Yi-Jen Yu			to-Person Modes of ROC-PRC
	in 1930s Taiwan			Kind": Non-governmental, Person-
	of Shunkin" and Its Circulation			Close Encounters of "Another
	The Japaneseness of "A Portrait			(City University Of New York)
	The Metaphorology of Visuality:			Rubinstein
	(University of Wisconsin-Madison)			Presenter3: Prof. Murray
	Presenter 3: Laura Jo-Han Wen			Taiwan and South Korea
	Chou's Queer Trilogy			Japanese Colonial Legacy in
	Politics of Performances in Zero			late Economic development:
	(University of California-Irvine) Welcome to the Gaudy show:			(University of Chicago) Re-thinking the source of East Asia
	Presenter 2: Kiki Ssu-Fang Liu			Presenter 2: Chengpang Lee

Film Screening Schedule

Date: June 7-9 (Thu-Sat), 2012

	June 7, Thursday Varsity Room in Courtyard
7:30-10:00PM	A Gift for Father's Day: The Tragedy of Hsiaolin Village Part 1
	(爸爸節的禮物:小林滅村事件首部曲)
	Director: Lo Shin-chieh (羅興階) and WANG Hsiu-ling (王秀齡)
	Length: 90 minutes
	&
	Formosa vs. Formosa (福爾摩沙對福爾摩沙)
	Director: Ke Chin-Yuan (柯金源)
	Length: 59 minutes 50 seconds

June 8, Friday		
Room 123 (Moot Court Room)		
Indiana University-Bloomington Maurer School of Law		
&		
Varsity Room in Courtyard		
1:50-3:40PM	The Man behind the Book (尋找背海的人)	
	Writer: Wang Wen-xing (王文興)	
	Director: Lin Jing-jie (林靖傑)	
	Length: 103 minutes	
8:30-10:20PM	Young at Heart: Grandma Cheerleaders (青春啦啦隊)	
	Director: Yang Li-chou (楊力州)	
	Length: 105 minutes	

June 9, Saturday		
Room 123 (Moot Court Room)		
Indiana University-Bloomington Maurer School of Law		
&		
Varsity Room in Courtyard		
8:00-9:50AM	The Man behind the Book (尋找背海的人)	
	Writer: Wang Wen-xing (王文興)	
	Director: Lin Jing-jie (林靖傑)	
	Length: 103 minutes	
12:00-13:20PM	Hometown Boy (金城小子)	
	Director: Yao Hung-I (姚宏易)	
	Length: 72 minutes	
8:00-10:30PM	Hand in Hand (牽阮的手)	
	Director: Yen Lan-chuan (顏蘭權) and Juang Yi-tzeng (莊益增)	
	Length: 140 minutes	