INTRODUCTION

Empire, Transculturation, and Literary Contact Nebulae

Cultures and cultural products are constantly in motion, grappling with and interpenetrating one another within and across artistic, ethnic, geographic, linguistic, political, ideological, and temporal frontiers. In so doing, they create and embody fluid spaces of transculturation, where transculturation is understood as the “many different processes of [their] assimilation, adaptation, rejection, parody, resistance, loss, and ultimately transformation.” Simultaneously affirming and undermining cultural capital and authority at the same time that it creates identities, transculturating almost always entails negotiating power dynamics. It thus can be particularly vibrant in empires and postimperial spaces. In the nineteenth- and twentieth-century British, French, Ottoman, American, Portuguese, Russian, Soviet, Spanish, and Japanese empires and their aftermaths, (post)colonial, (post)semicolonial, and other subjugated peoples and their (former) imperial counterparts engaged with and transformed one another’s cultures and cultural products. Often defying binaries and borders, they produced fascinating amalgams of resistance, collaboration, and acquiescence.

Mary Louise Pratt identifies transculturation in empire as a phenomenon of the “contact zone,” a term she coined to describe “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.” More specifically, the contact zone as Pratt understands it is
the space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict . . . the term “contact” [borrowed from linguistics, where the phrase “contact language” indicates an improvised language that develops among speakers of different tongues] foregrounds the interactive, improvisational dimensions of imperial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed.5

Among the most intriguing of these spaces are artistic contact zones, or more precisely, considering their rapidly changing and frequently ambiguous borders, artistic contact nebulae (nebulas). The term artistic contact nebulae designates the physical and creative spaces where dancers, dramatists, musicians, painters, sculptors, writers, and other artists from cultures/nations in unequal power relationships grapple with and transculturate one another’s creative output.6 Among the most vibrant subsets of artistic contact nebulae are literary contact nebulae, active sites both physical and creative of readerly contact, writerly contact, and textual contact, intertwined modes of transculturation that depend to some degree on linguistic contact and often involve travel. In this context, “readerly contact” refers to reading creative texts (texts with aesthetic ambitions, imaginative writing) from cultures/nations in asymmetrical power relationships with one’s own; “writerly contact” to interactions among creative writers from conflicting societies; “textual contact” to transculturating creative texts in this environment (appropriating genres, styles, and themes, as well as transculturating individual literary works via the related and at times concomitant strategies of interpreting, adapting, translating, and intertextualizing); and “linguistic contact” to engaging with the language of the society oppressing or oppressed by one’s own.7

This book explores the dynamics of intra–East Asian literary contact nebulae in the Japanese empire between 1895 and 1945. It is the first in any language to unearth the complex relationships among the imperial Japanese, semicolonial Chinese, colonial Korean and Taiwanese, and informally colonial (i.e., occupied) Manchurian literary worlds.8 Drawing largely on sources in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, as well as English, French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese, it is based on extensive research in vernacular archives in China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Chapter 1 highlights key aspects of early twentieth-century intra–East Asian travel and linguistic, readerly, and writerly contact. But the book’s principal concern is textual con-
Introduction

tact, particularly the transculturating of individual creative works. I argue that while actively transculturating so-called “Western” literatures—the subject of most comparative scholarship on twentieth-century East Asian literatures—Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers also engaged a great deal with one another’s creative output. In so doing, they formed vibrant nebulae of intra-East Asian textual contact that intermingled with other literary and artistic contacts.

Early twentieth-century intra-East Asian literary contact nebulae diverge in two principal ways from the contact zones discussed by Pratt and others. Not unique to artistic contact spaces in the Japanese empire, these differences reveal underexamined facets of transculturation in sites of unequal power relationships, particularly empires and postimperial spaces. First, imperial encounters in early twentieth-century East Asia, far from occurring solely among peoples geographically, historically, and culturally distant (i.e., China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan vis-à-vis America and Europe), instead were dominated by exchanges among regional neighbors with longstanding relationships. As is well known, China was the cultural center of East Asia until the late nineteenth century, and Korea an active transmitter of Chinese as well as Korean culture to Japan. Internal chaos and American and European oppression in China, paired with Japan’s emergence as a colonial power at the end of the nineteenth century, radically transformed rather than introduced contacts among East Asian peoples and cultures. To be sure, early twentieth-century intra-East Asian contact nebulae intermingled with contact nebulae that more closely fit Pratt’s definition, namely those where East Asian and European/American peoples and cultures engaged with one another and established ongoing if ambivalent relations. But scholarship that posits imperial encounters, let alone power imbalances, as necessarily occurring between the West and the Rest risks becoming ensnared in some of the same biases it deconstructs. Second, as in other empires and postimperial spaces, transcultural encounters in intra-East Asian artistic contact nebulae rarely replicated either the steep hierarchies presupposed by (post)colonial and (post)semicolonial peoples, or those promoted by imperial discourse, hierarchies that at times reached the extreme of “exploitation unto death.” Instead, artistic contact nebulae are characterized by atmospheres of greater reciprocity and diminished claims of authority than those of many other (post)imperial spaces.
The fluidity of textual contact is particularly striking. Most writers are avid readers. Unable or unwilling to let the texts they consume have the final word, they often reconfigure and frequently transculturate (reconfigure across borders, however understood) genres, languages, styles, and themes, as well as individual creative works. They reconfigure interpretively—in the form of literary criticism (understood in its broadest sense as discourse on literature regardless of approach), interlingually—by translating and adapting (rewriting loosely into another language), and intertextually, weaving transposed fragments from predecessors into their own creative works. Many texts are interpretively, interlingually, and intertextually reconfigured; interpretive, interlingual, and intertextual reconfigurations themselves often intermingle within a single text. Through their reconfigurations writers not only demonstrate their grasp of literatures, languages, and aesthetics of composition, but they also both affirm and deny one another’s cultural capital and authority: the former by permanently incorporating literary predecessors into their own artistic fabrics and in so doing contributing to the survival of these texts, and the latter by picking them apart, if not dismembering them entirely. Naturally, much textual transculturation occurs among creative work from peoples not in current or recent conflict with one another. Literary engagement and struggle also frequently take place within borders. Far from uncritically endorsing discourse from their immediate cultural, geographic, and linguistic spaces, writers often contest this production and assert the validity and at times superiority of their individual beliefs and methods. Likewise, reconfiguration within the oeuvre of a single writer if not a single text is not unusual: artists rework their own narratives in later creations, with varied motives and ramifications.

The simultaneous affirming and denying of cultural capital and authority inherent in textual transculturation have particular significance when they involve groups that are in notably uneven power relationships; teasing out intra-(post)imperial networks of literary transformation enhances our understanding of local, regional, and global cultural dynamics. What are the implications of interweaving hundreds if not thousands of texts into different cultural fabrics under the conditions of empire and its aftermaths, whether interpretively, interlingually, or intertextually? Is so doing denying the validity of the host culture, and, in the case of the subjugated, granting the subjugator the final word? Transculturations, whatever their
form, permanently alter and often significantly violate the landscapes of their host cultures. They also reconstruct existing cultural products: at the same time that they integrate foreign bodies, they also dislocate if not shatter them. As in many imperial spaces, literary transculturation in early twentieth-century East Asia appeared in a highly charged political milieu in which cultural production almost inevitably involved both collaboration with and criticism of the colonial enterprise. Concentrating on artistic contacts in the Japanese imperium while interweaving discussion of related phenomena from a variety of other literary contact nebulae, this book probes the dynamics of these complex and paradoxical negotiations; it analyzes the significance of how the literary works of one space are transculturated in/by another when political relations are unequal, even openly hostile, and when one people is or recently has been under the domineering hand of another.

I am most concerned with (post)colonial and (post)semicolonial transculturation of literature from (former) metropoles, especially colonial Korean and Taiwanese, occupied Manchurian, and semicolonial Chinese writings on and adaptations, translations, and intertextualizations of Japanese literature within the Japanese empire. There is no question that imperialism deeply impacts the cultures and cultural products, including the languages and literary production, of both (post)colonial spaces and (former) metropoles. As Simon Gikandi has argued, “colonial cultures [were] central in the transformation of English identities . . . the writing of English and colonial identities becomes more complicated the greater the interaction between the two entities.” The hybridity of peoples and cultural products in empires and postimperial spaces is undeniable, and distinctions between colonized and colonizer and between their cultural products are often constructed. To be sure, in many empires and postimperial spaces, key facets of travel, linguistic contact, and writerly contact are apt to be asymmetric. Colonial and postcolonial writers tend to be proficient if not fluent in the language of the (former) imperial power, often publishing in it themselves, and many receive at least part of their education in the (former) metropole. In contrast, although a significant number of metropolitan writers make at least brief trips to their nation’s (former) colonies, they often go as tourists or, during the imperial period, as short-term promoters of empire; they rarely learn the local language(s) of these spaces, much less receive their educations there. Likewise, the desire of (post)colonial
writers to be respected by, if not join the literary establishment of the (former) metropole generally exceeds that of writers from the (former) metropole eager to become part of (post)colonial literary circles. On the other hand, readerly and textual contacts tend to be more balanced, with (post)colonial writers and those from the (former) metropole reading and transculturating one another’s creative work in diverse ways not as dependent on standing in the official imperial hierarchy.18

Writers across early twentieth-century East Asia discussed, translated, adapted, and intertextualized Chinese and, to a lesser extent, Korean and Taiwanese literatures. But Japanese literature, enjoying more cultural capital and authority than ever before in part because of Japan’s new imperial status, was the most frequently reworked East Asian textual corpus. Moreover, in contrast with their counterparts in many other colonial sites, where the most active transculturation of imperial texts took place after decolonization,19 Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers—inherited of two of the world’s longest, richest, and most voluminous literary traditions (Chinese and Korean)—transculturated thousands of Japanese novels, plays, poems, and short stories during the colonial period itself. While probing the intricate web of transcultural interactions that characterized early twentieth-century East Asian literatures, that is, the blurred boundaries and complicated relationships among the Chinese, occupied Manchurian, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese literary worlds, I am not implying that we replace sinocentrism and Eurocentrism with Japancentrism. Rather, I analyze semicolonial Chinese, occupied Manchurian, and colonial Korean and Taiwanese transculturations of Japanese literature as the most active, but by no means the only, vectors of intra–East Asian cultural negotiation.

Part of what makes the cultural flows of the Japanese empire unusually fascinating and separates them from those of most European empires is Japan’s long engagement with and oftentimes adulation of Chinese and Korean creative products. Unlike Egypt and the Arab world, which had lost significant cultural currency with Europe and the United States long before colonization, and other (post)colonial spaces in Africa, the Americas, and South and Southeast Asia, which before colonization had enjoyed only minimal cultural prestige with Western nations, China was the intellectual center of East Asia from the beginning of the Common Era until the late nineteenth century; literary Chinese remained the lingua franca for Chinese, Japanese,
and Korean scholars through the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). For a millennium or more, Chinese cultural products, including literature, circulated widely in the region, and across the centuries Japanese and Korean writers transculturated many volumes of Chinese texts. During the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) some Japanese elites began to assert superiority over Manchu China, attempting “to create the illusion of an East Asian world order that was Japanese in design and Japanese in focus.” But sinology continued to dominate Japanese intellectual life. The Tokugawa nobility eagerly purchased Chinese paintings, books from China, and Japanese reprints of Chinese works; books from China, for instance, enjoyed a large presence in the libraries of Tokugawa rulers. Between the Opium War in China (1839–42) and the first treaties between Japan and Western nations (1854), Tokugawa elites also devoured Chinese books on Europe. But the most widely circulated Chinese texts at this time were the principal works of Ming (1368–1644) and Qing vernacular fiction, most of which were translated into Japanese multiple times. In addition, Japanese literati used the Chinese vernacular in their own writing, composing dozens of popular narratives in Chinese.

The Korean cultural impact on premodern Japan also was immense. Early Korea not only was an active transmitter of Chinese culture to Japan but also was greatly admired in its own right. Japanese leaders coveted the talents of Korean intellectuals and artisans: in the seventh century, they welcomed Korean literati refugees; during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they requested that Korean specialists in ink painting and calligraphy accompany official Korean embassies to Japan; and during military operations against Korea between 1592 and 1598, they kidnapped Korean artists and plundered Korean libraries. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Tokugawa government went to great lengths to impress visiting Koreans with Japanese greatness, but Japanese artists, eager to learn from their Korean colleagues, are reported to have sought the advice of Korean envoys at all hours of the day and night. Respect for Korean judgment was so high that Korean endorsement of a work of Japanese art virtually guaranteed its success.

Circumstances changed significantly in the nineteenth century. China’s loss to Great Britain in the Opium War and the subsequent establishment of numerous foreign treaty ports on its soil, combined with Japan’s emergence as a unified state after the Meiji Restoration
of 1868, dealt a large blow to China’s leverage in East Asian political and cultural affairs. Sinology, to be sure, remained an important discipline in Japan and Korea well into the twentieth century. But the Japanese turned increasingly to the United States and Europe and strengthened their nation in part by transculturating Western economic, political, social, and cultural institutions. Impressed by Japan’s success at thwarting Western imperialist ventures, Chinese and Koreans wrote volumes on their East Asian neighbor.25 As the Korean reformer Yun Ch’iho (1865–1945) ecstatically proclaimed on his brief visit to Tokyo in 1893:

Japan is perhaps the most delightful country in the world at least to me. The politeness of the people, their cleanliness, their obliging disposition, their hospitality, their high mindedness, their pretty women, their clean streets . . . their bath-houses . . . all this and other innumerable agreeable little ways and things just made me intoxicated with perfect delight . . . If I had the means to choose my home at my pleasure, Japan would be the country. I don’t want to live in China with its abominable smells or in America where racial prejudice and discrimination hold their horrid sway, or in Corea as long as its infernal government lasts. O blessed Japan! The Paradise of the East! The Garden of the World!26

Far from universal, Yun Ch’iho’s impressions nevertheless were emblematic of a notable shift in East Asian cultural authority from China, and secondarily Korea, to Japan.

Japan’s decisive victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) cemented its position as the flourishing prototype of a new Asian modernity; this acclaim was reinforced by its defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5).27 Intra–East Asian travel, as well as linguistic, writerly, readerly, and textual contact, however uneven and ambiguous because of Japan’s dual position as imperial power and gateway to coveted Western science and culture, were hallmarks of early twentieth-century intra–East Asian literary contact nebulae. Just as (post)colonial African, Caribbean, East-Central European, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and South and Southeast Asian writers often were educated in imperial metropoles, so too did the majority of East Asia’s prominent colonial and semicolonial literary figures study in or at least visit Japan. The preeminent Chinese writer Guo Moruo (1892–1978) once asserted: “The modern Chinese literary world has been constructed for the most part by writers who studied in Japan. . . . We can even say that China’s new literature was baptized by Japan.”28 Experience in Japan was also important for writers hailing from occupied Manchuria,29 and was even more decisive for
Korean and Taiwanese literatures; it is generally understood that three-quarters of Korea’s and Taiwan’s major early twentieth-century writers received at least part of their educations in Japan or spent significant time there. In addition, just as European writers frequently traveled to colonial sites, nearly all of Japan’s principal early twentieth-century writers visited China, however briefly, and many also traveled to Korea, occupied Manchuria, and Taiwan.

Linguistic contact involved even more writers than did travel. To be sure, although generally trained in classical Chinese, few early twentieth-century Japanese intellectuals were proficient in vernacular Chinese, much less Korean, and still fewer Chinese and Taiwanese intellectuals knew Korean. But imperial Japanese language policies, like those of other metropoles, mandated Japanese language instruction in schools in Korea, Taiwan, and occupied Manchuria. This ensured that most writers from these regions had at least a rudimentary knowledge of Japanese. Chinese institutions began offering Japanese language instruction in the late 1890s, and Japanese engaged in a number of cultural enterprises in China, but the early twentieth-century Chinese writers who learned Japanese often obtained most of their training in Japan. The large numbers of early twentieth-century Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers who attended Japanese institutions both at home and in Japan, as well as those who, whether or not they spent time in Japan, read and translated Japanese literature and published creative work in Japanese, in many cases long before they were prohibited from publishing in Chinese and Korean, together demonstrate significant intra-East Asian linguistic contact throughout the (semi)colonial period. Linguistic contact was particularly complex in Taiwan, where writers negotiated among modern Japanese, literary Chinese, vernacular Mandarin, and vernacular Taiwanese dialects, but throughout the empire it resulted in the production of intriguingly hybridized translingual and transnational creative work.

Travel and linguistic contact open wider doors to readerly, writerly, and textual contact. Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese readers alike voraciously consumed creative works by preeminent contemporary Chinese writers, particularly Lu Xun (1881–1936). Even more striking was how eagerly Chinese, Koreans, and Taiwanese devoured Japanese literature: by most estimates, they read more Japanese drama, poetry, and prose during the first decades of the twentieth century than their predecessors had in the previous thousand years com-
bined.36 Such readerly experiences prompted many colonial/semi-
colonial East Asians who had been focusing on engineering, medi-
cine, and other more practical professions themselves to become writ-
ers. Intra-East Asian readerly contact frequently intertwined with
writerly contact as budding writers and established literary figures
alike sought out their East Asian counterparts at home and abroad.
From early in the imperial period, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and
Taiwanese writers regularly socialized with one another, joined one
another’s literary societies, published in one another’s periodicals,
and forged deep friendships. But imperial discourse and embedded
biases exacted their toll, complicating these artistic relationships.

For much of the (semi)colonial period intra-East Asian writerly
contact consisted of unstable amalgams of supporting and under-
mining one another’s creative output. So too did textual contact, the
most striking aspect of intra-East Asian literary contact nebulae.
Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese writings on and adaptations, trans-
lations, and intertextualizations of Chinese literature were significant
at this time, as were Chinese and Japanese transculturations of Korean
literature, but Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese transculturations of
Japanese creative works numerically overshadowed other intra-East
Asian textual contacts. Relatively few studies that discuss East Asian
cultures in a comparative context have explored this dynamic literary
engagement. Rather, the principal concerns have been 1) Japanese,
Korean, and Taiwanese fascination, if not obsession, with classical
Chinese literature and culture until the early twentieth century; 2)
twentieth-century Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese frenetic
consumption of Western literatures and cultures; 3) late twentieth-
and early twenty-first century intra-East Asian popular culture flows;
and 4) American and European enthrallment with the “Orient.”37
Western-language studies that explore modern intra-East Asian lit-
erary relationships tend not to focus on the transculturation of specific
literary works. They analyze parallels, reveal how Japanese creative
texts served as windows on the West, and examine the appropria-
tion of literary genres, styles, and themes. Certainly modern Chi-
nese, Koreans, and Taiwanese involved themselves profoundly with
American and European literatures, this engagement regularly sur-
passing their engagement with Japanese literature. Just as occasional
nineteenth-century colonial Bengali writers longed to be labeled the
“clones” of certain English writers, so too some early twentieth-
century Chinese writers became involved in what Leo Lee has dubbed
a “fetish of personal identification” with their Western counterparts.\textsuperscript{38}

It is also true that Japan and its literature facilitated Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese encounters with American and European literatures. Colonial and semicolonial writers likewise frequently emulated Japanese language reforms and appropriated prominent Japanese literary genres—including the political novel, free-verse poetry, the I-novel, proletarian fiction, modernist poetry and prose, and even battlefront literature. But, just as important, they also transculturated individual texts. Examining these transculturations can shed new insight into the dynamic cultural struggles and negotiations that take place in spaces of dramatically unbalanced power relationships, and in the Japanese empire specifically.

Scholars in East Asia today are focusing increasingly on the intertextualizing of modern Japanese literature in Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese creative works, yet they usually speak of the resulting relationships as manifesting “influence.” The influence paradigm allows critics to establish writers’ interactions with literary predecessors, but it also frequently assumes a relatively straightforward transfer of commodities from a “creator” to a “receiver,” implying simple (post)colonial and (post)semicolonial appropriation or absorption of Japanese cultural products. In reality, far from demonstrating subaltern indebtedness, Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese engagements with Japanese texts often expose fundamental ambivalence toward Japan and its cultural products. The modern literature of the imperial overlord was simultaneously embraced and rejected and its cultural capital and authority both acknowledged and severely challenged as colonial and semicolonial East Asians constructed and deconstructed identities. The weaving of metropolitan creative works into (post)colonial and (post)semicolonial artistic fabrics ripples with meaning in many directions and is a central—yet often, in the case of East Asia, overlooked—component of empire.

\textit{Situating Literary Contact Nebulae in the Japanese Empire}

Our understanding of empire, and the Japanese empire in particular, derives in good part from accounts that focus on the doctrines and methods of imperial state formation as absorbed voluntarily or under duress by colonial and semicolonial peoples. This absorption has been presented as occurring in two principal forms. Imperial powers, often with the support of local collaborators, impose policies that enable them to increase political and economic penetration; these
policies generally exploit colonial and semicolonial resources and frequently attempt to assimilate colonial and semicolonial peoples. In contrast, colonial and semicolonial peoples, as part of national self-strengthening, enthusiastically seek out from imperial powers what they regard as superior ideas and institutions. Both these modalities of foreign system integration posit a clear hierarchy, whether of oppressor/oppressed or benefactor/supplicant. Yet more fluid forms of transculturation also proliferate in empire, particularly in artistic contact nebulae. In these ambiguous social spaces, which include both physical sites and creative products, people from societies in unequal power relationships grapple with one another’s cultural output in atmospheres of increased reciprocity and diminished hierarchies of authority. Recent scholarship on settler colonialism has exposed complex interactions among authorities based in imperial capitals, local administrators, metropolitan settlers, and colonial/semicolonial peoples of all ranks, yet its focus on ideology, law and representation, and struggles over land and labor obscures the massive transcultural negotiations that also occur in empire.39

Japanese Encroachments and Impositions

At its most bloated in 1942, the Japanese empire stretched from the borders of Burma and India to the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific, and from Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians to the rainforests of New Guinea.40 Japan’s territorial encroachment on East Asia accelerated in 1895, with its military victory over China and acquisition of Taiwan as its first colony. After defeating Russia in 1905, the Japanese colonized southern Sakhalin and established Korea as their protectorate; in 1910 they annexed Korea outright. Japan also continued to gnaw away at China geographically and economically. The Japanese obtained the South Manchurian leasehold (Liaodong Peninsula) in 1905 under the terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth and in 1914 took over the German concession in Shandong and German islands in the Pacific. Japan seized Manchuria (northeast China) in 1931, establishing the puppet state (informal colony) of Manchukuo in 1932. Full-scale war with China erupted at Marco Polo Bridge outside Beijing in July 1937, and by 1938 Japan controlled the eastern coast of China (including Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai), part of Inner Mongolia, and all of Manchuria. During the early twentieth century, the Japanese also enjoyed substantial economic control over additional areas of China. The Boxer Protocol of 1901, four follow-up agreements with

In addition to imposing political, military, and economic demands on the region, the Japanese also pursued their vision of becoming the cultural leader of East Asia. Colonial authorities advocated regimes of dōka (assimilation into Japanese culture and loss of ethnic and national identity) and kōminka (conversion into dutiful imperial subjects), attempting to strip Koreans and Taiwanese of their identities. In Korea, the governor-general and his ruthless police force, composed of both Japanese and Korean officers, encroached on every area of colonial life, including urban planning, commerce, education, health and public welfare, language, morals, politics, public services, publishing, and religion.41 Efforts to integrate Koreans more fully into the empire increased after Japan seized Manchuria in 1931. The strategy of naisen ittai (unification of the homeland and Korea), a radical social experiment introduced after the beginning of all-out war with China in 1937, called for the Korean people’s total Japanization in “form, mind, blood, and flesh.”42 Koreans were ordered to take Japanese names, worship at Shinto shrines, and speak and write only in Japanese. By the end of the colonial period, approximately one-quarter of the Korean population and most of the Korean elite knew Japanese, compared with less than 1 percent in 1913.43

The Japanese invested considerably fewer resources in managing Taiwan than Korea, but on the whole they pursued similar policies of oppression. The colonial police controlled nearly all civil affairs, imposing agriculture, hygiene, tax, and security regulations and intruding into a wide variety of personal matters. Japanese exploitation of the Qing baojia (Jpn. hokō) structure of mutual household surveillance enforced tight control over the Taiwanese population. For its part, Japanese-language training worked to alienate Taiwanese from China and integrate them into the Japanese cultural sphere. In the late 1930s, striving to integrate the island into Japan culturally as well as economically, militarily, and politically, the Japanese also expected Taiwanese to adopt Japanese names, publish only in Japanese, and pay homage to the Japanese sun goddess Amaterasu. When Taiwan was returned to China in 1945, more than half the population knew at least some spoken Japanese, up from less than 1 percent in 1905.44
Unlike its colonization of Korea and Taiwan, Japanese encroachment on the Chinese mainland was primarily economic and military. Japan engaged in a number of cultural enterprises in China, but these paled against its economic and military weight. The principal exception was in the puppet state of Manchuria. Although authorities there described the informal colony as a space of *gozoku kyōwa* (five races in harmony), the Japanese imposed their way of life on the existing population: they designated Shinto the national religion and declared Japanese the first national language to be learned throughout the territory. In many respects occupied Manchuria was no more sovereign than Japan’s formal colonies.

**Compliance and Collaboration**

Early in the colonial period, local resistance movements successfully tempered some of the most oppressive Japanese policies. Their effectiveness quickly waned, however, and compliance and collaboration—often present well before formal colonization and almost always necessary for the success of colonial enterprises—soon became virtually unavoidable. Starting early in the colonial period, nearly all channels of upward mobility in Korea and Taiwan were located in Japanese-dominated institutions and required knowledge of the Japanese language. The mobilization campaigns of the late 1930s and early 1940s ensured that much of the colonial population was involved in the Japanese war effort—from elites, including writers such as the Korean poet Im Haksu (1911–82), propagandizing for Japan both at home and on foreign battlefields, to laborers working in Japan, to comfort women serving and soldiers fighting in the Japanese army, to uneducated farmers spying on their neighbors, to children taken out of school to toil in factories and fields.

Colonial authorities promoted the genres of *shinnichi bungaku* (pro-Japanese literature) and *kōmin bungaku* (imperial-subject literature), which endorsed the Japanese imperialist agenda and often were written in Japanese. A variety of factors motivated Koreans, Taiwanese, and Chinese, particularly those in occupied areas, to write texts in this vein: like collaborators in other arenas, some believed their actions ultimately would benefit their homelands, some feared the repercussions of not supporting the colonial power, and some were swept away by colonial propaganda. On the other hand, pro-Japanese and imperial-subject literature represented only a fraction
of most writers’ total creative output, and despite its enthusiastic rhetoric it often revealed ambivalence vis-à-vis Japan.

The volumes of Japanese-language works by Koreans, Taiwanese, and to a lesser extent Chinese that do not explicitly promote Japanese designs on East Asia are even more ambiguous. Writing in the language of the (former) imperial power is a common phenomenon in empire and postimperial spaces, and no small number of Koreans and Taiwanese composed at least some of their texts in Japanese. Significantly, many did so long before the Japanese government officially banned publication in Chinese and Korean late in the colonial period. Written by colonial peoples for both Japanese and transcultural audiences, creating what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have somewhat condescendingly termed “minor literatures” (literatures in “major” languages by “minority” groups), these Japanese-language texts embody the contradictions of cultural production in empire. But so do those by Taiwanese and Koreans written in Chinese and Korean, especially after these languages were officially prohibited. Choice of language, often tied deeply to questions of national, cultural, and personal identity, can be a simple artistic prerogative but frequently is also a political statement and at times a revolutionary act. Yet, as is often true of texts by multilingual writers, the rhetoric of Korean and Taiwanese Japanese-language literary works is frequently even more significant than the language in which they are crafted. The translingual nature of creative texts by Koreans and Taiwanese—their incorporating Japanese vocabulary and syntax into Korean—and Chinese-language works and Chinese, Korean, and Hokkien (Taiwanese) vocabulary and syntax into Japanese-language works—expands the perimeters and obfuscates the boundaries of individual languages. And regardless of the language in which they are written, these works often negotiate intensely with the cultural products of the imperial power.

Chinese resisted Japanese expansion on the mainland as early as the Twenty-One Demands (1915) and May Fourth Movement (1919), and anti-Japanese boycotts broke out in major cities after the Japanese takeover of Manchuria (1931). Yet compliance and collaboration with the Japanese imperialist agenda also were common, particularly in Japanese-occupied regions. Shortly after all-out war erupted in 1937, the Japanese attempted to coerce local Chinese talent into creating literary works and staging theatrical productions that supported the Japanese occupation of China. Chinese writers ultimately produced
very few creative texts that explicitly advocated Japanese imperialism, but some participated in Sino-Japanese cultural functions and wrote testimonials and editorials supporting the Japanese. Chinese wrote in Japanese in much smaller numbers than their Korean and Taiwanese counterparts, but their Japanese-language literature raises many of the same questions. Imperialism in occupied Manchuria was more collaborative than in other areas of China. In the early 1940s, the Japanese easily mobilized writers there to assist with war propaganda, yet, as in China proper, state-sponsored organizations had little impact on the literature created. On the other hand, despite the ardent patriotism of the Manchurian warlord Zhang Xueliang (1901–2001), the nationalist protest against Japan was not nearly as vocal as the myth of widespread resistance in Manchuria suggests.

Self-Strengthening Initiatives

As in many colonial spaces, the lines distinguishing collaboration, acquiescence, and resistance were blurred throughout East Asia for much of the early twentieth century. Some of what the Japanese foisted on China, occupied Manchuria, Korea, and Taiwan was never accepted, some was embraced, and much was simply endured. At the same time, colonial and semicolonial peoples actively sought out and enthusiastically incorporated what they considered more advanced knowledge from Japan. Chinese, Koreans, and Taiwanese became deeply involved with national self-strengthening as Japan tightened its grip on East Asia. They hoped to stem the increasing tide of Japanese (and, in the case of China, Western) imperialism, establish independent legitimacy, and be recognized regionally and globally. Believing educational opportunities in their homelands insufficient, whether because of Japanese-imposed quotas in Korea, Taiwan, and occupied Manchuria (where the Japanese reserved most seats at the best schools for Japanese) or an outdated system in the rest of China, hundreds of thousands of colonial and semicolonial elites chose to study in Japan. While there, they became deeply engrossed in the social and political currents swirling in the metropole, including socialism, anarchism, communism, and feminism, which they believed could bolster their societies. Language reform was another pressing concern of colonial and semicolonial intellectuals, no small number of whom were inspired by Japan’s recent genbun itchi (unity of speech and writing) movement. For instance, the many versions of baihua (the new written vernacular) that proliferated in
China in the 1920s were hybrids not only of classical Chinese, the premodern vernacular, and contemporary colloquial speech but also of Japanese and Western syntactical structures. Similarly, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chinese, Koreans, and Taiwanese transplanted into their languages hundreds of Japanese verbal compounds, many of which paradoxically had their origins in China, with altered meanings. In these and other ways, colonial and semicolonial peoples actively followed Japanese blueprints in the hopes of building up, if not liberating, their homelands.

**Literary Contact Nebulae**

In addition to impositions by imperial fiat and self-strengthening by the (semi)colonized, a third and frequently overlooked modality of foreign system integration in empire is the transnational cultural negotiation that takes place in artistic contact nebulae, spaces of greater reciprocity and diminished claims of authority. Throughout the early twentieth century, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Taiwanese grappled with and transculturated one another’s films, music, nonverbal arts, folk arts, comedy, popular culture, and a variety of media phenomena, including the moga (modern girl). For instance, both Japanese and Koreans reconfigured the folk ballad “Arirang,” making this song of lost love and homesickness one of the most widely known pieces of music in the empire. As E. Taylor Atkins notes:

> Although a song of Korean origin . . . its flexible lyrical and melodic structure made it possible for Koreans and Japanese to adapt it for different expressive purposes. It proved malleable enough to articulate Korean indignation toward Japanese colonial domination, Japanese fantasies of a primordial Korean wonderland, and the ambivalence of both peoples toward the transformative effects of modernity.

But East Asian literatures were also dominant vehicles of intraempire cultural negotiation. Although seldom enjoying the cachet of Western literatures, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese literatures were dynamically consumed and transculturated throughout the empire, and their active circulation resulted in a surprisingly integrated East Asian print culture decades before Japanese authorities and colonial/semicolonial collaborators called for the creation of such an entity. The reciprocal flow and transculturation of texts between China and both Korea and Taiwan was more sizable than it had ever been; the early twentieth century also marked the first significant literary exchanges between Korea and Taiwan. Not sur-
Introduction

prisingly, Chinese readers in occupied Manchuria, many of whom had embraced China’s contemporary literature before Japanese occupation, remained avid consumers of it. At the same time, Japanese gradually began reading and transculturating contemporary Korean, Taiwanese, and particularly Chinese literatures. Still, the flows of Japanese literature to Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese readers, not to mention the streams of adaptations, translations, critical studies, and intertextualizations of Japanese literature by colonial and semicolonial writers, were the largest.

To be sure, a handful of Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers—including the prominent Chinese reformer Liang Qichao (1873–1929)—believed Japanese literature (in Liang’s case the Japanese political novel) a superior product that had contributed directly to Japan’s economic and military success and thought that if it were disseminated and reproduced in their societies it would have a similar effect. Others found that Japanese literature provided a welcome window into Western literatures; they believed that if they emulated Japanese literature, they would elevate the status of their homelands. In addition, the dichotomy of (semi)colonizer/(semi)colonized, although mediated, often persisted in literary negotiations; Japanese writers welcomed Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers into their homes and literary coteries and published large quantities of their creative work, yet seldom treated them as true equals. But relegating early twentieth-century intra–East Asian cultural negotiation to submissive Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese imitation of a more advanced culture or to dominant Japanese control over colonial and semicolonial cultural production obscures the complex and ambiguous dynamics of these interplays and ignores a major component of empire, its “web of mutually constitutive discursive networks.”

For most of the colonial period, cross-cultural currents were created willingly by enthusiastic Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese readers and writers; before the outbreak of total war with China in 1937, the Japanese government did little to impose Japan’s literature on other Asians. The one exception was students, who encountered it in required textbooks. Beginning early in the colonial period, the Japanese established numerous libraries in Korea and Taiwan, making hundreds of thousands of Japanese books, including tens of thousands of creative texts, available to colonial and semicolonial peoples. But the Japanese did not force them to read these literary works. In Manchuria, Japanese authorities destroyed hundreds of
thousands of Chinese books immediately after taking over the region in 1931; they stocked the newly emptied shelves with Japanese books and severely restricted textual inflows from China proper. The Japanese believed it imperative to sever cultural ties between Manchuria and the remainder of China. Literature was a principal target of these endeavors because the Manchurian literary field was closely integrated with that of Beijing, Shanghai, and other Chinese literary centers. But even in occupied Manchuria, the Japanese authorities did not require residents to read Japanese literary works, much less transculturate them. Expatriate Japanese communities, often with the cooperation of local leaders, occasionally used Japanese plays and other creative works to attempt to inculcate colonial and semi-colonial peoples with “Japanese values.” Yet these projects, including the March 1919 Kabuki initiative in Korea, were market-driven, not compulsory. Even the Japanese government’s official cultural agency—the Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai (K.B.S. or Society for International Cultural Relations, est. 1934)—which actively promoted Japanese culture outside Asia, put very low priority on distributing Japanese literature in China and the colonies.

Most exports of Japanese literature to China, occupied Manchuria, Korea, and Taiwan depended on the initiative of private citizens. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Japanese publishers, bookstores, and entrepreneurs looked to these areas, where the numbers of both Japanese settlers and local people able to read Japanese were steadily increasing, as attractive markets for the mountains of unsold enpōn (one-yen books) and other books that overflowed warehouses in Japan. Private companies such as the Teikoku Tosho Fukyūkai (Society for the Popularization of Imperial Books) sold Japanese remainders in Korea, Taiwan, and occupied Manchuria, while organizations close to the state, including the South Manchuria Railway Company, facilitated the distribution of literary works to China, occupied Manchuria, Korea, and Taiwan, where both Japanese settlers and local peoples welcomed them. Also, it is important to remember that throughout the Japanese empire there was no shortage of Western literature in translation for those eager to read foreign texts. For most of the imperial period, reading Japanese literature outside of school, much less transculturating it, was almost always a deliberate choice.

It has long been understood that regulating cultural production and consumption is one of the most effective means of controlling societies, and scholars increasingly are examining the relationship
between culture and imperialism, including writing as an instrument or enabler of empire. But only after the outbreak of total war with China in 1937, following decades of voluntary consumption and transculturation, did the Japanese state actively promote Japanese literature in China, Korea, and Taiwan in any systematic way. Beginning in the late 1930s it dispatched Japanese writers across East Asia, where they were joined by film experts, painters, publishers, reporters, and theater figures. Artists were sent “to bear witness to Japan’s superior culture” and to use their creative products as propaganda tools. The Japanese also encouraged translation of their literature in occupied areas of China, where comprehension of the Japanese language was not as widespread as in Korea and Taiwan. In addition, they began employing the rubric of *Dai Tōa bungaku* (Greater East Asian literature), arguing that literature could bring disparate regions together “under the unifying code of the Japanese language.” The diffusion of haiku and *waka* (short, fixed-syllable Japanese poems) throughout the empire was an important part of this process. As Faye Kleeman has noted, “the colonial poetic cartography closely parallels the outline of political and military conquest, spanning an area from the Kurile Islands to Manchuria, Korea, Taiwan, and the South Pacific.”

Culminating Japan’s efforts to use literature to unite the empire were the Dai Tōa Bungakusha Taikai (Greater East Asian Writers Conferences) of the early 1940s, which assembled first in Tokyo (1942, 1943) and then in Nanjing (1944) and brought together leading writers, editors, and critics from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, occupied Manchuria, Mongolia, and other parts of Asia. These meetings generally are believed to mark the formation of an East Asian literary sphere centered on the Japanese cultural tradition and coterminous with the Japanese empire. In fact, by the time they were convened, twentieth-century Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Taiwanese had been engaging in travel and linguistic, readerly, writerly, and textual contact for decades, creating literary contact nebulae oddly suggestive of, but in the end very different from, the imperial cultural ambit trumpeted by the Japanese state. The willing and enthusiastic engagement of colonial and semicolonial East Asians with Japanese literature is significant, not only in light of their historical spurning of Japanese culture, but also considering the oppressive political, cultural, economic, and military policies Japan foisted on the region after 1895.
Boundaries among East Asian authors and literatures were fogged during the colonial period as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers worked with one another and with one another’s creative products. Writers published in lands in which they had not been born or raised or with which they did not identify most closely, in forms and styles not habitual to the languages used, and in languages that were not their ostensible “mother tongues” or did not “match” their cultures. The Palestinian Arab writer Anton Shammas (1950–), who publishes in both Hebrew and Arabic, has commented on the insecurity this situation can provoke: “I feel an exile in Arabic, the language of my blood. I feel an exile in Hebrew, my stepmother tongue.”76 Similarly, the contemporary English-language writer Ha Jin (1956–) captures well the problems inherent in associating language with nation/culture, and, more generally, in dividing peoples and cultural products along national lines. Born and raised in China but having lived in the United States since the mid-1980s, he once remarked, “without question, I am a Chinese writer, not an American-Chinese poet, though I write in English. If this sounds absurd, the absurdity is historical rather than personal . . . since I can hardly publish anything in Chinese now.”77

Recent discussions concerning the “borders” of “national” literatures have focused on the relationships among languages and individual, cultural, and national identities. We have questioned how to categorize exophonic writing, that is to say texts an author writes in languages other than his/her “native” tongue.78 Likewise, we have interrogated how to classify translocal writing, that is, texts a writer publishes outside his/her homeland or adopted home (however loosely defined); we also have probed how to think about translingual writing, in this case texts published in a language not usually associated with or not “native” to the place of publication (the latter includes a substantial subset of the Francophone, Lusophone, sinophone, etc.). More controversially, we have questioned how to categorize texts where writer and language “belong” to different nations or cultures (e.g., Japanese-language texts by so-called “non-Japanese”).79 Although texts such as these have often fallen through the cracks, marginalized on account of an ultimately constructed homelessness (the work of readers, writers, and scholars alike), they are best understood as inherently transcultural, as contact nebulae belonging to several heterogeneous literary worlds.80
This is even more true of textual transculturations. Interpretive, interlingual, and intertextual transculturations long have been understood as facilitating the cross-pollination of literary worlds. Nevertheless, adaptations and translations tend to be marginalized, dismissed as derivatives of the same literature (often national/cultural) as the texts they transculturate, and they are rarely talked about as components of the literatures associated with the languages they employ; for their part, interpretive and intertextual transculturations are often discussed as belonging solely to literary spheres distinct from the texts they transculturate. In fact, like their sources (which also transculturate predecessors), they also belong to and bring together multiple heterogeneous literary corpuses.81

But for clarity, and to highlight the interplays among what conventionally have been discussed as the relatively separate spheres of twentieth-century Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese literatures, in this book the modifiers Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese that precede such terms as “literary work,” “criticism,” and “intertextualization” refer to the primary identity of the writer/transculturator, regardless of the language or place of publication of the text. Modifiers preceding “adaptation” and “translation” refer both to the target language and to the primary identity of the adapter/translator (e.g., “Chinese translation” = translation into the Chinese language by someone generally considered or considering him/herself to be Chinese). Exceptions and ambiguities are discussed on a case-by-case basis. Nationality, culture, and national and cultural identities can be notoriously arbitrary and are often multiple, particularly in cases of people who have spent substantial time in and identify with multiple places, who are born to parents with different cultural identities, whose homelands have been overtaken by peoples of other identities, or who have not spent much if any time in their ostensible “homelands.” Moreover, the constructed and often manipulated categories “Chinese,” “Japanese,” “Korean,” and “Taiwanese,” not to mention “Western”—whether they refer to individuals, societies, languages, or literatures—are far from discrete homogenous entities.82 These designations naturally obscure major differences, differences that require continued scholarly attention. But separation along these lines also obscures distinctive transcultural interfaces and contact nebulae. Both the Japanese language and the many divisions within Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese literatures helped to promote links with like-minded writers else-
where in the empire, creating a hybrid transnational early twentieth-century East Asian literary field.

_Empire of Texts in Motion_

This book concentrates on literary contact nebulae in early twentieth-century East Asia in order to help transform our understanding of the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese cultural landscapes, as well as of the Japanese empire more broadly. But it also posits a research agenda for the study of texts consumed and created in other nineteenth- and twentieth-century empires and their aftermaths. More broadly, it opens pathways for examining literary works produced in the context of unequal power relationships, whether we approach these texts from the standpoint of comparative literature, world literature, area studies, cultural studies, history, or some combination of these and other methodologies. Even cultural products never consumed outside narrow communities of origin do not stand alone, untouched by predecessors, indifferent to contemporaries, unnoticed by successors; how much more deeply intertwined with other cultural products are the countless texts that traverse cultural and political lines? The many unexplored interactions among the literatures and literary worlds of colonial, semicolonial, and otherwise subjugated African, Caribbean, East-Central European, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and South and Southeast Asian spaces on the one hand, and American and European literatures of all eras on the other, are vitally important areas of further study. Also important are the literary dialogues emerging from religious, regional, and internal struggles and colonialisms as well as inter-(semi)colonial networks and rivalries, the regularly overlooked yet strikingly complex relationships among postcolonial and postsemicolonial literatures and those of former imperial but often still hegemonic powers, the frequent overhauls of “canonical” works that appear in texts by women, minorities, immigrants, and other disenfranchised groups, and the engagement of “canonical” texts with marginalized literatures. Regardless of specialization, in the future we need to do more to contextualize peoples, texts, and phenomena beyond their immediate cultural and geographical surroundings. This book replaces comfort zones with contact nebulae by unraveling tangled transcultural webs of consumption and production. It hypothesizes that for understanding most literatures and cultures, particularly those of nineteenth- and twentieth-century empires and their aftermaths, it is
essential to analyze how creative texts are transspatialized and how spaces are transtextualized. That is to say, how writers throughout metropoles, colonies, semicolonies, postimperial spaces, and other regions, by negotiating with and ultimately transforming one another’s creative products, cracked apart textual bodies, incorporating intra-empire literary fragments large and small into their own cultural spaces, and in so doing further hybridizing these spaces and those of their predecessors.

As we proceed, it is worthwhile to bear in mind the approach of the French literature scholar Victor Brombert:

No single theoretical formulation, however ingenious, can possibly accommodate the specific thrust and quality of a given work. Wary of preformatted definitions, I have preferred to be an attentive reader and interpreter of the works under discussion, to remain flexible in my approach. . . . What mattered to me in all cases was to respect the texture and inner coherence of the works in question.83

Drawing from a diverse array of primary and critical sources, I aim to reveal the interactions among writers and texts as multifaceted and in many cases resisting classification.

Chapter 1 probes the scale and complexity of both travel and readerly and writerly contact in the Japanese empire, allowing fuller appreciation of the textual contact that took place in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century East Asia. As in most imperial spaces, texts by metropolitan writers had a greater immediacy to colonial and semicolonial literary figures than products of unfamiliar hands from alien lands. Japanese creative works were more than discrete artifacts to be at once emulated and despised because of their production in a more modernized society with oppressive colonial/semicolonial policies. Instead, as the output of writers whom they sometimes knew personally, and the output of a metropole with which they often were intimately familiar, Japanese literary works embodied some of the greatest ambiguities confronting colonial and semicolonial intellectuals.

After Chapter 1, the narrative focuses on textual contact and divides into two parts, the first dealing with interpretive and interlingual transculturations (critical studies, adaptations, and translations) and the second with intertextual transculturations of Japanese literature. All three are explored as taking place within a context of polyvectoral intra–East Asian and inter-regional (primarily East Asian and Western) transculturation. Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese critical studies, adaptations, translations, and intertextualizations
of Japanese literature, of which only a handful existed before the twentieth century, formed the dominant but not the only current of intra–East Asian textual contact in Japan’s colonial and semicolonial imperium. Numbering in the thousands, these transculturations are a vital but little-known part of the swirling vortex of peoples, ideas, and texts that characterized cultural contact in early twentieth-century East Asia. They also embody a fundamental characteristic of the colonial and semicolonial landscape: the blending of resistance, acquiescence, and collaboration. Their presence grants importance, if not narrative and cultural capital and authority, to the Japanese texts they transculturate. On the other hand, whether interpretive, interlingual, or intertextual, these transculturations offer novel interpretations that frequently challenge the validity of prior textual assumptions and often overturn established works. Moreover, in selecting which Japanese texts to transculturate, Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers often deviated from the Japanese bundan (literary establishment), creating alternative Japanese canons.

Part I examines intra–East Asian critical studies, adaptations, and translations of early twentieth-century Japanese literature in the context of interpretive and interlingual transculturation in empire. Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers interpretively and interlingually interwove hundreds of Japanese novels, plays, poems, and short stories into their own cultural fabrics, reversing the sinocentric cultural flow that had dominated East Asia for centuries. Chapter 2, focusing on Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese critical writings about Japanese literature, is concerned both with the anxiety of colonial and semicolonial intellectuals vis-à-vis the creative products of the imperial hegemon and with explicit challenges to imperial cultural capital and authority. Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on colonial and semicolonial adaptations and translations of Japanese literature, from exceptionally free to nearly literal transpositions. These chapters, bisected by the Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese new culture and literature movements of the late 1910s and early 1920s, emphasize the conflicting functions of adapting/ translating in the East Asian colonial and semicolonial sphere. Throughout, I highlight the inherent paradox of interpreting, adapting, and translating: the concurrent validating and denying of cultural capital and authority through the selection of texts and the manner of transculturation, key issues in empire and other spaces of unbalanced power relationships.
Part II brings out the ambivalence of intertextual transculturation and the implications of simultaneously pulling apart Japanese literature and interweaving—often relatively silently—it’s fragments into colonial and semicolonial creative work. It relates this phenomenon to intertextualizing in empire more generally. Chapter 5 highlights the critical significance of intertextuality as a literary strategy employed by politically and socially subordinated writers and summarizes how early twentieth-century Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers incorporated transposed allusions to Japanese literature into their creative texts. Subsequent chapters address three of the most pressing problems confronting early twentieth-century East Asians in a context of international strife and imperialist pressure on each of the societies involved. Chapter 6 looks at how Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese literary works intertextually transculturate Japanese literary works to give new perspectives on suffering. Chapter 7 demonstrates how colonial and semicolonial writers use intertexts from Japanese literature to interrogate the construction and dynamics of relationships, whether interpersonal—among lovers, relatives, friends, comrades, enemies, or strangers—or intrasocietal, between people and their communities or homelands more generally. Chapter 8 explores how Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese intertextualizations problematize Japanese constructions of agency. The book concludes with a brief epilogue addressing postwar intra-East Asian cultural negotiation. Analyzing literature and other artistic genres that quickly rebounded from wartime and resumed their roles as key transcultural conduits allows us to move beyond studying postwar Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese cultural products in isolation, focusing primarily on the nature of their encounters with the contemporary West, and discussing only popular culture as transcending frontiers.

In light of the massive transspatializing of texts and transtextualizing of spaces that took place in early twentieth-century East Asia, how separate are what have been designated modern “Chinese,” “Japanese,” “Korean,” and “Taiwanese” literatures? More generally, to what extent should we refine our understanding of national literatures—looking more closely at transculturation and contact nebulae within national cubbyholes—and to what extent should the paradigm of national literatures be displaced, with the focus shifted to spatial and textual contact nebulae themselves? Political borders are rarely stable, cultural and linguistic boundaries even less so, but cross-
border contacts often are precisely what stimulate assertions of difference; flows and interactions of peoples and cultural products consistently obfuscate boundaries, but by triggering identity anxieties they frequently reinforce them as well. Divisions along national and linguistic lines provide the substrate of much humanistic discourse. But increasingly, scholarship on the networks that inspire and reject such divisions is projecting a tantalizing vision of diverse contact nebulae made up of churning and intermingling cultural vectors.

The future of comparative literature lies partly in exploring more fully the dynamics of literary contact nebulae, understood broadly; the future of humanistic area studies requires examining cultural products in regional and global perspective. The current spotlight on habitually disregarded peoples and cultural phenomena—such as resident Koreans and their literatures (in Japan), the Japanese-language compositions of colonial and even postcolonial Korean and Taiwanese writers, the Chinese-language compositions of Japanese writers in both the premodern and modern periods, and the heteroglossia of the Japanophone and sinophone more generally—is welcome and long overdue. But we also should look more closely at the rapid circulation, dislocation, and reconfiguration—particularly transculturation—of cultural products. Teasing out local, national, regional, and global networks of transculturation yields a clearer picture of the world’s artistic landscape and a sharper image of each of its deeply intertwined literatures. The chapters that follow take up this project for a key moment in the history of modern empires, Japan’s overseas imperium between 1895 and 1945.