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アジア太平洋のディアスポラ、および脱植民地主義的語りにおける記憶と歴史の定位

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Mapping Time and Place in Narratives of Diaspora and Decolonization from the Asia-Pacific

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She puzzled over this for some time, but at last a bright thought struck her. “Why, it’s a Looking-glass book, of course! And, if I hold it up to a glass, the words will all go the right way again.” — Lewis Carroll

The history of mankind is the instant between two strides taken by a traveler. — Franz Kafka¹⁾

In the transformation of silence into language and action, it is virtually necessary for each one of us to establish or examine her function in that transformation and to recognize her role as vital within that transformation. — Audre Lorde

This essay examines counter-hegemonic literary texts from the Asia-Pacific regions in relation to narratives of the past as loci of emancipatory potential.²⁾ This study links texts produced at several cartographical coordinates in the Asia-Pacific regions and at different times in the past few decades in order to trace similar colonial experiences and similar expressions of resistance across time and across this geographical space that is also constructed as the “West’s” temporal and, not simply, spatial other; the peoples and cultures of Asia, the Pacific rim, and the Pacific islands have been embedded in the colonizers’ Imaginary as always lagging behind the West, both in terms of time (History and Progress) and in terms of the East’s innate inability to exploit its physical domain, that is, to marshal what the land’s abundance into material and, hence, cultural advancement. The homogenous East in the Western Imaginary is figured as profligate and primitive, modernity’s other, capable only of mimicking Western technology, art, and humanism. Such a construction is still an essential element of the “West’s” phantasmagoric journey East in the 21st Century.

This essay focuses on a Singaporean novelist, an ethnic Chinese academic who grew up in Macau and Hong Kong, a Chinese American poet, and a Filipino American poet and novelist from Hawai‘i. This Asian-Pacific trek would be incomplete without at least a brief stop at the iconic text of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *Dictee*, since a crucial dimension

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of this study is to examine the ways that “alternative” histories can be re-called and remembered into contemporary socio-ideological environments, which are no longer simply “local” environments because the “local” must be conceived of as belonging to global networks of cultural, material, economical, informational, human and biological, technological and political flows, which are multidirectional, collaborative, or conflictual and which are represented in a variety of braided, discursive registers. The constellation of poetry and prose narratives in this essay is contextualized in this new global material and discursive structure and structuring and is one among many possible constellations that rehistoricize shared colonial histories as a way to renew or form alliances across spatial and temporal distances. In addition, connecting non-United States authors with Asian American authors helps to mark a decided “transnational” turn in Asian American literary and cultural production. This situation further works to decenter United States literary studies by directing our sights East-ward. U.S. literary studies thereby is resituated not only along a north-south axis, in relation to the Americas; the axial shift can also be a longitudinal one, from the west to the east, with a slight bias — depending on the texts used and the critical agenda in question — in favor of perspectives from the Asian and Pacific regions in all their multiplicity, contradictions, and heterogeneity; these perspectives are an important counter to this stage of Western-dominated global capitalism, facilitated by technological innovations that reconstitute subjectivities in flows of commodification and consumption. In this way, U.S. literary studies is no longer a totalizing “American” studies; it exists as a regional concern vis-à-vis the Americas (north, central and south) and the Asian and Pacific and Pacific rim arenas.

I write as one who has been a life-long reader of English and Chinese word-texts, addressing, most likely, other life-long bi-lingual or multi-lingual readers. I admit to feeling particular affinity towards persons who are fluent in more than one language and culture, who travel among two or more cosmologies, or who might “live” simultaneously in two or more worldviews. This kind of radical cultural reframing — an aspect of diaspora consciousness — is a common experience among millions of migrant workers, refugees, business entrepreneurs, students, and so on. On the other hand, one might feel like a stranger not only upon arrival in an alien location, but whenever one perceives or experiences a border. Even the place that one might call home can contain the profoundest walls of segregation, for the most effective walls are the ones that one internalizes and naturalizes, the invisible lines — striations — in the sand and so-called self that define and confine us. Borders, then, can be dangerous, marginal spaces if realized in terms of one’s interpellation as that which is hopelessly conflicted, un-whole and mapped in the colonizer’s History, that is, subject-ed in a conceptual map that silences, distorts, and erases what might be imagined otherwise. However, identities of subjection can be resisted and, at times, restructured, as the authors that I discuss in this essay have shown; to them, borders are locations of productive transgression and, even, transformation. Borders exist in order that one might come to know the self; every time one reconstitutes a slightly different “I,” one has transgressed a border. Michael Ondaatje in *Divisadero*

writes of the need to know oneself through realizing that,

Everything is biographical, Lucien Freud says. What we make, why it is made, how we draw a dog, who it is we are drawn to, why we cannot forget. Everything is collage, even genetics. There is the hidden presence of others in us, even those we have known briefly. We contain them for the rest of our lives, at every border that we cross. (17)

In the following additional prefatory comments regarding the critical approach of this essay, I would note that History refers to the totalizing and homogenizing version of the collective past put forth in Western narratives; I use histories to mean alternative narratives of the marginalized and the oppressed, which are continually being uncovered and retold. Theirs are not “minority” stories, but rather, these stories are the important ones to recount. One way to offset the totalizing drive that undergirds partial and fantastical History is to speak in terms of histories, at various scales, individual and group, national or regional, and of H/history redefined as being simply one kind of narrative, and narrative to mean also stories, poems, autobiographies, epic plays, and so on. [h]istories conceptualize shared pasts and contemporary moments in ways that counter a History that is driven to frame, interpret, silence, distort all “other” narratives. At the crux of the problem that is History, one also locates the will to master Time and to project onto figural and literal space a particular rationale of real Time in such a way as to make Western man appear to be the hero of the drama, the novel, of (the end of) History.

My interest in the work of Henri Lefebvre on spatiality (and the dominance in the West of a linear concept of Time) in contrast to that found in Eastern philosophical traditions led me to Benoit Mandelbrot’s concept of fractals (Hsu). Specific aspects of fractal theory form an apt metaphor for this project of remapping Asia-Pacific connections. In *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*, Mandelbrot explains that he was drawn to try to resolve the “problem” of how to quantitatively measure or account for “formless” things, or to investigate “the morphology of the amorphous” (3) that he terms “grainy, hydralike, in between, pimply, pocky, ramified, seaweedy . . .” (5) — “a cloud, a mountain, a coastline, or a tree” (3). He explains that these “grainy” or “hydralike” objects — when looked at in differing scales — reveal regularities and irregularities: “Both their regularities and their irregularities are statistical,” in other words, “the degree of their irregularity and/or fragmentation is identical at all scales” (3). Coastlines or stock market fluctuations can be understood in terms of fractal patterns (31). A coastline merely looks jagged to the naked eye. But, to Mandelbrot, “[T]here is also a great degree of order in their structure. Although maps drawn at different scales differ in their specific details, they have the same generic features. In a rough approximation, the small and large details of coastlines are geometrically identical except for scale” (34). Mandelbrot — borrowing the concept of cascade from Lewis Richardson’s work on turbulence — writes, “When each piece of a shape is geometrically similar to the whole, both the shape and the cascade that generate it are called self-similar” (34). Interestingly, he argues that the “most useful fractals involve chance” (3).

Mandelbroit's description of fractal patterns urges us to practice the difficult work of switching perspective; it also urges us to practice discerning temporal-spatial specificities and, simultaneously, relationships among superficially fragmented, discrete phenomena. To me, self-similarity does not mean identical; rather, it means that a regular pattern exists within apparent "formlessness." The spatial-temporal linkages constructed via the texts used in this essay illuminate a pattern accumulated over time and across geographical distances in the Asian and Pacific regions in relation to differential experiences of Western and Westernized colonialism and imperialism. These fictional narratives and poetry resonate with each other; yet, they do not collapse into sameness. Specificities of history and place (such as, culture, language, and location) constitute the uniqueness to be found in each of these textual representations. I coin the term, "trans-iteration," to mean self-similarity and more: "Trans" underlines the ways in which these texts that contain similar (reiteration) but non-identical narratives traverse temporal-spatial distances in order to form this particular constellation. This constellation reveals an image, a pattern, consisting of specific places and histories that cannot be substituted one for another.

Frequently switching our perceptions from the macro-level to a micro-level and vice versa is helpful when one attempts both broad and deep views of the fraught relationship of dominant History and decolonizing histories. I belabor this point partially because I believe that it is crucial especially now to build inter-national and intra-national communities that de-construct the hatreds and conflicts within the Asia-Pacific regions. Some of these conflicts certainly pre-date the invasion of Western colonial empires; however, the divide-and-rule tactic of European colonizers and their mimics from these regions exacerbates pre-existing enmity.

Although this essay does not focus on "American" literature and I use different aspects of fractal theory, I quite agree with Wai Chee Dimock's perspective in *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time*. Dimock writes,

I have in mind a form of indebtedness: what we called "American" literature is . . . a simplified name for a much more complex tangle of relations. Rather than being a discrete entity, it is better seen as a crisscrossing set of pathways, open-ended and ever multiplying, weaving in and out of other geographies, other languages and cultures. These are input channels, kinship networks, routes of transit, and forms of attachment — connective tissues binding America to the rest of the world. Active on both ends, they thread American texts into the topical events of other cultures, while also threading the long durations of those cultures into the short chronology of the United States. This double threading thickens time, lengthens it, shadowing in its midst the abiding traces of the planet's multitudinous life.

I would like to propose a new term — "deep time" — to capture this phenomenon. What this highlights is a set of longitudinal frames, at once projective and recessional, with input going both ways, and binding continents and millennia into many loops of relations, a densely interactive fabric. Restored to this, American literature emerges with a much longer history than one might think. (3–4)

Most of us share in the experience of re-visiting a story or a poem or a place years

later to find the text not the way we first understood it, refracted and mediated as that word-text or culture-text has become through numerous intervening experiences and memories of relocations, of everyday living, including the vicarious living that readers do via texts of all kinds, texts that are embedded in different yet always related discursive arenas. This essay focuses primarily on poetry and prose narratives containing subjects or fictive characters that deal with crises brought about by confrontations with colonialism. Aspects of the stories evoke the classic tale of oppositional post-colonialism, with varying degrees of emancipatory success. Yet, while these texts contain traces of not only the morphology of colonial discourse, the stories also illustrate changes in this long post-colonial era. These stories pose the question: In the face of an aggressive global capitalism, how might we measure the benchmarks of decolonization and the state of our aspirations for liberation and justice?

The selection of texts is partially explained by my own journeys in making meaning and effecting transformation beyond the Historical frame of Western colonialism. I was born in Singapore and have lived for extended periods of linear, calendar time in Hong Kong, Los Angeles (arguably a megalopolis island/city unto itself), and now, Hawai‘i. The prose selection that I look at in this essay also was inspired by a suggestion from one of the editors of this issue, a suggestion that dovetailed with topics that I had been thinking or writing about for most of my academic and personal life.

In exploring the writing of Suchen Christine Lim (Singapore), Maria N. Ng (Hong Kong and Macau), R. Zamora Linmark (Hawai‘i), and the poetry of Russell Leong (Los Angeles), I suggest that these “stories” can be framed as linked, fractal trans-iterations. The texts memorialize significant, cartographic points of aggressive, Western colonial beachheads towards the Asian hinterland. However, they are also counter-hegemonic loci that connect people in a vast, decolonization network; the power of such networks resides in its temporal-spatial multi-dimensionality, its unpredictability, fluidity, and adaptability. Confronting, challenging, adding to and rewriting History in unpredictable ways is essential to the project of decolonization.

The similarities among these “island” texts are equally important to this configuration of their differences-in-connectivity. Fractal patterns respond to unpredictable variables and expand in directions and dimensions that take events and these subjectivities-in-motion any place and any time. The stories contain strategies that range from assimilation and/to resistance and/to confrontation and/to actively deconstructing the binarism and essentialism that undergird the Western hegemonic paradigm and its instantiations in the Asia-Pacific regions. A few of these narratives can be categorized as part of the classic post-colonial tradition, one that is only oppositional to Empire. Other books offer more nuanced depictions of the motivation, desire, and fears of everyone that had a hand in making History, and of those fleeting and in-between instances of half-conscious and unconscious desires to stride away from fear.³⁾ All of these narratives reckon with History and seek to avenge themselves on their colonial pasts, subdue the ghost of 124 (Morrison), so to speak. Notably, the story of *Beloved* and *Sethe* shows that ghosts cannot be

banished if we simply reject them; History is already part of what one is and, so, part of what one is becoming. Other tactics must be used.

It is productive to read three of Lim's novels — *A Bit of Earth, Rice Bowl*, and *Fistful of Colours* — in relation to each other, as a fictionalized history of sorts of modern Malaya and Singapore. *A Bit of Earth* depicts the migration of Chinese workers to the Malay Peninsula, the arrival of British colonial administration, and the irreparable changes to the native societal structure. The later two books portray contemporary Singaporeans who feel estranged from modern Singapore: political liberation from colonial masters has not translated into other forms of freedom. Ng's aptly named memoir, *Pilgrimages: Memories of Colonial Macau and Hong Kong*, is emblematic of what is typically understood to be diaspora consciousness. Leong's *Country of Dreams and Dust* and the poetry carved on the walls of Angel Island detention center in San Francisco are book-ends to a century of Asian migration to the United States. Angel Island embodies the recurring fear of the U.S. towards the other; it was a place used to quarantine and expel what was cast as dis-eased. However, ironically, the Chinese calligraphy carved on the walls of that precursor of World War II internment camps undercuts that fear born of desire, fear that constitutes prisons. Those walls are scored with characters that are not merely concepts, for Chinese calligraphy bears the spirit, the *qi*, of the writer. In that sense, the calligraphy infuses/infects that oppressive, statist space with rebellion and the indefatigable courage of the disenfranchised. Similarly, Linmark's *Rolling the R's* highlights the constructed nature of identity formations and how such cultural constructs restrict imagination and destroy true community — echoes of Lim's Singapore. Nonetheless, Edgar in this unique text deals with his relationships with his socio-ideological environments in ways that subvert and undo heteronormativity and racism.

And so, I begin with another critique of History, in recalling and recasting an earlier reading experience as an encounter with British colonial education. One of my teachers at my primary school in Hong Kong made us memorize “Jabberwocky“ from *Through the Looking-Glass*. It was a surreal experience even then, in which word-text creates confusion and incomprehension in the reader, for whom the learning, with the prescribed goal of mastering the English language, carried half-understood yet palpable, life-changing importance. The teacher, British and matronly, raved over Carroll's “brilliance” while we, her students, became ever more despondent in inverse proportion to her hyperbolic accolades. Carroll meant for the words to be “unintelligible” and “discomforting,” of course. But, our teacher's assurances about the purposeful non-sense of the poem only increased our fear and anxiety. At stake, as all children of colonial education systems know, was nothing less than one's future: University or, as my father put it, pushing around a dim sum cart for the rest of my life. Years later, in the U.S., intervening experiences and exposure to community activists and post-colonial theory afforded me a way to remember that early encounter with will-to-power and aggression, and the violence inherent in that primal scene of colonial subjugation, for what it was. It is a scene that is intimated in Lim's *A Bit of Earth, Rice Bowl*, and *Fistful of Colours*, and most clearly in Linmark's *Rolling*

the R's.

I have also come to realize, after much inner struggle, that liberation can be found in more than a resistant or an oppositional stance. Ironically, my access to the colonizer's language also gives me access to the visuals and sounds of rebellion and extreme subversion, such as the lyrical and unbending commitment to enduring truth in the writings of Toni Morrison or a Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, a significant point of light in a network of cartographic, transformative, decolonizing locations. To merely reject the colonizer's language and narratives would be to deny a part of oneself and to deny that one is able to — as one of Lim's characters repeatedly asserts in *Fistful of Colours* — reimagine and recreate History. That would be to hand over one's inherent power to the colonizer yet again.

This essay on more recent narratives on post-colonialism, diaspora, and globalization in the Asia-Pacific regions would be incomplete without my acknowledging the path-breaking nature of Cha's *Dictee* in the corpus of post-colonial literature. My necessarily brief discussion here focuses on a couple of aspects of the postmodernist novel most salient to this essay. It precedes a critique of Linmark's *Rolling the R's*.

As critics in *Writing Self, Writing Nation* noted, the impact of *Dictee* lies in its capacity to undercut colonial paradigms without restaging those paradigms. It crystallizes in ways that few other texts have done the necessity of confronting and exposing History's lies, of retelling History from the perspective of the colonized, but not by reinstating dominant fear/desire. My discussion here derives also from my own experiences of colonial Hong Kong.

Aller a la ligne C'etait le premier jour point
Elle venait de loin point ce soir au diner virgule
Les familles demanderaient virgule ouvre . . .

Open paragraph It was the first day period
She had come from a far period tonight at dinner
Comma the families would ask comma open . . . (1)

These words begin the first chapter, "Clio History." Cha's multi-genre and genre-bending postmodernist text deconstructs colonial discourse and its technology of erasure and replacement. Dictation and recitation ("Jabberwocky," William Wordsworth's "Daffodils") are coerced acts of mimicry that instills, in the subject, abjection, as well as a will-to-mastery over the desired object that one is "fated" never to achieve completely. In my experience, the teacher reads to the class the punctuation and not only the words; students are tested on their ability to write down exactly every enunciation from the teacher. Recitation and dictation seek to colonize one's body, the former aurally and the other through sight and the movement of my arm. As I orally repeat or write out the colonizer's words, what might have been mine before the colonizer's intervention was erased in space and from the paper lying before me on my student desk. I was to be blank like an empty room

and virgin paper. Dictation, recitation, planting a flag on an equatorial island — these are symbolic, repetitive yet also banal acts of foreign occupation. Lisa Lowe — on the way to her overall analysis of the subversive nature of *Dictee* — aptly writes, “dictation is at once the sign for the authority of language in the formation of the student, a model for the conversion of the individual into a subject of discourse” (39).

Cha re-configures the colonizer’s moves in order to undercut his/her attempts to pass on his fear/desire. She does so not by merely trying to erase or destroy the colonizer’s words — an act that in actuality apes the colonizer’s will — but by exposing his/her will-to-power as driven by the need to deny and to erase his/her profound inner poverty and self-loathing. The text also invites those who wish to embark on journeys of decolonization to connect despite spatial and temporal distances. As L. Hyun Yi Kang notes, “*Dictee* is multiple and ever-shifting — words and voices are decentered, recalled from the margins, exclusive, unclaimed, indecipherable and then again viscerally clear” (78).⁴

Dictee unsettles the reader by troubling the fictive representation of linear time and two-dimensional space; the reader’s expectations that the colonizers’ languages will easily yield intelligibility and referential accuracy are purposefully frustrated by Cha. Frustration is partially effected when the author calls attention to the unreliable surfaces of word-texts by shifting narrative focal points and hence the interpretative frameworks that we might use in order to make sense of things. In a way, this story takes us out of our habitual bodies in order to have us inhabit other and the other’s subject positions. This is defamiliarization with a vengeance, in the service of creating occasions for one to walk, no matter how briefly, in other persons’ locations in time and space. The narrative invites the reader to enact radical shape-shifting; it is a trickster’s word-text. Paul Carter would name this narrative as dark writing, in which one writes, paints, lights up, and scores the “dappled” nature of truth, to hold black and white and shades of gray in our sights simultaneously:

The pied beauty of clouds, foliage, and limestone walls comes into view not as a background to important events but offering an alternative focus of its own . . . It is the dappled history of those marks; its blotches are the signature of time . . . Dark writing is the complexity of hieroglyphs . . . Always gesturing toward other presences, the marks dark writing makes outline other places inside the one we agree to inhabit . . . they signify forms of communication that resist the self-same logic of linear reason. They suggest patterns of meeting that cannot be represented or prescribed. (1–2)

Similarly, R. Zamora Linmark’s *Rolling the R’s* affords the reader a look at the dappled nature of reality. Edgar, one of the primary actants, is in the fifth grade; in some vignettes, the narrator can be said to be a much older, more knowledgeable, and wiser Edgar. Other narrative voices include those of Bino and Rowena (“Bino and Rowena Make a Litany To Our Lady of The Mount”), young women caught up in American consumerist culture in the 1970s. A pair of older Filipinas trade gossip about the young people in Kalihi (“Daldalera”), a predominately Filipino immigrant community that is the setting of the book. Gossip is a means of enforcing conventional morals. The characters

that are given very little “narrative” authority are the local Japanese American schoolteachers (“Blame It On Chachi,” “Tongue-Tied,” “The Sentencing Of Lives, Or Why Edgar Almost Failed Mrs. Takemoto’s Class,” “F For Book Report”) and Stephen Bean, the Caucasian/haole kid (“Dreamhouse”). Older Edgar/narrator recalls Mrs. Takemoto to be middle-aged and obake-looking (ghost-like) (48) and Ms. Takara as resembling the “double-lidded Sabrina . . . a professional back-stabber because she is too nice to be true” (48). He sees them as petit-bourgeois enforcers of American colonialism in Hawai‘i. The young Edgar and his friends use a popular culture frame of reference to describe their teachers and tormenters; the voice and perspective of the older Edgar overlays young Edgar’s descriptions with much more sophisticated analyses of the inter-laced hierarchy of class, gender, and race categories in Hawai‘i.

“Tongue-Tied” is a good example of this “double voice,” a kind of narrative ventriloquism. In the subsection ironically entitled, “History,” the older Edgar/narrator remembers and recounts the following,

Always dressed in a muumuu with an arc of plumeria or hibiscus flowers pinned to her hair, Ms. Takara can pass as a model for Hilo Hatties or Liberty House, though Florante tells Vicente that the flowers in her hair are so huge she looks like Nagasaki blooming.

When the fourth bell announces the death of lunch recess . . . Mrs. Takemoto threatens her students to *settle down, kids, I said settle down before . . .*

Katrina and Edgar see Ms. Takara and Mrs. Takemoto as the Japanese versions of Sabrina from *The Archies* . . . Mrs. Takemoto is the four-eyed Broom Hilda . . . with a husband who prefers to sleep with Katrina’s mother. (48)

The narrator’s memory consists of specific details that have become more meaningful than other details to Edgar/narrator. That Florante compares Ms. Takara’s hair-do to the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb that destroyed Nagasaki is ironic in light of the ancestral heritage of both teachers. It is an irony that escaped Florante at the time of his supposed utterance but not the narrator who chose that memory to include in his recreation of the past. Both teachers are low-level functionaries of an education system that essentially is a colonial civilizing mission, a process whereby students’ diverse cultural heritages are erased and a bland, generic “Americanism” is installed, even though Ms. Takara signals through her dress and hair ornaments that she is a “local” and, perhaps, multi-generational resident of the islands, and not Japanese American from the mainland or a Japanese national. She and Mrs. Takemoto are avatars for American colonialism, a far-reaching and historical structure that the children can only know as mundane encumbrances of composition (“Watch your punctuation. NO PIDGIN-ENGLISH ALLOWED. You have 45 minutes”) (121), special education classes to assist immigrant children “crippled” by their un-American accents, of putting up with bullying from football players, peer enforcers of American heteronormativity, and so on. On the other hand, Edgar/narrator uses an understanding of class, race, and gender structure to mediate his memories. The female schoolteachers were not merely nuisances; he remembers them as both purveyors of and prisoners of an oppressive, colonial ideology. Interestingly, Edgar/

narrator also recalls the young Edgar to be openly defiant and confrontational over his homosexuality: he flamboyantly stands up to his father, his teachers, and school bullies. He refuses to fit into American middle-class values.

The self-interested nature of the making of memory on an individual or collective level allows us to reimagine the past in response to our perceived circumstances and survival needs of the present. The crucial difference between the colonizer's History and the histories of the disenfranchised lies in power differentials. Who gets to tell their stories, to whom, and to what practical effect? Fortunately, access to power is not an absolute affair. It is not the case that one has absolutely no power or all the power. Rather, power is a relative asset, a function of many factors, such as one's race, ethnicity, sex, and so on. From that perspective, Ms. Takara and Mrs. Takemoto were crucial in that their role was to transform the unruly, like Edgar, into the "responsible citizens" of tomorrow, or more accurately, docile subjects. The myth of the American Dream is based upon a masked hierarchy of essentialized identity categories that is part of a technology of divide and rule. In a sense, the narrator's silencing of the schoolteachers (and the principal) and the Caucasian/haole kid is a bit of payback that, unfortunately, serves to maintain and replicate the divisive and oppressive discursive hierarchy of gender, race, and class.

Understandably, within this socio-ideological, material, and physical environment of 1970s Hawai'i, the young Edgar that Edgar/narrator re-members most "clearly" is the larger than life hyper-individualistic champion of outcasts. Yet, the young Edgar is not merely a parody of profound American anxiety and excess; rather, Edgar/narrator reimagines him so as to be able to give voice to the "lessons" of his life up to the present, that is, his creation of the young Edgar is mediated through his experiences of fifth grade and of the years since then.

Linmark's variegated or dappled portrait of Edgar/narrator/young Edgar is crucial to understanding colonialism and decolonization as envisioned in *Rolling the R's*. Edgar, the precocious champion of the downtrodden, is also insecure and immature, as the reader is led to perceive in several of the later vignettes. "The Casting" is structured like a stage play. Edgar, Katrina, Vicente, Florante, and Loata argue over who will play the roles of the television series *Charlie's Angels*. Edgar, as always, wants to be the boss and tries to assign roles to his friends, keeping the one that he rates most highly (Kris Munroe) for himself. The scene is hilarious and sad, a restaging of the desire/fear that drives larger power struggles in their school, families, and in Kalihi. The following excerpt shows Katrina — somewhat eclipsed in Edgar/narrator's memories — effortlessly deconstructing Edgar's reasoning for always assigning her the role of Bosley. In doing so, Katrina also shows the reader the untenable nature of identity categories:

Katrina: No make sense to me.

Edgar: Does to me.

Katrina: Doesn't Edgar, cuz look: I cannot be Sabrina cuz she one lez, and I cannot be Kris or Kelly either cuz they way too fem, but if I be Bosley, that means that Bosley stay somewhere between butch and fem.

- Edgar: So?
- Katrina: So, in other words, I goin' have to end up playin' Bosley like one fag, and Bosley is far from one fag. 'Sides I can no picture Bosley doin' it with one 'nother guy.

- Katrina: He right, you know. You always like be the center of attention. Remember when we did *Saturday Night Fever*, you never like none of us to be John Travolta. (129–131)

Edgar's retort is that he was the only one who knew the dance steps, reminiscent of other missionaries who claim to possess the one true God and the key to His Kingdom. In "Heart," Edgar's monologue reveals the loneliness that lies behind his attempts to dominate his friends. He complains bitterly that his friends get him "the same freakin' gifts" for Christmas: "Think I no shop at Longs? Think I no check how much those damn story-book containin' five rolls of Lifesavers candies cost? Ninety-nine cents plus four-percent tax, assholes. Til this day, I still in shock" (140). In his mind, his friends have betrayed his generosity and loyalty.

"Mama's Boy," Vicente's monologue in the section immediately before "Heart," unfolds one of the saddest sections of the book. Vicente realizes that Edgar pimped him out for twenty dollars: "I saw you watch him bend over to wax his yellow car. And I saw you get mad when he took his fat fingers off the rag and looked away . . . so you started pulling the ends of your shorts high" (138). Vicente's heart-wrenching description of his molestation: "I thought I was going to die in there, Edgar. So dark, so stuffy. He was sweating. I stayed because I was afraid he was going to hurt you . . . I was scared, Edgar, but he said . . . No need be sacred of me. I not goin' to hurt you. I only like touch Filipino birdie" (139). Edgar's action towards Vicente echoes the role of Ms. Takara and Mrs. Takemoto: the pretty and matronly schoolteachers offer up well-trained, docile students to the capitalistic societal structure in exchange for their own needs being met.

In "The Secret," told by an older narrator, possibly Vicente, the reader finds out that young Vicente — on Edgar's invitation — had been watching Edgar and Mr. Campos, the janitor, have sex. Afterwards, "Edgar reaching his arms out and telling Vicente to smell the secret that Mr. Campos thinks is forever buried in his skin" (127). Edgar uses his own shirt to wipe himself off and "soaks it with soap and Clorox as soon as he gets home" (126). Edgar seems to regard his experience with this much older man as somewhat sordid. His investment in the affair lies in being dominated, in marked contrast to his desire to dominate his friends. Edgar's stated reason for treating Vicente this way is that Vicente must realize — for his own good — that he is "really" homosexual. In a sense, Edgar's rationalization is a small scale "civilizing" mission, one that traumatizes the one-to-be-saved, much like all such forcible missions are wont to do.

Linmark's characterization shows the technology of power differentials and the resulting, very divisive relationships that can operate among the marginalized. We, often, repeat unto others the same violence and oppression that have been dealt us. In victimizing others, we mete out the same "punishment" that we have received, and that perhaps

we have internalized into believing that we deserve. Colonization perpetuates itself through recitation and dictation. That is the kind of repetitive iteration we do not want.

Chinese migrants who were held at Angel Island upon arrival in San Francisco — sometimes for over a year — could not have known that they were part of creating a diaspora and transnational history. Some transmitted their despair and anger in the form of poetry written in Chinese calligraphy on their prison walls. *Island. Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910–1940*, edited by Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, and Judy Yung, uses a cover that resembles a photograph of a part of a wall. The shadow on the wall is made by, one assumes, sunlight coming through the slats of horizontal bars made of iron, wood? Did these bars bar the occupants of the room from leaving when they wished? Many of the poems lament the writers' imprisonment, the boredom, the infernal questioning by the officials. Often, the poets express regret for having left family and village for the land of the flowery flag — America. Upon closer inspection of the cover, one perceives that what appeared to be written or carved looks more like scars, like tissue that had formed over very deep and improperly cared for cuts; the scars are bumpy, uneven. If I press down hard, will I be able to intuit the pain of the thousand strokes/cuts on the wall? The cover design recalls the legend of Yue Fei, a hero and warrior, who left his aging parents to fight an unjust ruler. Before he left, his parents cut ideographs into his back, so that he would always remember why he was fighting. To the extent that the parent's calligraphy contained their *qi*, so too would their son carry in him his parents' unwavering fortitude. Many hundreds of years later, in America, Maxine Hong Kingston appropriated the original legend for *The Woman Warrior*, re-cast as a female Yue Fei among the white ghosts; this woman warrior is doubly challenged, once because of her gender and again because of her race-d body. The original carvings on Angel Island preceded Hong Kingston's fantastical tale; the cover of *Island*, the word-text, is a trans-iteration of the legend and *The Woman Warrior*, a trans-iteration that links battles for justice anchored in different temporal-spatial landscapes in the Asia-Pacific, and in so doing, highlights the common desire of all peoples for social justice. History must be comprehended and depicted as a dappled narrative that takes unexpected turns, that branches out in surprising directions, that intersects other stories, constituted of all shades of dark and light and shadows.

A photograph of the poem used for the cover can be found on page 135. There, one notes that the actual calligraphy seems to be deeply carved into the brick; the characters look square-ish, most likely because the carver could not use the hard surface, as he might have if it had been soft paper, to write in a liquid, fluid style; then words and paper would look and feel like flowing water. Or, perhaps, the ideographs would have turned out the same on paper or on a prison wall, for the writer was a no-nonsense kind of person, given to straight talk rather than flowery euphemisms. Traditionally, the student is told that the act of writing Chinese characters is an act of self-expression, where quintessential qualities of the writer are revealed in his/her writing. I recall being made to try different stylistic schools: square-ish, very cursive, slightly cursive, then being told that the square-ish

styles would express my “character” the most clearly and fully. I was told that my intention, my *qi*, or life force, at any particular moment of practice would come through. My mother’s less than flattering assessment of my character lay in her admonition that I have to be less of a square peg in a world composed of round pegs eager to fit into a world of round holes. Her calligraphy was cursive, flowing: the bottom of an ideograph would link to the next one. She came from a large, multigenerational family led by a matriarch. My mother learned to affect her will like seawater creates and deconstructs the shoreline of continents and islands. Near the end of her life, her writing became increasingly cursive and hard for me to decipher.

I found it surprisingly difficult even to write out the characters exactly as the exemplars looked. The only texts that I had learned to recognize were the ones that my eyes could see; I did not have the capacity to understand, much less realize, anything as ephemeral as *qi*, colorless, tasteless, invisible. Learning to discern the dappled reality of our lives and environment came decades later, when I began to take *tai qi* classes in Honolulu, a surprising turn. The stress of being a yet untenured professor led me to yoga, initially; I switched to *tai qi* due to an injury; otherwise, I would have happily stayed with the Hindu tradition.

In the poem on the cover of *Island*, the writer laments his imprisonment of many months; he is frustrated that he is not allowed to be the “hero” and “warrior” that he believes he has the potential to become. The speaker ends with, “Even if it is built of jade, it has turned into a cage” (134). Expressions of resentment, despair, and regret abound in the word-text of *Island*; even more so, perhaps, the *qi* or the energy in the writing on the walls of the detention center. The migrant-poets insisted on leaving something of themselves behind them, to remind the world of the disenfranchised. Their angry and frustrated *qi*, expressed through the calligraphy, would bring down those walls.

The editors note that none of the collected poems was written by the small number of women who were among the detainees at Angel Island (*Island* 25). Until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which fundamentally changed the immigration laws of the nation, the vast majority of Asian migrants were men. Women who entered the country through Angel Island were incarcerated in the administration building, which burned down in 1940. The editors located and interviewed eight of those women for the collection. The detention center was closed down in 1940; of the 175,000 Chinese migrants that entered the U.S. through San Francisco, the vast majority were kept at or deported from Angel Island (8). Alexander Weiss, a park ranger, noticed the scribbling on the walls of the barracks in 1970. In 1976, the local Asian American community successfully persuaded the Legislature to preserve the barracks as a historical landmark.

Mrs. Chin, 19 in 1913, recounted the boredom of the days; highlights seemed to consist of meager meals three times a day and when someone was let out. Mrs. Chan was one of the few women who knew how to write. Letters coming into or going out of the detention center were “examined” (72). Mrs. Woo noted that one “kid” had already been at the detention center for two years when she arrived. He called the white woman who kept an

eye on the women, “Mama” (73). Mrs. Woo, “When we arrived, they locked us up like criminals in compartments like the cages at the zoo” (73). Like many of the poems penned by the men, the women interviewed spoke about their frustrations with America.

Russell Leong’s *The Country of Dreams and Dust* enters into a dialogue with the migrant-poets of Angel Island; Leong is also about speaking truth to power, of providing a more complete depiction of Chinese and Asian migration and immigration to the U.S..

Leong uses an anonymous poem from the prison walls of Angel Island to preface section 1, “As a traveler in wind and dust . . . / I crossed to the end of the ocean” (1). “Wind” and “dust” in Chinese, used in the context of a journey, act as a metaphor for the weary traveler after a long, rough journey. It is Leong’s inclusion of the Chinese characters for “dreams” and “dust” on the same page that gives readers an interpretative framework with which to read the somewhat ambiguous English words. “Dreams” and “dust,” combined as a phrase, become a metaphor to mean that life is an illusion, a viewpoint often associated with a fundamental belief of Buddhism. Juxtaposing the excerpt from *Island* to the Chinese characters suggests that the long and difficult journey, which possibly began with the attitude that it would be an adventure, has turned out to be a disillusion. Leong’s take is that America failed to live up to its promise.

The middle of the book, Chapter II, consists of the poem that is also the title of the collection, “The Country of Dreams and Dust.” The Chinese characters “dreams” and “dust” complement the prologue, chosen from Carlos Bulosan’s work, “His life unfolded like a coral sea, / where stone is a hard substance of wind / and water leading into memory . . .” (21). Even a hard substance that took millions of years to make, like a sea of coral, was created from soft things, fluid and without form. However, even coral in fractal patterns in time will become merely memory, churned by the waves into the smallest of particles, set free by the wind, which remain invisible but for its presence on the water and among fractal leaves of trees. The softest and most formless phenomena can contain enormous power.

Patience appears to be one of the strengths that the persona in this collection learns to cultivate, alongside empathy, as well as courage in speaking truth to power. Each of the sixteen cantos is headed with excerpts from “Rev. I. M. Condit’s English and Chinese Reader (1882), a missionary lesson book used to convert the Chinese in the Americas and Australia to English and Christianity” (23). Canto 1, “Dreams,” begins with the lesson, “As the son went away / From home, and did / So much that was wicked; / So we have gone away” (23). The personae are a collective, we, the migrants from “the Canton Delta mud” fleeing the Manchu emperor of the last dynasty of China. The speaker “scrape[s], beg[s], or borrow[s] / silver coins, sacks of rice . . . we swear, belch and snore, / blanket steege with stiff bodies . . . we chisel surnames on wooden decks” (24). They work any job to survive. Then, the focus of the poem shifts to American missionaries who, “stricken” by their faith, “queue up to teach heathens / how to pray / and how to pay for pagan sins” (25). “Souls fall to missionaries / who charm their way inland / wherever Chinamen mine . . . Yellow earth and brown men — / twice undermined” (25). The mis-

missionaries tracked down Chinese miners ostensibly to save their souls; the speaker, however, sees through their false piety to what actually drives their fervor to convert, that is, their own self-loathing and need for redemption. The canto ends with the same excerpt from the *Reader*, but the words now carry another layer of meaning that is quite different: “As the son went away / From home / So we have gone away” (25). The son who left home to do wicked deeds was not the Chinese migrant, as the *Reader* would have the heathens believe, but the Western missionaries.

Similarly, in “The Country of Dreams and Dust,” other parts of *History* refracted and reimagined from the accumulated knowledge and experience of the colonized work to expose *History*’s lies and, from there, to recreate that *History* into histories. The colonizers’ storytelling is shown to arise from fear and the will to dominate others. Or, from the viewpoint of the colonized, “As a child, he picks up odd things, / sticks and stones, and so discovers / how another’s love or loneliness / can desire or diminish him” (35). Canto 6, “Tet,” begins with this lesson from *Condit*’s *Reader*, “A horse has four feet / He has a head, / Neck, and tail. / His skin and hair are soft. / Men ride on his back” (33). What at first seems to be an innocuous passage that teaches proper English takes on a completely different meaning when refracted through these stanzas, worth quoting in full,

The reverend
 Rules his Chinatown roost,
 Named Donaldina Cameron House.
 In his private office
 He insinuates at least three kinds
 Of Christian love: philia, agape, eros.
 But which love is which lie,
 Which passion is which poison?

Father,
 Twice as wide and whiter
 Than my real father incarnate,
 Incarcerate me in your arms.
 Save me with your hands
 On my chest and legs.
 Promise not to tell
 in the name of him
 who died to save us all.

How doth move a missionary’s hand?
 Who moves inside me,
 Plucks ribs,
 Forks intestines,
 enters esophagus,
 takes tongue?

No one hears the fear behind

the mashing of mah jong tables,
sewing machines, Mekong
machetes under the moon.
Under his irreverent hands
my body slips.

*His skin and hair are soft.
Men ride on his back. (34–35)*

The poem is based upon a report in the San Francisco Chronicle in 1989: Dick Wichman, “a Presbyterian minister resigned his ordination after being accused of molesting . . . 19 male teenagers under his charge in incidents that allegedly occurred 20 years ago at Cameron House, one of the oldest and best known religious organizations in Chinatown” (qtd. from Leong 69).

In “Ideographs,” Leong deconstructs the colonizer’s attempt to replicate herself/himself through recitation and dictation:

*I am teaching you.
You are taught by me.
A lady taught me to speak
and read in English.*

Repeat:
My name is Ah Sam.
My name is Ching Chong.
My name is Gook Go Home.
Most recent name, Vincent Chin —
.....
mistaken in a missionary’s mind
who believed that in the beginning
was His word, alone.

*I am teaching you.
You are taught by me. (36–37)*

Leong’s poetry confronts History like it is a book that we thought we knew, only to find, upon re-reading it again, and perhaps after reading other similar narratives, that it is not the book we remember, that it always contained numerous more interesting, truthful, sad, and strangely inspiring stories of the so-called disenfranchised and marginalized. It is important to re-member Leong’s poetry and the Angel Island collection in relation to a larger constellation of Asian and Pacific texts and not simply as part of the nationalistic History of “American” immigration, which is a phantasmagorical and narcissistic Self-construction of the nation-state. Such re-articulation of memories subverts History’s monologue, anchors us anew to the places from where/which we came as well as to the many places where we currently are. What are our responsibilities in either case?

The work of Suchen Christine Lim and Maria N. Ng expand the postcolonial connection and trans-iteration across the Asia-Pacific regions that can be seen in the writings already discussed in this essay. Maria N. Ng, now an academic in Alberta, Canada, has written a memoir about growing up in colonial Macau and Hong Kong. She begins with a trip to Porto, Portugal, in 2004, in search of a cultural past that had nothing to do with her ethnic origin (8). Her memoir is “not a classical kind of narrative” (8), a theme that she emphasizes again in her conclusion, “The more I write, the more apparent it becomes that no one particular narrative strategy would work for me, certainly not “the kind of coming-to-voice narrative that relies on a unified concept of the ethnic subject and a developmental narrative of assimilation or belonging” (141).⁵ She rejects stories of victimization. Yet, the author’s “contradictory” and fractured cultural influences are more coherent and unified than she wishes to believe. Ng illustrates her non-unitary subjectivity with an imagined conversation with Vasco da Gama, who becomes nonplussed when he finds out that she is a “Chinese woman who carries a Portuguese passport . . . who speaks fluent English, but not Portuguese, her mother tongue.” “Mother tongue, what nonsense!” Ng replies. Gama thinks to win the point when he asks, “Without a native language, how do you define yourself, your identity, as a citizen that belongs to a kingdom, or now, what is it called, a nation?” Ng gives a rejoinder that marks her global and diaspora self-positioning but not necessarily an identity that is fractured or unstable, “Gama, a nation now can have many languages. Canada has French and English, and the First Nations . . .” (27). Indeed, Ng’s self-narrative and, hence, self-creation from the perspective of the present, historical moment adheres to a clear trajectory built from her narrative decisions. For instance, the author is familiar with postcolonial theory; nonetheless, she has decided to be unabashedly complimentary about her “superior” colonial education at Maryknoll Sisters School in Hong Kong; she believes that the difficult relationship between her mother and grandmother alienated her from her Chinese heritage. Ng is particularly critical of the ways that women have been oppressed by Confucian Chinese culture. Maryknoll taught her to be an independent individual and gave her access to a globally dominant culture (British/English). She also recalls favoring English over Portuguese, fascinated as she was with the vibrant and dynamic English-centered Hong Kong culture as opposed to what appeared to her to be a stagnant Macau. After all, the Portuguese empire had long been eclipsed by the British Empire. She recalls that in Hong Kong she dated only Brits, in order to practice her English as well as to annoy her mother. Like all narratives, perhaps, Ng’s memoir could only be written because the author already knew how it ends in the present.

Aspects of *Pilgrimages* echo my memories of growing up in Hong Kong: the importance that my parents placed on doing superlatively well in school. Hong Kong was one of the most international and open cities I know. Unlike Ng’s experiences, however, I do not recall my friends and I being taken with the nuns’ attitude of superiority or the Western curriculum of the school. I enjoyed school because I wanted to be with my friends. We thought the nuns dour and out of touch with average Chinese. Bible Study classes were

restricted to the Gospels, to the credit of the nuns. But I do not recall that they were very successful in converting students to Catholicism. Our parents sent us to parochial schools because they were the best university preparatory schools in the colony. My parents were pragmatic Christians and anti-communists, refugees from Shanghai and northern China. My father had an electrical engineering degree from an American university; my mother lived in Belgium for several years and knew French well enough to be able to tutor high school students in Hong Kong, a means of putting food on the table because she escaped from China with literally only the clothes she was wearing. I grew up with aspects of “traditional” Chinese values, *Streets of San Francisco*, *kung fu* movies, and the totally inappropriate slapstick of Benny Hill. My aversion to rote learning — recitation — came from having to memorize both Chinese poets and Pope. But, I have always thought Chinese poetry to be much more moving and finely wrought than British poetry. My rebellion against my “Chinese” moral values began in earnest when I immigrated to the U.S., intent on pursuing university degrees in Western literature, which became contemporary American and postcolonial literatures. In Los Angeles, my first port of call, I realized that so-called Chinese codes of integrity and loyalty were to be selectively practiced, or they would get me clobbered in a place dominated by solipsistic individualism. Regarding what the nuns taught us, a friend, now a successful CEO, told us at a reunion soon after she matriculated and entered the work force, “You need to forget everything the nuns taught us. None of it applies to real life.” But habit is resistance to change; my parents had written their “instructions” on my back, intending that they remain in place forever, anchor me in the safe harbor of tradition while I traversed an alien landscape. But I had to purposefully smudge some of their phrases and write over others with my own instructions; I had to transgress both my history and my present. That I had entered a vastly different cosmology did not get scored thoroughly enough on my back until after many harsh lessons to do with uniquely American sexism and racism, some of those lessons coming from other “people of color.” It has taken me many years to get used to mainstream American culture; I am not completely assimilated. I have never felt as at home as I did in Hong Kong, in contrast to Ng, who fled even while she lived there. Perhaps it is a good thing to remain unassimilated. In a world of millions of migrants butting up against “natives” of all kinds, one is more likely than not to be figured as a yellow/black/brown peril in someone’s fantasies of fear/desire. So, one might as well build the life one wants.

Similar to *Pilgrimages*, Lim’s *Fistful of Colors* depicts a variegated modern urban society of Chinese, Malay, Muslim, Hindu, and British cultural heritages. Lim’s actants believe that Singapore does not have an authentic cultural heritage. Notably, the novel seems devoid of physical environments. Actants reject English culture because it is the colonizer’s culture; they also resist the older generation for judging them for not being fluent in Putonghua. At the same time, younger Singaporeans internalize the criticism and believe that the criticism is correct; competency in one’s “mother” tongue proves one’s ethnic authenticity. *Rice Bowl* contains stereotypical actants that are studious but limited

in their interests; the main character laments their narrow ambitions: good jobs, marriage, families — the middle-class cloning itself. However, the novels do not contain alternative possibilities; rather, they restage the rudderless and monochromatic quality of modern Singapore, as projected from the narrators' perspectives. There are questions about cultural and individual authenticity and where every part of one's life should fit. These existential questions overtake the narratives.

Lim's *A Bit of Earth* is the most cohesively constructed of the three novels. Mostly set in 19th century Malaya, the historical novel portrays the upending of society — a carefully negotiated hierarchy of ethnic Chinese and Muslim Malaysians — when the British gradually take over the Peninsula. Southern Chinese had begun migrating to the region for hundreds of years and had assimilated into Malay culture and society. In the 19th century, Chinese coolie labor, fleeing famine, rebellion, and Manchu persecution, landed at the bottom of a brutally competitive and inhumane social heap and hoped to work their way up. However, the British successfully reconfigured societal structure in terms of racial identity and pitted ethnic Malaysians against Chinese Malaysians and new Chinese migrant workers along racial lines. Read together, Lim's novels illustrate the way in which the past endures and how one's imagined articulations to that past can at least partially constitute one's present "reality." Modern Singaporeans and Malaysians cannot return to a pre-colonial time and space, just as Edgar cannot undo or expunge the memories of his childhood in Kalihi.

History, however, fails to remain the only legitimate collective narrative; its suzerainty will continue to be undercut, and it must be put in its proper place, as a history among equally significant and legitimate histories. *Living Spirit*, in the most recent issue of *MANOA* literary journal, demonstrates, again, that formerly silenced and "erased" voices might emerge as a platform to inspire generations of storytellers. It will reach thousands of readers across the region. Who can predict or limit its trans-iterative capacity, its anarchistic and chaotic power? The project of decolonization requires emancipating the self to create new and unique stories; it is to assent to take up the power that one always had. Recovering this power is to place the colonizers' will-to-power and will-to-mastery in their proper context and history — while dismantling his/her lies, one need not mimic the other's violent worldview. All empires expire; the trick is not to replicate the fear and lust that drive imperial ambitions. Russell Leong's return to Buddhism, one of the oldest religions, does not mean that he will turn the other cheek but that he will continue to expose the sexism and racism of the colonizer; Maxine Hong Kingston remembers Chinese legends in order to inscribe the U.S. narrative landscape with Chinese warrior stories that are as much the women's as they are for the men. Even though Alice only temporarily enters radically unfamiliar and disorienting — emancipatory — mindscapes, upon her return, one would think that her "reality" has been fundamentally altered, perhaps, even transformed. From "Possessed by Love, Thwarted by the Bell: An Overview of *Kumi Odori*,"

Two qualities that the performers should have are *kan* and *konashi*. *Kan*, the ability to put life into a performance, is largely intuitive. Someone who has *kan* will learn things quickly, but more important than this is *konashi*, the accumulation of experience that allows one to master the essence of a scene. . . . In a good performance, all the elements should be in balance, with nothing too strong, and nothing too weak. (93)

From “Hawks” by Kawamitsu Shinichi,

Hawks, spirits of our ancestors, restlessly arriving
On our poor island as October winds begin blowing,
What can we do but capture those hawks to feed ourselves,
As our ancestors did when they were living?
Alive because of each other, now and always. (24)

Notes

- 1) Qtd. in Carter 16.
- 2) Asia-Pacific here is defined as the Pacific rim of Asia and the Americas, and the islands in the Pacific. This configuration is one that stresses the long historical and diverse relationships of the Asian-Pacific rim and the Pacific, a configuration articulated in *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production*, edited by Rob Wilson and Arif Dirlik and in the work of Asian Americanists, such as Evelyn Hu-Dehart. The 2008, *Hemispheric American Studies*, edited by Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine, is the most recent publication to reconstitute “American” studies.
- 3) Bauman, “Most fearsome is the ubiquity of fears; they may leak out of any nook or cranny of our homes and planet” (4).
- 4) A very compelling discussion of *Dictee*, can be found in Laura Hyun Yi Kang’s *Compositional Subjects: Enfiguring Asian/American Women*.
- 5) Ng quoting Joanne Saul.

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アジア太平洋のディアスポラ、 および脱植民地主義的語りにおける記憶と歴史の定位

ルース・Y. シュー

本稿では、抵抗と解放への可能性を生じさせる「場」としての記憶と歴史に注目しつつ、アジア太平洋地域の反主導権力の文学テクストについて考察する。アジア太平洋地域の異なる地理的場所において、過去数十年の異なる時期に書かれたテクストを分析していくが、特に21世紀における昨今の動きの中で有利な位置にあるアジア系アメリカ文学・文化が、いかに合衆国の文学研究をさらなる脱中心化へと導く方法として有効かということについて、合衆国の昨今の問題意識のもとに分析していく。

その覇権的な作用が多岐にわたる決定論を無効にするひとつの方法は、支配的な歴史的語り^{ナラティブ}に埋もれた、場所や人々の物語^{ストーリー}を掘り起こすことである。私たちが過去をどのように認知し、その知見とどのように向き合うかは、日常生活的に課せられた現在の責務（例えば、共同体意識や共通の目的のもとに、政治的に機能する社会を築くことなど）と関わっており、私たちが脱植民地化の流れの中で過去や現在を刷新していくことは、そうした共同体形成の作業に影響を与える。必要なのは、個人的な記憶と共同体や国家の集合的記憶の両方を再構築することであり、それによって、歴史の創造過程が、主導権を掌握する勢力との交渉や闘争の場そのものとなるのである。

本稿は、スーチェン・クリスティン・リム（シンガポール）、マリア・N. ヌグ（香港マカオ）、R. ザモラ・リンマーク（ハワイ）の著作やラッセル・リオン（ロサンジェルス）の詩などを検証することにより、脱植民地主義的試みにおける記憶や集合的歴史の問題点に迫る。これらの「物語」^{ストーリー}

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は、アジア太平洋地域の人々がどのように西洋の植民地主義と関わってきたかという経験のありようを垣間見せてくれる。また、これらの語りは、実際にある多様な奴隷状態から登場人物たちがどのように自らを解放へと導いていったかについても明らかにする。読者は、フィクションとしてのこれらの語りを、過去を「再追悼」する行為であると認識すると同時に、広大な脱植民地化の動きの中で人々をつなげる反主導権的ネットワークの生じる場所を、時間的・空間的な多面性、その予想不可能性、流動性、順応性といった力を備えた「場」として位置づける。本論ではまた、そのポストモダンの語りによって脱植民地化の文学の中でイコニックな存在となっているテレーサ・ハッキオン・チャの『ディクテ』についても論じ、結びとして、これまで英訳されることのなかった沖縄文学の作品を含む *MANOA* の沖縄文学特集号についても触れる。
