

**UCLA**

**UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations**

**Title**

Between Sovereignties: Chinese Minor Settler Literature Across the Pacific

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8n91k8xc>

**Author**

Huang, Yu-ting

**Publication Date**

2015

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Between Sovereignities:

Chinese Minor Settler Literature Across the Pacific

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Comparative Literature

by

Yu-ting Huang

2015

© Copyright by

Yu-ting Huang

2015

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Between Sovereignties:  
Chinese Minor Settler Literature Across the Pacific

by

Yu-ting Huang

Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature

University of California, Los Angeles

Professor Shu-mei Shih, Co-chair

Professor Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Co-chair

Taking as its subject Chinese immigrant-settler literature across the Pacific, this study introduces the concept of minor settler to describe settlers who are marginalized within settler society, as later-coming immigrants, racialized minority, or colonized peoples. Maintaining that their experiences of settlement differ from those of dominant settlers, and also foregrounding their role and responsibility as settlers perpetuating Indigenous dispossession, this dissertation is motivated by two research questions: (1) how minor settler aspiration for identity and belonging may corroborate settler ideology of non-native right to place, and (2) whether and how their minority struggle may lead to productive engagement with Indigenous decolonization. To answer these questions, I examine contemporary literary fictions by Chinese minor settler authors in Hawai'i, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Taiwan. Using critical insights from settler colonial studies and Indigenous critical theories, I analyze Chinese minor settler narratives against each location's layered settler colonial history, Indigenous political expressions, and racial and

national discourses, illustrating how these different conditions of literary production give rise to specific themes, formal qualities, and political commitments in minor settler literary narratives across national contexts. In each case I scrutinize instances where minor settler articulations facilitate ongoing settler hegemony and Indigenous silence, and also seek moments when they turn to Indigenous historiography and values for alternative relations and conversations. This study concludes that minor settler narratives can and do engage with both dominant settler and Indigenous narratives, as these coincide on the same geographical site and through interlocking historical processes. Despite their marginality, in narrating identity, belonging, place, and history, minor settler authors commit into writing their understanding of nation and subjectivity, and contribute to the ongoing negotiations between settler and Indigenous sovereignties.

This dissertation of Yu-ting Huang is approved.

Eleanor K. Kaufman

Shu-mei Shih, Co-chair

Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Co-chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

To my family.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter 1. "Growing up Local": Narrating Asian Minor Settler Identity in Hawai'i	28
Chapter 2. Being Ethnic in a Bicultural Nation: Acts of Translation in Chinese New Zealand Fictions	64
Chapter 3. From Survival to Survivance: Decolonizing Ethics in Settler Novels in Taiwan	115
Conclusion On Minor Settler Belatedness	172
Bibliography	176



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project began in Los Angeles, was written mostly in Taiwan, and is taking its final shape in the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts as I type these words. It is both bizarre and fitting that it was in Los Angeles, the paradigmatic postmodern third space, that I first came to perceive my identity as a Han settler in my home country of Taiwan and a foreigner-resident on unceded Native American land. Wherever I stand, my belonging is a debt. This dissertation acknowledges, before all else, my unshakable responsibilities to Indigenous peoples and lands.

Yet in the process of writing this dissertation, I have also accumulated numerous debts that are immediate and deeply felt. Many people's love and support sustain the research and emotional work in these pages:

First and foremost, I will remain forever grateful to Shu-mei Shih for inviting me to consider comparative literature as an intellectual calling during our first chance meeting in Taiwan almost ten years ago, and for being my mentor and advocate in the many years that follow. Shu-mei's unwavering support, trail-blazing scholarship, and intellectual curiosity provide the unparalleled foundations for my intellectual adventure. Her guidance and friendship nurture my confidence as a scholar that I could not otherwise obtain. This project, and my career as a comparatist, would have been truly impossible without her.

I am equally and infinitely indebted to Elizabeth DeLoughrey, who introduced me to the literary worlds of the Indigenous Pacific and new ways of looking at postcolonial literature environmentally and tidalectically. She keeps my feet on the literary grounds when my reasoning strays and pushes me to reach for theoretical heights when my thinking drags. Many of the ideas in these pages are hashed out during our sun-drenched walks with her adorable schnauzers and I am eternally thankful for her friendship and encouragement.

I also thank Eleanor Kaufman deeply for cultivating my knowledge and interests in theory and philosophy since the first year of my PhD work, and for the many wonderful and heartening conversations we have had since about theory, scholarship, and academic career. Eleanor's enthusiasm in exploring new

theoretical territories is infectious and she has never ceased being my most trusted advisor and ally. To my amazingly inspiring and supportive doctoral committee, I owe everything for becoming the scholar and thinker I am today.

Jenny Sharpe and Saree Makdisi both helped to shape my doctoral project by being readers and reviewers of my work. Saree in particular gave me much inspiration and guidance during my earlier study on eighteenth-century literature, which informs my research here in distant but important ways. Mishuana Goeman's generous advice gave the work much needed circumspection and sensitivity with regard to Native studies and Native theories, for which I am deeply grateful. Gary Pak and Syaman Rapongan, by replying to my inquiries about their literary endeavors, gave me motivations to continue my research as a project with real-life consequences. Also, the writing and research of this dissertation are financially supported by the Asian Institute and the Graduate Division of the University of California, Los Angeles, in the respective forms of Asian Institute Graduate Fellowship and Dissertation Year Fellowship, and I thank them for their confidence in the project and their generous support.

I must express my boundless appreciation for my colleagues in the Department of Comparative Literature: learning, teaching, conversing, and partying with them have given me the intellectual sharpness and emotional soundness to last as long as I do. Nasia Anam, Alexei Nowak, Nic Testerman, Thomas Chen, Chien-Heng Wu, and Zen Dochterman are not only loyal friends and brilliant scholars, but are also active contributors to this project; they are my sounding boards, TAs, therapists, first readers, and editors. Thank you for being such true friends and amazing human beings. Outside of UCLA, I thank Seneca Lindsey and Jamie Hilder for always being on the other end of the phone line in the last difficult months of this writing.

Finally, I must thank my family for indulging my decision to live an ocean away, and for taking me in and caring for my needs and wants during the last two years when I wrote the words that are now this dissertation. Mom, Dad, and Gordon, your steadfast love and support are the only reason I dare to step so far away, knowing that I can always come home to you. This dissertation is dedicated to you.

## VITA

2004	B.A., Foreign Languages and Literatures National Taiwan University Taipei, Taiwan
2007	M.A., English National Taiwan University Taipei, Taiwan
2008-2010	Taiwan Ministry of Education Scholarship Ministry of Education, Taiwan
2008-2013	Fulbright Graduate Study Grant Institution of International Education
2009, 2010	Chancellor's Prize Award, University of California, Los Angeles
2009-2010	Teaching Assistant Department of Comparative Literature University of California, Los Angeles
2010-2011	Teaching Associate Department of Comparative Literature University of California, Los Angeles
2011-2013	Teaching Fellow Department of Comparative Literature University of California, Los Angeles
2012	C.Phil., Comparative Literature University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, CA
2013-2014	Asian Institute Graduate Fellowship UCLA International Institute
2014-2015	Dissertation Year Fellowship UCLA Graduate Division

## PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Huang, Yu-ting. "The Archipelagos of Taiwan Literature: Comparative Methods and Island Writings in Taiwan." In *Comparatizing Taiwan*, edited by Shu-mei Shih and Ping-hui Liao, 80–99. New York: Routledge, 2014.

- “Reading Minor Settler Narratives: Temporality and Territoriality in Chinese New Zealand Fictions.” Paper presented at the annual meeting for American Comparative Literature Association, Seattle, Washington, March 26-29, 2015.
- “Building a Home on Contested Grounds: Imagining Indigenous Land in Asian Hawaiian ‘Local’ Writings.” Paper presented at the annual meeting for American Comparative Literature Association, New York City, March 20-23, 2014.
- “Women’s Bodies after the Apocalypse: The Liquefaction of Textual, Sexual and Physical Bodies in Keri Hulme’s *stonefish*.” Paper presented at the biennial conference for Contemporary Women’s Writing Association, Hsinchu, Taiwan, July 11-13, 2012.
- “Diasporic Senses of Place in the Caribbean and Maritime Southeast Asia.” Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association, Claremont, CA, November 5-6, 2011.
- “Repeating Islands: The Poetics of Relation from the Caribbean to the Islands of Taiwan.” Paper presented at Comparatizing Taiwan: International Conference on Taiwan, Los Angeles, California, January 21-22, 2011.
- “‘I Must Create a System Lest I be Enslaved by Others’: Native Theory Formation in the Caribbean and Southeast Asia.” Paper presented at the annual meeting for American Comparative Literature Association, Vancouver, Canada, March 31-April 3, 2011.
- “Unknowable Risk: The Concept of Risk and the Ethics of Political Action.” Paper presented at the conference for the UC Santa Barbara Consortium for Literature, Theory and Culture, Santa Barbara, CA, May 29, 2009.
- “Sympathy and Minority Politics: From *The Rights of Man* to the Contemporary Global Community.” Paper presented at the First International Graduate Student Conference on Literary and Cultural Studies, Hsinchu, Taiwan, June 4, 2008.
- “William Blake’s Social Vision and the Culture of Sensibility.” Paper presented at Blake at 250: Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Birth of William Blake, York, United Kingdom, July 30-August 1, 2007.

## Introduction

*Between Sovereignties* takes as its subject the literary articulations of marginalized settlers—descendants of Asian plantation workers in Hawai‘i, Chinese immigrants in Aotearoa New Zealand, and postcolonial Han peoples in Taiwan—and theorizes ways of reading this contemporary body of literature as minority expressions of settlement. All three locations in this study are Indigenous territories expropriated by invading non-native settlers, and settlement here refers not to innocuous acts of putting down roots but specifically to the politically intentional processes of evacuating Indigenous land rights to make place for non-native settlers. In these contexts, settlement implies occupation and expropriation, since to stay and settle without Indigenous consent entails an originary violence against Indigenous sovereignty. And yet, within this process of settler land grab, settlers are not homogenous bearers of the same sovereign power. Those who become settlers have arrived on Indigenous lands from different social and economic positions within and without the empire, as opportunists, convicts, religious exiles, slaves, and indentured labors, each with vastly different relation with the political order that comes to preside over Indigenous territories; or, as in the case of Taiwan, established settler collectives can become colonized by other invading powers. *Between Sovereignties* studies a particular strand within such settler heterogeneity across three settler colonial sites, where immigrant-settlers originating from China construct senses of settled subjectivity in place of Indigenous sovereignty, while struggling with experiences of exclusions, discrimination, and colonization. The fact that their struggle is articulated and interpreted vertically with regard to a hostile White mainstream or Japanese/Chinese colonial threats does not mean their desires for settlement and belonging somehow occur outside of the ongoing process of settler colonialism; and this study proposes that minority articulations construct particular senses of place-belonging and subjecthood that legitimize non-native access to Indigenous land, and thus interfere with Indigenous land rights and decolonization.

In a broad sense, the study investigates how minority authors in settler nation legitimize their senses of identity and belonging amidst ongoing contests between Indigenous and settler sovereignty. It foregrounds the triangulated relation between non-native minority, dominant bearers of national sovereignty, and the Indigenous peoples as the condition of writing and reading in Chinese immigrant-settler literature. While these texts are traditionally read as ethnic or postcolonial minor literature, this study argues that the awareness of their involvement in the settler colonial process alters the ways we read and interact with these texts. We know how they function as resistive, minority articulations against cultural hegemony of racism and foreign colonialism, but we as yet know little of their nature as settler expressions. How are their aspirations for place and future in effect expressions of settler desires, articulated against the assumption of already-completed Indigenous evacuation? How do their stories of arrival, struggle, and triumph corroborate settler natives of non-native rights to place? And finally, when may their uncertainty about their “places” in the settler nation ever be productive for Indigenous decolonization, contributing to the decolonizing effort of exposing the nation’s founding violence and envisioning altered relationships with Indigenous peoples as the sovereign peoples of these lands of their settlement? The following pages represent a concerted effort to answer these initial questions.

### **Starting Points: Opening Propositions**

As a premise this study begins with the understanding that settler colonialism is not merely an event of invasion, but a legal and symbolic structure that legitimizes non-native access to Indigenous land as a naturalized, given condition of settler livelihood and subjectivity. Such are the major insights of recent settler colonial studies, theorized and expanded in the past decade or so by mostly Australia- and Canada-based scholars such as Patrick Wolfe, Lorenzo Veracini, and Mark Rifkin, who propose that settler colonialism is structurally distinct from colonialism and thus consists in different mechanisms of

governance.<sup>1</sup> Constructed primarily around a settler majority's progressive replacement of Indigenous peoples on their ancestral land, settler colonialism seeks the physical, political, and symbolic evacuation of Indigenous rights and peoples in order to open the land for direct non-native possession; settlers come to stay, to cultivate their own land, and to become "Indigenous" to a new world. As such, rather than a political hierarchy through which colonial authority control native labor, settler colonialism's main project is to eliminate Indigenous peoples' special rights to land, through policy and violence, but also by narratives of pioneering heroism, settler hardship, Indigenous weakness and historical staleness, and the romance of wilderness and *terra nullius*. Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson thus emphasizes settlement as a particularly cultural and symbolic project, that "it is in the translation from experience to its textual representation that the settler subject can be seen working out a complicated politics of representation, working through the settler's anxiety and obsessions in textual form."<sup>2</sup> To adopt Patrick Wolfe's phrase, because settlement is a structure not an event,<sup>3</sup> the telling and re-telling of settler worthiness and the projection for the settler nation's future sustainability is the perpetual cultural demand in settler collective lives.

My study of minor settler literature is informed on one end by this growing scholarship on settler colonial cultures. Even as the literary study of settler colonial texts is a relatively new academic venture,<sup>4</sup> most sociological and political analyses of settler colonialism have observed the centrality of legal, political, and cultural discourses in the construction of settler national and individual identities and in the

---

<sup>1</sup> In particular, Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999); Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson, "Settler Colonies," in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Henry Schwartz and Sangeeta Ray (Maldon, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 363.

<sup>3</sup> Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> With the exception of Mark Rifkin's *Settler Common Sense*, there has to date not been other scholarly monographs or edited volumes devoted solely to the reading of settler colonial texts. I have had the opportunity in hosting and participating in two panels on settler colonial literatures and cultures in the most recent annual meeting of American Comparative Literature Association in 2015, from which an edited volume is being conceived and pursued.

removal of Indigenous peoples and rights. It is in this sense that Mark Rifkin argues for a way of reading settler literature that attunes to the ways in which “the construction and maintenance of the settler-state” direct how settler authors imagine “place, personhood, and political belonging,” even when the texts do not directly imagine a frontier or represent Indigenous peoples.<sup>5</sup> Rifkin’s point is particularly poignant with regard to minor settler texts, whose apparent concerns are often citizenship, cultural marginalization, and racial conflicts, subjects that are apparently distant from the nation state’s originary settler violence. Yet these very same concerns of minor settler inclusion and recognition can build on a similar symbolic and discursive investment in the maintenance of settler-state, and tell a story of settler future modified for minority accommodation. In this light, minority demands for the right to belong to place, to parity, and to legitimate citizenship in the settler nation—if unchecked by considerations of Indigenous sovereignty—continue to elevate Indigenous dispossession as the taken-for-granted condition of subjectivity, liberty, and fairness.

Yet what does it mean to consider Indigenous sovereignty? While much of this study is concerned with the ways in which minor settler texts operate within the parameters of settler cultural hegemony, it also rejects the notion that settler colonial hegemony always already encompasses minor settler articulations. This study takes as another central premise that Indigenous sovereignty has not been made to disappear in settler colonial processes of occupation, but is inherent in Indigenous lands and peoples. Indigenous sovereignty, furthermore, is not defined by the western notion of national sovereignty such as decreed at Westphalia in 1648, nor is it a uniform notion of pre-contact world order; instead, it inheres in Indigenous everyday lives, performed in real-time and on material grounds. Indigenous sovereignty is frequently articulated most urgently in the contexts of political and cultural activism, and my chapters engage with expressions of Indigenous sovereignty specific to each context that I study. Yet there is a major tenor running through these Indigenous forms of sovereignty that distinguish them from settler

---

<sup>5</sup> Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense*, xvii.



forms of sovereign nationhood. Here I rely on the definition of Indigenous sovereignty from Australian Aboriginal theorist Aileen Moreton-Robinson, who explains that, from the Indigenous standpoint,

the Indigenous subject/knower is situated in the everyday actualities of their sovereignty in their relations with other Indigenous peoples and communities. Our sovereignty is embodied, it is ontological (our being) and epistemological (our way of knowing), and it is grounded within complex relations derived from the intersubstantiation of ancestral beings, humans and land. In this sense, our sovereignty is carried by the body and differs from Western construction of sovereignty, which are predicated on the social contract model, the idea of a unified supreme authority, territorial integrity and individual rights.<sup>6</sup>

Because Indigenous sovereignty is imbedded in Indigenous ways of being and knowing, it is not eliminated when settler sovereignty usurps Indigenous land, nor does its realization necessarily overlap with western notions of territorial sovereignty (although some Indigenous peoples do choose it as an expression of their sovereignty in relation to other national polities). Theorizing Native American political sovereignty, Kevin Bruyneel thus concludes that Indigenous sovereignty does not line up with the spatial and temporal boundaries that settler nation state assigns to the notion of sovereignty, in particular settler concepts of national borders and the perceived divide and incompatibility between pre-contact tribal time and modern political time. Instead, Indigenous tribes are not simply inside or outside settler national territory, but “straddle the temporal and spatial boundaries of American politics, exposing the incoherence of these boundaries as they seek to secure and expand their tribal sovereign expression.”<sup>7</sup> In these ways, Indigenous sovereignty remains an active political order that structures relations on lands expropriated by settlers; while its expressions may have been ignored, its persistence in Indigenous bodies

---

<sup>6</sup> Aileen Moreton-Robinson, introduction to *Sovereign Subjects: Indigenous Sovereignty Matters*, ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2007), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xv.

and ways of knowing continues to challenge settler assumptions that formal colonization is over and the false notion that Indigenous sovereignty is confined on reservations.

Such understanding of Indigenous sovereignty suggests that minor settler narratives of settlement and belonging concern not merely their place in the institution of nation state but also their political relation with Indigenous sovereignty. While Indigenous people still struggle to express sovereignty in real-political terms—and while these political expressions are by no means uniform—their sovereignty over expropriated or occupied land remains inherent, and minor settlers who reside on Indigenous lands inevitably enter into relation with Indigenous world orders, even as such relation exceeds the terrains of state politics of citizenship or property rights. Regardless of one's legality in the settler nation, residency on expropriated Indigenous territory automatically prompts questions of obligations and responsibilities. When we center Indigenous perspectives in this way, it is possible then to evaluate minor settler texts on the extent of their interference with Indigenous models of social relation, knowledge systems, identity, and ethics. It is possible then to interpret minor settler articulations as cultural productions of settler residency overlapping with Indigenous knowledge and relation on the same plot of land. It is possible, finally, to understand minor settler texts as making conversations with Indigenous meanings and Indigenous histories. Rather than reading minority literary expressions as solely contending with sovereign state power, the recognition of enduring Indigenous sovereignty suggests a re-reading of these minor settler texts as cultural productions *between sovereignties*.

The centering of enduring Indigenous perspective is therefore not simply to facilitate further critique of minor settler's potential colonial complicity—although this is admittedly one of the major tasks of this study. What is more important and ultimately hopeful is the opportunity for analyzing immigrant or colonial minority subjects in direct relation with Indigenous peoples and communities. Too frequently in the histories that we will recount in this study, White settler mainstream and colonial powers maintain their singular forms of hegemony by being the inevitable mediators between racial/colonial minority and the Indigenous peoples. In Hawai'i and Aotearoa New Zealand, White settlers historically racialized

Chinese immigrants differently from the Indigenous peoples: Chinese are both laboring bodies required and regulated by capitalism and carriers of disease and moral corruption that threaten both the integrity of White settler community and the welfare of the “disappearing” Natives under White protection and guardianship.<sup>8</sup> In Taiwan, under either Qing, Japanese, or Chinese Nationalist rule, Indigenous peoples are under special legal provisions to ensure the state’s access to their land and also to prevent Han-Indigenous relation beyond the exploitation and assimilation of Indigenous bodies.<sup>9</sup> In the former cases, the categorization of both exogenous undesirables and Indigenous wards legitimize White residency, and in the latter, colonial governments evacuate Indigenous sovereignty and Indigeneity to complete Han settler colonial project. In any event, minor settlers are prevented from negotiating their residency directly with sovereign Indigenous peoples, and are kept in or out of place through dominant settler or colonial mediation. Re-centering Indigenous sovereignty in reading minor settler texts, this study proposes the possibility and importance to comprehend direct relations between Indigenous and other minority peoples. As Jodi Byrd maintains, settler colonialism creates cacophonous spaces of multi-directional relations, which foster “the possibility for memory and resistance to forge alliances and cultural experiences in opposition to the competition upon which colonialism relies.”<sup>10</sup> While this is not to deny the structuring impact of settler state apparatus, it calls attention to the role minority-Indigenous relations can play in both the maintenance and possible dismantling of settler colonialism.

At its core, the study takes the nation as the practical framework of analyses. While the political and temporal boundaries of settler nation state cannot confine Indigenous sovereignty or minority-

---

<sup>8</sup> Sally Engle Merry, *Colonizing Hawai'i: The Cultural Power of Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); David Pearson, “‘The Majority Factor’: Shaping Chinese and Māori Minorities,” in *The Dragon and the Taniwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand*, ed. Manying Ip (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009), 32–55.

<sup>9</sup> Emma Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming “Japanese”: Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 133-173; Basuya Bojjjernue (Pu Zhongcheng), *Bei yiwang de shengyu: yuanzhumin shenhua lishi yu wenxue de zhuisu* [The forgotten land of spirits: Indigenous myths, history, and history] (Taipei: Wunan, 2007), 445-459.

<sup>10</sup> Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 53.

Indigenous relation, the nation remains the main political force field where settler colonialism, Indigenous sovereignty, and minority identity intersect or collide, and where minor settler texts produce social and political meaning. At the foreground of each of my chapters is the question of national future—be it Hawaiian sovereignty movement, Aotearoa New Zealand’s bicultural constitution, or Taiwan’s national identity—and it is in these questions of national constitution that lies the real stake of the discussion of settler colonial violence and its transformation and unraveling. Settlers’ national sovereignty has been the hegemonic discourse containing both Indigenous sovereignty and racial minority as “domestic issues,” and Indigenous and minority assertions of sovereignty or identity must engage in one way or another with the violence perpetuated in the name of the national collective. This has to do with the practical and cultural importance of nation, national space, and national community as an important political goals and symbols in settler, minority, and Indigenous articulations, around which they converse and interfere with one another’s visions. More than any other forms of colonialism, settler colonialism fundamentally concerns land, or its trans-form as territory, and this highlights the ontological importance of land to Indigenous peoples as we have seen described by Moreton-Robinson. Adding to this existing conflict, minor settler struggle for recognition and fairness ultimately hinges on their desire to belong to the place of their settlement. Despite our theoretical disagreement with the nation state as the dominant form of organizing a people’s relation to land, these attachments to land in political praxis have been formalized as the domain of the nation state, so much so that the UN declaration in the 1960s defines independence and autonomy of colonized peoples by the terms of a people’s “complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their *national territory*.”<sup>11</sup> It is thus not surprising that sovereignty movements frequently have the explicit goals of national independence or territorial autonomy; nor should it be considered inconsistent for Indigenous resurgence movements to seek the remapping or retelling of national space and history. While the UN equation of sovereignty with national territory

---

<sup>11</sup> United Nation General Assembly, Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, 14 December, 1960, A/RES/1514(XV), <http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/dicc/dicc.html>. Emphasis mine.

privileges settler legal systems and aggravates Indigenous dispossession—a bias implicitly exposed subsequently by UN’s 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—the maintenance as well as the decolonization of settler colonialism have taken place foremost in the space of the nation. This study thus engages the nation as the context in which settler colonialism is most urgently investigated and contested. It understands minor settler foremost as a structural position within a national context, responding to competing sovereign notions, and participating in the imaginations of national futures.

### **Toward a Reading of Minor Settler Literature**

So why compare? My three chapters deal with three specific national situations, each with its own settler colonial histories, Indigenous political expressions, and racial and national discourses. Minor settler texts in Hawai‘i, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Taiwan converse with different literary histories and respond to distinct national debates, and as a result have their own separate aesthetic and political agenda. Their forms and themes vary: in Hawai‘i, where island-born Asian writers are keen to develop a place-based identity separate from the U.S. Mainland, *bildungsroman* emerges as the key genre for identity formation. In Aotearoa New Zealand, where post-settler colonial bicultural negotiation has its roots in a bilingual Māori-English treaty, it is the question of translation that preoccupies Chinese New Zealand writers and their effort to write themselves into the bicultural nation. In Taiwan, in the wake of layered foreign colonizations, postcolonial authors seek ethical retellings of multiple histories in experimental poststructuralist novels. These are literary forms and concerns specific to their locality, and there has not been a uniform expression for minor settler literature across national contexts. Excepting this—that each of these literary cultures is developed as a minority response to the workings of specific hegemonic discourses while simultaneously articulating the settler will to relate and belong to the land of their residency. As such the ambition of this study is not to catalogue characteristics that may identify a text in the minor settler category, but to propose a set of questions we may ask when encountering a text

produced in negotiation with both Indigenous and hegemonic state sovereignty. The two components of the key analytical term, minor and settler, are relational signifiers that aim to situate a text's structural relation with dominant and Indigenous discourses, and to suggest certain relation between the two historical processes that allow us to read a text as at once minor and settler.

I use the term “minor” in order to capture these literary texts' entanglement with dominant domestic powers that is not Indigenous and to which they are subjected. My chapters focus on Chinese indentured labor force in Hawai'i, the racially discriminated Chinese descendants and migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand, and Taiwan's colonized peoples; and in each case the subjects of minor settler articulations write in both resistance and response to a hegemonic discourse: U.S. capital and cultural hegemony in Hawai'i, White New Zealand's historical hostility to Chinese immigration, Japanese and Chinese colonial/semi-colonial control of Taiwan's early arriving Han settler collective. The Chinese immigrant or Sinophone authors I read in these contexts identify themselves in opposition to dominant discourses—be it White mainstream culture or the ideologies of the empire. Posted as universal and the norm in the domestic contexts, these dominant discourses forcefully involve minority subjects in “a politics of assimilation, incorporation, or resistance,” while “instituting a structure of vertical struggle for recognition and citizenship.”<sup>12</sup> Because minority is defined against a hegemony, its cultural expressions and political agenda exist on a spectrum between assimilation and difference; therefore, Abdul JanMohamed and David Lloyd identify minority politics as an articulation of difference: “the very recognition of the value of minority culture forms entails the examination of the economic and political differences which determine their differences from those of majority culture.”<sup>13</sup> Note that JanMohamed and Lloyd emphasize that these differences are not simply cultural, but foremost material, economic, and political; minority articulations thus speak to minority subjects' different conditions of life and subjectivity as produced by the operations of dominant discourse. What remains for minority subjects to decide is how

---

<sup>12</sup> Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, “Thinking Through the Minor, Transnationally,” introduction to *Minor Transnationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Abdul JanMohamed and David Lloyd, “Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse,” *Cultural Critique* 6 (1987): 9.

to interpret these differences, how to construe a response, and how to create, demand, or imagine alternative conditions of life and subjectivity.

If being minor demands a sensitivity to differences in the face of assimilation and the hegemonic universal, then there is an inherent double-move in minority narratives—its assertion of difference goes hand-in-hand with an intimate understanding of what is dominant. Because of such doubleness, there is always the risk for minor identity to cling to the dominant discourse—like Bhabha’s colonial mimic man<sup>14</sup>—or the threat for hegemony to internalize differences as a part of its operation.<sup>15</sup> Many theorists of minor literature thus focus on its linguistic slipperiness, its orientation in perpetual flight, and its sustained and strategic dance with the majority that resists the collapse in resolution. Tellingly, such lines of flight are usually theorized in spatial terms, as an existence at some ever-shifting margins or illusive paths of wandering— a refusal, in other words, of settlement. Deleuze and Guattari famously define minor literature by its three characteristics: "the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation."<sup>16</sup> Among these, the deterritorialization of language seems the foundational act that describes the literary texture of minority utterance not least because the minority experience’s strong association with migration and dislocation. Thus Deleuze and Guattari continue to explain that the question of minor literature—"the problem of immigrants, their children, but ultimately all of us"—is "how to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one’s own language?"<sup>17</sup> While their answer is the creation of a "linguistic Third World zone" in all of its historical senses of being outside of a primary binary, its political history of postcoloniality, and the promise of collective resistance built on geographical marginality, they admonish this linguistic Third World’s potential desire to eventually become major: "How many styles or genres or

---

<sup>14</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 85-92.

<sup>15</sup> JanMohamed and Lloyd, "Minority Discourse," 9.

<sup>16</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 18.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

literary movements, even very small ones, have only one single dream: to assume a major function in language, to offer themselves as a sort of state language, an official language.... Create the opposite dream: know how to create a becoming-minor."<sup>18</sup> In Deleuze and Guattari's formulation, the linguistic Third World of minor literature cannot succumb to the postcolonial desire for national articulations, but must remain vigilantly in a third space of resistance, similar to Bhabha's location of culture or Edward Soja's postmodern city.<sup>19</sup> As such, Deleuze and Guattari defines minor literature at the point of tension between enunciation and unsettlement.

Yet minor enunciation of linguistic deterritorialization must also always take place at a specific location and moment where and when multiple spatial histories materially create the condition of writing and reading. Linguistic space, as Deleuze's Third World metaphor attests, has its material correspondence in lived and storied spaces, and the injunction of linguistic nomadism does not take minor literature from its material contexts, but rather, indicates a special relation between minor literature and its imagination of place and space—particularly an awareness of place and space as layered and fluid, capable of multiple and intersecting inscriptions, and as a result, is constantly in the process of making and being made.<sup>20</sup> But if one of the main lessons of minor literature is the production of space as layered inscriptions and ongoing negotiations, it also follows that a minority text constructs a particular vision of spatial practice and place-based relation, that can and should be read in relation to other, potentially competing ones.

One interest of this study is the occasions in which such minor imaginations of place and space coincide with settler colonial expropriation of Indigenous land, where minor articulations of spatial practices privilege settler residency at the expense of Indigenous sovereign relation to place and culture. As Mark Rifkin theorizes in a different context, literary resistance against hegemonic spatial practices can

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>19</sup> Bhabha, *Location of Culture*; Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journey to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996).

<sup>20</sup> See Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005).



still perpetuate a deeply seated "settler common sense," or sets of legal and political structures by which "non-native access to Indigenous territories come to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, genetic condition of possibility for occupancy, association, history, and personhood."<sup>21</sup> Rifkin's reading of "queer" homemaking in canonical American Renaissance texts by Hawthorn, Thoreau, and Melville suggests that these self-conscious resistances against capitalist and heterosexual state economy are imagined through the erasure of Indigenous presence and the creation of North American nature and city as oppositional spaces from within the settler collective (as opposed to Indigenous mapping such as described by Mishuana Goeman).<sup>22</sup> This study corroborates the tenor of Rifkin's important findings but investigates the self-consciously minor strand of settler narratives through the literary articulations by racial minority and colonized peoples who also occupy Indigenous land. To the extent that minority access to national space is frequently restricted and conditional, minor settler texts seldom depict minor access to land (Indigenous or otherwise) as "unmarked" or "genetic," but are instead often keen on exposing the discursive traces of spatial conditioning by state hegemony; yet the flip side of such awareness is these texts' explicit or implicit projection of emancipation as the break-down of spatial barriers and the democratization of spatial access (if also diversified). While these minor acts of border-erasing can be self-consciously tactical,<sup>23</sup> frequently they are embraced as teleological destinations of emancipatory projects that define a historical latter day of settler/immigrant conviviality.<sup>24</sup> The symbolic gesture of nomadism, when combined with

---

<sup>21</sup> Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), xvi.

<sup>22</sup> Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> By "tactical," I employ de Certeau's definition of the tactical as impromptu, responsive, and opportunist acts of coping with systematic strategy. However, my use of strategic in other places of the dissertation does not often invoke the kind of systematic institutionalization of de Certeau's notion; rather, minor settler's dual political function—simultaneously minor and settler—rather troubles the distinction between strategy and tactic. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> I refer here to Paul Gilroy's argument for conviviality in *Postcolonial Melancholia*, against which Jodi Byrd has saliently critiqued the way the notion of conviviality presupposes the extinction of Indigenous sovereignty. Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Jodi A Byrd, "In the City of Blinding Lights: Indigeneity, Cultural Studies and the Errants of Colonial Nostalgia," *Cultural Studies Review* 15, no. 2 (2009): 25-6.

the actual political struggle for minority recognition, citizenship, and rights to settle, can create the fictional aspiration for a land free to be roamed by anyone, thus potentially obscuring the political conflicts between minority settlement and Indigenous sovereignty and evading discussions of settler responsibility and accountability. In other words, when the elevated figures of nomadism and exile mask the material reality of minority settlement, minor authors' challenges against hegemonic spatial constructions may in fact anticipate the expansion, rather than the unraveling, of settler occupation of Indigenous land.

Yet the reverse must also be allowed as a possibility. If, upon exposing the constructedness of mainstream settlement, minor literary texts turn to Indigenous values and sovereign knowledge as alternative truth for reframing their acts of settlement, they may create openings to imagine alternative forms of relations and alliances outside colonial competitions. My contention here is that the mandate of persistent nomadism is insufficient. With a sensitivity to hegemonic spatial arrangement, minor settler texts have the opportunity to confront their relation to Indigenous land and its attendant responsibility, and to produce narrative forms in which Indigenous historiographies and values can play an active role in minor deconstruction of state hegemony. This is then another question that guides this project: if a minor settler text seeks to interrogate minor conditions of settlement with a sensitivity to the Indigenous perspective, what kind of literary forms would it produce and what writing strategies would it need to employ? The rest of the dissertation records a range of tentative answers, but a common theme would emerge time and again with regard to this question: the centrality of time—as in the obligation of remembering, the acknowledgement of different temporalities flowing together in landed encounters, and the limits or promises inherent in the temporal play of fictional narratives. Jodi Byrd advocates “mnemonic reading” in her formulation of critical Indigenous theory by emphasizing land as itself a mnemonic device, structuring both Indigenous-centered relations and the resistance against settler colonial violence. On the one hand, “a land that remembers is a land that constructs kinship relations with all living beings who inhabit it,” while on the other, “to read mnemonically is to connect the violences and

genocides of colonization to cultural productions and political movements.”<sup>25</sup> So mnemonic reading disrupts the silent workings of settler hegemony through cultural productions of settler common sense. While the minor settler texts I read in this study do not all have the same access or orientation to land as sites of Indigenous memories and relations, many puzzle over the ethics of remembrance between different histories layering on the land where they have come to reside, including settler, immigrant, and Indigenous stories. And it is frequently with such sensitivity that minor settler authors may come to re-articulate their relation with land and the Indigenous peoples. In the end, it is not the persistently proclaimed nomadism that would prevent minor settler texts from perpetuating the symbolic violence of settler colonialism, but it is through the lessons about space—that space is made in relation and multiply inscribed in time—that would remind minor settler texts of their inevitable functions of power and demand them to give a clearer account of their responsibilities and relations.

### **Naming the Minor Settler**

The question of how to politicize marginalized non-natives in a settler-dominated nation state has not gone unnoticed. Rather, it is arguably one of the more controversial problems confronting both settler colonial studies and Native studies in recent scholarship, particularly with regard to the usefulness or appropriateness in identifying them with the term “settler.” In these debates, the designation of settler is decidedly political: it signals the territorial interests diametrically opposed to those of the Indigenous peoples in the zero-sum game of sovereign struggle over land. Patrick Wolfe has always maintained a fundamental binary between non-natives and Indigenous in settler colonial situations, that despite internal complexities and hierarchies among settlers, settler societies “uniformly require the elimination of Native

---

<sup>25</sup> Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, 118, xii.

alternatives.”<sup>26</sup> Similarly, but from the perspective of Native sovereignty movement, Hawaiian nationalist scholar and poet Haunani-Kay Trask insists that Asians in Hawai‘i be recognized as “settlers, not immigrants,” who have by now maintained an “immigrant hegemony” over the islands of Hawai‘i.<sup>27</sup> At a basic level, the designation of all non-native residents who actively seek to stay as “settlers” emphasizes their inevitable participation in the expropriation of Indigenous land and their indelible obligation to answer to ongoing Indigenous dispossession. While Indigenous epistemology frequently conceives of land and landed relation as layered and multiply described, that a zero-sum conception of land as territory does not necessarily describes the political goal and practice of Indigenous sovereignty, the designation of “settler” usefully alerts us to the existing fact that existing settler occupation of Indigenous land has not gone through such conversation with Indigenous sovereignty, that settler colonial territorialization of Indigenous land has indeed seeks a totalizing hegemony. It is in this sense that I find it crucial in retaining “settler” in my own reading of minor settler texts, to call attention to the political responsibility of being settlers on Indigenous land that these texts must ultimately confront.

Yet disagreements exist. Some refuse the name “settler” to signal their structural difference from the dominant settler groups who have a more direct relation to state sovereignty. Lorenzo Veracini has importantly theorized settler colonialism as a tripartite structure, constituting settlers, Indigenous Others, and the “Exogenous Others”—including the Empire, foreign competitors, and those whom I theorize here as minor settlers.<sup>28</sup> According to Veracini, the Exogenous Others is the necessary third term in settler colonial structure mainly due to settlers’ desire for “indigenization”: in the sense of becoming “Indigenous”—and thus rightfully sovereign—to the land they come to occupy without having to heed Indigenous codes of relation and obligation. To do so, settler ideology requires the presence of outsiders against whom their Indigeneity can be constructed structurally and by comparison (while the Indigenous

---

<sup>26</sup> Patrick Wolfe, “Recuperating Binarism: A Heretical Introduction,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3–4 (2013): 257.

<sup>27</sup> Haunani-Kay Trask, “Settlers of Color and ‘Immigrant’ Hegemony: ‘Locals’ in Hawai‘i,” in *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai‘i*, ed. Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 45–65.

<sup>28</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 16–32.

peoples, being the *original* Indigenous, are apparently unfit for this function). In Veracini's formulation, minor settlers are the structural and discursive side products of settler colonialism, whose position in the settler society fluctuates: for the dominant settlers, minor settlers remain outsiders whose participation in the settler society is only probational, yet they also must prove possibly assimilable into the dominant settler collective to avoid complete exclusion or deportation.

There is an apparent limitation in Veracini's otherwise salient analysis, namely the primacy he grants to dominant settler maneuvers and the relative lack of agency he allows for both Indigenous and minor settlers in the formation and dissolution of settler colonial collective. Granted that Veracini's main interest lies in the theorization of settler colonialism as a specific modality of colonial governance, his description of minor settler's paradoxical presence in the settler nation leaves unanswered the question of minor settlers' political agency in settler colonial societies. It is widely agreed that many racialized immigrants were brought into expropriated Indigenous land to provide labor that the Indigenous would not or could not provide (because of the logic of Native elimination at the center of settler colonial project),<sup>29</sup> yet even when minor settlers' arrival has been the case of slavery and indentureship, Veracini's formulations leaves out the possibility for minor settlers to address or interrogate their settler status in direct relation with the Indigenous peoples and to forge alternative relations based on negotiations of obligations between minor settlers and Indigenous sovereignty. It is also difficult to explain minor settler's shifting roles after settler nations increasingly turn to the rhetoric of multicultural inclusion as a means to maintain settler hegemony:<sup>30</sup> do they still play the function of the dialectical outsiders if the dominant discourse successfully recasts them as a multicultural insider of the settler collective? While it is doubtful whether multicultural agenda ever actualizes inclusion and parity, the discursive shift from exclusion to inclusion still requires some modifications to Veracini's initial formulation.

---

<sup>29</sup> Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (June 1, 2001): 866–905.

<sup>30</sup> For settler states' turn to multiculturalism, see Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

Indeed, Veracini's notion of immigrants as exogenous others seems to have a temporal component that Jodi Byrd's chosen term, "arrivant," more explicitly addresses. Borrowing from Caribbean poet Kamau Brathwaite's term, Byrd uses arrivant to describe those "forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe."<sup>31</sup> For Byrd, the arrivants are distinguished from settlers because their settlement has the added burden of racialization and is therefore different from White settler experiences. But she does not exonerate them from participating in settler colonialization or their responsibility to Indigenous decolonization. Byrd frequently employs the term "arrivant colonialism" in conjunction with settler colonialism, while at the same time calling attention to settler colonialism's differential racialization of arrivants and Indigenous peoples. In these ways, Byrd's use of the term coincides with my conceptualization of minor settlers.

Yet my decision to employ a different term has to do with my different focus. While Byrd's is a more focused theorization of the production of Indigenous figures in American cultural texts, my goal is the explication of minor settler's settler function. To me, minor settlers' settler status derives not from explicit intention to create settlements at the moment of landfall, but from their subsequent adherence to a narrative of settled future at the cost of Indigenous sovereignty. As such, minor settler responsibility to Indigenous decolonization is not a matter of voluntarism—(else how do we justify categorizing British convicts in Australia as settlers, or for that matter, to conceive of settler responsibility as transgenerational?)—but has more to do with their places in the projected national future. The history of arrival matters, and the experience of racial minoritization is an essential component of their narrative of settlement and future aspirations, but these do not cancel the role they play as settlers in the ongoing hegemony of settler colonialism.

This is rather why narrative is critical in my conceptualization of the minor settler. These political questions have motivated this study from the start: how is it correct to connect enslaved and indentured people to settler colonialism, and has not their unwillingness to be instruments of settler colonial economy

---

<sup>31</sup> Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, xix.

made them also victims, rather than perpetrators, of the settler colonial process? How do we address the multiple waves and manners in which these minor settlers arrive? These questions demonstrate for me the necessity to read minor settler position not primarily as a fixed category in political theory, but as an active vantage point of articulation and relation in the ongoing history of settler colonialism and the living struggles of decolonization. My reading of fictional narratives argues for such deeper encounter with minor settler presence in the settler colonial society over time, in the spatial and temporal concepts opened by narrative deployment. Here we may recall Bakhtin's observation of the novelistic genre as textual encounters between multiple voices that synthesize both the temporal and spatial trajectories crisscrossing its social worlds.<sup>32</sup> As such, narrative fictions tell stories of long histories—from arrival to future—on a thick landscape where histories of different peoples and multiple tellings are storied. In fictional narratives, through emplotment's "game of time,"<sup>33</sup> minor settler arrival is recast by its vision of future destination while the future visions can be tempered by different understandings of the past. While the first minor settlers may have arrived in indentureship and slavery, contemporary tellings and readings of these stories are not bound by settler violence in the same way and are venues in which social relations are actively interpreted and performed: When perceived as justifications for minor settler inherited right to place, these stories of arrival feed a narrative of settler legitimacy; when remembered alongside Indigenous dispossession, the stories of minor settler arrival may be the soils for alternative conversations and renewed friendship. The sense of political engagement in minor literature that I have pointed out earlier lends itself to the emergence and remembrance of multiple histories where political subjectivity can be articulated with ambivalence and hesitation. The following pages take minor settler literary texts as the discursive fields where minor settlers attempt different visions of history and future, and construct pictures of social relations either real or aspired.

---

<sup>32</sup> M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

<sup>33</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, vol. 2, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 61-99.

## Setting the Scene: Chinese Minor Settlers in the Pacific

The literary texts I have chosen for this study are authored by writers who actively acknowledge full or partial ancestral origins from modern-day geographical China and who are now residing in or around the Pacific ocean. One of the purposes for the decision is to delimit the kinds of conditions that give rise to minor settler positions in this initial study of the problem. My formulation of minor settlers as marginalized settlers on expropriated Indigenous land may be perceivable in many contexts, and each certainly would add to the complication of our considerations. Limiting minor settler authors to those with a common migrational origin allows me to zoom in on several common experiences of racialization, exclusion, and assimilations across national contexts. Yet, another reason of my choice to read Chinese minor settler texts in the Pacific is my interest in capturing a partial picture of Chinese settler network in the Pacific. For roughly two decades, North American historians have begun to argue that Chinese Qing dynasty's vast territorial acquisition in Eurasia from the 17th to 19th century was colonial in nature and spurred by global imperial competitions.<sup>34</sup> More recently, similar argument is extended to Chinese maritime expansions, especially regarding to Chinese incorporation of Taiwan in mid-19th century.<sup>35</sup> While we do not yet have too much historical research on China as a maritime empire, the pattern of Chinese outmigration into Pacific Indigenous land is suggestive of a connected settler network besides the British commonwealth. While much of this outmigration took the form of indentured subaltern labor, its expansive reach has a lasting impact even to this day. More immediately relevant to this present study, the

---

<sup>34</sup> Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.)

<sup>35</sup> Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Edward Vickers, "Original Sin on the Island Paradise? Qing Taiwan's Colonial History in Comparative Perspective," *Taiwan in Comparative Perspective* 2 (2008): 65-86.



connected history of Chinese outmigration in the Pacific has influenced the ways that Chinese minor settlers are excluded, included, or positioned in both local and regional politics.

Chinese minor settler presence across the Pacific has a long history,<sup>36</sup> as multiple waves of migration that situate them regionally and nationally in complex power structures. Since at least four centuries ago, Han Chinese from southeast coastal areas have established settler colonies on Indigenous lands in maritime Southeast Asia, ranging from pioneer societies in modern-day Taiwan to enterprises of resources extraction and trading hubs centered around the strait of Malacca.<sup>37</sup> When Europeans arrived in Southwest Pacific in the late 17th century and through to the early 20th century, they contended and cooperated with existing settler networks, facilitating more expansive Chinese and Asian settlement on the rubber plantations of Southeast Asia, while fostering its own settler colonies in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>38</sup> By trade routes and by way of Southeast Asia, Chinese traders, miners, and laborers—at first exclusively and then overwhelmingly male—began to arrive almost as early as British settlers in the Antipodes, and as in established settler colonies of Canada and United States, worked in gold mines, plantations, and agriculture.<sup>39</sup> Towards the second part of the 19th century, most of the gold miners in

---

<sup>36</sup> I use “Chinese” with full awareness of the term’s imprecision and Han-centrism. As Shu-mei Shih argues, “Chinese” is not an ethnicity but a reference to the geopolitical unit of China, whose multiethnic construction is frequently elided by the equivalence assumed between its Han majority and an ethnic “Chineseness.” Shih has proposed using “Sinophone” in place of “Chinese” when referencing Chinese-speaking subjects and authors outside of China. Because this study covers both Chinese- and English-speaking authors, for the sake of brevity and to avoid confusion, I have continued to use “Chinese” to designate those who maintain an active sense of inheritance as migrants from geopolitical China; but my readings are attuned to the internal complexity of the term. Shu-mei Shih, “Sinophone American Literature,” in *The Routledge Companion to Asian American and Pacific Islander Literature*, ed. Rachel Lee (New York: Routledge, 2014), 333. For further arguments against the use of Chinese diaspora, see Shu-mei Shih, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); for critical accounts of Han-centrism and the construction of Han as the ethno-national foundation of modern China, see Thomas S. Mullaney et al., eds., *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China’s Majority* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Emma Teng, *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Norman G. Owen, ed., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 22-26.

<sup>38</sup> Owen, *The Emergence*, 183. As I will discuss below, Shu-mei Shih has thus dubbed Chinese minor settlers in Southeast Asia “middleman settler colonizers.” Shu-mei Shih, “Theory, Asia, and the Sinophone,” *Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 4 (2010): 465–84.

<sup>39</sup> Eric Rolls, *Sojourners: Flowers and the Wide Sea* (St Lucia, Australia: University of Queensland Press, 1992), 32; Manying Ip, “Maori-Chinese Encounters: Indigene-Immigrant Interaction in New Zealand,” *Asian Studies Review* 27, no. 2 (2003): 227–52.

Australia and New Zealand were indentured through credit-ticket systems maintained by merchants both at home and in Australia.<sup>40</sup> In addition, European Imperial aggression in East Asia translated to the massive flow of labor out of China, supplementing much needed productive force in settler colonies where Indigenous peoples were decimated or resistant, and where settlers were eager to extract values out of expropriated Indigenous land—most notably on plantations in Hawai‘i and the West Indies. Many Chinese laborers died en route, most who survived returned home, but some stayed, intermarrying with local women or, in some cases, bringing their wives over. Those who stayed on among White settlers were construed as threats to the value of White labor and the integrity of White morality, mostly through a discourse of Chinese disease and immorality that is shared among White settler states, and those who mingle and intermarry in the Indigenous communities were additionally targeted for attack for corrupting Indigenous morality.<sup>41</sup> Came the turn of the twentieth century and through to the second World War, Chinese immigration would be banned or heavily restricted in settler colonies of America, Hawai‘i, New Zealand; at the same time, Han settlers in Taiwan were ruled by Japanese colonizers as racially inferior and cultural backward. In response, many Chinese minor settlers sought social uplift by industry and education that eventually catch them in the ambivalent discourses of model minority and settler assimilation, and, in the case of Taiwan, colonial mimicry.<sup>42</sup> Over the last half century, Chinese settler presence in White settler states and postcolonial Southeast Asia still constantly stirs hostility and even violence, particularly with their perceived association with the rise of China, the influx of Chinese capital and immigration, and China’s aggressive domination in parts of the region.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Barry McGowan, *Dust and Dreams: Mining Communities in South-East New South Wales* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000), 109.

<sup>41</sup> Sally Engle Merry, *Colonizing Hawai‘i: The Cultural Power of Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>42</sup> David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford University Press, 1999); Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura, eds., *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008); *Becoming Japanese*

<sup>43</sup> I have in mind anti-Chinese riots in Malaysia, Indonesia, and most recently, Vietnam, as well as anti-immigration political campaigns in New Zealand and Australia in the 1990s.

I attempt this sketch of Chinese settler migration across the Pacific in order to chart the deep historical roots of contemporary dispersion of people with Chinese origins. Chinese oversea settlements involved multiple nodal points of starts and stops, where contacts, alliances, and oppressions worked multiple ways, and Chinese minor settlers have played various roles as aggressors, settlers, entrepreneurs, subaltern laborers, colonized subjects, and ethnic minority on the long routes of migration among criss-crossing networks of power. Stressing these nodal points of local contacts, the frame of my comparative reference is not a study of diaspora<sup>44</sup>—it does not concern the pattern of dispersion and the distance of oversea Chinese from their ancestral home— but is signposted through a relational arc that finds Chinese minor settlers at different locations where they must negotiate with both other settler authorities and the Indigenous peoples. Modeling on Shu-mei Shih’s proposal of relational comparison, in which world history allows specific relations to be excavated among texts along various axes and in different scales,<sup>45</sup> my comparison of Chinese minor settler texts coincides with an emergent cognitive map of the Pacific as a region traversed by multiple networks of Indigenous and settler movements. Pacific has always been a space of many crossings and commutes: as explained by writers of the “New Oceania,” predating and overlapping the Imperial orbit of British Commonwealth and American influence, Indigenous peoples have traveled and commuted across the Pacific for millennia and have sustained a sense of expansive lifeworld despite neocolonial belittlement.<sup>46</sup> This study traces when Chinese settler migration, both independent of and intertwined with Euro-American maneuvers, enters into relation with Indigenous peoples and places. Prompted by relation, this dissertation thus finds comparison across empires and linguistic cultures, and as such, suggests that minor settler relations are not merely auxiliary to Anglo-European settler projects, but are local results of multifaceted and volatile regional dynamics.

---

<sup>44</sup> Shu-mei Shih, “Against Diaspora: The Sinophone as Places of Cultural Production,” in *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader*, ed. Shu-mei Shih, Chien-Hsin Tsai, and Brian Bernards (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 25–42.

<sup>45</sup> Shu-mei Shih, “Comparison as Relation,” in *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*, ed. Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 79–98.

<sup>46</sup> Epeli Hau’ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” in *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 27–40.

The organization of this dissertation is directed by the desire to both distinguish between different national contexts and to investigate several important and related thematics in the reading of minor settler literature. As a result, each chapter focuses on one national context while highlighting one particular issue concerning minor settler literature that is particularly prominent in each location. It starts with Hawai'i, where debates about Asian minor settlers are most visible because Asians have ostensibly moved from subaltern labors into prominent positions in state politics and local economy. Along with their social and political ascension, island-born Asians produce a dominant discourse about their "Local" identity, packaged in the narratives of just deserts and ethnic triumph over White discrimination, that many have criticized as normalizing Asian dominance at the cost of Native Hawaiian land rights. The first chapter thus builds on the ongoing debates in Hawai'i to explore the formation of identity and its relation to sovereignty in minor settler narratives. Foregrounding identity as the central issue in debates about Asian settler colonialism in Hawai'i, this chapter traces the articulation of identity in the volatile political terrain of Asian-Indigenous relation. Arguing that Local Asian identity, as formulated particularly through the literary genre of *bildungsroman* in Hawai'i, creates a settler sovereign identity, I propose that Kathleen Tyau, with mixed Chinese and Hawaiian ancestry, modifies the *bildungsroman* form to call attention to the complex relational construction of a minor settler subject as the Chinese side of her protagonist's family enters into relation with local Indigenous lands and communities by kinship relation. Through multiple story-telling voices and bilateral genealogical accountings, Tyau's novel reveals the complex sources of self-knowledge and allegiances informing a minor settler position. Identity can thus be told, not simply as sovereign individuality, but in webs of relation and obligations.

The second chapter analyzes acts of linguistic and stylistic translation within Chinese minor settler narratives of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand, arguing that these instances of translation highlight the processes via which minor settler authors seek legitimating rationales of national belonging amidst competing narrative, political, and legal frameworks. Foregrounding complex processes of legal interpretations—particularly around the linguistic and historical translations of the Treaty of Waitangi—

which are at the center of Aotearoa New Zealand's bicultural national identity, this chapter argues that linguistic and stylistic translations in minor settler narratives in Aotearoa New Zealand are avenues through which minor settler authors participate in the imagination of a decolonizing national community. Reading closely texts by Alison Wong, Ann-Marie Houng Lee, and Tze-Ming Mok, the core of this chapter examines how each author's formal choices—from historical novel to postmodern metafiction—correspond to different translation strategies and underlying conceptualizations of national community. While extending previous chapter's arguments that minor settler narratives necessary engage with multiple sources of authorities, this chapter also suggests, via the politics of multi-directional translation, how minor settler narratives may open up new channels in decolonizing projects beyond the binary interpretations of colonial encounter.

The last chapter focuses on the ethics and aesthetics of writing settler selves and Indigenous others in the context of Taiwan, where I compare its Han settler majority's narratives of postcoloniality with its supposedly assimilated Plain Indigenous (Pinpu) peoples' expressions of cultural survivance. Pingpu peoples bore the forefront of Han settler invasion, and through the long process of assimilation and social "uplift"—as defined by Veracini as a colonial strategy to maintain settlers' population advantage<sup>47</sup>—had come to assume a minor settler role, as they were forced to move into other Indigenous territories in the interior of the Taiwan island. The concerns of the chapter are thus two-fold: one the one hand, it interrogates the limitation of postcolonial aesthetics in addressing settler colonialism, and on the other, it confronts the difficulty in articulating Pingpu peoples' supposedly sunken Indigeneity while acknowledging their role in the expansion of settler colonialism. To these ends, it contrasts the postmodern and postcolonial ethics of self-reflection and contextualization to Indigenous ethics of obligation and relation, examining the interplay between these two ethical codes and their corresponding aesthetics in two settler novels—*Remains of Life* by Han author Wuhe and *Return to Dadu Town* by Pingpu author Zhou Huiling. Reading the two texts against the backdrop of Taiwan's layered colonial and settler colonial histories, I

---

<sup>47</sup> Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 20, 37-38.

caution against the privileging of postmodern/postcolonial ethics, and advocate for the re-centering of Indigenous "moral survivance." I maintain that the ethics of Indigenous moral survivance better allows for cultural assimilated Indigenous peoples like the Pingpu to resurrect their Indigenous identity while also confronting their participation in settler colonial expansion.

Together, these chapters hope to intervene in current modes of reading these texts as either ethnic minority, postcolonial, or diasporic texts, and center their role and participation in local politics at the level of these nations' settler foundation. Each chapter begins by examining blindspots in our current ways of reading, and proceeds to explore how each literary text elucidates dynamics within a cacophonous settler colonial society. While settler-Indigenous negotiations is not always the most apparent element on the surface of these minor settler fictional narratives, these texts are persistent explorations of place and history at multiple scales—individual, communal, national, and transnational—and they are as a consequence some of the most lucid sites where settler colonial politics of global connection and local inclusion/exclusion are played out. This study takes seriously narratives' function in relaying and imagining relations and posits narratives as active sites where minor settlers negotiate their identity, residency, and belonging with both settler discursive regimes and Indigenous sovereign stories. On the one hand, settler belonging does not share Indigenous ontological ties to land and depends on narrative alchemies that translate migrancy into nativity and settlement into birthright.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, Indigenous authors and scholars repeatedly demonstrate the centrality of story-telling and writing for articulating an active sense of Indigenous identity and disrupting settler grammar of property and law.<sup>49</sup> My readings is directed by the conviction that minor settler narratives can and do engage with both dominant settler and Indigenous narratives as they coincide on the same geographical site and through interlocking historical processes. In articulating locally informed identity, belonging, and senses of place

---

<sup>48</sup> Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 41-42, 94-104.

<sup>49</sup> Analyses in this vein are numerous. For a good theoretical overview of Indigenous writing and identity, see Lisa Tanya Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xx-xxxix.

and history, minor settler authors commit into writing their understanding of nation and subjectivity that are inseparable from ongoing negotiations between settler and Indigenous sovereignties.

## Chapter 1

### “Growing up Local”:

#### Narrating Asian Minor Settler Identity in Hawai‘i

Perhaps one of the most visible literary events in Hawai‘i in the last century was the emergence of the “Local literature” since the late 1970s, when a coalition of writers began to cultivate a multi-racial and place-based identity among Hawaii’s diverse population. Led by several authors of Asian immigrant roots, many associated with the literary magazine *Bamboo Ridge*, Local literary movement self-consciously resisted the U.S. mainland authors’ objectifying gaze on the archipelago as a primitive paradise, including in works by such canonical figures like Mark Twain and Jack London; instead, they insisted on local expressions of Hawaii’s colonial and plantation history, its multiracial social fabric, and the unique Local culture that has resulted from crisscrossing cultural heritages. In the words of Darrell H. Y. Lum, a Local Chinese playwright and one of *Bamboo Ridge*’s founding editors, “while ethnicity and class play important roles in defining local culture’s resistance to the dominant Western society, the bonds that tie it together are the common values, common history, and common language (Pidgin, or more correctly Hawai‘i Creole English).”<sup>1</sup> Local writers thus identify their literary missions as both resistive and expressive: resistive against U.S. economic domination and cultural assimilation, and expressive of a cultural identity with roots in place, history, and language. Along with the increasing importance of Asian American literature in academic contexts and publishing circles, Local literary texts have come into mainstream attention, lauded by some as the authentic and representative contemporary literary voices from Hawai‘i.<sup>2</sup>

The emphasis on commonality and the widespread recognition of Local literature as representative of contemporary Hawai‘i realities however also incur criticism from the Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian)

---

<sup>1</sup> Darrell H. Y. Lum, “Local Genealogy: What School You Went?,” in *Growing Up Local: An Anthology of Poetry and Prose from Hawai‘i/Hawai‘i*, ed. Eric Chock et al. (Honolulu: Bamboo Ridge, 1998), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen H. Sumida, *And the View from the Shore: Literary Traditions of Hawai‘i* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991); Rob Wilson, *Reimagining the American Pacific: From South Pacific to Bamboo Ridge and Beyond* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 119-162.



community.<sup>3</sup> In 1999, Kanaka Maoli scholar and activist Haunani-Kay Trask published the essay “Decolonizing Hawaiian Literature,” criticizing Local literary movements for “colonizing” Hawaiian literary expressions and obscuring the long tradition of Native oral and written literature. In her polemic, Trask complains that “some non-Hawaiians assert they are Hawaiian writers, and their work part of the canon of Hawaiian literature. Those who compose in Hawai‘i but are not genealogically Hawaiian are particularly insistent on this point. Here, an immigrant/settler consciousness is attempting to dispossess our Native people through the backdoor of identity theft.”<sup>4</sup> While it must be pointed out that most Local authors in fact avoid calling themselves “Hawaiians,” on account of the shared understanding that the term refers to the archipelago’s Native population,<sup>5</sup> Trask is here responding to Local authors’ insistent claim to their identity as the native inhabitants—the “Local” population—of Hawai‘i, while giving scant attention to Native Hawaiians’ Indigenous sovereignty and little acknowledgement of their role as later-coming settlers on expropriated Indigenous land. Trask’s critique thus calls attention to the primacy of Native Hawaiian sovereignty in the archipelago’s political and cultural histories, and her claims are collaborated in the historical works by Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, Noenoe K. Silva, Sally Merry, and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, who record Native Hawaiians’ unwilling and devastating subjugation under U.S. settler colonialism. These Kanaka-centered histories illuminate the facts of U.S. encroachment on Hawaiian sovereignty—from White plantation owners’ land grab in the Hawaiian Kingdom throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, the armed overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1893, and the illegal annexation of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Kanaka Maoli is a Hawaiian-language term that can be translated as “real or true people.” According to J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, Kanaka Maoli is becoming an increasingly common term to describe a Native Hawaiian person because “they emphasize Hawaiian Indigeneity without blood.” Following Kauanui’s usage, I use “Kanaka Maoli” or “Hawaiian” interchangeably to describe those who are Indigenous to Hawai‘i. With regard to Hawaiian diacritical marks, I use Kānaka, with a macron, to refer to a countable plural, and Kanaka without a macron for singular or categorical plurals. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) xi-xii.

<sup>4</sup> Haunani-Kay Trask, “Decolonizing Hawaiian Literature,” in *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*, ed. Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 169.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen H. Sumida, “Sense of Place, History, and the Concept of the ‘Local’ in Hawaii’s Asian/Pacific Literatures,” in *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*, ed. Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Amy Ling (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 216.

Hawaiian islands in 1898<sup>6</sup>—and they agree that Kanaka Maoli sovereignty over the Hawaiian archipelago has never been legally ceded. It is on these bases that Trask inquires into Local authors' role as settlers and their literary localism as colonial encroachment. From Trask's point of view, despite their avowed opposition to U.S. hegemony, Local authors are complicit in U.S. settler control over Hawai'i by naturalizing their own settler residency, while failing to interrogate how their settlement is made possible only by ongoing suppression of Native Hawaiian sovereignty.

Trask's polemic divides subsequent critical readings of Local literature. On the one hand, Trask's important critique on Local literary movement led to broader scrutiny on settler practices within Asian economic and political ascendancy, culminating most notably in Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Okamura's 2008 edited volume *Asian Settler Colonialism*. Fujikane, as a literary scholar, adopts a critical view on the omission of Native Hawaiian presence in some of the most canonical Local literary texts, arguing that "the erasure of a Native Hawaiian presence in settler literature enacts a depopulation that renders Hawai'i an 'emptied' space opened to settler claims of 'belonging.'" <sup>7</sup> On the other hand, more sympathetic readers of Local literature highlight its resistive and strategic nature, arguing that Local expressions never presume homogeneity, that this body of literature is saturated with the anxiety of identity and belonging resultant from colonization and dislocation, and that prevalent textual instability and contradictions attest to Local authors' sensitivity to the contingency of Local identity construction. <sup>8</sup> Scholars of the latter group often warn against the danger of a stringent binary between Indigenous and settler as an impediment to decolonizing efforts. As Seri Luaunghphinit cautions, "simply identifying and

---

<sup>6</sup> Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992); Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Sally Engle Merry, *Colonizing Hawai'i: The Cultural Power of Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); J. Kehaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Candace Fujikane, "Sweeping Racism under the Rug of 'Censorship': The Controversy Over Blu's Hanging," *Amerasia* 26, no. 2 (2000): 164.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Najita, *Decolonizing Culture in the Pacific: Reading History and Trauma in Contemporary Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 132-134; Brenda Kwon, *Beyond Ke'aumoku: Koreans, Nationalism, and Local Culture in Hawai'i* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 97-113, 130; Erin Suzuki, "Haunted Homelands: Negotiating Locality in Father of the Four Passages," *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 56, no. 1 (2010): 160-82.

enunciating the boundaries surrounding ‘settler’ may not necessarily achieve a ‘de-colonizing’ of Hawaii’s literature.”<sup>9</sup> While Trask and Fujikane’s critiques have been urgent and incisive, a question thus lingers as to where we can go from here, beyond identifying island-born Asian authors’ settler ideology and/or reiterating the traumatic sense of alienation still detectable in their literature.

The case of Asian settlers in Hawai‘i suggests the dilemma of identity in minor settler literature: how may a minor settler formulate a place-based identity, without succumbing to the hegemony of dominant settler state and while acknowledging the illegitimacy of her settlement? Should all successful expressions of minor settler identity be predicated on the erasure of Indigenous sovereignty? Or is a perpetually unsettled and fractured identity the only possible self-expression for a conscientious settler writer, as she refuses the comfort of a settler colonial subjectivity?

Without pretending to offer a final solution, this chapter inquires whether these difficulties stem partially from an overly narrow understanding of identity as either coherent—autonomous and self-sufficient—or fragmented, unstable, and incomplete. From the two sides of the debate summarized above, Local identity is discussed either as a totalizing discourse of non-Indigenous rights to claim Hawai‘i as home or as a strategic and resistive articulation, ethically responsible in its self-conscious instability and fracture. To the extent that a minor settler’s relation to her place of residency constitute much of her self-identity—as one identifies as Local or settler migrant—the assumption of identity as either coherent or fractured corresponds to another set of binary, in which one’s relation to land is imagined as either indisputable or unjustifiable. Within the binary, to acknowledge one’s settlement as colonial encroachment seems to imply a fractured identity. While some take such instability as sites of creative energy, the threat of non-identity has also led to others’ open hostility towards acknowledging Local Asian’s settler position,

---

<sup>9</sup> Seri Luangphinit, “Homeward Bound: Settler Aesthetics in Hawai‘i’s Literature,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 48, no. 1 (2006): 57.

accusing Native Hawaiian critique of Asian hegemony as “neo-racism” and creating ever-widening chasm in Hawaii’s social and political fabric.<sup>10</sup>

In this chapter, I propose a different conception of identity and an alternative reading of minor settler narratives of identity. Taking inspirations from Kanaka Maoli concept of genealogy as well as feminist reconceptualization of identity as relation and responsibility, I argue that minor settler identity can be more fruitfully analyzed as the coexistence of multiple relations informing one’s sense of place and belonging and the ability to take the various political or moral responsibilities implicit therein. Thus, to identify as a minor settler does not need to imply dis-identification with the place, but can mean a clearer recognition of one’s responsibility to heed Indigenous sovereignty and that one’s history of migration and settlement is entangled with Indigenous dispossession, as the condition of one’s sense of place. It is my contention that one’s settler responsibility and minority experience can be narrated in relation to each other, that such multilayered construction of identity can be conveyed through literary representations, and expressions of identity by minor settler authors is not already doomed to the replication of settler ideology or the confinement of fragmentary indeterminacies.

Yet many minor settler texts do narrate the process of identity formation as a struggle between fragmentation and coherence where Local belonging frequently entails the concomitant erasure of Indigenous sovereignty. Indeed, a different conception of identity as I suggest above would call for altered narrative forms. This chapter thus contrasts two coming-of-age novels, Lois-Ann Yamanaka’s *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers* (1997) and Kathleen Tyau’s *A Little Too Much Is Enough* (1995), distinguishing between Yamanaka’s construction of a Local identity through a narrative of ethnic *bildungsroman* and Tyau’s representation of relational identity in a biracial Chinese-Hawaiian family through multiple narrative voices. Yamanaka’s novel, recounting how a third-generation working-class Japanese girl gradually develops a sense of Local belonging amidst racial envy and social oppression, depends on a linear

---

<sup>10</sup> See Dean Saranillio’s account and incisive refutation of such attitude in the wake of the publication of *Asian Settler Colonialism*, in “Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters: A Thought Piece on Critiques, Debates, and Indigenous Difference,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3–4 (2013): 280–94.

progression from the girl's conflicted sense of self to a more-or-less coherent acceptance of her identity. My reading highlights how the novel's trajectory from alienation to belonging coincides with a settler conception of space and the evacuation of Kanaka Maoli sovereign history, suggesting particularly how the much utilized genre of ethnic *bildungsroman* in fact relies on an anxiety of dislocation and alienation to valorize minor settler's right to place.

In contrast, Kathleen Tyau's account of a biracial Chinese-Hawaiian family, while also featuring a young girl's coming-of-age, differs from the *bildungsroman* by introducing multiple narrative voices and perspectives. Through these multiple voices and perspectives, the central character Mahi's identity emerges only amidst layered family histories and community stories, in accounts of her relation and responsibility to other members of her extended family and community. Without relying on racial conflict to carry the novel forward as in an ethnic *bildungsroman*, the text's aesthetic appeal is derived from the exchange of stories and the abundance of world views, where the reader is interpellated in Mahi's position as a younger member of the family who reads the multiple narrators' stories of pain and pleasure and receives cultural instructions. Tyau's coming-of-age narrative thus aligns more closely with Indigenous conception of identity formation; with kinship relation as its organizing logic, the novel constructs an alternative narrative of identity formation rooted in multi-directional relation and responsibility, beyond ethnic strife and the anxiety of dislocation. Further, centering on a biracial family with memories of both Kanaka Maoli displacement and Chinese migration, Tyau's novel challenges the problematic binary between settler and Indigenous relations to land, between migratory routes and fixed roots: the novel's narrative style rather suggests a more fluid temporal and spatial account that may be described as archipelagic. I thus conclude the chapter by arguing how Tyau's text points to ways in which minor settler identity may be articulated as the archipelagic congregation of various geopolitical relations that have informed a minor settler history, as they are narrated through the interlacing stories of displacement, migration, and settlement among Kānaka Maoli and other settler groups.

## “Growing up Local” and ethnic *bildungsroman*

Our question is still identity. What is identity, this concept of which the transparent identity to itself is always dogmatically presupposed by so many debates on monoculturalism or multiculturalism, nationality, citizenship, and, in general, belonging? And before the identity of the subject, what is *ipseity*? The latter is not reducible to an abstract capacity to say “I,” which it will always have preceded. Perhaps it signifies, in the first place, the power of an “I can,” which is more originary than the “I” in a chain where the “pse” of *ipse* no longer allows itself to be dissociated from power, from the mastery and sovereignty of the *hospes* (here, I am referring to the semantic chain that works on the body of hospitality as well as hostility....)

— Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other*.<sup>11</sup>

In an autobiographical contemplation of his identity as a Judeo-Franco-Maghrebian—a minor settler position, we may add—Derrida defines identity as one’s inalienable possession of the political sovereignty to be hospitable or hostile. To be able to act as a host or to choose not to be hospitable, as Derrida explains further in another context, implies first of all one’s sovereignty over the territory, in contrast to the guests’ lack of it.<sup>12</sup> For Derrida, the kind of identity at issue in the global debates on “multiculturalism, nationalism, citizenship,” etc. is thus not simply a knowledge of one’s private self, but more importantly one’s claim to belong to a place as a host and the power to reject displacement. Identity, construed as such, suggests a zero-sum binary: one either belongs to the territory where she is host, or she is a guest, who may have the moral entitlement to wish to stay but never the sovereignty to decide others’ coming or going, at least until she is accepted as part of the host community.

I question the universal utility of this notion of identity and seek to inquire how this notion creates a unproductive anxiety about dislocation in minor settler claims to identity. Derrida’s understanding of identity and its political stake illuminates the kinds of investment and anxiety involved around Local identity in Hawai‘i, and permeates Local narratives of identity formation. Much more than

---

<sup>11</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; Or, the Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 14.

<sup>12</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). For a discussion of Derrida’s thoughts on hospitality and the connection between hospitality and sovereignty in a settler colonial context, especially with regard to immigration, see Avril Bell, “Being ‘At Home’ in the Nation: Hospitality and Sovereignty in Talk about Immigration,” *Ethnicities* 10, no. 2 (2010): 236–56.

a designation of place-based culture, articulations of Local identity by Hawai'i-born Asians are politically significant statements of their belonging to the sovereign collective of the archipelago, their rights to welcome or reject outside influences or interventions, and their refusal to be told to leave. It was the banner raised by many of them in the 1970s, alongside island-born Whites and Native Hawaiians, to protest against U.S. and foreign dominations in Hawai'i in militarization, tourism, and housing developments. Eric Yamamoto, one of the earliest theorizers of the emergent Local identity in the 1970s, thus explained that Local identity symbolized "people who belong to Hawaii—however defined—and their struggle to retain or regain control of Hawai'i and its future."<sup>13</sup> Local identity, in these expressions, designates these Asian residents' rights to defend Hawai'i as their home from outside encroachments. Yet this sense of belonging and authority is never a given. Just a few decades before these political articulations of Local identity, Asians were themselves seen as aliens and outsiders, whose major function was to provide cheap plantation labor and whose numbers were kept low by U.S.-wide immigration ban. Much of Local literature, emerging particularly since the founding of Bamboo Ridge press in 1978, thus tells stories that reflect the progression of Hawaii's Asian residents from alien labors confined by the stringent racial management on the plantation, to becoming the Local defenders of Hawai'i as home. Without ancestral claims to the archipelagos, the formulation of Local identity and the forging of Asian ties to Hawai'i are imagined through the trope of "growing up Local," where the temporal progressions of learning about the place, living in it, and defending its integrity justifies one's total identification with it. While such narrative responds to the histories and realities of racial exclusion, it however also risks obviating essential differences between immigrant and Indigenous belonging and denying the primacy of Indigenous sovereignty in the process.

*Bildungsroman* thus emerges as one of the most prominent forms of Local literature, and I argue that the form of *bildungsroman*, and the manner in which it has been adopted to a Local narrative of identity formation, reinforces the conception of identity as either fragmentary or coherent, serves to privilege Local historiography of arrival and settlement, and justifies non-Indigenous belonging to land through the naturalized trajectory of alienation to belonging. Specifically, it is the ethnic *bildungsroman* as a genre of minority articulations with which I take issue. *Bildungsroman* in its classical form has frequently been criticized as male-centered, bourgeois narratives of conservatism;<sup>14</sup> yet, the genre's close association with autobiography and its principle interests in an individual's assimilation into his or her social milieu have obvious appeal to ethnic authors seeking to narrate ethnic subject's encounter with the mainstream

---

<sup>13</sup> Eric Yamamoto, "The Significance of 'Local,'" *Social Process in Hawaii* 27 (1979): 108.

<sup>14</sup> Pin-chia Feng, *The Female Bildungsroman by Toni Morrison and Maxine Hong Kingston: A Postmodern Reading* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 4.

society, which does not easily facilitate successful or complete assimilation. As such, ethnic *bildungsroman* is frequently characterized by a heightened sense of conflict between the genre's formal trajectory of integration into a larger society, and the (sometimes insurmountable) obstacle to inclusion and integration faced by the ethnic protagonist. As Lisa Lowe argues, even in ethnic *bildungsroman* novels where the main protagonist seems to successfully integrate, they "express a contradiction between the demand for a univocal developmental narrative and the historical specificities of racialization, ghettoization, violence, and labor exploitation."<sup>15</sup> For a minor subject to adopt the canonical form, in other words, opens up spaces for critiquing the intolerance of the mainstream society and the otherwise taken-for-granted narratives of success and achievement. Local *bildungsroman*, written in opposition to U.S. cultural and economic hegemony, often performs such critical function.

Yet the flip side of ethnic *bildungsroman* is still its close identification with the foundational tension within a canonical developmental narrative, namely the conflict between an individual's coherent sense of self and the pressure to maintain this sense of coherence in the larger social context. Ethnic or other minor adoptions of *bildungsroman* frequently agree with the genre's underlining commitment to an Enlightenment model of organic development and sovereign individuality. In the words of the editors of *The Voyage In*, a volume that traces the alternative female tradition of *bildungsroman*, *bildungsroman* remains useful for their feminist agenda because they agree with the ideological goals of the form—in its "belief in a coherent self," "faith in the possibility of development," "insistence on a time span in which development occurs," and "emphasis on social context."<sup>16</sup> While such insistence on coherent selfhood and developmental progress serves specific purposes of minority expressions, it is problematic in a minor settler context, particularly when Indigenous sovereignty is omitted from the "social context" with which the minor settler protagonist contend. To the extent that many practitioners of Local literature identify as ethnic and working-class authors, and understand Local literature to be the expression of an ethnically diverse population, their adoption of *bildungsroman* is frequently motivated by the history of "racialization, ghettoization, violence, and labor exploitation" as Lowe observes, particularly as these trauma manifest in territorial exclusions. Specifically in Hawai'i, plantation racial management functioned by defining and managing "race" through place: Workers were racialized by their nations of origin as Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipinos, or Puerto Ricans, each assigned with racial attributes and skills that then confined them not only in specific occupational assignments in the plantation economy, but in physical and spatial

---

<sup>15</sup> Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 100.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland, introduction to *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1983), 14.



arrangements—in separate camps identified by these national/racial labels.<sup>17</sup> For descendants of these racialized plantation workers, the ability to move out of these stringently racialized spaces—either the plantation camps or the return voyage “home”—is tantamount to a resistive gesture against racialized exclusion and expulsion. Therefore, while classical *bildungsroman* centers the hero’s move from the province to the metropole to signal the private self’s integration into society,<sup>18</sup> Local *bildungsroman* novel exploit the genre’s spatial convention to their own end—the move from plantation camps or ethnic ghettos into other parts of the archipelago or U.S. territories coincides, not only with the ethnic protagonist’s education in the mainstream society, but more so with the Local struggle against spatial regulation and expulsion, as well as the desire for unimpeded senses of belonging coterminous with a coherent identity. But then again, this narrative—and its underlying binary between oppression and freedom, racialized space and territorial access—too frequently means that the Local *bildungsroman* is unable to heed Indigenous sovereignty on the lands that these Local subjects seek to roam and belong. The reminder of Indigenous dispossession disturbs the relatively clear-cut conflict between alienation and belonging which sustains *bildungsroman*, and threatens to dislocate and unsettle the ethnic protagonist again, albeit for a different reason. In many Local *bildungsroman* novels and other narratives about the development of Local identity, the solution then is often to deny the primacy of Indigenous sovereignty or to insists on the commonality between Indigenous and Local struggles. The anxiety of dislocation that drives the Local *bildungsroman*, in other words, also prevents the serious engagement with the settler colonial assumptions imbedded in Local desire to access and belong to the land of their residence.

Among Local canons, Lois-Ann Yamanaka’s coming-of-age novels—*Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers* in 1996, *Blu’s Hanging* in 1997, and *Heads by Harry* in 1999—are some of the most paradigmatic texts in the genre of such Local *bildungsroman*, built around the theme of growing up Local. In *Wild Meat*, in particular, Yamanaka traces with deliberation a Local subject’s progression from a fragmented ethnic subjectivity to the discovery and attainment of a Local identity. Adopting the form of *bildungsroman*, Yamanaka not only criticizes American hegemony and White supremacy, but also offers an alternative resolution, where the attainment of Local identity satisfactorily resists the demand of assimilation into American mainstream. *Wild Meat* depicts a working-class third-generation Japanese girl Lovey Nariyoshi and her maturation from an envious and self-hating child to a teenager who appreciates her family’s Local roots and asserts their organic tie to the Hawaiian soil. With episodic chapters that make up the *bildungsroman* narrative, Lovey is the central consciousness and sole narrator of her experiences. The

---

<sup>17</sup> Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 92-98.

<sup>18</sup> Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 17-18.

combination of episodic form and a single first-person narrative voice is deliberate: it allows Lovey to cycle through multiple identitarian possibilities and obstacles while eventually coming to a resolved Local self-understanding. Due to her class, race, and island-born status, Lovey is first thrown into the abjection of non-agency. The first chapter, titled “Happy Endings,” is permeated with the agony of being non-White, poor, and living in the dingy town of Hilo on the island of Hawai‘i. Growing up in the 1970s, Lovey talks about her obsession with Shirley Temple and TV shows based in Honolulu, and imagines a happy ending where she will be somewhere else, with Shirley’s looks, family, and a house in New York. In the course of the novel, we learn that her family is so poor that she and her father shoot wild game and raise animals for food, while Lovey is humiliated in school for her poverty and her Pidgin English. Not only is Lovey not *haole* (White), she is disadvantaged even among her Local peers, bullied by her Japanese classmates as much as by the *haole* teacher. Her description of the Local community is not one of harmony or solidarity, but instead where class and ethnicity divide and damage. But the *bildungsroman* form provides a moment of transcendence and resolution based on Lovey’s new-found strength in herself and her family’s history of labor. At the end of the novel, when Lovey’s father’s eyes are injured while hunting, Lovey travels on her own to the Kipu plantation on the island of Kauai, where her father had grown up, retracing his steps to the bountiful Mount Haupu by the memory of stories he had taught her. In an act that demonstrates both agency and Local knowledge, Lovey brings back a Ziploc bag full of soil, which she then mixes with the soil from her family’s backyard in Hilo. This act, free from a sense of social inferiority, communicates a momentary sense of power that completes the maturation of Lovey’s autonomous subjectivity. Lovey finally comes into a new appreciation of her Local roots: as she watches her father recognizing the smell of both homes and with the image of the soil, in the novel’s final words, Lovey hears her father’s voices saying, “I be home.”<sup>19</sup>

Confident in her sense of belonging to the soil of not one but *two* of the Hawaiian islands, Lovey’s happy ending is eventually a rejection of the American dream of metropolitan assimilation and capital accumulation with which she began her narrative. As such, hunting for wild game testifies to her family’s close relation to the Hawaiian land, which is unavailable to the wealthier children and their supermarket-bought food.<sup>20</sup> Lovey’s humiliation under the eyes of a *haole* teacher for speaking Pidgin is similarly transvalued in light of the ending as an expression of an “at-home” identity: “I cannot make it sound like

---

<sup>19</sup> Lois-Ann Yamanaka, *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996), 276.

<sup>20</sup> For an excellent analysis of the food theme in the novel, especially the contrast between wild game and “White” food, see Jennifer Ho, *Consumption and Identity in Asian American Coming-of-Age Novels* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 49-77.

his way... my words will always come out *like home*.”<sup>21</sup> The homeliness of Lovey’s background and appearance now proves her Local belonging, the source of self-identity and autonomy against even her difficulties among her better-positioned peers in the world of American English and imported brand-name groceries. While this sense of identity does not lessen the emotional difficulty of discrimination and humiliation that Yamanaka skillfully produces in her readers’ imagination, the rewards of identity and belonging are rich enough for Jennifer Ho to describe the novel as ultimately a powerful statement of Local autonomy: “By writing in Pidgin, Yamanaka validates the power of the local—the novel cannot be confused with a commodified mainland product. Her narration confirms its status as an *organic work rooted* in the language used by local Asians living in Hawai‘i.”<sup>22</sup> Ho’s image of the work’s organic rootedness reminds us that while the family has an immigrant root, and the image of the soil is originally attached to Lovey’s grandfather who keeps a bag of Japanese soil with him,<sup>23</sup> the centrality of Hawaiian soil in the novel’s final scene transfers the family’s place of belonging from Japan to Hawai‘i. As we follow Lovey’s narrative consciousness over the course of the novel, American culture influence, Japanese immigrant origin, plantation history, and racial and economic disadvantage are all experienced, filtered, and eventually melded together to arrive at the eventual moment of Local-ization. Following the teleological undercurrent of the *bildungsroman* form, *Wild Meat* brings these multiple identities together as ingredients of Lovey’s final Local consciousness. Even as the novel ends without material improvement of Lovey’s life, the sense of belonging and home offers at least a temporary emotional resolution. The American “Happy Endings” so fervently desired by Lovey at the beginning of the novel is in the end replaced by the material certainty of Hawaiian soil, where the Local identity is organically rooted, decidedly not American, nor wholly Japanese.

By the end of the narrative, therefore, *Wild Meat* has developed a sense of Local agency out of Lovey’s reconceptualization of her multivalent social positioning rooted in the Hawaiian soil, and this is where we can evaluate the novel’s position on the question of identity and sovereignty. The Nariyoshi family is defined most vividly by their semi-subsistence lifestyle outside of the capitalist economy; their hunting and gathering suggest a sovereign freedom in relation to land and food that is minor and resistive against the hegemonic capitalist economy. While for Lovey the need to hunt for food is primarily the marker of her family’s poverty, narratively and ideologically it strengthens the organic relation the novel eventually establishes between the family’s Local identity and the Hawaiian soil. Especially in contrast to

---

<sup>21</sup> Yamanaka, *Wild Meat*, 14, emphasis mine.

<sup>22</sup> Ho, *Consumption and Identity*, 77, emphasis mine.

<sup>23</sup> Yamanaka, *Wild Meat*, 174.

the plantation economy that commodifies both its immigrant laborers and the export crops, the Nariyoshi family's self-subsistence on wild game and homegrown food rhetorically replaces their past relation to land based on exploitation (of both themselves and the land), with a supposedly holistic one, where they are beyond exploitation both as victim and perpetrator. Significantly, Lovey's father learns to hunt and gather during his childhood on the plantation. He remembers these adventures as paradisiacal moments of escape from the toil and poverty of plantation labor; and later, when he takes his daughters to hunt on the slopes of Mauna Kea, the highest mountain of Hawai'i and one of Hawaii's most recognizable landmarks, the hunting comes to symbolize life and dignity outside of the hierarchies of labor market. The hunting and killing, while graphically presented at times, stand in for the possibility of an alternative way of life to the alienation of the plantation and post-plantation labor markets. At times, the organic relation to Hawaiian land appears completely unmediated: not only does the family eat wild game for food, but in one chapter Lovey describes helping her father tan leather and make a vest out of the hide. The striking description of the family undertaking the complete process of skinning the animal, tanning the leather, and sewing a vest from the hide suggests a knowledge and self-sufficiency that serve at this moment as sources of pride and self-identity, beyond the absolute necessity of poverty. Lovey's father tells her that the vest is "for the *real* huntas for wear,"<sup>24</sup> staking a claim for authenticity based both on the "authentically Local" Pidgin grammar and on the self-sufficient purity of economic independence. The sense of authentic and organic connection to land justifies the family's reliance on Hawaiian land for food, as the land seems to grant the family the promise of becoming sovereign subjects. Supported by the narrative progression of the novel, the sustenance lifestyle is represented as an honest and dignified way of living.

But the sense of unmediated natural connection between person and land—the foundation for the sense of home-coming and self-realization which completes Yamanaka's *bildungsroman*—is predicated on deliberate omissions of the land's Indigenous history: for the site where the Nariyoshis hunt, the slopes of Mauna Kea, is anything but an empty wilderness. The tallest mountain in the Hawaiian archipelago, Mauna Kea is one of the most sacred sites (or *wahi pana*) in the Kanaka Maoli tradition,<sup>25</sup> and also one of the most contested pieces of land between settler developers and Kanaka Maoli activists. As sung in Kanaka Maoli traditional chants, Mauna Kea is the first child of the sky father Wākea and the earth

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 222, emphasis original.

<sup>25</sup> Suzuki, "Haunted Homelands," 175.

mother Papahānaumoku, who also gives birth to the Hawaiian islands and people.<sup>26</sup> By Hawaiian genealogy, the mountain is thus the older sibling of the Hawaiian people, and to whom Hawaiians have the obligation to love, honor, and serve.<sup>27</sup> This is a foundation for Kanaka Maoli ontological belonging that settlers cannot mimic. As such, Mauna Kea is a highly politicized space, the stage of numerous protests and confrontations against its expanding use as a site for astronomical observatories since before the novel's publication in the 1990s and as recently as at the time of my writing.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the very existence of the gaming animals that the novel's characters hunt was the direct consequence of White settler development of the mountain for plantation, ranches, and hunting grounds.<sup>29</sup> Mauna Kea is therefore a place with strong Kanaka Maoli genealogical ties as well as a site still ridden with settler colonial powers, and as such is an ideological and material ground where sovereignties constantly clash. *Wild Meat*, as its title suggests, does not hint at any of this; instead, Lovey introduces us to Mauna Kea as a landscape in the settler image of *terra nullius*: "From Hilo town as we leave in the morning, I see the *purplemountainmajesty*—Mauna Kea. I know exactly what the song means every time I see the mountain in the middle of my island. There on the slopes of Mauna Kea, we find a place to hide. Stay low."<sup>30</sup> Opening an episode of Lovey hunting with her father and sister, the passage compares Mauna Kea and the Big Island to the American landscape, since "the song" is of course "America the Beautiful," the poem and later unofficial national anthem first penned by Katherine Lee Bates in 1895.<sup>31</sup> Unlike the anti-Imperial wartime glory in "Star Spangled Banner," Bate's lyrics were inspired by the sublime promises of the late 19th-century Colorado landscape as a god-given land of bounty, offering up grains, gold, liberty,

---

<sup>26</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui and Alfons L. Korn, trans., "Birth Chant for Kau-i-ke-au-uli," in *The Echo of Our Song: Chants and Poems of the Hawaiians*, eds. and trans. by Mary Kawena Pukui and Alfons L. Korn (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1973), 17 and 23.

<sup>27</sup> Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land*, 25.

<sup>28</sup> Most recently, the projected installation of the Thirty Meter Telescope on its summit was the target of a month-long protests in 2015. Frances Kai-hwa Wang, "Hawaiians Fight Mega Telescope Construction on Sacred Ground," News, NBC News, (January 27, 2015), <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/hawaiians-fight-mega-telescope-construction-sacred-ground-n293581>; Ilima Loomis and Adrian Cho, "Telescope Clash Deeply Rooted in Hawaii's Past," Science, May 8, 2015; Associated Press, "Hawaii Governor: Massive Mauna Kea Telescope Can Go Ahead," News, NBC News, (May 27, 2015), <http://www.nbcnews.com/science/science-news/hawaii-governor-massive-mauna-kea-telescope-can-go-ahead-n365431>. Currently, the summit hosts 13 telescopes. See "Mauna Kea Observatories," Institute for Astronomy, University of Hawaii, May 29, 2015, <https://www.ifa.hawaii.edu/mko/>.

<sup>29</sup> I. J. O. Juvik and S. P. Juvik, "Mauna Kea and the Myth of Multiple Use: Endangered Species and Mountain Management in Hawaii," *Mountain Research and Development* 4, no. 3 (August 1, 1984): 191–202.

<sup>30</sup> Yamanaka, *Wild Meat*, 224.

<sup>31</sup> Reference to "purple mountain majesties" appears in the first verse: "O beautiful for spacious skies, / For amber waves of grain, / For purple mountain majesties / Above the fruited plain! / America! America! / God shed his grace on thee / And crown thy good with brotherhood / From sea to shining sea!"

and brotherhood to a settler America. When Lovey references the song but turns her gaze to the Hawaiian landscape, not only does she reject the patriotism demanded of her as an American citizen, she replaces it with a comparable patriotism for Hawai‘i—in the same way that the American West was imagined and claimed as available territories by frontier settlers, Mauna Kea is imagined and claimed by Lovey as *her* island. By appropriating the song, Lovey thus (unwittingly?) legitimizes and celebrates their hunting on the slopes of Mauna Kea as exploring a similar frontier for fruits and meat for the settler taking. As Lovey surveys the plains of Hawai‘i as directed by Bates’ gaze, Hawai‘i Local is remade by rhetorical sleight of hand in America’s image: and not its post-industrial capitalist present, but very specifically the promise of sovereignty and freedom through expansion it once held at the “wild frontiers” where the Natives have been transferred away.

*Wild Meat* is guilty of what many commentators have since observed with regard to Yamanaka’s other works that there is an almost complete omission of Native Hawaiian presence in her novelistic worlds. Ku‘ualoha Ho‘omanawanui, for instance, finds Yamanaka’s work to be saturated with settler presumptions, treating Hawaiian land only as a empty background of Asian ascendancy.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, in *Wild Meat*, Hawaiians are transferred away from the Hawaiian land to Lovey’s school, where they are mentioned only to occupy a position of ambivalent privilege in the local teenage dating scene, where “everybody wants a hapa girlfriend or boyfriend. Everybody wants a part Hawaiian person.”<sup>33</sup> In light of the hyper-sexualization of Polynesian body in colonial discourses and Pacific militourism,<sup>34</sup> this supposed position of advantage rather describes the discursive and biopolitical strategy by which Native Hawaiians are incorporated into the settler community.<sup>35</sup> But *Wild Meat* goes beyond the omission or misrepresentation of Kanaka Maoli people and land. As a *bildungsroman*, it creates a narrative of the “coming-of-age” of a Local identity that, at its emotional climax, reimagines the Hawaiian land as an immediately accessible territory that one can learn to work with and live on in the manner of a settler frontiersman or frontierswoman. With the plantation and immigrant pasts honored in memory, and present poverty and subjugation still in place, the refocusing of Hawaiian soil as home and future frontier replicates the settler trajectory of arrival and settlement, which is motivated by the minority anxiety over

---

<sup>32</sup> Ho‘omanawanui, “This Land,” 135-138.

<sup>33</sup> Yamanaka, *Wild Meat*, 244.

<sup>34</sup> Teresia Teaiwa, “Reading Paul Gauguin’s *Noa Noa* with Epeli Hau‘ofa’s *Kisses in the Nederends*: Militourism, Feminism, and the ‘Polynesian’ Body,” in Hereniko and Wilson, *Inside Out*, 249-64,

<sup>35</sup> For elimination of the Indigenous people by blood quantum, see Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, and Patrick Wolfe, “Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 866-905.

dislocation and alienation. Their belonging is narrated as a minority defiance against previous and ongoing mandates of non-belonging, but it takes place on the same grounds of dominant U.S. settler colonialism. In a brilliant twist of language plays, in the novel's last sentence "I be home," the pidgin grammar eradicates tense, so that Local belonging becomes timeless in a final, confirmed settledness.

The narrative of Local identity formation in *Wild Meat* thus describes not only a Local history and cultural consciousness, but a certain territorial desire to be freely associated with the land. This desire for a coherent identification with the land of Hawai'i, as it is implied in the final moments of *Wild Meat*, is imagined in opposition to, *and* along with, the legal sovereignty of the United States by variously resisting, mirroring, and subjecting to it. Yet, this bilateral negotiation with American sovereignty relies on a silent denial of the need to address Kanaka Maoli sovereignty, a denial recurring in Local literature. Defending *Bamboo Ridge* against accusations of privileging Local Asian literature as the "representatives" of Hawaiian literature, for example, Eric Chock emphasizes that the vision of *Bamboo Ridge* is non-discriminatory:

We hoped to develop a sense of a tradition of literature which was pluralistic or multicultural, but in a distinctly contemporary Local way. Although there have never been any stylistic guidelines, we hoped the writing would be representative of our regional, multicultural, modern, Local community.

The effect of this kind of general approach is that we did not have a specific political agenda beyond the idea that most of the work we expected would be written by people born and raised in the islands, or with very strong ties to life here, and that it would be largely about Hawai'i or Hawai'i-related themes.<sup>36</sup>

Chock explains later in the same piece that the reason for the overwhelming lack of Native Hawaiian voices in *Bamboo Ridge* is not a conscious decision, but merely reflects the lack of voluntary submissions by Native Hawaiian authors. Chock offers several guesses for the reasons of such lack: perhaps they have not had the time for creative writing, perhaps they prefer oral forms, or perhaps they feel ambivalent about western literary forms and language.<sup>37</sup> But perhaps a more reasonable hypothesis is that the great majority of Native writers are not comfortable, or even interested, in becoming one of the "representatives" of the multicultural Local community.<sup>38</sup> The difficulty here is not inclusiveness or respect, but the presupposition of multicultural accommodation as the primary framework under which all are equally authorized to be part of the tradition of Local literature. It carries with it the spatial imagination that Hawai'i is a territory

---

<sup>36</sup> Chock, "Neocolonialization," 12.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 15

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Ho'omanawanui's analysis of the fundamental differences between Hawaiian and Local literatures. Ho'omanawanui, "This Land," 118-120.

for all residents to access equally, like a municipal park, or indeed a mountainside hunting preserve; it advocates for all who have strong ties to the islands to be equally authorized to the description and representation of Hawai'i, its past, present, and future.

Before I move on to explicate Tyau's commentary of the *bildungsroman* form, I want to clarify in a side note that it is not my intention to argue that *bildungsroman* as a form is inherently settler colonial or that it cannot be worked into effective anti-colonial texts. It is however my purpose to argue that *bildungsroman* has been employed prevalently and famously in the context of Hawai'i to articulate a history that privileges Asian immigrant historiography and hides away the concomitant Indigenous dispossession on which Asian settler triumph is predicated—no matter the triumph takes the form of Americanization or ethnic resistance. It is perhaps important to note here that, on the opposite side of this critique of Local *bildungsroman*, we may well observe that *bildungsroman* has helped to structure narratives of Kanaka Maoli revitalization and decolonization, as in the case of Matthew Kaopio's *Written In the Sky* and John Dominis Holt's more troubled exploration of *hapa haole* (half-Hawaiian, half-White) identity in *Waimea Summer*, although both authors also challenge the assumptions of the genre in significant ways and produce different temporal and spatial effects as compared to that in Local Asian novels.<sup>39</sup> In Kanaka Maoli iterations of the genre, the narrative drive to transformation needs not coincide with the emptying of land of Indigenous meaning or the arc of physical arrival; on the contrary, for instance, Kaopio's main character, a homeless Kanaka boy, reinstates his connection to the land of Hawai'i, through his learning and recreating Kanaka Maoli symbolisms in the modern city of Honolulu, where he continues to wander at the end of the narrative. In a similar vein, Holt's narrative is hinged upon a *hapa haole* boy's education in genealogical knowledge, as he struggles to correctly comprehend Kanaka Maoli spirits and history that fill the land of Waimea. As a narrative on mixed-blood identity, Holt's narrative troubles the *bildungsroman* form in the ambiguous transformation experienced by the central character, and thus highlights the colonial trauma imbedded in Kanaka Maoli genealogies.<sup>40</sup> The form of *bildungsroman*, as we will see with Tyau's text, is problematic in so far as it feeds into an immigrant narrative at the expense of the other narrative trajectories and spatial relations—in particular the dispossession of Kanaka Maoli by the settler regime—in which a minor settler position is necessarily implicated.

---

<sup>39</sup> Matthew Kaopio, *Written in the Sky* (Honolulu: Mutual, 2005); John Dominis Holt, *Waimea Summer* (Honolulu: Topgallant, 1976).

<sup>40</sup> Najita, *Decolonizing Culture*, 62.



### ***A Little Too Much Is Enough and the challenge to Local bildungsroman***

If in the Local *bildungsroman*, the anxiety and trauma of dislocation propels the narrative aspiration for a coherent identity that is coterminous with an unmitigated right to land, we now seek a different narrative that can meaningfully articulate non-Indigenous identity without submitting to the absolute aporia of identity. Instead of being perpetually cast in the resistive role against U.S. control of the islands, can Asian minor settler position be situated in relation to Native Hawaiian conception of Hawai'i as Indigenous homeland and their ongoing sovereignty over the archipelago? Can a literary narrative imagine an identity that both affirms minor settler connection to place and also consciously rejects settler complicity? And if so, what literary form is called for to narrate such identity formation in place of the Local *bildungsroman*?

To begin to answer these questions, the second part of the chapter turns to Kathleen Tyau's 1996 novel *A Little Too Much Is Enough* as an occasion for an alternative articulation of minor settler subjectivity, especially from the perspective of a biracial Chinese-Hawaiian author and text. The novel is particularly significant for our discussion because, while it describes much of *pake* (Hawaiian local term for Chinese) memories and experiences, Tyau and her similarly biracial protagonist are Hawaiian by their Kanaka Maoli genealogy and are thus positioned differently from the majority of Local authors writing about island-born Asian experiences. As a consequence, the novel is preoccupied with presenting both Chinese and Hawaiian voices and perspectives, and is uniquely positioned to envision conversations and correspondences between minor settler and Indigenous identities present within the novel's Chinese-Hawaiian family. By upending the assumption of fragmented identity in ethnic *bildungsroman*, Tyau's fiction employs short episodes from multiple narrative voices and diverse world views, and introduces a biracial family whose place-based identity is articulated through multilayered and multidirectional relation and obligation, both to the people in their kinship network and to the various stories of the lands with which they have come into contact in the processes of displacement, migration, settlement, and home-making.

Perhaps because it deviates from both the articulation of Local identity and the familiar themes of Native Hawaiian cultural survival, *A Little Too Much is Enough* has received little scholarly attention from readers of either Local Asian texts or Native Hawaiian literature, in spite of the accolades it received upon

publication and its vibrant depictions of island sights, sounds, and smells.<sup>41</sup> This neglect is surprising, especially in light of the heated debate about the status of Local writing in Hawai'i literature around the time of the novel's publication: from her unique vantage, Tyau engages with the triangulated relation between American influence, island-born Asian identity, and Native Hawaiian kinship sovereignty, in ways that other Local texts had not attempted.<sup>42</sup>

Particularly, telling a coming-of-age story through a unique narrative form, *A Little Too Much is Enough* seems to effect a direct challenge to the dominant Local genre of *bildungsroman*. Published in 1995, just two years before Yamanaka's 1997 *Wild Meat* and by the same New York-based publishing house Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, the novel shares several of Yamanaka's thematic and formal concerns. Although Tyau's Hawai'i is more urban, more lower-middle class than working class, and her narrators much less acerbic, *A Little Too Much Is Enough* narrates the island childhood of Mahealani Susanne Wong, a biracial Chinese-Hawaiian girl insecure about her looks and uncomfortable with American patriotism, during the politically and economically tumultuous time of the 1960s and the 70s. With stories celebrating the multiethnic and multilingual island community against U.S. militarization and cultural hegemony, Mahi's identity formation from infancy to young adulthood, when she leaves for college on the mainland, ostensibly sets up the readers' anticipation of an ethnic *bildungsroman* of identity conflict and individual autonomy. However, Tyau's novel deliberately frustrates such anticipation. Rather than replicating Local *bildungsroman*, Tyau's text significantly deconstructs the *bildungsroman* form and challenges its focus on the formation of a sovereign individual identity, particularly as that of an immigrant subject. The novel is composed of forty chapters, loosely chronological, and narrated by a large cast of ten characters, including Mahi and members of her extended family. With the juxtaposition between these chapters that check and balance one another throughout the novel, Tyau highlights the limitation of the *bildungsroman* format and challenges her readers' supposed familiarity with it. Rather than seeing Mahi transforming through the development of the plot, we are treated instead of slices of life around her.

Tyau's deliberate critique of Local *bildungsroman* may be observed from the way that she first introduced her main character through some of the conventional tropes of the genre, before then

---

<sup>41</sup> The novel won the 1996 Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Best Book of the Year, was short-listed for the Oregon Book Award, and was reviewed in national outlets including *New York Times Book Review* and the *Washington Post*.

<sup>42</sup> Local authors who are mindful of such triangulation have mostly resorted to the format of short story collections. For example, Gary Pak in his two short story collections, *The Watcher of Waipuna* and *The Voice of the Gecko*, and Sylvia Watanabe in *Talking to the Dead* juxtapose stories that recount Local Asian and Native Hawaiian memories and experiences. While such juxtaposition is an important narrative strategy and resonates to some extent with Tyau's text, because it is distributed into separate short story narratives, it also stops short from challenging the correlation between the *bildungsroman* form, its temporal and spatial imagination, and the sovereign imagination of Local identity formation.

deviating from these conventions and introducing other narratives of identity formation. In particular, the first episode of the novel establishes for the readers the expectation of Mahi's struggle as a Local subject torn between multiple heritages and cultural identities, which however never realizes in the novel. When we first meet Mahi, her second-generation Chinese mother, Anna, complains about baby Mahi's Hawaiian name and anticipates the identity and social conflict she will confront in mainstream American society. Given by Mahi's Kanaka Maoli paternal grandmother, Mahi's palpably Hawaiian name worries Anna, particularly with regard to the inconveniences that could come with the non-American-sounding first name: "I wanted you to have an American first name. Suzanne Mahealani, not Mahealani Suzanne. That way you could go away to school on the mainland, and everybody could say your name right. I told her haoles cannot say Mahealani. Besides, you are mostly Chinese, and this is not just Hawaii anymore. This is America."<sup>43</sup> I will return to discuss the penultimate sentence, its racial blood logic and its implication as a minor settler notion momentarily, but here I first want to call attention to the way Anna anticipates Mahi's life story to be a struggle between her non-Americanness and the American mainstream. Mahi being still a newborn baby, Anna's prediction of her eventual Americanization introduces the pressure of assimilation frequently structuring ethnic *bildungsroman*, and the ethnic-versus-mainstream trajectory Anna imagines is a reprise of the struggle between ethnic alienation and coherent identity that we have seen playing out in Yamanaka's novel. Through Anna's perspective, the novel's first chapter seems to prompt the readers to anticipate a *bildungsroman* narrative of a young girl struggling through her multiple minority identities, battling her mother's expectations for her academic achievements, and eventually resolving these conflicts in acts of either transcendence, independence, or reconciliation.

The chapters that follow, however, never quite adhere to this predictable path. Anna's first chapter is followed almost immediately by another one narrated by Kuhio, Mahi's biracial Chinese-Hawaiian father, that places and educates Mahi in Kanaka Maoli tradition, and thus identifies Mahi with relation to land, rather than the trajectory of immigrant struggle and triumph. In a dramatic monologue similar to Anna's in the previous episode, Kuhio speaks directly to the silently-listening young Mahi about his learning to mix *poi* as a young child and his love for this staple dish in Hawaiian cuisine made with taro root (*kalo*). Through *kalo*, considered an early creation by Wākea and Papa, an older and distant sibling to Kānaka Maoli, *poi* is not only an important daily necessity in Hawaiian life, but is symbolic of the Kanaka Maoli cosmological and genealogical connection to the Hawaiian land.<sup>44</sup> Explaining that mixing *poi*

---

<sup>43</sup> Tyau, *A Little Too Much Is Enough*, 4.

<sup>44</sup> Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land*, 23.

takes embodied knowledge that one gains through intergenerational instruction, practice, and muscle memory, Kuhio narrates a different epistemological and cultural world in which Mahi also grows up and belongs. Kuhio tells Mahi that “poi is like staying home... Poi is very hard head. Sticks to your hands, sticks to your mouth, hard to wash off.”<sup>45</sup> While Anna describes Mahi’s multiple identities with reference to her names, here Kuhio emphasizes the symbolic, embodied, and cosmological relation between food, land, and people. Kuhio effectively tells a different story by which Mahi’s life may be interpreted by invoking another set of epistemological and relational concepts. Mahi’s life story is not only one of ethnic potential for assimilation but also one rooted in her Kanaka Maoli identity and her continuous education in a land of long ancestral connection.

Again, the contrast between Chinese and Indigenous identity does not provide simply another source of conflict that feeds a *bildungsroman* trajectory of transcendence and transformation: Mahi does not grow up struggling between her parents’ different views of her identity. In fact, narratively, the juxtaposition between Anna’s minor settler aspiration and Kuhio’s Kanaka Maoli worldview quickly gives way to other narrators and their various manners of reading Mahi’s life story. Several chapters follow with further dramatic monologues from Mahi’s two grandmothers, uncles, aunts, and siblings in which Mahi is instructed in hula dance and songs, cooking rice, visiting a grandfather’s gravesite, roasting duck, or (unsuccessfully) digging a hole to China. Delivered by more than ten narrators from Mahi’s extended family over the span of almost twenty years of Mahi’s life, these episodes are almost always also vehicles of these characters’ own personal memories, desires, and wishes that invoke yet more ways in which they understand family, identity, Hawai’i, and relationships. These early chapters thus quickly pluralize the instructions Mahi receives about her place in the community and her means of self-expression and social engagement, and obscure the trajectory Anna initially sets up as Mahi’s life story. With Mahi silent in most of these episodes, the narrative structure implies that Mahi identifies not in spite of these many narratives around her, but because of and only through them. When Mahi does speak, she does not rebel against these instructions that she has received but offers her own observations and her own life experiences of the people and events around her. In the words of an unnamed aunt from Mahi’s Chinese family, when she teaches Mahi about a tea ceremony that takes place after a Chinese wedding, “what you know is what we know. What we pass on to you is more than custom, more than china and jade. It is the way we married. The babies we had. The ones we lost. The work we did outside of home. The waiting. The cooking....”<sup>46</sup> This intergenerational knowledge is not abstracted culture, but a reservoir of layered and living knowledge

---

<sup>45</sup> Tyau, *A Little Too Much Is Enough*, 8.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

that is variously infused and interpreted with generations of lived lives and individual stories. Rather than reified cultural differences, stories of lived lives are what structure Mahi's sense of being and belonging.

These dramatic monologues—uniformly second-person addresses in the present tense—continue, and eventually account for almost half of the 40 chapters; if we further include those narratives that are in the first person and the present tense, in which Mahi relates her immediate observations and experiences as if to a specific listener, over three quarters of the novel are dominated by personalized immediate communication in which the readers are alternatively cast in Mahi's place to receive the wisdoms and stories of her family elders and siblings, or else interpellated as Mahi's direct interlocutors. Instead of witnessing the formulation of a singular identity from the perspective of the central consciousness, readers participate in a series of literary simulation of situated oral communications. The narrative time passes without these episodes affecting plot changes or serving as seeds for later conflicts and resolutions. As such, the novel rejects the single, synthesizing narrative voice and the chronological trajectory of the girl's identitarian conflict, resolution, and transcendence, and pointedly upsets the internal dynamics of *bildungsroman*. While Mahi does grow up to go to Oregon for college and she does confront the difficulties of interracial relationship in one chapter, her supposed identity struggle never materializes as the driving force behind the novel. Instead, among stories of family memories and cultural instructions, the narrative seems indifferent to the suspense demanded of in a *bildungsroman's* developmental impulse, and if a modicum of the typical narrative tension surrounds whether Mahi will ultimately leave for the mainland, the author resolves this tension already on page 36 of the 200-plus page novel, when a college-age Mahi returns in this chapter from Oregon to visit with her family during a school break. In this episode, Mahi shows them pictures of the Oregon scenery, listens to her uncle's ideas of roasting a duck (the university's mascot), and remains in easy, unstrained communication with her family. This figure of the older Mahi returns several times in later chapters, narratively preceding the last chapter, which is supposedly set on the day before she first goes away. If certain expectations for a Local *bildungsroman* have been set up for readers by the novel's apparent subject matter as well as Anna's first monologue, the lack of tension and conflict actually frustrated several initial reviewers precisely because the novel does not fulfill the conventional structure of the genre. For example, Andrew McCullough complains that, while the novel contains great stories in which an ethnic Hawaiian author forcefully criticizes American economic and political control, "nothing in the social fabric, no hints of personal limitation imposed by group-think, compels Mahi to forsake the islands or embrace the mainland," as if this were a bad thing, while another reviewer comments that "the narrative has [a] certain circular

sameness.”<sup>47</sup> Other than what I perceive to be a misreading of the novel—Mahi’s departure from home is not a severance of her island ties, and she has not forsaken the islands or her family—these critical commentaries register a widespread investment among readers and publishers for a particular formula of ethnic *bildungsroman*, which Tyau’s novel rejects. While ethnic *bildungsroman* and its Local variations like Yamanaka’s texts trace the formulation of individual identity mainly through conflict between individuals and groups, between the either-or binary of islands or mainland, Mahi’s identity does not depend on the resolution of conflicts or the continuous supersession of earlier identities that Anna sets out imagining.

In *Time and Narrative*, Paul Ricoeur comments in passing that *bildungsroman* is driven by the dynamic exchanges between formation and transformation (*bildung* and *umbildung*),<sup>48</sup> and I argue that Tyau’s novel downplays the genre’s demand for an explicit *transformation* of her central character. As Mahi grows up and accumulates knowledge about herself and the world, her transformations are not the narrative focus—they are narrated and contained within particular episodes that remain partial perspectives among others within the overall narrative. With many sources of knowledge present in a narrative of identity formation, it is difficult and undesirable to understand Mahi’s individuality as existing in conflict with one or two dominant sets of cultural values and authorities. The inclusion of many direct voices overwhelms the structural capacity of the *bildungsroman*, and introduces an identity that emerges, not as an individual with defensible sovereign boundaries, but as a porous site where different knowledge-stories are told, heard, learned, and lived. Unlike in a *bildungsroman*, the central individual in *A Little Too Much Is Enough* does not transform in her relation with a social history that is at least initially separate from her personal identity; instead, when the reader opens the book, Mahi is already firmly embedded in the community that she continues to belong. If as Ricour speaks about narrative time, there exists in fictional narratives two temporalities—one belonging to the plot and the other the reader’s temporal experience—our experience reading the novel echoes the non-progression of Mahi’s family: we visit and revisit different facets of the family’s memories and traditions, without needing to arrive at a destiny of surprise, transcendence, or other foreign territories.

---

<sup>47</sup> Andrew McCullough, Review of *A Little Too Much Is Enough*, by Kathleen Tyau, *Mānoa* 8, no. 1 (1996), 187; Review of *A Little Too Much Is Enough*, by Kathleen Tyau,” *Kirkus Reviews*, accessed February 11, 2015, <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-review/kathleen-tyau-2/a-little-too-much-is-enough-2/>.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, vol. 2, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 80. Goethe, a founding practitioner of the genre of *bildungsroman*, has written in his botanical studies on morphology about the close association between formation (*bildung*) and transformation (*umbildung*): “everything that is formed is immediately transformed.” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Botanical Writings*, trans. Bertha Müller (Woodbridge, CT: Ox Bow Press, 1989), 24.

## Narrative Archipelagos

I have argued that, in narrating Mahi's subjectivity as a congregation of multiple knowledge-stories, *A Little Too Much Is Enough* posits a different concept of identity that is imbedded in relation and obligation. To make better sense of the kind of narrative dynamics Tyau's novel creates, I turn now to the model of archipelago both as a cartographical concept for mapping minor settler genealogy and as a visual metaphor for the narrative structure of the novel. An archipelagic concept of minor settler identity interrupts narratives of exploration, arrival, and destination that legitimates settlement as destination, and insists on the persistent juxtaposition of migration history, Indigenous dispossession, and settler invasion as part of minor settler genealogy and self-positioning. It allows the multiple knowledge stories and narrative logic in Tyau's narrative to relate and interrogate one another, without appearing as alienating conflicts that require resolution.

Archipelago has emerged as an important topographic model in reading island literatures and cultures. Tongan writer and scholar Epeli Hau'ofa has famously reconceptualized the Pacific as "a sea of islands" where Indigenous life worlds are expansive and inclusive through Islander's movements between islands,<sup>49</sup> and Elizabeth DeLoughrey has saliently examined how literary renderings of archipelagos inform Caribbean and Pacific authors' remapping of place and belonging against European colonial belittlement. In her reading of Caribbean and Pacific island literature, DeLoughrey offers the model of archipelagraphy—"a historiography that considers chains of islands in fluctuating relationship to their surrounding seas, islands, and continent"—as a dynamic metaphor for both literary cultures' central dynamics between Indigenous roots and migrational routes.<sup>50</sup> Building on this scholarship, in another context I have proposed to expand these formulations of archipelago into a broader topology for comparative study, arguing that a conceptual archipelago can be grouped along different lines of relation and may extend beyond geographical proximity to capture political, cultural, linguistic, or cultural connectedness across waters and at different scales.<sup>51</sup> To connect this understanding of archipelago with the concept of genealogy, then, minor settler identity may be articulated as the archipelagic congregation of geopolitical relations within a minor settler genealogy, whereby a minor settler identity can be narrated

---

<sup>49</sup> Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands," in *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 27–40.

<sup>50</sup> Elizabeth DeLoughrey, "'The Litany of Islands, The Rosary of Archipelagos': Caribbean and Pacific Archipelagraphy," *ARIEL* 32, no. 1 (2001): 21–51.

<sup>51</sup> Yu-ting Huang, "The Archipelagos of Taiwan Literature: Comparative Methods and Island Writings in Taiwan," in *Comparatizing Taiwan*, ed. Shu-mei Shih and Ping-hui Liao (New York: Routledge, 2014), 81–82.

through the interlacing histories of displacement, migration, and settlement among settler groups and Indigenous peoples. Considering minor settler identity as an archipelagic genealogy interrupts unidirectional migration and assimilation, and may open up more meeting points between different settler groups and the Indigenous communities.

Tyau hints at the utility of archipelagic imagination in interpreting her novel through a personal story told by Mahi's father Kuhio, from his standpoint as a Chinese-Hawaiian boy. Kuhio makes sense of his biracial identity by way of mentally imagining an archipelagic relation between the Hawaiian Islands and between Hawai'i, China, and the U.S. mainland. In the episode "Mixing Poi," Kuhio tells Mahi that, when he was young, he "used to think China was just an outer island like Niihau, where my mama was born. She sang to me about Niihau, how she couldn't go back home. My papa was the same way. Talking all the time about China."<sup>52</sup> Kuhio eventually finds out that China is very distant from his home in Hawai'i, and that once he is "shanghaied" by his father to receive an education in China at a young age, it will be years before he can return to Hawai'i. But here Kuhio indicates an intuitive perception of significant locations in one's genealogy that is not linearly mapped onto an immigrant itinerary, but one that experiences these locations as linked through multi-directional island-to-island relations. Being born locally to parents who both migrated to O'ahu from locations across the waters, Kuhio imagines Ni'ihau, China, and O'ahu to be islands in the same archipelago, locations of genealogical significance that together inform his sense of place. Such an archipelagic imagination spatializes immigrant, Indigenous, and biracial genealogies and promises more flexible ways of accounting for one's attachments to different places and histories. Not only does it highlight Chinese migration that constitutes part of Kuhio's identity, it also obliquely comments on his Kanaka Maoli mother's displacement from her home island Ni'ihau, which was purchased whole by Elizabeth Sinclair in 1864 and whose descendants, the Robinson family, still own the island privately.<sup>53</sup> The archipelagic image in Kuhio's young mind conjures the entangled histories of minor settler migration and Indigenous dispossession that both constitute Kuhio's subjectivity. Such archipelagic mapping of China and Hawai'i decenters the continents, further minimizing the weight Anna places on them in her narrative of transgenerational migration. Thinking with the model of archipelagic connections, Kuhio understands both China and the U.S. mainland among the chains of islands, with no primacy over any other islands but merely points in an island network that one navigates by way of the surrounding waters. Placed in an archipelagic chain of relation, these locations are

---

<sup>52</sup> Tyau, *A Little Too Much*, 7-8.

<sup>53</sup> Edward R. Stepien, *Ni'ihau: A Brief History*, Working Paper Series (Manoa, HI: University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1988).



connected not by a teleological narrative of departure and arrival, but by criss-crossing routes of travels and moments of chance encounters.

Just as each location in such archipelagic concept of identity has its stories, Tyau's narrative structure may also be described metaphorically as archipelagic. As narrative archipelagos, the multiple knowledge stories that inform Mahi's identity do not need to compete with one another, but are juxtaposed in positive relations. Such conversation is particularly crucial when we consider the politically discrepant positions that are occupied by Mahi's Chinese and Kanaka Maoli families, and reading their stories as archipelagically connected—rather than locked in conflict and opposition—allows for a more expansive understanding of Mahi's identity that emerges out of such multifarious constructions.

Here I want to turn briefly to Kanaka Maoli concept of genealogy—not only because it explains Mahi's Kanaka Maoli identity, but also because it offers an alternative model of identity based in relation and obligation, which, as I argue, describes more productively the multilayered formulation of minor settler identity. Hawaiian genealogy does not translate perfectly to the English definition of genealogy as the visual display of bloodlines, the family tree, but instead consists of narrative and performative recitations of individuals', families', and Kanaka Maoli peoples' social locations and relations, in reference to their expansive and flexible kinship networks—including bilateral descents, systems of adoption and fostering, marriage or cohabitation, hierarchies of friendship, and Kanaka Maoli cosmos.<sup>54</sup> Associated most frequently with the Hawaiian term *Mo'okū'auhau*, whose etymology implies succession, lineage, tradition, the act of reciting genealogy, and obligations between the commoners, chiefs, and land, Kanaka Maoli genealogies identify an individual by her relation, obligation, and geographical histories through cultural practices and narrative acts.<sup>55</sup> J. Kēhaulani Kauanui explains that contemporary Kānaka Maoli locate each other genealogically upon meeting by asking who their *'ohana* (family) are, and that “such invocations are always contextual, political, and specific.”<sup>56</sup> In other words, genealogical accounting is particularly not an abstracted linear account of birth, but is an engaged discussion happening in a specific place and time. In this sense, individual Kanaka Maoli identity does not correspond to a socialization process beginning with an individual's departure from family, her assimilation into society, and the attainment of individuality and independent agency; rather, it is invoked by situated articulation of her

---

<sup>54</sup> Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 37-49; Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land*, 19-20.

<sup>55</sup> Kaunui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 37; Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English, English-Hawaiian*, Rev. and enl. ed., s.vv. “mo'okū'auhau,” “mo'o,” and “kū'auhau,” (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

<sup>56</sup> Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 40.

kinship relations as well as persistent performances of one's obligations in line with such social positioning. In Kauanui's words, Kanaka Maoli identity is recognized by the interlocking factors of "relationship, duty, and status" both in one's kinship network and with reference to Kanaka Maoli epistemology and cosmology.<sup>57</sup>

Such understanding of identity by relation and kinship has real political consequence for Kanaka Maoli in Hawai'i, a fact that we can explicate if we reread Anna's pronouncement in her opening monologue, referenced above, that Mahi is "mostly Chinese." Read through Kanaka Maoli concept of identity and genealogy, Anna's maternal worry over Mahi's alienated identity unwittingly invoke the settler-colonial racial logic of blood quantum. Anna, identifying Mahi as less Kanaka Maoli than Chinese, quantifies Mahi's identity by blood quotient—since Mahi's father, Kuhio, is half Kanaka Maoli and half-Chinese and, notably, Anna herself is completely Chinese.<sup>58</sup> Such blood logic is integral in settler colonial government's ongoing control of Hawaiian land. According to Kauanui, blood quantum, the U.S. system of racial categorization that designates Indigenous legal status by biological percentage of racial descents, is in the Hawaiian context tied to the bureaucratic management of Hawaiian Home Land territories, the roughly 1.8 million acres of former Hawaiian kingdom and crown land that is designated for native Hawaiian homesteading. By Hawaiian Home Commission Act of 1920, fifty-percent of native Hawaiian blood is required in the leasing applicants to qualify as "native Hawaiian." The logic thus obscures the genealogical system of identity and belonging in favor of the governing logic of race.<sup>59</sup> Anticipating Mahi's eventual alignment with the American values through education and relocation in the immediate wake of Hawai'i statehood in 1959, Anna reckons with settler hegemony's racial logic, by assuming that Mahi's Kanaka Maoli identity is a quantity which can thus be diluted by Chinese "blood" in a trans-generational process of racial mixing. Kauanui argues that such ideologies of blood-based racialization are essential to U.S. settler colonial domination in Hawai'i, effectively limiting the Native Hawaiian population to those with an arbitrarily and pseudo-scientifically defined blood percentage, in disregard of Kanaka Maoli genealogical practices. As Kauanui further explains, the composition of Kanaka Maoli society continues to be rooted in "principles of bilateral descent, where descent groups are formed by people who claim each other by connections made through both their maternal and paternal lines" and Kanaka Maoli genealogy is "impossible to quantify because they are about status and relationships, not

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>58</sup> In a later episode, "Crackseed," we learn that there is suspicion in the family that they may have some Portuguese blood, but Anna denies the suspicion.

<sup>59</sup> Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*.

arbitrary blood measurements.”<sup>60</sup> While this is not to exclude blood as an effective and frequent metaphor for Indigenous ancestry,<sup>61</sup> there is a fundamental political distinction between settler colonial racialization that reduces Indigeneity to mere quantifiable and dilutable blood and an Indigenous cumulative accounting of bloodline as one of the ways to narrate ancestry and relations, both between family members and within the Kanaka Maoli cosmology that genealogically connects Kānaka Maoli to land. In this light, while Anna does not deny Mahi’s Kanaka Maoli heritage in her complaint about Mahi’s Hawaiian name, by arguing her point in terms of racial quantification and according to the teleology of Americanization, she echoes the settler colonial attempt to gradually disassociate and downplay her daughter’s Hawaiianness. Moreover, as she considers Mahi’s Hawaiian association (manifest in the name Mahealani) to be more of a barrier than her Chineseness (through her last name Wong) to her future Americanization, Anna implicitly suggests that Chinese diasporic identity conforms more easily to the narrative of assimilation than Kanaka Maoli Indigeneity. This confidence results at least partially from images of successful Asian assimilation in the American mainstream, as Anna tells Mahi that she can choose to use her middle name when she grows up, “like the actress Suzy Wong.”<sup>62</sup> In her avowed hope for Mahi to integrate into mainstream American society, Kanaka Maoli Indigeneity—and the cultural and historical memories of dispossession associated with it—are cumbersome in the narrative of supposedly progressive development from racial otherness to assimilation.

It is not a coincidence that Anna’s forward projection of Mahi’s eventual Americanization conjoins with her rhetoric of blood racialization. Her vision’s developmental trajectory coincides with a racial logic of blood and the implicit possibility of gradual de-racialization through a trans-generational process of continuous dilution. Settler colonial logic of blood quantum and Kanaka Maoli genealogical practice structures identity formation along two distinct temporal structures. On the one hand, blood quantum suggests a mathematically chartable arboreal system of descent. Because the ancestral lines are imagined to proceed unidirectionally from original purity to different degrees of mixed-ness, racial identity is calculated by an individual’s distance from the originary point of racial purity. On the other hand, Kanaka Maoli genealogical practice makes available links of association in one’s entire genealogy

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 38, 40.

<sup>61</sup> Reading Native American and Māori activist discourses, Chadwick Allen argues that the invocation of Indigenous blood has been a strategic necessity for Indigenous activists to recall and defend Indigenous minority identity in deeply entrenched settler colonial societies. He explains that “the blood/land/memory complex articulates acts of Indigenous minority recuperation that attempt to seize control of the symbolic and metaphorical meaning of Indigenous “blood,” “land,” and “memory” and that seek to liberate Indigenous minority identities from definitions of authenticity imposed by dominant settler cultures.” Chadwick Allen, *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 16.

<sup>62</sup> Tyau, *A Little Too Much Is Enough*, 4.

archipelagically. The recounting of one's Kanaka Maoli identity by her genealogical associations is non-linear, and contextually determined by the speaker's circumstances at the particular moment of utterance and her desire to associate or disassociate herself from her interlocutor. As we have seen, Kanaka Maoli genealogy is not fixed, and its recitations are contextual and performative. Anna's adherence to the racial logic of settler governmentality delineates Mahi's potential ethnic *bildungsroman*, but as the narrative instead breaks away from the developmental model of assimilation and resolution, the minor settler assumption of identity by assimilation is revealed as only one version of minor settler belonging that is informed in particular by the desire for settler sovereignty.

Now, it is important to recall that, despite Anna's invocation of colonial blood logic, her perspective is not repudiated in the novel but is rather put in conversation with other, different formulations of identity as we have seen above. If we see the novel as structured around narrative archipelagos, the Chinese side of her family—and their position as minor settler—is still a composite part of her identity and a part which she must still acknowledge. The fluidity of archipelagic movement enforces the continuous effort to negotiate between histories and identities among characters in Tyau's novel. In a chapter titled "Family Shark," Kuhio is rescued by his future father-in-law, Fook, while almost drowning. In his moments of confusion, he thinks that he encounters his family's *aumakua*, or guardian spirit, in the form of a shark, but he wonders at the odd language the "aumakua" chooses to speak:

I suddenly realized he was scolding me in hakka, my very own dialect.

"Ngee hei mang nge ma! Ngee hei so gai ma!"

I wondered, how could the aumakua speak hakka? Who was this calling me stupid and blind? Then I thought maybe he was a Chinese ghost, the *gui*, coming to take me back to China. Maybe he was the *gui* of my ah bak goong, who died without telling the family where he hid the gold he found in California. My grandfather said my uncle's ghost could not sleep until he told someone.<sup>63</sup>

At the moment of crises, Kuhio's multiple genealogies surge to his rescue. Kuhio in the water thinks that he can be visited by both his family's local guardian, the Hawaiian shark god, or another diasporic member of his Hakka family. Fook becomes for Kuhio both of these things, but more importantly an older generation of the local Chinese Hawaiian man. Fook and Kuhio share similarly complex identities,

---

<sup>63</sup> Tyau, *A Little Too Much*, 168

which were made explicit in a following conversation conducted in both Hawaiian pidgin English and Hakka: “‘Sorry ah, brah,’ I said. Then in hakka, ‘Ngai e wui ngee hei gui.’ I thought you were a ghost. I wanted him to see I was pake like him.”<sup>64</sup> *Pake* is the local term for Chinese in Hawai‘i, and the mixture of pidgin English and Hakka dialect in this conversations places both men as local and Hakka at the same time. Kuhio, in particular, moves between Hawaiian, local, and Hakka identities that are equally important and formative in his identity. In the passage, not only is the shark god free to navigate the waters to rescue the family members he looks over, so is the Hakka *gui*, who is able to visit different places across the Pacific ocean without definite direction. Kuhio and Fook have cultural literacy to understand both supernatural presences, both are equally plausible, and it is this inclusive worldview that seals the bonds between Kuhio and Fook.<sup>65</sup> Their connection through archipelagic relations is further strengthened by Hawaiian kinship relations when Kuhio later marries Fook’s daughter Anna.

Tyau’s emphasis on the men’s Hakka identity, instead of a generalized Chinese ethnicity, further destabilizes the immigrant itinerary where “China” is set up as the continental homeland of Chinese diaspora. Not only do the Hakka people have a wide-ranging global diaspora, they are a distinctively migratory people even within geographical China. Hakka, literally meaning “guest people” or “stranger families” in the Sinitic script—or less literally, “settlers”<sup>66</sup>—are a particular group of people who have left their ancestral places in central China for centuries to reside in the Southeast coast of China. Although they are ethnically Han and thus belonging to the ethnic majority in China, their status as the non-local, “guest” residents in Southeast China means that they had bore much aggression and had engaged in frequent conflicts with locals. Scholars of Hakka studies contend that, since the name “Hakka” emphasizes their settler status, the ethnic affiliation of “Hakka” most likely originated with other Chinese’s perception of them as specifically non-local, though they themselves have since accepted the denomination as their identity.<sup>67</sup> In 19th-century Guantong, the conflict between the Hakka and Punti (literally “original land”) peoples escalated into what came to be known as the Hakka-Punti Wars between 1850 and 1867; Hawai‘i, being settled by both Punti and Hakka shortly after these conflicts, and with Punti being the larger settler group, also became a site for Punti-Hakka conflicts in the second half of the

---

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>65</sup> C.f. Wilson’s reading of this passage as cultural mixture through the commingling of languages and superstitions in *Reimagining the American Pacific*, 208. My reading, in calling attention Hakka settler itinerary, goes beyond Wilson’s interpretation of cultural mixture to emphasize the criss-crossing archipelagraphy that remains visible and significant in Tyau’s account.

<sup>66</sup> Nicole Constable, “Introduction: What Does It Mean to Be Hakka?,” in *Guest People: Hakka Identity in China and Abroad*, ed. Nicole Constable (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 3–35.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

19th century.<sup>68</sup> China is therefore not experienced as a homogenous homeland for the Hakka settlers in Hawai‘i, and their group identity—like the immediate sense of mutual recognition between Kuhio and Fook—is dependent instead on the minor Hakka dialect and the traveling, Hakka-speaking peoples and *gui*. Accepting their status as settlers, these Hakka men cultivate a sense of local belonging by recognizing their particular identity as *pake* in Hawai‘i, while at the same time recounting their multiple genealogies that connect them to other parts of the world as their ancestral homelands and various settlements.

Kuhio and Fook are thus connected to their immigrant origins by language—it is the fact that their families come from the same Hakka speaking region that they can converse with each other in that dialect in Hawai‘i. The Hakka genealogy, introduced through the mistaken but inspired notion that China is an outer island of the Hawaiian archipelago, is here pronounced on equal footing with the Hawaiian genealogy in Tyau’s novel. By acknowledging both genealogies, and placing them in relation through her characters’ experiences, the author is able to bring these different notions of identity, place, and movement into relation and conversation.

*A Little Too Much Is Enough* thus retains genealogy’s important association with ancestry and ancestral place for both minor settler and Kanaka Maoli characters, and as such is able to capture the multiple historiographies that inform a minor settler identity. The novel’s minor settler genealogy, invoking its origin in migrational roots and routes, local settlement and relations, and resistive consciousness as an ethnic minority under U.S. cultural hegemony does not fix island-born Asians in diasporic nostalgia. Instead, comprehending the experience of migration as archipelagic and relational, rather than linear and dialectic, Kuhio’s way of understanding belonging seems to offer a more productive way to talk about the settler genealogy from the “old country,” the placed-based sense of local belonging, and Kanaka Maoli understanding of the Hawaiian Islands together. The fact that Chinese have lived in Hawai‘i for more than a century does not mean one can disregard their settler origin, nor should the fact that Chinese play the role of minor settlers imply the false conclusion that they are not concerned with local politics or that they do not have a role in the decolonization of Hawai‘i. By allowing multiple stories to co-exist and speak to each other as family, or as an archipelagic clusters of memories, Tyau depicts minor settler identity by laying bare the different threads of genealogies. It is only by confronting these multiple stories that a minor settler’s multi-faceted locations of identity and her many obligations to place and others may be fully articulated.

## Listening and Speaking Beyond Family

---

<sup>68</sup> Clarence Elmer Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese Migrants in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980). [Must check page number]

We are left with one more difficulty. My reading is informed by an interest to understand *A Little Too Much Is Enough* as a text negotiating between minor settler and Kanaka Maoli genealogies and identities, but Tyau is not necessarily explicit in alluding to Hawaiian values. The text is not overtly political and the lack of ostensible political content to match the narrative innovation has likely contributed to earlier reviewers' confusion and the neglect of academic readers. Yet I maintain that this is neither an aesthetic nor political mistake on Tyau's part: while she does not overtly challenge continuing settler presence and sovereignty, the distinguishing characteristic of her novel is her refusal to pathologize the coexistence of Asian minor settler and Kanaka Maoli genealogies in Mahi's identity formation. Among Tyau's readers, however, there has been an asymmetry of visibility between on the one hand analyses of minority issues of gender, race, ethnicity, class etc. and on the other discussion of settler colonialism and Indigenous decolonization. It is much easier for readers to pick up on themes of ethnic minority resistance against American mainstream than for them to comprehend the work Tyau does with Native Hawaiian survivance. Most readers do not possess the theoretical, historical, and cultural literacy that allow for a critique of settler colonialism; between the two minority positions—ethnic and Indigenous—it is with the ethnic position that most readers would likely identify.<sup>69</sup>

But where does this literacy emerge, and how can it be cultivated? Simply to “learn” about Indigenous history, culture, and even politics is insufficient, and packed with ethical dilemmas. Andrea Smith has forcefully criticized settler self-reflexivity and the gesture to “learn from” Indigenous communities as frequently a move to confirm settler subjectivity and innocence.<sup>70</sup> So how do non-Native scholars begin to obtain that literacy as settler scholars without encroaching on Indigenous authority or confining Indigenous writers and theorists within the role of “native informants”? That is to say, how do they make sure that, while they are learning to talk about minor settler positionality, they are in fact conducting a process of communication rather than appropriation or self-therapy?

One of the stories in *A Little Too Much Is Enough* stages such acts of communication, clearly and poignantly, as contextualized attempts to learn another person's language and to listen for signs of muted responses. In “Mana,” Mahi narrates her interest in her neighbor, a gay Hawaiian man called Lani

---

<sup>69</sup> This is of course the argument put forward by many Indigenous authors. See, for example, Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

<sup>70</sup> Andrea Smith, “Native Studies at the Horizon of Death: Theorizing Ethnographic Entrapment and Settler Self-Reflexivity,” in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 215-220.

Gerard, who isolates himself in his house after his partner has passed away. A figure of manifold vulnerability, Lani guards himself and his private territory with sheet-metal plated windows and sturdy fence with barbed wires, and loses his public presence in the neighborhood all altogether. Mahi explains that “after Ambrose died and the fence went up, we never saw Lani come out of his house. We didn’t hear music.... Lani went to work early and came home late, in the dark, and he parked his car in the garage.”<sup>71</sup> After hearing her parents whisper worried hopes that Lani will not commit suicide, Mahi begins to need to know that he is alive. She lets her snack bag fly over the fence into his yard and observes with relief that the trash disappears the next day. Thus begins Mahi’s gradual attempts to communicate her good will with increasingly bold gestures—sending over a flower, leaves, fruits, a haiku, the lyric of a Hawaiian song that Mahi learned from her Kanaka Maoli grandmother, fortune-bearing origami cranes, her essay opposing statehood—and receives in response music, made by wind and silverware, metal objects, and then art works of sun, star, and moon that Lani welds with copper and hangs on his big mango tree. This tacit communication culminates in Mahi’s recognition of Lani as a friend and her effort to learn about his languages—she finds in a school dictionary that his name means “heaven, sky, a very high chief” in Hawaiian, and learns to pay attention to the wind and the sweetness of the clanging music “that rang only with the help of the wind.”<sup>72</sup> In the last paragraph of this section, Mahi sends over grass that she blesses “with the strongest, the best words I knew. Hau‘oli—happy. Ho‘olehua—strong. Maluhia—peace. Aloha. Mana. Lani. Ko‘u hoaaloha—my friend.”<sup>73</sup> The communication is multilingual, multi-media, and contingent upon whatever resources that Mahi and Lani can lay their hands on. Between a young Chinese-Hawaiian girl and a grieving gay Hawaiian man, whose identities are themselves constructed at the crossroads of social relations, the network of relation and communication does not follow visible paths but is created through will and self-education.

For the purposes of this chapter, I read this story as an allegory of communication between subject positions, especially between those whose languages are kept arcane due to the asymmetry of power and legibility in the wake of historical traumas. In the story, Lani suffers from aphasia as well as self-imposed spatial enclosure, and it is significant that his plight is associated strongly with both his Hawaiianness and his sexual orientation. Not only does his hyper-spatialization recall that of many

---

<sup>71</sup> Tyau, *A Little Too Much*, 115.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.



Indigenous nations and nationals under settler colonialism,<sup>74</sup> his homosexuality marginalizes him more fundamentally within the biopolitical governmentality of settler colonialism. As we have seen with the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, U.S. settler colonialism delimits Indigeneity and Indigenous right to land by the stringent racial reproduction of Indigenous “purity” that is defined by blood quantum, and Lani’s Hawai’ianness is not likely to be passed on through biological reproduction, the only legible means of affiliation under this logic of racialization. To the extent that colonial racial inheritance relies on the paradigm of reproductive heteronormativity, Lani’s Hawai’ianness and homosexuality together mark him as the excess elements of settler colonial biopolitical economy, in which Indigenous homosexuality has no part. As Sally Merry argues, throughout the 19th century, when U.S. missionary and legal counsels’ of Hawaiian court attempted to redefine Hawaiian Kingdom as a legible sovereign nation by European juridical codes, Hawaiian family and gender order were forcefully transformed, and any excess outside of the western model of the bourgeois nuclear family—including cohabitation, divorce, sexual play, and homosexuality, all of which were governed by Kanaka Maoli social logics of rank and kinship relation—became damning “truths” of Hawaiian sexuality’s intractability, and eventually the legitimating reasons of United States’s formal colonization of Hawai’i at the turn of the 20th century.<sup>75</sup> Against this backdrop, Lani’s aporia and marginalization is as much a consequence of his personal grieving as the silencing and pathologization of Kanaka Maoli sexuality outside of the controlling models of settler colonial racial policy and home-making.

Here, we find the kind of interpersonal communicational network existing outside of biological family, and reach into the flexible and expansive genealogical and kinship system between neighbors and friends in Kanaka Maoli epistemology. If we may understand Lani’s fortified house and his aphasia as a certain manifestation of Indigenous sovereignty under siege, which seeks foremost the autonomy against further invasion and encroachment, Mahi’s ad hoc and cautious attempts at communication may be a worthy analogy for our work as non-Indigenous critics. With the addition of a self-awareness concerning the genealogies of our coming-to-be-here, the willingness to learn different languages in all their forms for the sake of communication may be exactly what we need in confronting our present task.

## Coda

A Judeo-Franco-Maghrebian genealogy does not clarify everything, far from it. But could I explain anything without it, ever? No, nothing, nothing of what preoccupies me, what

---

<sup>74</sup> For Indigenous experience of hyperspatialization, see Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 10.

<sup>75</sup> Sally Engle Merry, *Colonizing Hawai’i: The Cultural Power of Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 235

engages me, what keeps me in motion or in ‘communication,’ nothing of what summons me sometimes across the silent time of interrupted communication...”

—Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other*.<sup>76</sup>

At the end of this chapter on identity, I return to Derrida not because of specific theoretical fidelity, but because of how inevitably the contemplation on his identity as a minor settler eventually leads him to genealogy. The alienation he feels with the French sovereignty and its sovereign language—"I only have one language, and it is not mine"—is perceivable only by the recounting of his genealogy.<sup>77</sup> It is by the impossible position of being neither colonizer nor native that Derrida first finds a coherent identity to be distant. And for that, it is the genealogy of his multiple identities, described on a land that he does not own, that provides an explanation for his many names and no sovereignty.

Similarly, in my reading of minor settler literature in Hawai‘i, I argue that it is eventually by deep historical remembrance and flexible accounting across lands and time that a minor settler subject may parse through her relation to the many knowledge stories and histories that have been told on this land. A minor settler identity can thus be perceived, not in terms of its distance or possession of the land of her residency, but more so in the ways that she inquires, relates, and communicates with other peoples and stories of the land. Tyau’s protagonist, a Hakka-Chinese-Niihauen-Hawaiian-American who resides in Pearl City and then the Pacific Northwest, can thus only locate her self by the stories of her family, friends, and neighbors, by the history of her identity, and the criss-crossing genealogical and articulations of each storied land in her family’s long and varied travels.

This is how Tyau’s narrative of identity may be one of abundance, rather than the kind of poverty and disorder by which Derrida describes his similarly-hyphenated identity. If identity does not mean primarily autonomy and coherence, but responsibility and relation, then a settler can identify herself through her obligation to the land, rather than the denial of her settler responsibilities. Imagining place-based identity for a minor settler entails the willingness to be narrated and to negotiate a hearing, especially when one must come to understand Indigenous political position as different from one’s own, but originary and must take precedence. This kind of identity does not promise arrival and settlement easily or assuredly, and is perhaps difficult to maintain without risking mental and emotional exhaustion.

---

<sup>76</sup> Derrida, *Monolingualism*, 71-72.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

But at least in literary fiction, there is a space to imagine how such identity may stay open, despite the anxiety for closure.

## Chapter 2

### Being Ethnic in a Bicultural Nation:

#### Acts of Translation in Chinese New Zealand Fictions

If minor settler subjectivity emerges through intersecting histories, to parse through the relation between these histories would imply, at some point, the complications of translation. At the end of the last chapter, I proposed that literacy—historical, theoretical, and cultural—determines our ability to read minor settler narratives as sites where knowledge-stories converge and converse. Minor settler identity is articulated amidst various relational networks; and each networks of relation come with its own grammar of meaning-making and communication. This chapter delves deeper into the mechanisms of communicating between these different systems of meaning-making, and reads minor settler narratives as spaces of inevitable translation: not only of literal translations between immigrant, Indigenous, and colonial languages, or the stylistic translations between genres and narrative conventions, but also of the figurative translation of an immigrant body into the legal and political terrain of the settler colonial society and Indigenous sovereign lands. This chapter explores these acts of translation in Chinese minor settler narratives of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand where te reo Māori (the Māori language) is the official language alongside English, and where New Zealand national identity is conceptualized around a bilingual document, the Treaty of Waitangi or te Tiriti o Waitangi, signed by about five hundred Māori chiefs in 1840. Foregrounding how contemporary bicultural reconciliation in Aotearoa New Zealand is already tangled with problems of linguistic and legal translations between Pākehā (New Zealander of European descent) and Māori sovereignty, this chapter queries how the ambiguous position of Chinese minor settlers in bicultural Aotearoa New Zealand prompts literary projects of “translating” Chinese minor settler presence into shifting national imaginations.

Eleanor Catton's 2013 Booker-winning *The Luminaries* is a novel that depicts Aotearoa New Zealand's 19th-century multiracial frontier community, and it includes an interesting passage that hints at the problem of translating Chinese presence into Aotearoa New Zealand's national history. The novel describes a mysterious death and a disappearance around the gold-rushing town Hokitika, and in the first part of the novel, twelve racially-diverse characters take turn narrating their knowledge of the relevant events to each other in order to piece together the facts. Two Chinese miners are among this cast, and as these Chinese characters supposedly speak their own languages, the narrative voice encounters the problem of translation. In its effort to integrate the Chinese perspectives into the collective narrative, the narrative voice admits, with regrets, that certain translation and omission prove to be inevitable, especially when it tries to describe a conversation between the two Chinese characters:

Sook Yongsheng began to explain the real purpose of his visit—speaking, as he always did, in a style that was vital, poetically exaggerated, and accented by proverbs, the meaning of which was always beautiful, but not always particularly clear.

He began speaking, for example, by observing that upon a big tree there are always dead branches; that the best soldiers are never warlike; and that even good firewood can ruin a stove—sentiments which, because they came in very quick succession, and lacked any kind of stabilizing context, rather bewildered Quee Long. The latter, impelled to exercise his wit, retaliated with the rather acidic observation that a steelyard always goes with the weights—implying, with the aid of yet another proverb, that his guest had not begun speaking with consistency.

We shall therefore intervene, and render Sook Yongsheng's story in a way that is accurate to the events he wished to disclose, rather than to the style of his narration.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Eleanor Catton, *The Luminaries* (London: Granta, 2013), 262.

Engaged in a rare moment of self-conscious intervention, the narrative voice considers the practical problem of translation—while striving to preserve the integrity of Chinese linguistic culture and social protocols, the narration simply cannot carry on in coherent and comprehensible English and abiding the convention of nineteenth-century realist novel if it goes on transcribing the proverbs and poetry that confuse not only its non-Chinese listeners, but even the Chinese miners themselves. It is as if, under the purview of the novel's central mystery, the Chinese characters' linguistic foreignness threaten to prevent their relevancy in the community's collective dilemma. The narrator thus takes on the role of a translator in order to both convey the relevant substance of the Chinese conversation while making sense of their presence in accord with the collective world narrated by the whole of the novel. Writing Chinese into such a narrative of multi-racial community pressures the novel to both register their alienation from her chosen genre and to convey them meaningfully into the larger fictional world and its narrative mission.

While the following pages do not engage directly with Catton's novel but focus on Chinese New Zealand authors' treatment of translation, this brief scenario suggests two important considerations in our central inquiry: how an as-yet-foreign presence may be faithfully and usefully translated so that it makes sense in the present context, and how the translator comprehends the rules of meaning-making in this target context. In the case of the Chinese New Zealander as speaker of a foreign tongue, rendering their presence legible depends as much on the process of constructing and conveying the long history of Chinese in Aotearoa New Zealand, as on the translator's knowledge of what constitutes the national community, as well as its grammars of inclusion and belonging. The two considerations are intimately related: we must remember that the categorization of Chinese as foreign is already predicated on specific conceptions of what the national community is; in our present case, the national community has been largely imagined around the historical core of settler colonial encounter between Pākehā and Māori, and Chinese New Zealanders are excluded from the national imagination *as minor settlers*. Similar to other

settler societies in this study, the Chinese settlers participated in European extraction of landed resources on the goldmines in the 19th century and have bolstered the capitalist economy in recent decades,<sup>2</sup> directly and indirectly perpetuating settler control over Māori land and continue to stifle Māori values and lifeworlds. As Chinese and other immigrants are introduced and regulated by the Pākehā government from the 19th century to the present, without consultation with Māori authorities, Chinese settlement also continues to undermines Māori sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> While Chinese settlement is thus unsanctioned by Māori sovereignty, Pākehā mainstream has also historically excluded Chinese from the settler nation on racial grounds. The settler government imposed discriminatory immigration policy targeting Chinese immigration from 1881 to 1944, and the decade of 1990s witnessed visible anti-Asian sentiments among both Māori and Pākehā.<sup>4</sup> As I have argued in the introduction, such a minor settler positions are a structural side-effect of settler colonialism, which is frequently omitted in analyses of settler colonial dynamics and decolonizing dialogues. Chinese exclusion in Aotearoa New Zealand thus has a double cause—they are not White nor are they Indigenous, and they are largely conceptualized as outsiders by both the settler hegemony and the current bicultural conversation. The task to convey them into the bicultural national community like Aotearoa New Zealand demands much more than a mechanism of recognizing ethnic difference, but rather a series of active negotiations with both Pākehā and Māori authorities and their claims to national sovereignty.

---

<sup>2</sup> According to Manying Ip, current immigration policy in Aotearoa New Zealand favors new immigrants who arrive at the country with the education, capital, and upward mobility that cohere with the Pākehā market economy. Significantly, Ip does not find such economic advantage problematic, but in another context lauds Chinese economic advantage as a result of “sheer hardwork and education.” Manying Ip, “Māori-Chinese Encounters: Indigine-Immigrant Interaction in New Zealand,” *Asian Studies Review* 27, no. 2 (2003): 242; Manying Ip, “Introduction,” in *The Dragon and the Tanīwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand*, ed. Manying Ip (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ranginui J. Walker, “New Zealand Immigration and the Political Economy: Indigenous Decry Switch from Biculturalism to Multiculturalism: Claim Right to Restrict,” *The Social Contract* 4, no. 2 (1993): 87; David Pearson, “‘The Majority Factor’: Shaping Chinese and Māori Minorities,” and James Chang, “Māori View on Contemporary Immigration: Implications for Māori-Chinese Interactions,” in Ip, *The Dragon and the Tanīwha*, 32–55, 185–208.

<sup>4</sup> Manying Ip, “Chinese,” *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, November 2, 2012, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/chinese>; Ip, “Maori-Chinese Encounters.” For a much cited primary example of contemporary anti-Asian immigrant sentiments, see “Inv-Asian” published in 1993 in an Auckland community newspaper. Booth and Y. Martin, “Inv-Asian,” *Eastern Courier*, April 16, 1993

Making sense of Chinese New Zealand presence involves, as a result, a triangulated translation—between Chinese New Zealand presence and the two sources of national sovereignty, Pākehā and Māori. The process of rendering Chinese minor settlers visible in Aotearoa New Zealand inevitably demands the narrator/translator to have an implicit or explicit understanding of the relation between Pākehā and Māori in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand and the terms of national belonging, on the base of which the translation of Chinese into the national community may take place. In this way, and as I maintain throughout the study, articulating Chinese belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand can endorse the perpetuation of settler hegemony or seek legitimacy by engaging Indigenous sovereignty and decolonizing relations. Within this framework, this chapter reads Chinese New Zealand authors as minor settler translators between ethnic differences and a national community still grappling with its settler colonial history, maintaining that their acts of translation not only construct ethnic subjectivity but also imagine a national community prior, during, and after the process of translation. To the extent that literary forms envision and organize social relations, the chapter focuses on reading three Chinese New Zealand texts—Alison Wong’s *As the Earth Turns Silver*, Ann-Marie Hough Lee’s “Chinese Arrow,” and Tze-Ming Mok’s “The Beach”—and examines how each authors’ formal choices—from historical novel, realistic short story, to postcolonial/postmodern metafiction—correspond to different translation strategies and underlying conceptualizations of national communities. The three texts, read within the framework of minor settler negotiation with a bicultural nation, offer three distinct paths to conceptualize Chinese belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand and conjure different interpretations of Aotearoa New Zealand’s settler history and bicultural present. Alison Wong’s 2009 historical novel, being the first and to date the only published novel by a Chinese New Zealand author, enlists the genre of historical novel to criticize past racial discrimination and to project recognition and acceptance of Chinese ethnic minority particularly in relation to the White settler mainstream. As such, Wong seeks to translate Chinese difference into a national vision of liberal multiculturalism that is however potentially conflictual with Māori sovereignty. In contrast, Hough Lee’s 1993 short story, written in the realist strain but focusing on



contemporary Māori-Chinese relations, explores the instances of convergence, conflict, and solidarity between Māori and Chinese minority political consciousness. Houng Lee's story comprehends Chinese belonging in relation to ongoing Māori struggle for the realization of sovereignty. Between Wong and Houng Lee's texts, however, I also suggest that the realism of both texts fails to capture either the complex construction of Chinese ethnic subjects or the still fluctuating nature of the bicultural state. I therefore turn to Tze-Ming Mok's metafictional short story in the third part of the chapter, examining how Mok's story not only unsettles the meaning of Chineseness but also questions current interpretations of the bicultural construction of the New Zealand national community. Through several moments of unsuccessful or incomplete translations, I argue that Mok pushes for minor settlers, Pākehā, and Māori to engage more vigorously with both Pākehā and Māori sovereignties on issues of minor settler belonging. By way of Mok's story, I return in the concluding pages to the image of minor settler authors as translators, who are not only obliged to respond to multiple sources of authorities, but may also open new considerations in decolonizing projects.

### **Re-imagined Community I:**

#### **Intimate Translations and Historical Memories in *As the Earth Turns Silver***

“Translation is the most intimate act of reading.”

— Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “The Politics of Translation”<sup>5</sup>

In her essay “The Politics of Translation” Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak characterizes translation as an intimate act of reading, which compels the translator to surrender her agency to the rhetorical

---

<sup>5</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “The Politics of Translation,” in *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (London: Routledge, 1993), 180.

mandate of the original text, and to risk the disruption brought about by the chasm between the original and the target languages.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere, Spivak describes such translation practice as one-to-one encounters, when the commonality and unevenness between two languages may be thoroughly experienced, so as not to privilege one over another.<sup>7</sup> Translating Chinese New Zealand experience into English and into a national imagination that has largely ignored it similarly hints at an investment in acts of intimate translation. Chinese New Zealand author Alison Wong, shortly before the publication of her award-winning 2009 historical novel *As the Earth Turns Silver*, explains the pressure she has experienced in writing the novel: “There is so little fiction out there about and/or by the New Zealand Chinese, that the novel is more likely to attract attention and criticism.... Perhaps I have to shoulder a certain responsibility because we are only at the beginning of what I hope will be a wave of New Zealand Chinese writers.”<sup>8</sup> Later she specified that the anxiety she felt was directed at both the reception of her work among contemporary Chinese New Zealanders and its historical accuracy: “I felt enormous pressure and expectations, and worried about criticism from the Chinese community and from historians and experts.”<sup>9</sup> As if to testify her fidelity to these anxieties, the published novel contains a four-page “Author’s Note” explaining historical, geographical, and linguistic details that support the narrative’s historical and cultural accuracy. Wong is conscious of her task as the first Chinese New Zealand novelist to act as a cultural and historical translator, and who would be expected to deliver Chinese New Zealand experience in its emotional, cultural, and historical truths in her fictional work. She carries the responsibility to deliver a Chinese New Zealand story through her intimate work with the community and its history, and leaving traces of this knowledge in the fictional world she eventually creates. Wong’s contribution as the first Chinese New

---

<sup>6</sup> Spivak “The Politics of Translation” 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Rethinking Comparativism,” in “Comparison,” ed. Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman, special issue, *New Literary History* 40, no. 3 (2009): 609–26.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Kathy Ooi, “Insider Dilemmas: The Politics of Reading and Writing Ethnic Minority Fiction,” in Ip, *The Dragon and the Taniwha*, 323.

<sup>9</sup> Alison Wong, “Personal Narrative: As the Earth Turns Silver,” in *Localizing Asia in Aotearoa*, ed. Paola Voci and Jacqueline Leckie (Wellington: Dunmore Publishing, 2011), 69.

Zealand author that represents Chinese racial history for a largely oblivious national audience is duly acknowledged by an impressive publication record—the novel was published by mainstream international publishing houses (Penguin and Picador),<sup>10</sup> won the 2009 Janet Frame Fiction award and the 2010 New Zealand Post Book Award, and most of her reviewers remarked that the novel’s merits and interests lie at least partially in its endeavor to represent a missing part of the national history through a believable world of private intrigues and social upheavals.<sup>11</sup>

But what is this world that she creates in her novel? *As the Earth Turns Silver* is a historical fiction that reworks national memory to include the history of Chinese New Zealand traces of living, loving, and dying in Pākehā-dominated New Zealand as suspected outsiders and racial others during the years between 1905 and 1922—the middle years of the 60-year policy demanding exorbitant head tax for any Chinese persons entering a mostly White New Zealand. The novel follows the love affair between a Chinese grocer, Wong Chung-yung, and a widow originally from Ireland, Katherine McKechnie. Yung is educated as an intellectual in China before arriving in Auckland to join his brother in their fruit shop, and Katherine is a widow of an explicitly racist newspaperman. The love affair connects the two characters whose individual aspirations and feelings run counter to the expectation of their respective racial communities. Unlike his brother who submits to racial discrimination in silent hard work, Yung aspires for settler respectability and campaigns for overseas support for the democratic and anti-imperial revolution in China. Katherine not only rejects racism instinctually, but also rebels against her role as a wife and seeks independence as a woman. Their involvement aggravates their sense of alienation from their assigned social stations, and the love affair is secret for years until it is discovered by Robbie, Katherine’s

---

<sup>10</sup> This is a real feat for Chinese New Zealand authors since before Wong’s works, Chinese New Zealand authors have only been publishing in literary journals, anthologies, or—as in Houng Lee’s case—independent press that is established by the author herself.

<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Barr, review of *As the Earth Turns Silver* by Alison Wong, *The Guardian*, October 9, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/oct/09/earth-silver-alison-wong-review>; Viona Au Yeong, “Love Across Two Worlds,” review *As the Earth Turns Silver*, by Alison Wong, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal* 9 (2009) <http://www.asiancha.com/content/view/full/509/211/>; Nick Terrell, “A Wellington Nocturne,” review of *As the Earth Turns Silver*, by Alison Wong, *The Ember*. n.d. <http://theember.com.au/?p=608> [all accessed on Jan 14, 2014.]

son. Harboring memories of his father's racist ideologies over the years, Robbie kills Yung before going to the World War. In the last pages of the novel, we see Robbie returning shell-shocked and committed to a mental asylum, eventually committing suicide on the final page of the novel. Wong's account of the national past is personal and devastating, in which Yung's aspiration for acceptance and democratic ideal and Katherine's burgeoning feminist work are conveyed to the readers both by way of the intimate understanding between the two main characters and by our familiarity with their progressive values that may be wrong for their times, but which we understand with historical hindsight.

### *Intimate Translations*

The novel translates Chinese ethnic history in Aotearoa New Zealand as part of national history to its readers on two interrelated levels: on one, it highlights the human connection between the two main characters through love as well as by the supposedly universal desire for liberty, equality, and dignity; on another, its historicity contextualizes the private happening as a forgotten component in the national history. While other characters in the two protagonists' family take over as the narrative focus at one time or another, the organizing events of the novel surround Yung's arrival through to the death of his assassin, and Yung's racial experience and the Chinese community around him give the novel its self-consciously Chinese New Zealand identity. As such, the mutual understanding and affection between the two protagonists across linguistic barriers and cultural differences is the central event through which the readers learn to access the possibility of comprehending Chinese New Zealand lives in New Zealand history.

The centrality of an inter-racial love affair in the novel is a deliberate choice that allows Wong to convey Chinese New Zealand subjectivity as foremost a human reality, through the intimate emotions of love and recognizable stories of individuals' struggle for freedom and dignity. Wong is very conscious that hers is a project of translation, and a process of rendering a foreign culture legible to a mainstream that is

yet fully informed about the personal and affective elements of the Chinese experience in New Zealand, and the choice of love as the central emotion of her story is not a coincidence. As David Palumbo-Liu maintains, affect is among some of the most familiar “systems of deliverance” through which literary texts translate otherness into human commonality and connectivity,<sup>12</sup> and the intimate interests generated by the emotion of love allow Wong to approach Yung’s Chinese New Zealand subjectivity as culturally distinct but affectively relatable. As such, Wong’s description of inter-racial love is characterized by its ability to transcend the anxieties about language and translatability. The two protagonists first begin to feel a mutual attraction when they look at a Chinese-English phrasebook together, and later, the narrative describes the love they come to share thus: “He knew he *loved* her. Though he could never utter that word. It was not that *Tongyan* didn’t feel affection, need, desire—something more than duty, which seemed to flow with the breast milk. But love was a word that only *gweilo* spoke. Something you might feel but never utter.”<sup>13</sup> Between *Tongyan* (self-identifiers for oversea Chinese who largely speak Cantonese) and *gweilo* (foreigners, literally “ghosts” in Cantonese), the sharp divide between linguistic cultures does not invalidate the emotional truth of desire that is supposedly universally human, that comes “with the breast milk.” By explaining, in lyrical and literary English prose, how Yung’s love exceeds the capacity of the Chinese language and thus exists beyond the proper realm of translation, the narrative voice fills the gap of untranslatability; through the narrative sleight of hand, the readers receive the density of the emotion and comprehend fully the affective attachment as something, while supposedly untranslatable, is however perfectly rendered by the words of the novel. Wong’s prose thus approaches her Chinese characters and their linguistic culture and social conventions with a careful and willing surrender: at once, Yung’s love is understood as universal but its expression remains specifically Chinese. The affect of love not only relates

---

<sup>12</sup> David Palumbo-Liu, *The Deliverance of Others: Reading Literature in a Global Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

the readers to the inter-racial relation as a valid human experience, but also maintains the integrity of the Chinese language and culture as that can be approached and understood with careful sensitivity.

If the love story serves as an emotional entry point for the reader's sympathy with the novel, Wong strengthens the recognizability of her Chinese characters by highlighting the social milieu and racial discrimination they must survive, as well as the resultant aspiration for equality and dignity, particularly from Yung's perspectives. It is then important to observe that, through Yung's character, Wong represents Chinese New Zealand subjectivity by their affinity to liberal democratic ideals of equality. To Wong's 21st-century readers in Aotearoa New Zealand, Yung's personal and political ideas are recognizable as anti-imperial, cosmopolitan, settler, and masculine. From the beginning of the narrative, Yung identifies with Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the Hawai'i-educated democratic leader of China's anti-imperial revolution; through the image of Sun Yat-sen, Yung articulates his desire for settler respectability without complete assimilation and self-denigration. "He dreamed of a haircut like Sun Yat-sen's, like that of the man he'd seen walking out of the shop.... That night, Yung took the scissors from the drawer in the kitchen and cut off his braid."<sup>14</sup> The man Yung sees in this passage is Pākehā, but for Yung, Sun Yat-sen is the final referent for the short, western haircut; rather than westernness and Whiteness, Yung sees in the haircut the democratic ideal and national pride embodied in Sun Yat-sen's political movement. At the same time, Sun Yat-sen is not simply a figure of Chinese democracy, but also a suave cosmopolitan who moved among overseas Chinese communities in Anglophone settler nations. His western-style appearance is not only a sign of Chinese liberation from western domination but also signifies individual mobility and the potential freedom to become integrated into the western world. Sun Yat-sen represents an ideal combination of Chinese agency in its national destiny, the supposedly universal pursuit for democracy and equality, and a Chinese man's ability to move among Westerners as an equal member of the cosmopolitan society. In a similar manner, Yung invokes the western tradition of Enlightenment rights of men, but localizes it as an approximate translation of his feeling for liberation and dignity as a Chinese subject in response to

---

<sup>14</sup> Wong, *As the Earth*, 15.

centuries of foreign invasions. In a scene close to the middle of the narrative, Yung receives news of a friend found dead among the revolutionaries at home in China, and ponders at the difficulty in conveying his feelings to Katherine:

How could he speak of foreign domination—Manchu, British, French, German, Russian, Japanese—the struggle for liberty—with a foreigner?.... He thought of words he'd looked up in his Chinese-English dictionary and on nights when he'd lain alone spoken into darkness, practising the feel on his tongue, the sound of a foreign language. 'Liberty, equality, fraternity,' he said. And he knew she didn't understand.<sup>15</sup>

Like most prominent Chinese intellectuals at the time, Yung finds in western ideas the expressions for his desire for liberty. While the ideals of the French revolution predates Chinese democratic revolution, by describing Yung as looking up the words in his Chinese-English dictionary—translating thus from Chinese to its approximate English words—the narrative emphasizes that Yung's desires for liberty is originary, not derivative nor servile imitation of western principles. In fact, uttering "liberty, equality, fraternity" after he has cited French as one of the invading powers in China, Yung mocks the hypocrisy of the Enlightenment right of men and its association with global imperialism, which also reflects the injustice of racial discrimination that he endures in White New Zealand.

Although, in assuming that Katherine, being a foreigner and perhaps also as a woman, would not understand his political ideology and the western tradition from which he has to borrowed the terms, Yung is here subtly exposed as a flawed character unaware of his own contradiction and masculine condescension,<sup>16</sup> Wong's readers would be able to identify with Yung's desire for liberty and equality. In fact, a reader's impulse to criticize Yung's contradictions would likely be premised on a prior acceptance of Yung's reliability and his principled pursuit for equality and justice. Yung's respectability and

---

<sup>15</sup> Wong, *As the Earth*, 161. By including Manchu in the list of invasive foreign powers, Yung speaks specifically as a Han Chinese man who has a national claim to Chinese territory usurped by the minority Manchu empire for almost three hundred years.

<sup>16</sup> Nick Terrell in his review criticizes Yung's characterization for these reasons with regard to the above quoted passage. Nick Terrell, "A Wellington Nocturne."

relatability is recognized by Katherine, who notices early on that Yung is unlike the Chinese she has imagined: “[H]e was tall. Unusually tall for a Chinaman. His hair was cut short in the western style, and he had straight white teeth—nothing like the buck-toothed caricatures you saw in the newspapers....”<sup>17</sup> Also keen on having conversations in the limited English that he has, Yung embodies a Chinese settler who is thinking, literary, and politically active, whose migration and settlement in a Western country do not imply subjugation but assert foremost the desire for agency and mobility. Yung’s subjectivity is produced of a translation between Chinese democratic movement and cosmopolitan mobility that then renders him recognizable to settler subjects like Katherine who are not already consumed with racist prejudice. Indeed, Yung would later encourage Katherine’s burgeoning pursuit for independence as a woman. When Katherine remembers, in bitterness, how her racist and chauvinist late husband had “taken her life, how he’d used language and power against her,” Yung reminds her that “you don’t belong to him. Language does not belong to him.... English is your language. Your gift. Write your name on it.”<sup>18</sup> While Katherine would first respond with anger at Yung’s didacticism as coming from yet another dictatorial man, she soon realizes that he is right. Yung’s words amount to a minority subject’s manifesto to take control of a language that does not at first completely belong to him or her, and they resonate with the novel’s ambition to write Chinese New Zealand history into being. Yung’s words and Wong’s novel spell a deep trust in language as a democratic medium that is capable of conveying minority subjectivity.

The reference to China’s democratic movement indicates the other level of Wong’s translation of Chinese New Zealand experience for her contemporary readers: the historicity of the events. As Georg Lukács’s analysis of historical novels maintains, the genre’s function seeks foremost the representations of types, although Lukács also more forcefully argues that the need for such representation of historical totality is connected to a new consciousness of historicity and nationalism in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, whereby history comes to be seen as a determining factor of social and national lives and that present realities of a

---

<sup>17</sup> Wong, *As the Earth*, 59.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.



nation are inextricably connected to those of the past.<sup>19</sup> As a historical novel, *As the Earth Turns Silver* delivers the effect of relatability and authenticity very much by conjuring its fictional world as historically viable, where social groups exist in relation to each other that are historically determined, and that the historical characters' lives and experiences importantly precede the contemporary moment of the reading. As the reference to Chinese anti-Imperial revolution attests, the social milieu in which Yung and Katherine move is anchored to specific historical references, and the author's note explicitly emphasizes the historical veracity of several important characters, political figures, and the major events. Edward Lionel Terry, who murdered a Chinese man in Wellington in 1905, features prominently in the novel as an associate of Katherine's husband and a role model of Robbie, and his actual public discourses, trial, and imprisonment make way into the novel. Along with discussions of the effect of anti-Chinese legislation and other cases of historically factual violence, reference to Terry's crime produces in Wong's readers the very real sense of horror and anxiety under the reality of social alienation, denigration, and violence experienced by Wong's Chinese characters. Representations of these events would appear urgent to Wong's New Zealand audience, as an official apology issued by the New Zealand government and read by the Prime Minister Helen Clark in 2002, merely seven years before the publication of Wong's novel. Acknowledging and apologizing for the New Zealand government's discriminatory immigration practices, the official apology lends a collective importance to the story Wong undertakes to tell. In this context, the novel not only communicates the history of a minority social group, but more importantly glosses a forgotten moment of the national past that is shamefully racist and discriminatory, and of an intolerant society that crushes dreams of equality, justice, and love. Yet also in light of the apology, while the novel speaks of a tragedy in the nation's racist past, we need to acknowledge how the historicity of the text may in fact offer comfort for Wong's contemporary readers. In the same way that the Chinese democratic revolution was successful, the poll-tax was lifted in 1944, Edward Lionel Terry died in 1952, and the

---

<sup>19</sup> Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah Mitchell and Stanley Mitchell (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

official apology may have provided foremost a safe sense of historical progression in which the novel is consumed *as a historical novel*—an anecdote from an era that is already gone. While Wong’s readers would be aware of ongoing anti-Asian sentiments in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1990s and early 2000s and the novel would constantly inquire of its readers whether racism has really fallen behind them, the legal discrimination, explicit racism, and the impossibility of love and humanity for Yung would have come across as something of the past. And this would be the most fundamental level of Wong’s translation of Chinese New Zealand subjectivity: Yung’s aspiration for acceptance, dignity, and recognition is far from alien to Wong’s contemporary readers, rather they would recognize Yung as anticipating *their* willingness to respect and understand him. They would find him human, his love touching, and his democratic ideals answered at least partially by the contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand they now inhabit.

#### *Minority Dreaming and the Māori Land*

Either through love or historicity, Wong’s novel delivers Chinese New Zealand history into the national imagination through the transcendence of dualistic divides: between White and Asian, hegemony and minority, racist past and a present of liberal democratic multiculturalism. If Wong’s novel re-imagines the national community from a minority perspective, she does so by drawing the intimate lines across these supposed sides of binary divisions. But, as we have seen, the lines of communication and negotiation are strung along principles of universal affect and political aspirations of rights of men endorsing a multiculturalism that many have however identified as favoring settler hegemony over genuine respect for Māori sovereignty. Augie Fleras for instance argues that “biculturalism ideally is transformative,” in the sense that it alters the structure of power between Pākehā and Māori, in contrast to multiculturalism whose “underlying logic of hegemonic, that is, to preserve status quo by modifying people’s attitude” in

order to accommodate Māori difference in the same fashion as other ethnic differences.<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Povinelli, in the Australian Aboriginal context, theorizes such multicultural accommodation as the liberal “cunning of recognition” that produces identity as “social difference without social significance.”<sup>21</sup> Wong’s strategies of translating Chinese New Zealand characters into the national body assumes, to borrow Will Kymlick’s terms, a polyethnic national community, whose justice lies in the even distribution of recognition, equality, and rights of property among difference ethnic groups.<sup>22</sup> This fails to account for the fact that Aotearoa New Zealand is also fundamentally—again borrowing Kymlick’s definition—a multinational society where Māori are not simply one of the ethnic minorities, but *tangata whenua* (people of the land) who have a sovereign claim to the nation.<sup>23</sup> Importantly, Māori sovereignty does not spring from western tradition of equality and individual rights, but is rooted in a genealogical relation to land and cosmology and knowledge systems that situate Māori individuals within kinship networks and their physical and spiritual environments, particularly through the system of *whakapapa*, or genealogy. In Elizabeth DeLoughrey’s definition, *whakapapa*, both an intransitive verb and a noun, denotes the “layering of ancestry” that is transmitted through oral accounts and performed in physical movements.<sup>24</sup> Through *whakapapa*, Māori connection to the national place is both historical and embodied. Similar to what Christopher Tilley describes with regard to Indigenous Melanesia, in Māori epistemology and cosmology, “particular locales are of essential importance in ‘fixing’ events and acting as mnemonics, thus creating a

---

<sup>20</sup> Augie Fleras, *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Multicultural Governance in Comparative Perspective*. (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 144. See also Walker, “New Zealand Immigration.”

<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 16.

<sup>22</sup> Allen Bartley and Paul Spoonley, “Constructing a Workable Multiculturalism in a Bicultural Society,” in *Waitangi Revisited: Perspectives on the Treaty of Waitangi*, ed. Michael Belgrave, Merata Kawharu, and David Vernon Williams, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 143.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* 143. There is a substantial body of scholarship on Māori sovereignty. For a foundational work on Māori sovereignty over Pākehā, see Donna Awatere, *Māori Sovereignty* (Auckland: Broadsheet Publication, 1984). For more recent political theoretical intervention in the direction of Māori sovereignty, see Dominic O’Sullivan, *Beyond Biculturalism: The Politics of an Indigenous Minority* (Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Press, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 163.

sense of social identity and establishing linkages between past and present, the worldly and the supernatural.”<sup>25</sup> The national space is therefore not empty, but is embodied testimonies of Māori sovereignty. This aspect of the nation has failed to enter into Wong’s imagination of the nation.

The Māori claim to the national space in this manner has been written out of Wong’s novel in preference for an image of the nation as a symbolic space of racial equality between dominant settlers and immigrants, and Wong’s narrative appropriates the material ground of Aotearoa New Zealand as a symbolic foundation for its multicultural aspirations. The novel contains an eponymous chapter almost at the exact mid-point of the whole narrative, and it describes one of Yung and Katherine’s late night wanders in Wellington. Here, Yung glosses his life of traveling to a foreign country, supporting democratic cause, and falling in love with a foreign woman in masculine adventurism: he “told her to look again at earth and sky and water. Could she see how the world turned silver? People died, he told her, because they were afraid. They did not go out at night on dangerous water. They did not see the earth as it turned overnight to silver” (152). While Yung’s expressions are aesthetic, the romance of exploration in his lyrical statement conjures an earth that invites exploration and gaze. In a manner that calls to mind Mary Louise Pratt’s definition of the anti-conquest “seeing-man”—“he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess”<sup>26</sup>—Yung does not participate in militant conquest of Aotearoa New Zealand, but with surveying eyes still commands the landscape in front of him. Analogizing the rewards of his daring for opportunity, equality, humanity, and love where there is none for him, Yung imagines the landscape yielding to his gaze and validating his courage by surrendering beauty. The landscape is emptied of other intentions than to reward his adventurism. Against the context of Māori ontological connection to land, Yung’s seemingly harmless gaze implies a settler indifference to Māori history of dispossession, and the land’s persistent significance in living Māori worldview.

---

<sup>25</sup> Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Place, Paths, and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 59

<sup>26</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 8-9

Then, as if to confirm Chinese claim to the national space as complicit to settler control, towards the end of the novel, land returns as a symbolic venue for Chinese-White reconciliation and commonality through Robbie's labor with the soil. When Robbie is committed to the mental hospital, the doctors assign him to work in the garden, remarking that "by the time he gets out of there, he'll be a right Chinaman."<sup>27</sup> Robbie is taught as a child that food grown by Chinese market gardeners are contaminated by their filth,<sup>28</sup> and the doctors' remark here is an ironic reversal of Robbie's racist crime against Yung. Robbie's deep-seated racism is to be overridden by his repetition of an activity—working in the garden—that is labeled racially as Chinese. Being traumatized by the war and perhaps also the murder, gardening becomes the only activities available for Robbie, and he eventually hangs himself in the garden. Although the narrative does not explain the reasons of Robbie's suicide, his assumption of a "Chinese" labor by working in the garden confirms a commonality between him and his Chinese victims that is either too weighty for him to accept or too clear for him to deny his guilt. The effectiveness of the irony lies in the emotional potency of the image of early Chinese New Zealanders as soil-tillers, which have for many Chinese New Zealanders served as the symbol of their right to belong to the national community. A 2012 history of Chinese New Zealand market gardeners, for example, invokes Chinese New Zealanders as autochthonous "sons of the soil" in its title, which obliquely underlies the grave injustice that should be felt for Chinese exclusion—and it should not perhaps be surprising that the history is sponsored partially by the Chinese Poll Tax Heritage Trust, established with the monetary compensation allocated to Chinese New Zealand cultural advocacy along with the 2002 official apology.<sup>29</sup> Yet the rhetoric of rights to settle by working the land is a particularly familiar trope of settler self-identity. Lorenzo Veracini observes that settlers routinely imagine their sovereignty as granted by a specific life style of simple, hard-working life amidst difficulty and inconveniences, that their settler claim is thickened the closer they are to the soil; and these aptly describe

---

<sup>27</sup> Wong, *As the Earth*, 224.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 26

<sup>29</sup> *Lily Lee and Ruth Lam, Sons of the Soil: Chinese Market Gardeners in New Zealand* (Pukekohe: Dominion Federation of New Zealand Chinese Commercial Growers Inc., 2012).

Yung's and then partially Robbie's lives at this later stage.<sup>30</sup> Such rhetorical reliance on labor with soil is not only a common identifier for settler sovereignty and respectability, but is more importantly and almost universally the justification for Indigenous dispossession. (The latter is at the core of the legal illusion of *terra nullius*: the land is not being *used productively*.) Chinese market-gardening, and by extension Yung's patient washing of vegetables for more than two decades, thus translates Chinese New Zealand national belonging by vocabularies that are powerfully resonant in settler colonial national identity. Yet such forms of autochthonous claims of belonging can never be equated with Māori belonging, which is ontological and genealogical. While less ostensible than the languages of love and historicity, land functions at the end of the novel as yet another connector between White settlers and Chinese New Zealanders, by which Chinese New Zealand belonging is represented as natural and just, but as such evades engagement with Māori sovereignty. The translation of Chinese New Zealand belonging thus remains tied to settler conceptions of land as material for exploration and value-production: because Wong's novel engages in drawing out intimate connections in the binary of Asian and White, hegemony and minority, and racism and multiculturalism, issues of Māori sovereignty are sidestepped as an uncomfortable third term that does not have a real place in Wong's imagined national community.

As a result, while *As the Earth Turns Silver* is not oblivious to the Māori loss of land completely, the narrative's treatment of Māori dispossession remains a point of unresolved conflict with the narrative's more general impulse to represent Chinese New Zealand experience as a racial minority. Early in the novel, Yung learns that Māori are petitioning for their land back; without knowing fully the cause of the loss of land and the terms of Māori grievance, Yung sympathizes with their petition. When a Māori man, with a top hat, well-pressed black suit as well as a fully-tattooed face, walks into Yung's shop and treats him with respect and politeness that Yung has never experienced from a White man, Yung wishes him luck on the land:

“Good Luck,” Yung said.

---

<sup>30</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 55-6, 20.

The man looked at him quizzically.

“Your land,” Yung said.

“Yes,” the man said.

They almost bowed to each other before the man walked out into the southerly.

What *gweilo* had ever treated him as respectfully? How many had even looked in his eyes?<sup>31</sup>

The encounter is a significant moment of mutual respect between Māori and Chinese. The scant words exchanged suggest a tacit understanding between the two that seems to not require translation; but it is also the only moment when Māori is represented to any degree in the novel, other than a few lines of brief sketches before this passage, where the narrator explains that Yung occasionally sees Māori workers, barely speaks to them, and that “whatever their standing they never called out names or pulled his braid. They smiled, cigarette in hand, as if to a brother.”<sup>32</sup> While Yung’s comparison between Māori kindness and White racism elevates Māori as potentially the better host among the two, the fact that Māori are petitioning for their land right hints at the dispossession of true Māori sovereignty and thus their national standing to be host to Yung, especially in cities like Wellington in the early decades of the twentieth century. Sociologist Avril Bell has argued with regard to the discourse of hospitality and immigration in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand that “offering hospitality is also an assertion of the sovereignty of the national host; relations of hospitality are power relations” and also that Māori anti-immigration sentiments are rooted in concerns over sovereignty, namely that contemporary immigration has been instituted by the usurping settler state without consulting Māori as equal or prior national host.<sup>33</sup> And here, if Yung has recognized the potential for Māori to act as better host to him and, by extension, for him to negotiate national belonging by submitting to Māori sovereignty, it does not materialize as a practicality

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>33</sup> Avril Bell, “Being ‘At Home’ in the Nation: Hospitality and Sovereignty in Talk about Immigration,” *Ethnicities* 10, no. 2 (2010): 236-237.

in the remaining narrative; instead, the narrative proceeds with the binary that we have observed so far, with Yung identifying with the principles of equality and liberty that however lead to a sense of multicultural evenness, anticipating reconciliation between Asian and White communities in Aotearoa on grounds that are foremost defined by settler values. The seemingly transparent understanding between Yung and the Māori man in fact registers a stunted exchange, when they pass each other without further engagement. Even if Yung is sympathetic to Māori cause, and Wong is careful to hint at Māori dispossession in her novel, the potential interests in issues and conversations about Māori sovereignty quickly give way to the Wong's much more intimate and sustained negotiation with the White mainstream history.

#### *Dualism in Bicultural Politics*

Analyzing the novel against issues of Māori sovereignty, we thus acknowledge two parallel tracks of translation that do not effectively cross within the space of the novel. Māori negotiation with Pākehā for national sovereignty is ongoing in the background of the novel, but Wong's Chinese New Zealand continues to imagine itself in the national community by terms that largely define settler values and hegemony. Sociologist David Pearson has usefully coined the term "majority factor" to describe how Chinese and Māori minorities are produced distinctively in relation to Pākehā majority, and how each minority group's self-positioning shifts along with the changes within the majority group.<sup>34</sup> I would expand on this thesis to argue that texts like *As the Earth Turns Silver* respond to the majority factor, and as a result must negotiate their belonging in the national community *as ethnic minority* by engaging with majority values, which are however defined against the other minorities—namely, the settler principles of multicultural equality and individual rights that are elevated by suppressing Māori kinship sovereign. To return to the question of language, Chinese New Zealand belonging depends on a translation of its

---

<sup>34</sup> David Pearson, "The Majority Factor."



differences and commonality into the hegemonic language, and such intimate relation of translation then excludes the process and effect of other translations going on in the nation, specifically here that of the bicultural conversations. But the reverse can also be real: Mark Williams has pointed out that the ideological underpinnings of biculturalism have been inhospitable to serious inclusions of Chinese experiences in most Pākehā and Māori literary imaginations. Williams argues that the emphasis on Māori and Pākehā parity in bicultural nationalism inherits a “dualistic interpretation of colonial contact,” to which both Māori and Pākehā adhere to for their sense of identity, and Chinese presence complicates the dualistic structure of biculturalism and threatens to upset both Māori and Pākehā senses of security and national identity.<sup>35</sup>

Williams’s phrase “dualistic interpretation of colonial contact” touches upon the intimate translation that is ongoing between Pākehā and Māori, and it is not simply an analogy. Eric Cheyfitz has argued pointedly that settler colonial usurpation of Indigenous land is perpetuated through acts of translation, that “the European process of translation...displaced or attempted to displace (for there was and still is enduring resistance) Native Americans in the realm of the proper, into that place where the relation between *property* and *identity* is inviolable, not so these Americans would possess the proper but so that having been translated into it they would be dispossessed of it.”<sup>36</sup> And contemporary bicultural negotiation in Aotearoa New Zealand may be seen as a reverse act of translation that seeks to counteract settler colonial translation, while generating a new imagination of the national community by renewed performances of intimate translations, where Pākehā and Māori differences are acknowledged rather than assimilated. This renewed translations evolve primarily around the Treaty. As the official biculturalism—posited as a post-colonial ideal partnership between the Māori and Pākehā—is retroactively traced to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, the interpretation and implementation of the Treaty has been

---

<sup>35</sup> Williams, “The Other from Elsewhere,” 302.

<sup>36</sup> Eric Cheyfitz, *The Politics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonialism from Tempest to Tarzan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 59.

a central process of determining the extent of Māori sovereignty, the processes of retribution, and even the constitutional structure of Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly after the establishment of Waitangi Tribunal by the 1975 Treaty of Waitangi Act.<sup>37</sup> For many advocates for fuller Māori sovereignty, a particular function of re-visiting the Treaty is to contextualize and rectify confusions arising out of the Treaty's translation, embedded in the fact that there are important discrepancies between the meaning of the English and Māori versions of the Treaty. While the English version clearly states that the chiefs cede "all the rights and powers of Sovereignty" to the Queen in the first article in exchange for the protection of their "full exclusive and undisturbed Possession" of their lands and resources by the second article, most chiefs who signed the Treaty did so on the Māori version of the document, which instead gives the British Queen merely the *kawanatanga* (governorship) of Māori land in the first article, and guarantees the Māori their *tino rangatiratanga* ("unqualified exercise of their chieftainship" as translated by I. H. Kawharu) over their land, homes, and all possessions (*taonga katoa*) in the second.<sup>38</sup> According to Ruth Ross's authoritative study on the versions of the Treaty, *kawanatanga* falls short of conveying the full sense of sovereignty, while *tino rangatiratanga* can mean much more than rights of possession, and has in fact been used to denote sovereignty by the same British governor who presented the Treaty to the chiefs.<sup>39</sup> The discrepancy is not a simple matter of mistranslation from an original text into another language; Ross explains that "from the very beginning, confusion has reigned over *what* was a translation of *which*" and concludes forcefully that "what was signed was the Māori text."<sup>40</sup> The implication is that, returning to this historical and linguistic context of the Treaty's signing, the Māori never signed away their sovereignty, and

---

<sup>37</sup> The 1975 act was amended by the 1985 Treaty of Waitangi Act, allowing the Tribunal authority to hear cases as far back as 1840, the date when the Treaty was signed.

<sup>38</sup> From Kawharu's translation of te Tiriti, in Ian Hugh Kawharu, ed. *Waitangi: Māori and Pākehā Perspectives on the Treaty of Waitangi* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989), 319-320.

<sup>39</sup> Ruth M. Ross, "Te Tiriti O Waitangi: Texts and Translations," *New Zealand Journal of History* 6, no. 2 (1972): 129-157.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 135, 133. To add another fold of complication in the matter of translation, Ross explains that te Tiriti was written in "missionary Māori" rather than Indigenous Māori. This means that the language used in te Tiriti were known by Māori mostly with reference to the biblical teaching and in dealings with the world where the Pākehā and missionaries have come from. Ross, "Te Tiriti," 136-137.

the Crown has effectively promised to protect the full exercise of chiefly Māori authority. For many scholars and writers rereading the Treaty in the wake of Māori resurgence, *tino rangatiratanga* comes to stand for true Māori sovereignty and self-determination that is distinct from western formulations of sovereignty.<sup>41</sup> Because of these complications, bicultural Aotearoa New Zealand is mindful of interpreting the Treaty as a historically specific task, and historian Giselle Byrnes has observed that, as biculturalism becomes more concerned with the Māori sovereignty and bicultural partnership, Waitangi Tribunal—that legal body that decides on Crown violation of the Treaty and recommends reparations—has become increasingly mindful of the historical context in which the Treaty was signed, and Māori cultural and social contexts are vigorously consulted in order to determine the most proximate interpretation of the Treaty’s spirit.<sup>42</sup>

I list at length the exact words and terms in dispute here because I want to emphasize how translation is at the very center of Aotearoa New Zealand’s sovereign national identity and constitutional structure, and why it is problematic for Chinese New Zealand texts like *As the Earth Turns Silver* to project a national community without taking into account the issues of Māori-Pākehā translation that lie at the heart of the bicultural nation. Yet I also hope to point out that Māori focus on bicultural translation is in itself an extremely intimate act of translation that at times risks excluding other possible expressions of Māori sovereignty. In response to the Aotearoa New Zealand government’s preparation for the 2002 apology, Te Puni Kokiri, the Ministry of Māori Development, discouraged formal apology because:

the relationship between Māori and the Crown is unique. The Treaty settlement process concerns actions by the Crown that were in direct breach of explicit promises the Crown has made in the Treaty of Waitangi to the Indigenous people of New Zealand. Therefore,

---

<sup>41</sup> Donna Awatere, *Maori Sovereignty* (Auckland: Broadsheet Publication, 1984); Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand*, (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1999); Suzanne Romaine, “Contested Visions of History in Aotearoa New Zealand Literature: Witi Ihimaera’s *The Matriarch*,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 16, no. 1 (2004): 31–57; Patrick Evans, “‘Pākehā-Style Biculturalism’ and the Māori Writer,” *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 24, no. 1 (2006): 11–12.

<sup>42</sup> Giselle Byrnes, *The Waitangi Tribunal and New Zealand History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

the extension of Crown apologies to other ethnic groups should reflect the unique relationship by assuming a different form to Treaty settlement apologies.<sup>43</sup>

Te Puni Kōkiri opposed the formal apology, or a “crown apology” to Chinese New Zealand community because formal apology had till then been issued only in conjunction to settlements between Māori and the Crown over the Crown’s past and present breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi. A similar formal apology would, Te Puni Kōkiri’s response suggests, compromise the special relation between Māori and the Crown on the basis of the Treaty.<sup>44</sup> By upholding the Treaty as the legal basis of Māori sovereignty, the opposition also implicitly suggests that, while discriminatory policies are regretful, they are not, by this logic, illegal. In a similar vein, Ranginui J. Walker, a prominent Māori scholar and a member of the Waitangi Tribunal, opposes immigration on the grounds that, if the Treaty of Waitangi is the country’s first immigration document, it only sets the terms for immigration from Europe, Australia, and UK; for Pākehā to invite immigrants from elsewhere without consulting their treaty partner is, therefore, a violation of the Treaty.<sup>45</sup> Like Te Puni Kōkiri’s statement, Walker’s legal reading of the Treaty is insightful with regard to the claim of Māori sovereignty in a truly post-settler colonial partnership; yet its criticism of Pākehā violation of Treaty categorically rejects non-White settlers as legally outside of the existing bicultural principle, despite Chinese settlers’ long residency and their sustained relation with certain Māori communities that may have social and genealogical significances, if not legal ones.<sup>46</sup>

The intimate translation between Chinese New Zealand and White hegemony and between Māori and Pākehā thus creates two parallel tracks of translation that do not effectively address each other in

---

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Chang, “Maori View,” 204.

<sup>44</sup> Chang, “Maori View,” 205.

<sup>45</sup> Ranginui J. Walker, “New Zealand Immigration and the Political Economy: Indigenous Decry Switch from Biculturalism to Multiculturalism: Claim Right to Restrict,” *The Social Contract* 4, no. 2 (1993): 87. While Walker’s analysis about the Treaty pinpoints the uncertain legal status of Chinese New Zealanders if the Treaty is to be honored as a binding legal document, some of Walker’s attacks on immigration in the same piece are based on uncritical and problematic equating immigration with capital. See Ip, “Maori-Chinese Encounters,” 244.

<sup>46</sup> Ip, “Maori-Chinese Encounters.”

their own positing of national community. Intimate translations, in both cases, allow for nuanced negotiations that not only stress commonalities but also highlight incompatibilities between languages and cultures; while not always true, intimate translations can facilitate better degrees of understanding and mutual respect. It is through intimate translation that Wong conveys Chinese subjectivity as equal partners to Pākehā in the attainment of humanity and democracy; it is through the same that the Treaty translation demands Māori linguistic integrity and historical veracity in interpreting the bilingual text. However, to return to Spivak whose contemplations on translation opens this section, such intimate translations imply an investment that is affective and devotional, which I observe here as potentially problematic when it closes off considerations of other translations going on in the same national space. One danger of the intimate translation with hegemonic sovereignty is that Chinese New Zealand belonging can become complicit in settler hegemony, as we have seen above. Yet a second, and perhaps more pernicious risk is that Pākehā hegemony would stay hegemonic through repeated investment by different processes of minority translation—either between Chinese and Pākehā, or Māori and Pākehā—while Chinese and Māori undermine each other’s political work through their divergent investments in Pākehā as an exclusive partner of translation and relation. The bicultural work of unsettling settler hegemony may be interrupted by Chinese aspiration for settler acceptance, while Chinese New Zealand narratives of belonging can be undermined by the Māori denial of their legality. As a result, while I agree very much with the importance to distinguish between the Māori as the sovereign people of Aotearoa New Zealand and Chinese New Zealand as a minor settler group, I wonder whether there are not ways through which Māori *tino rangatiratanga* may narrate Chinese presence without routing through its legal agreement with the British Crown, and conversely, whether there are ways by which Chinese New Zealand can imagine national belonging in more direct relations to Māori *tino rangatiratanga*. The following section thus turns to another act of intimate translation between Māori and Chinese New Zealand political subjects as imagined and narrated by Ann-Marie Houng Lee’s “Chinese Arrow.”

## Re-imagined Community II: Between Minor Politics

If Wong's historical novel anticipates a multicultural national destination in which Chinese and Māori struggles parallel but do not interact with each other, Ann-Marie Houg Lee's 2003 short story "Chinese Arrows" focuses on contemporary conflicts and relations between the Chinese and Māori. Set in a small community with a vibrant and predominantly Māori population where a Chinese family has accepted friendship but also endured racist harassment from some of their Māori neighbors, "Chinese Arrows" is a unique story that explores the problematic miscommunications between Māori and Chinese minority identities. It envisions the paths of their reconciliation and mutual understanding, particularly via feminist politics and in negotiation with Māori *tinu rangatiratanga*. Alongside the fact that the characters in this short story communicate in three languages—English, Māori, and Chinese—the text partially provides the link between Māori and Chinese that I observe above as missing in much of Chinese New Zealand and Māori texts, let alone Pākehā ones. Previously, I proposed that situating Chinese in the bicultural nation involves triangulated translations, and that such triangulations have frequently been overlooked by Chinese New Zealand authors in favor of an intimate translation with White settler mainstream; here, I contend that Houg Lee's short story sketches Chinese-Māori relation as another axis of intimate translation among minority positions, and as such imagines Chinese New Zealand national belonging in a more fully triangulated structure of translation.

To my knowledge, "Chinese Arrows" remains the only published Chinese New Zealand literary text that explicitly explores the relation between contemporary Chinese and Māori political identities. This is somewhat surprising given that Houg Lee, of Chinese and Pākehā descent, has mostly avoided depicting Chinese issues and experiences in her other stories.<sup>47</sup> However, as Kathy Ooi suggests, Houg Lee's choice to avoid Chineseness in her writing may be informed by her understanding of minority ethnicity as "sites

---

<sup>47</sup> Ooi, "Insider Dilemma," 334.

open to negotiation” rather than naturalized categories to which one automatically belongs.<sup>48</sup> Then, in keeping with her conviction that minority ethnicity is constructed out of specific contexts, “Chinese Arrows” is a uniquely conscientious piece that confronts such ethnic constructions directly in its political context, exploring exactly how Chinese minority ethnic political identity is formulated in Aotearoa New Zealand, how and when it is necessary and useful, and how it may intersect and coexist with Māori politics.

The story, realist in its style and almost classical in its construction, follows the development and resolution of a crisis: A young second-generation Chinese New Zealand woman, Song, is let go from her job of working with intellectually challenged children, because a Māori parent, Cody, complains about her race. The story then evolves around Song’s act of indignant revenge—shooting fireworks at a Māori occupation site—which turns out to be a mistake that almost kills her best friend, a Māori woman Marama, and her children, who in the end however forgive her. This plot unfolds against the background of a politically active Māori community, who are preparing a petition and staging an occupation in protest of a Pākehā construction project at a harbor where an old Māori *waka* (canoe) is located. And Song interprets her revenge by fireworks as a political statement about her pride as a Chinese woman, allegedly descended from the inventor of “original ‘black powder’” through matrilineal lines.<sup>49</sup> The story thus explores the ideological catches in political activism and identity politics in Aotearoa New Zealand: on the one hand, it questions Cody’s problematic appropriation of Māori sovereign claims to justify his chauvinism, and on the other, it reveals Song’s dangerous confusion between the entirety of Māori political project and anti-Chinese racism. Both political positions, self-consciously minor in relation to a hegemony—defined as either settler mainstream or xenophobic national hosts—unwittingly undertake the roles of oppressors or aggressors at one point or another in this story.

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ann-Marie Houng Lee, “Chinese Arrows,” in *Look at Me Like That All Day: Stories* (Auckland New Zealand: Fictionland, 2003), 49.

Cody's racism is the cause of the crisis, and as he finds justification for it in Māori activist discourse, it reflects the dualistic logic of colonial encounter that Mark Williams warns of about certain interpretations of biculturalism. In the story, Cody's problematic understanding of Māori political struggle for sovereignty is put on display as he rudely demands Song for a signature on the petition. The scene takes place on market day, the day after Song's dismissal, and at Song's wonton stand, which she sets up in order to make money for her bills that she does not quite know how to pay. Cody's approach is described in a militant fashion: "Eyes agleam, he brandishes his clipboard like a mere. Intent on adding her signature to the ant-like army creeping down his page, he barely looks at her as he thrusts the clipboard between her and customer."<sup>50</sup> A *mere* is a Māori war club that is traditionally made of greenstone, a Māori treasure with spiritual importance. In this scene, Cody handles the petition in a way that suggests the equivalent of Māori modern-day warfare, in which potential signers are interpellated as either enemy or part of the ant-like army of symbolic support. Because Cody does not bother to look at Song, however, he does not recognize her, nor does he realize that Song is routinely supportive of Māori political campaigns, that she comes to help out on Marama's *marae* (meeting house) during important family events, nor does he recognize her as a devoted teacher of his child but whose job is lost because of his complaint. When Song refuses to heed his petition, which as Ooi argues persuasively is motivated by personal spite rather than political disagreement,<sup>51</sup> Cody mistakenly interprets the slight as settler indifference, and roars with a threatening fist: "It's our land, our ancestors' land.... We must be given a chance!"<sup>52</sup> As the narrative suggests that Cody's physical threat expresses patriarchal violence against Song as a weak woman, Cody's words, while having a political and historical resonance, are at this moment only excuses for his absolute disregard for Song. Song's refusal to sign the petition does not challenge Māori sovereignty, but reflects the hurt in being categorically rejected by Cody's interpretation

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>51</sup> Ooi, "Insider Dilemma," 333.

<sup>52</sup> Houg Lee, "Chinese Arrows," 55.



of Māori sovereignty as militant exclusionism and her fear of him as a bullying man. It should be noted that Cody's racism and physical aggression are not appreciated by other Māori activists in the story nor supported by the narrative itself. As soon as Song is dismissed, Marama proposes to organize a *kōrerō*, a discussion or a conversation, with Cody and others to sort out the issues. Later, after Song's fireworks accidentally burn down the occupation site, one of Marama's daughters finds Cody accountable for mistreating Song in the first place. In contrast to Cody's, Marama's activism has included Song, by which Song learns to be part of the Māori community, and how to support Māori actions as an ally and a friend. Cody's activism, with its exclusive focus on challenging settler privilege and indifference, is not the most productive iteration of Māori sovereignty in the span of Houng Lee's story.

If Cody's racism is rooted in a militant interpretation of a settler-Indigenous binary and wrapped in patriarchal aggression, Song's misfired revenge reflects the same reductive logic and militant dualism, as she imagines her firework display at the Māori site as a battle between Chinese and Māori ancestors. When Cody mentions Māori ancestors as the source of Māori sovereignty over the land, an enraged Song is spurred to respond with reductive racism of her own, and thinks "my ancestors were inventing fireworks while yours were still in the trees."<sup>53</sup> The explicit racism in Song's remarks does not persist: on the next day, Song sleeps in a *marae* under a pillar with the carved shapes of five Māori ancestors, and she has respected the Māori ancestors, wondering, "do her ancestors know these ancestors?"<sup>54</sup> But still she interprets her action as a political act to assert her racial pride against oppression, and chooses a medium that is coded as Chinese and ancestral throughout the story. The terrain between personal spite and political act is tricky, and this is where Song is mistaken. Before setting the fireworks, Song justifies her actions by repeating to herself the mantra: "personal is political"—deciding that since her grievance is personal, it is also political.<sup>55</sup> However, the fact that she almost kills her best friend exposes her

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 68.

misunderstanding of this feminist slogan, or at least the application of it. The phrase “personal is political” was first used by Carol Hanisch in 1969 to explain why the Women’s Liberation Movement’s focus on seemingly “personal problems”—i.e., women’s regaining control over their bodies—and consciousness-raising groups must be understood as political acts that are as valid as overtly political acts such as protests and marches.<sup>56</sup> The phrase describes how transformations of personal consciousness play important roles in the political struggle against systematic oppression. While racism, like patriarchy, originates in systemic oppression and manifests in interpersonal relations and Song’s family has long suffered covert and overt racism throughout the years, her chosen revenge at this part of the novel—a nameless act of sabotage and disruption—is a misguided political action targeting the wrong object that does not affect Song’s personal relation with oppression. What is more, it has the side-effect of confusing the Māori sovereignty movement for racism. Although Song initially only wants to frighten Cody, the firecracker catches a dry wooden fence and almost destroys the ancient *waka* along with her best friend’s family’s lives. While her intention may not be to sabotage Māori political action, her misguided desire to make a statement about *her* ancestor against *their* ancestor mistakenly turns personal wrongs into an expression of political opposition against Māori ancestral connection to land, and effects an attack upon the Māori on their ancestral land. In this action, Song undermines Māori claims to the harbor land, although her true grievance is directed at racism. Houg Lee thus hints at the complex formulations of political identities, particularly the distinction between race and sovereign rights. As our analysis of Wong’s novel suggests, race equality has a different political foundation than Māori sovereignty, and here, Cody’s chauvinism does *not* embody Māori sovereignty. Song’s attack on a Māori ancestral site, while perhaps due to an ignorant mistake, suggests the danger of conflating the two political ideologies.

### *Communing Between Histories*

---

<sup>56</sup> Carol Hanisch, “The Personal Is Political,” reprinted in *Notes from the Second Year: Women’s Liberation*, ed. Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt (New York: Radical Feminist, 1970), 76–78.

Here, with Song, we thus have a case of multiple mistranslations. Both on the level of Song's confusion between two political targets—racism and Māori sovereignty movement—and her misappropriation of feminist politics, Song appropriates political ideologies confusedly and misinterprets the source of her oppression and the appropriate resistive strategies at several turns. In particular, Song does not seem to understand fully the Māori sovereignty movement that she has supported for many years, and hence her confusion about Cody's racism and her blunder in setting the occupation site on fire. However, as the story unfolds in such balance that resonates somewhat of Horace's five-act structure—there are five major scenes corresponding to the exposition, development, climax, falling action, and denouement of the crisis—Song's mistranslation is remedied in the end with a rectifying re-translation which resolves the dramatic tension by the friendship between Marama and Song, and particularly through the Māori symbol of the *waka*. The symbol of *waka* is invoked towards the end of the story twice, first in its Māori context and a second time in a comparison to Song's action, and as such embodies an iteration of Māori political ideology that can potentially narrate non-Māori politics within its epistemological system and ethical codes.

In the first instance, *waka* embodies Māori communal identity and kinship sovereignty whose survival entails living negotiation among Māori with regard to the interpretation and performance of Māori social relations,<sup>57</sup> and as such substantiates Māori connection to the ancestral land and world order beyond rhetoric. As Song unwittingly puts Marama and her daughters in mortal danger, Marama and other Māori women rescue their children by putting them in the ancient *waka* and pushing the *waka* to safety. The *waka* is a loaded symbol in this scene: in Māori *waka* traditions, these voyaging canoes are not only monuments of Māori's ancestral voyage to the islands but, as tribal origins are frequently traced

---

<sup>57</sup> I am here using Gerald Vizenor's notion of survivance to describe ongoing and productive Indigenous lifeworlds, particularly against the negative concept of survival and victimhood. Vizenor defines survivance as "an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victory," in Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), vii.

through *whakapapa* back to founding canoes, are also integral parts of Māori tribal identity. To many Māori and Indigenous Pacific authors and scholars, canoes have come to embody the ongoing and expanding voyages of Pacific peoples, stories, and lifeworlds, as demonstrated, for example, by the proliferating images of *waka* in various contexts and shapes in Māori poet Robert Sullivan's *Star Waka*.<sup>58</sup> The image of *waka* in the story thus significantly invokes Māori sovereignty and survival that differ from Cody's militant exclusionism. Marama and the other Māori women, carrying the *waka* so that it brings their Māori children to safety amidst contemporary crisis, symbolically re-enact Māori migration and endow it with contemporary significance. It is important to note that the re-enactment is not simply a ritualistic copy of the ancestral origin, since particularly important in Houng Lee's use of *waka* here is the predominance of Māori women as carriers of the vessel, who are traditionally forbidden from taking the paddle. Elizabeth DeLoughrey has cautioned against uncritical valorization of the concept of the voyaging canoes in its tendency to privilege the masculine seafaring subjects, to the exclusion of women and non-Polynesian peoples,<sup>59</sup> and Marama's taking charge of the *waka* in times of emergency and need suggests the power of Māori women to challenge patriarchy within their own world. In opposition to Cody's racism, Marama's action points at an iteration of Māori sovereignty that thrives on ongoing acts of courage to take responsibility for the community, particularly when such obligation to the community entails difficult challenge and negotiation with traditional taboos and inherited social order. Houng Lee's depiction of Marama's transgression as both transgression *and* part of Māori values resonates with what DeLoughrey has observed as possible within the framework of Māori spiral temporality and Māori's "corporeal relationship to history," by which situated transgressions are balanced by an expansive concept of non-linear historicity.<sup>60</sup> Again using the *waka* to bring her people, particularly Māori children, into

---

<sup>58</sup> Robert Sullivan, *Star Waka* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999); DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots*, 97; Vicente M. Diaz and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "Pacific Cultural Studies on the Edge," *The Contemporary Pacific* 13, no. 2 (2001): 315-42.

<sup>59</sup> DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots*, 97.

<sup>60</sup> Elizabeth DeLoughrey, "The Spiral Temporality of Patricia Grace's 'Potiki,'" *ARIEL* 30, no. 1 (1999): 59.

safety, Marama corporally re-enacted Māori history in her present action and as such performs Māori survivance.

Fascinatingly, Marama hints at the nature of her supposed transgression and its implication only later when she talks to Song, who is contrite and horrified by her blunder. After gently complaining about Song's keeping silent about her intent, Marama comforts Song, saying, "it's all right mate. Kia whakatane ahau, kia whakatane ahau."<sup>61</sup> Song understands the Māori phrase to mean "to act like a man" but cannot fathom its significance, nor does she realize that the phrase in fact comes from a legend of Māori Great Migration that closely resembles Marama's act the previous night and which Marama now uses to interpret Song's transgression. The legend describes a chiefly woman, Wairaka, who takes control of a *waka* that is dangerously drifting into the open ocean, in order to save all the women and children whom the men leave onboard when they explore the land. According to the legend, being fully aware of the taboo she is violating by taking the paddle as a woman, Wairaka cries out "Kia whakatane ahau [let me act like a man]" before paddling the *waka* to safety.<sup>62</sup> The phrase and the legend thus invoke the courageous violation of common codes in times of emergency and necessity, particularly in relation to a woman's role in the traditionally masculine sphere. They testify to the moments of necessary and incorporated acts of transgression that are deeply imbedded in Māori sense of history, demonstrating at the same time that change and negotiation are not modern erosions of Māori values but are originary elements in Māori *whakapapa* and communal life. Comprehending Song's acts of revenge in association with the legend and Marama's own acts of courage, Marama suggests that Song has acted inappropriately but also that her transgression is understandable and courageous: Song has acted with the intention to protect herself and her community against an aggressor whose racism is also wrapped in patriarchal violence. Song's emotions and actions can be translated and understood by Māori ethics even as they have misfired and harmed her Māori friends. Marama's use of the phrase in reference to Song's action

---

<sup>61</sup> Houng Lee, "Chinese Arrows," 70.

<sup>62</sup> John Te Herekiki Grace, *Tuwharetoa* (Auckland: Reed, 1959), 95.

resembles an act of translation particularly because Song is not, by this analogy, “adopted” into Māori kinship relation, but is discursively transferred to similar occurrences where her actions can make sense in Māori history and by the Māori ways. Such act of translation does not envision the assimilation of Chinese political identity, but opens a channel of mutual understanding.

In this sense, the translation is not meant to be a complete one. The narrative hints that there are significant differences between Māori struggle for territorial and kinship sovereignty and Chinese ethnic minority’s struggle for racial equality. As the story of a crisis in political identity ends with political lessons learned, the correct and more gratifying political action for Song is in the end her refusal to return to the job at a racist institution. At the same time, while Song and her brother Qi have attempted to shrug off their Chineseness their whole lives in order to evade discrimination, the last passages of the story see them speaking to each other in Chinese about her decision to not return to the job—a conversation she does not translate into English for the sake of Marama’s curious daughter. Song says only that “it’s a Chinese joke,” knowing fully well that the decision to not return to the job is significant and momentous mostly in the context of her family’s habitual response to accept all racial discriminations in silence, particularly for the sake of financial stability, and that context is at this moment beyond translation.<sup>63</sup> For Song not to return to the job and for Qi to voluntarily speak in Chinese demonstrates their eventual arrival at a more correct expression of Chinese New Zealand political identity, a much more faithful enactment of the kind of personal transformation propagated by Hanisch’s feminist politics. But they are also specifically *not* political expressions of territorial sovereignty that will continue to concern Marama, and for which Song will most likely continue to act an ally, but never as a political subject in that movement. The incompleteness of translation is important in light of Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s worry over non-Māori appropriation of Māori values as a means to “authenticate” their experience, all while remaining

---

<sup>63</sup> Houng Lee, “Chinese Arrows,” 71.

hegemonic as settler power.<sup>64</sup> For Houg Lee, as a non-Indigenous author, it is an obligation to clearly distinguish between, on the one hand, narrating Chinese New Zealand political identity in relation to Māori *tino rangatiratanga* and, on the other, asserting Chinese New Zealand rights to be here by ventriloquizing Māori values.<sup>65</sup> Here, by highlighting Song's transgression *as* transgression while envisioning opportunities to dialogue between Song and Marama, Houg Lee stages an intimate, but cautiously incomplete, translation between Māori and Chinese political identities through trials, errors, conversations, intersections, and incompatibilities.

Now, while "Chinese Arrows" seems to have completed the translational triangle that we propose for Chinese New Zealand narrative of national belonging, as a realist short story about a local crisis, it does not in fact envision a national community in the same scale as in a historical novel like *As the Earth Turns Silver*. Houg Lee's story situates both Māori and Chinese New Zealand in a local community where Pākehā presence is practically non-existent. The reality of Pākehā hegemony looms in the story mostly as a distant threat to Māori land claims, and although it must be recognized as the persistent psychological and social pressure that fuels Cody's hostility, it does not have an immediate effect on the story's central crisis or its resolution. This is not necessarily a political failure: rather, it is suggestive if an intimate Māori-Chinese translation can best be approximated at a local level without an explicit majority interference at the present moment. The majority factor, as conceptualized by David Pearson, has historically mediated interactions between Māori and Chinese interactions, and Houg Lee's depiction of direct Māori-Chinese relation does still depend on both's identifications as minorities in the nation who are still striving for unfulfilled political aspirations; but without explicit Pākehā interference, Houg Lee captures the possibility of Māori-Chinese negotiations that highlights Māori values rather than Pākehā ones, as the

---

<sup>64</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed, 2012), 105, also 75-78.

<sup>65</sup> Patrick Evans have observed similar problem with regard to Pākehā authors' writing about biculturalism and Māori writers' response to it. Evans, "Pākehā-Style Biculturalism."

central conflict is resolved really when Song and Marama directly engage with each other. Yet, it remains true that when the crisis resolves and the story ends, the national community is largely untouched by this local story. The realist form and the classical structure ensures that the emotional experience of reading the story completes as the curtain falls, and the local scale of the story also encloses the affective impact locally.

But the national negotiation between the three sides of translations is still volatile. While the demands of realist genre of both *As the Earth Turns Silver* and “Chinese Arrows” projects intimate translations that tend to stabilize the social relations, either the universalized commonality between Chinese and Pākehā or a negotiating minor-to-minor bond between Chinese and Māori, neither text seems capable of allowing the disorientation experienced by a Chinese New Zealand subject to remain unresolved and challenging, in the face of competing national sovereigns and with regard to her ambivalent position as both ethnic minority and settler. In the last section of this chapter, I turn to Tze-Ming Mok’s metafictional short story “The Beach” to examine how her exploration of the as-yet undecided and unresolved presence of Chinese New Zealanders in the nation creates a literary effect that is deliberately confusing and challenging, but that is also insistently open to the multiple processes of translation confronting a Chinese New Zealand subject in the bicultural nation.

### **“Our Legal Role as Pākehā”: Opening Sites of Translation**

Born in Auckland to Sinophone parents who migrated to New Zealand by way of Southeast Asia, and bearing a Manchurian surname,<sup>66</sup> Tze-Ming Mok published poetry and short fictions mainly in late

---

<sup>66</sup> Mok makes fun of her Manchurian surname in a short story/mock-interview “Hereditary Fiction: The Mok Tapes,” where the interviewee, supposedly Mok’s grandfather, exclaims: “Those goddamn Chinese. Thank the Lord we aren’t even Han. Mok is a Manchurian name from the north.” Tze-Ming Mok, “Hereditary Fiction: The Mok Tapes,” *Meanjin*, 63, no. 2, 2004, 199.



1990s and 2000s while working a government job of Human Rights and Immigrant Rights advocacy and maintaining a radical blog with an explicit agenda to combat anti-Asian racism and reductive constructions of race identity in Aotearoa New Zealand.<sup>67</sup> Interacting directly with public issues, Mok's style of writing is experimental, sarcastic, and highly conscious of a national audience, and as such, her representation of Chinese New Zealand experience in Aotearoa New Zealand diverges frequently from the realist literature we have read by Alison Wong and Ann-Marie Houng Lee. For her, Chinese New Zealand identity is a fluctuating expression that shifts constantly in relation to mainstream racism, bicultural negotiations, and the internal inconsistencies among Chinese and other immigrant communities. While she has not published a novel, her short pieces openly dialogue with national politics with a consciousness and porosity that suggest how metafictional short stories in her style may have been more appropriate and effective in representing the fluctuating translations among several political languages and discourses involved in any articulation of Chinese New Zealand identity. Mok's 2003 short story "The Beach" is particularly concerned with the legal, cultural, and linguistic confusions of immigrant experience in Aotearoa, which she layers on top of the unstable symbol of the beach—a loaded image that was, at the time of the story's publication, at the center of a Māori land rights campaign. Within the story, Mok opens up the fields of national translation that have been largely closed off and contained in Wong's and Houng Lee's realist texts, and my reading of it in this last section argues that while the story captures Chinese New Zealand belonging as a still open field of negotiation, it also comments on the unresolved nature of Aotearoa New Zealand bicultural national identity. It invites, therefore, more vigorous engagements with both Pākehā and Māori sovereignties on issues of minor settler belonging.

The formally complex short story has a simple central plot. Zhuan, a man of China's Uyghur minority, has just arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand with no knowledge of English, and he is looking for a

---

<sup>67</sup>Tze-Ming Mok, *Yellow Peril*, accessed December 30, 2013. Mok's blog has become inactive after late 2000s. For salient discussions of Mok's use of her blog in relation to public debates, see Jacob Edmond, "The Borderline Poetics of Tze-Ming Mok," *The New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 10, no. 1 (2008): 108-133.

Uyghur friend, Rebiya, who has arrived earlier. With the help of another friend, Rei, who is likely born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand with some Chinese ancestry and speaks flawed and accented Chinese, Zhuan finds the apartment where Rei originally lives, but it is now occupied by a new tenant, Salah Abdel Latif, a refugee from Iraq who speaks no English or Chinese. The landlady, from the southern provinces of China, is vague about where Rebiya has gone—both her Chinese and English are heavily accented. From a confusing English note by the landlady, Rei surmises that Rebiya has died, probably on the beach—although the ambiguity in the letter can also mean that Rebiya has simply left to go live somewhere else without telling the landlady, and the landlady on the phone may have angrily called her a bitch. Rei gets into a fight with Zhuan over her translation and leaves, Zhuan attempts to speak to Salah with some patchwork Arabic and Turkish but cannot get very far, and we last see Zhuan reading a few notebooks written by Rebiya for him introducing life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The plot is thus rather uneventful and largely unresolved, and the sense of linguistic confusion and alienation not only describes the experience of the characters but is also replicated in the readers' encounter with the story. In the present tense and largely narrated in the second-person perspective—intermixed with occasional first-person viewpoint—the narrative is however broken up into several different discursive situations. The story begins by interpellating us in Zhuan's confused position, suggesting in the first line that “you've lost all sense of where you are walking,”<sup>68</sup> and proceeds to confuse our senses of narrative direction by presenting conversations between Zhuan and Rei without quotation marks, between more passages of Zhuan's experience in second-person narrative, one passage where Rei is the second-person narrative point of view, as well as Rei's lengthy interpretation and explanation of the landlady's note in Chinese, transliterated in pinyin system. In the middle part of the story, after Rei leaves the narrative, the encounter between Zhuan and Salah is presented as Salah's conversation with a government translator, and we read it as a translated transcript in English from a government report

---

<sup>68</sup> Tze-Ming Mok, “The Beach,” *Landfall*, 2003, 142.

identified as a “recorded statement of Salah Abdel Latif.”<sup>69</sup> The last part of the story returns to the second-person narrative of Zhuan’s experience, but it soon gives way to many excerpts from Rebiya’s notes that fill the end of the story without further narrative explanation. Among the shifts and changes of narrative perspectives and genres, the translation acts in this story are decidedly multiple and radically inconclusive, and we as readers are cast in the same sense of confusion as the immigrant characters in the story, resulted largely from the intricate linguistic relations between these characters and the impossibility of identifying them by easy categories. Among those characters who would be identified as “Chinese” in Aotearoa New Zealand, Mok emphasizes the divergent experiences and linguistic cultures between a New Zealand-born Chinese, a Han Chinese from southern provinces, and Uyghur men and women who are ethnic minority within China and who speak a language that most from China do not understand.<sup>70</sup> The possibility of the wild mistranslation about Rebiya’s real story—between dying and possible assimilation—indicates the undecidable outcome of the project of translating Chinese New Zealand presence that we have been exploring so far, but particularly in the context of the diversities among those who may be identified as Chinese in Aotearoa New Zealand and their political aspirations. On top of the internal inconsistencies among Chinese New Zealanders, Salah’s translated statement invokes a bureaucratic system that monitors the legibility of immigration, which, as we have seen in the first section of this chapter, operates under immigration policies that were opened up in late 1980s to floods of Asian labor and capital and which have been a cause of Māori complaint. As we wonder why Salah needs to give a statement about his encounter with Zhuan, it is a distinct possibility that Zhuan’s presence in Aotearoa New Zealand may not be legal. Zhuan’s standing in Aotearoa New Zealand is therefore unsupported by either an ethnic community or the legal structure, and the form of the story reproduces such sense of drift

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>70</sup> The incompatibility between Uyghur and Chinese identity is ever more apparent in light of recent violent conflicts concerning increasing Chinese control in Xinjiang.

through linguistic confusion and the seemingly unstructured leaps between narrative fragments of different voices, genres, and perspectives.

The narrative complexity and linguistic multiplicity, unlike Wong's and Houng Lee's realist style and relatively clear ethnic representations, thus troubles in the first place the readers' ability to identify a singular immigrant identity. Mok refuses to take Chinese New Zealand identity and belonging for granted. The multiplicity in the narrative frustrates our tendency to search for coherent authenticity that can serve as the basis for political identity, and rather suggest a suspension of identity when an immigrant first encounters the new landscape and whose position in the nation remains undecided. Beyond resisting homogenous ethnic construction, as Jacob Edmond suggests in his reading of the story,<sup>71</sup> I believe that Mok's formal strategies call our attention to the impossibility in formulating an easily translatable identity in the scenario of encounter depicted by the story: the multiplicity and incompatibility in China's national community and among sinophone subjects inside and outside China is compounded by the unfamiliarity of Aotearoa New Zealand both as a new land and a sovereign nation with changing immigration and refugee policies. By the translational and structural confusion, Mok follows through with the stylistic ruptures that Catton's narrator in *The Luminaries* decides to gloss over, and exposes the moments of incomprehension that occur when translating Chinese New Zealand into the national community. Zhuan has no model for emulation or community for identification. His position in Aotearoa New Zealand appears to be both identitarily and legally unstable. In fact, if we take another look at the narrative, it can be noted that all the immigrant characters—the landlady, Rei, Rebiya, Salah, and eventually Zhuan—are dropped from the narrative one by one. Rebiya, an earlier immigrant and thus a potential successful model for Zhuan's assimilation into Aotearoa New Zealand community, is never to be found within the space of the story and becomes in the end only wads of paper and notes, bearing trivial instructions about Aotearoa New Zealand's daily life for those who come after her. The narrative moves towards this end by shedding every other characters on the way as well: the landlady is absent throughout, Rei storms out of

---

<sup>71</sup> Edmond, "The Borderline Poetics," 119-120.

the narrative after an argument with Zhuan, and Salah leaves, driving a cab, at the end of his “recorded statement” from some unspecified government agency and disappears from the story as well. In the last section of the story, which takes up a third of the whole piece, we are left with Zhuan reading Rebiya’s various notes, with the notes eventually taking over the narrative and expelling Zhuan from the narrative focus. The narrative design refuses to close off and contain these immigrant experiences; their identity and destination within Aotearoa New Zealand insistently open out beyond the confine of the narrative. As such, the story invites us to see, first of all, the fluidity and uncertainty of an immigrant experience as existing in an open and complex field of multi-directional translations. Mok, in this way, gives voices to her immigrant characters: while they are sometimes incomprehensible and frequently mistranslated, these cacophonous voices nevertheless keep open the field of ongoing attempts.

### *Layering Histories on the Beach*

But not only does the narrative effect of so much confusion, disappearance, and mistranslation prevent premature claims of belonging between immigrants under the label of Chinese New Zealand, Mok’s story also refuses to imagine immigrant belonging to national place as a natural or inevitable process. While inconsistencies among Sinophone subjects in Aotearoa prevent simple conceptualization of Chinese New Zealand as a homogenous ethnic group, Mok represents the national space of Aotearoa New Zealand as possessing similarly shifting identity, particularly around the loaded landscape of the beach. The beach is not only a defining feature of Aotearoa New Zealand as a nation of islands, but is also an important space in Māori *whakapapa* and contemporary literature. For instance, DeLoughrey in her reading of Patricia Grace’s *Potiki* has argued persuasively that the beach is a meeting place for dialogues “between land and sea, modernity and tradition, capitalism and agrarianism.”<sup>72</sup> While her reading there focuses on the beach as a meeting place between elements within Māori lifeworlds, I would build on this

---

<sup>72</sup> DeLoughrey, “The Spiral Temporality,” 76.

formulation and argue that in Mok's story, the beach is the gathering place for the nation's several waves of voyaging peoples: as the site where Māori ancestors made landfall before Pākehā, Chinese and other settlers, the beach stands for a space of layered histories, between which relations, belonging, and obligations are not always clearly mapped out but must nevertheless be addressed.

In Mok's story, the beach is thus represented as a place of unknown properties, both dangerous and promising. In two passages from Rebiya's notes, which also conclude the story, Rebiya describes the beach to Zhuan as a space of potentially terrifying promises.

Another thing with the beach is to watch out for riptides. You should keep between the flags. Outside those marked boundaries, which keep moving, the water is too dangerous to swim in. A riptide is caused by the convection of the water due to a channel opening up in the sand. They look like very calm patches of water, because it is there where the current is strongest, and will pull you out to sea. It is very easy to drown, should you wish to.<sup>73</sup>

Anticipating Zhuan's eventual encounter with the beach for the first time, the notes seem to use the beach to refer to the alien landscape of the new country that Zhuan has yet to know. While Rebiya's other notes cover trivial matters concerning societal convention, dress code, food, weather, etc., the beach stands out among them as the only spatial focus of Rebiya's written guide of Aotearoa New Zealand. Now, Rebiya's warning to Zhuan, a new immigrant, about riptides and the description of marked boundaries seem significant in relation to his uncertain status in the nation. While Edmond interprets Mok's figure of borders as the marginal location in the nation where ethnic identity is articulated, the borders in this story may also refer to frontiers *of* identities that may designate Zhuan variously as Chinese, Muslim, foreigner, immigrant laborer, illegal immigrant, etc. Stepping outside of these identitarian borders, by extension, would enter into yet unknown relationships, as-yet-nonexistent identitarian sites, and the potentials to become something or someone else. These borders, according Rebiya, shift all the time. It should be noted

---

<sup>73</sup> Mok, "The Beach," 149.

too that these borders are not marked out to be something one needs necessarily mix, challenge, or blur; what Rebiya suggests is simply that these borders mark known territories that one can get outside of, risking drowning, “should you wish to.” I would argue that this act of moving beyond knowable territories, though presented with danger, is not necessarily an unworthy endeavor or tragic event according to Mok’s story. The qualification, “should you wish to,” implies a certain degree of agency that is also imbedded in the translational confusion between Rebiya’s drowning or simply charting out a new life in the country. Although it is unclear whether the narrative endorses her decision to depart in either fashion it is clear that the decision is more than a tragic ending of immigrant hardship. Giving no detail of Rebiya’s life in Aotearoa New Zealand, the narrative refuses us the possibility to pity Rebiya at any moment. Furthermore, compared to marked boundaries and known territories, the uncertainty of the riptides may offer some tempting openings: if a riptide is created by “a channel opening up in the sand,” it indicates new phenomena and new relations that upset current balances and induce new configurations. Rebiya suggests, in her last/lasting words in the last passage that follows, that Zhuan should be prepared for “all eventuality,” and by it she stresses the unpredictability of an immigrants’ experience in the new country. Along with all the other immigrant characters who disappear into their own disparate lives outside the confines of the short story, Rebiya’s notes suggest that we cannot easily pin down immigrant identities and destinies even in relation to the land that they now move and make life.

After all, the beach in Aotearoa New Zealand is not unproblematically Pākehā property nor can it be taken as a value-free zone of diasporic liminality. In truth, especially around the time when Mok’s story was published, the beach was the most politically contested landscape in the nation. A national debate in 2003 inquired exactly whether New Zealanders’ prized beach is Crown land, a bicultural property, or Indigenous land with Māori customary rights. This is the specific historical context in which “The Beach” must be placed, a context that also contributed to Mok’s more explicit commentary on Chinese-Māori relation in her award-winning essay, “Race You There,” published one year later. “The Beach” was published in the November 2003 issue of *Landfall*. Earlier that year, in June 2003, the Court of Appeal

ruled that, according to the Treaty, Māori *iwi* (tribes) had never relinquished their customary property rights to the nation's foreshore (the land between high and low tide-lines) and seabed. The ruling suggested therefore that Māori Land Court could potentially establish some Māori *iwi*'s free-hold titles of these land, which would make them available for private ownership. A long public debates ensued over the fear that the beaches might become privatized and inaccessible to the nation's public. Historian Claudia Orange explains that the public fear triggered by this decision revealed the beach landscape's importance in the nation's collective identity: "Access to the county's beaches and the surrounding seas is treasured by New Zealanders, and there was a tendency initially to think that this access was threatened: this was like a challenge to national identity."<sup>74</sup> Events unfolded quickly. The government declared its intention to pass legislation to retain the nation's foreshore and seabed in public domain or Crown possession within weeks; the Tribunal ruled that such legislation would contradict the principles of the Treaty in March 2004, and a *hikoi* (march) took place between Apr. 28 and May 5, 2004 to protest against the Crown's intention to bypass legal procedures and deny Māori titles outright, with over fifteen thousand participants when it reached the parliament. Despite the Tribunal's explicit verdict that it violates the Treaty and the large turnout at the *hikoi*, a Foreshore and Seabed Bill that claims Crown ownership was then read in May and passed in December 2004.

It is perhaps not important to ascertain when Mok drafted the piece and whether the 2003 Court of Appeal decision affected Mok's choice to make the beach central in the piece. What seems certain is that by the time the piece appeared in *Landfall*, the nation's self-identity and its commitment to biculturalism were being tested on the issue surrounding the foreshore and seabed decision. Legal scholar Tom Bennion, reviewing in early 2004 the history giving rise to the controversy, observed that "the sea beach, the first meeting place of settlers and Māori, remains one of the final places where the Treaty relationship

---

<sup>74</sup> Claudia Orange, *The Illustrated History of the Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams, 2004), 272.



is being sorted out.”<sup>75</sup> As she describes at length in “Race You There,” Mok participated personally in the 2004 *hiko*. It is with regard to the dispute over the shore land that Mok voices her most explicit opinion about immigrant belonging in the bicultural nation. In the essay, Mok urges all immigrants to acknowledge their legal position as Pākehā and to recognize the binding power of the Treaty for them as well as for the White settlers: “People of South, East, and Central Asia, of the Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East: We have to take on the reality of our legal (if not ethnic) role as ‘Pākehā’ and reject the long-standing fallacy that the Treaty is ‘not our business.’”<sup>76</sup> Pākehā had till recently been a mostly racialized designation for British New Zealanders, since they were the only non-Māori when the Treaty was signed. Although the term in its epistemology likely does not contain specific racial designations, defined only relative to Māori,<sup>77</sup> many interpret the term racially. We have seen how Ranguinui Walker denies the applicability of the Treaty to non-White immigrants for the reason that the Treaty does not concern them, then for Mok to urge all immigrants to comprehend their “Pākehā” role is to enter into the arena of Treaty translation and, from the perspective of a minor settler negotiating a hearing with Māori authority, urges for a re-translation of the Treaty. The moment of national identity crisis is seized by Mok as simultaneously an opportunity for triangular translation, to decenter the racial distinctions between colored and White, and to re-center and advocate for the settler-Indigenous relation existing between all immigrants and Māori. Mok’s advocacy for non-White settlers to recognize their status *as* settler is not for their disenfranchisement, but is to imagine the possibility of non-White settler’s belonging through renewed negotiation with Māori authority. Emphasizing the Treaty’s significance to the immigrant populations’s right to belong, she therefore taps into the important reality of immigrants’ political positions in the structure of settler colonialism: their legal existence, visas to immigrate, and processes of naturalization, are granted by White settler sovereignty without direct (or indirect) negotiations with the

---

<sup>75</sup> Tom Bennion, “Lands Under the Sea: Foreshore and Seabed,” in Belgrave, Kawharu, and Williams, *Waitangi Revisited*, 243.

<sup>76</sup> Tze-Ming Mok, “Race You There,” *Landfall*, 2004, 24.

<sup>77</sup> Michael King, *Being Pākehā* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), 12

Māori people. Mok pinpoints the cause behind widespread Māori hostility towards Asian immigration, since immigration—without explicit Māori consent in the matter—is “racked up by the opposite side” of Māori sovereignty.<sup>78</sup> Mok thus saliently points out the structural collusion between the first settlers and later migrants, as the immigrants enter the settler nation on the terms of the dominant settlers and stay by being incorporated into the settler governing system, and seeks translational opening to re-position minor settler belonging in relation to Māori sovereignty.

The implied ethical responsibility for immigrants, according to Mok, is to be conscious of the Indigenous people’s prior right to land, that if the national space is a layered landscape. Asians are settlers whose being here implies relations and obligation to be negotiated with the first peoples of the land. If settlers seek to replace Indigenous people to access the land directly, and if immigrants as minor settlers by definition participate in this process of dispossession, Mok’s support of the march and Māori rights to land indicate an attempt to subvert her structural position as a settler. It is clear that Mok recognizes her presence in Aotearoa/New Zealand, as a Pākehā, is hinged upon dispossession of Indigenous people, and without such attempts at subverting her own implicated position, her belonging would never be truly legitimate. Her participation in the *hikoi* is thus less an expression of solidarity than the obligation to self-criticize.

As such, Mok argues that immigrants’ belonging cannot be taken for granted. The utopian vision of Mok’s piece does not lie with Māori-Chinese solidarity, but rather with Chinese finally gaining legitimate right to belong through a treaty agreement with Māori: “The principles of the Treaty give us rule of engagement; if we accede to them, we will access our right to be different. Just imagine—you can assert your right to belong here based on... your commitment to the place’s founding principles.”<sup>79</sup> In effect, she argues that only by acknowledge their status as outsiders would the Treaty allow immigrants to negotiate their relation with the place and Māori and to find belonging honestly. We need to recognize

---

<sup>78</sup> Mok, “Race You There,” 24.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

that Mok is speaking aspirationally: we've seen how biculturalism has the potential to exclude those outside the intimate translation of bicultural reading, and the triangular translation that Mok envisions here is at this moment still utopian. Such utopian vision appears rarely in Mok's fictional writing. Given that "the principle of the Treaty" remains, after all, a contested matter in the nation, its actual application to non-White immigrants would require Māori authority to decide. This would underlie the sense of uncertainty we have been reading in "The Beach." The beach in 2003 and 2004 Aotearoa New Zealand was the site where the uncertainty of national future was gathered, and where the unpredictable trajectory of immigrant belonging became palpable.

We must thus acknowledge a difference in genre between Mok's explicit mention of non-White settlers' responsibility to negotiation with the Treaty in "Race You There" and her creation of a narrative experience of disorientation and confusion in "The Beach." While "Race You There" puts forward a point of political opinion, "The Beach" is ultimately permeated with the uncertainty experienced by a minor settler subject seeking identity and belonging in the bicultural nation. The first line, "You have lost all sense where you are walking," reminds us of the dilemma any members of Mok's national reader could be facing with regard to national identity and the multiple negotiations between Māori, Pākehā, and non-White minor settlers. The piece interpellates its readers with its second-person pronoun in multiple ways: not only as a confused immigrant at the beginning of the narrative, in Salah's statement, "you" implies the government translator, and in Rebiya's notes, "you" are everyone who wants to be polite in Aotearoa. "Try not to spit," the note admonishes, for example,<sup>80</sup> and this voice eventually takes over to warn Zhuan (and the readers) to be prepared for all eventualities at the beach. The story ends before Zhuan sees the beach for the first time, and Rebiya's warning remains effective for a future with uncertain outcome that exists beyond the timeline of the narrative and our reading. Again, as the story never returns to Zhuan, we are the only actors left at the end of the story to make decisions and to brace ourselves for all eventualities.

---

<sup>80</sup> Mok, "The Beach," 147.

If “The Beach” borrows its central imagery from the foreshore and seabed debate and thus implicitly acknowledges the uncertain status of the nation’s land, Mok’s narrative form to a large extent replicates the uncertainty of the situation. The short story happens contemporaneously as our reading and leaves off without resolution except for a note of caution. The narrative, in other words, participates in history in real-time and when we read it now with the distance of a decade, we bring our historical knowledge to the story’s ending: It could have been otherwise, but it was not. The bicultural nation did not honor Māori rights to the foreshore and seabed. We now know. But readers of Mok’s story when it first came out on *Landfall* could well see other possibilities concerning the nation’s beach and its national future.

## Coda

Walter Benjamin famously postulated that translation aspires to a messianic pure language. While translation never completes the totality of the pure language, “it at least points the way to this region; the predestined, hitherto inaccessible realm of reconciliation and fulfillment of languages.”<sup>81</sup> In our examination of Chinese New Zealand authors writing in English as minor settler translators, pure language is perhaps the never approachable national grammar that can articulate Māori, Chinese, and Pākehā as national members all at the same time. Benjamin’s use of the term “reconciliation” (*Versöhnung*), and its familiar function in our post-colonial vernacular, fortuitously hints at the closeness of the acts of translation to conversations between competing sovereignties, such as that we have observed in the Treaty Tribunal and bicultural exegesis in Aotearoa New Zealand. Yet the difference between Benjamin’s *Versöhnung* and the English use of “reconciliation” is notable: the German word implies transformation—reconciliation between differences can only happen through essential transformations in all parties

---

<sup>81</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” trans. Henry Zohn, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Vol. 1, 1913-1926*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Tennyngs (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 257

involved.<sup>82</sup> While the English usage of “reconciliation” can sometimes denote situations in which one part simply submit to another—which describes too frequently the kind of reconciliation process occurring in postcolonial societies<sup>83</sup>—Benjamin’s use of *Versöhnung* demands transformation that is mutually significant. “Translation,” Benjamin explains, “is so far removed from being the sterile equation of two dead languages that of all literary forms it is the one charged with the special mission of watching over the maturing process of the original language and the birth pangs of its own.”<sup>84</sup>

In the context of minor settler belonging, this chapter intervenes in this concept of companioned maturing between two languages. My reading here suggests that the processes of translation and transformation in settler societies exceeds the intimate dance between the Indigenous and a single settler language or that between an ethnic minority and a monocultural iteration of nation. The task of the minor settler translator, to adopt Benjamin’s formulation, is foremost to deliver the maturation and transformation of bicultural translation by inserting minor settler stories. Between Wong’s projection of a liberal multicultural nation and Houng Lee’s investigation of local activist community, Chinese New Zealand presence in the bicultural national space is not fully articulated in either of these visions, both aiming for realistic closure and the settling of relations. But Mok’s story suggests that, because the immigrant stories are cacophonous and the national space is a volatile field of multiple inscriptions, Chinese New Zealand belonging still must be articulated through tentative and widely open translations. Then, if the process of translating Aotearoa New Zealand is still at its beginning, writing Chinese New Zealand’s belonging in triangulation with bicultural negotiation may nudge Pākehā-Māori biculturalism

---

<sup>82</sup> Michael O. Hardimon, *Hegel’s Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 85-87.

<sup>83</sup> Irene Watson, for example, cites the worries of many Aboriginal people over the rhetorics of reconciliation: “how can you become reconciled with a state and its citizens who have not yet acknowledged your humanity, let alone your status as the first peoples of this conquered land?” In Irene Watson, “Settled and Unsettled Spaces: Are We Free to Roam?,” in Moreton-Robinson, *Sovereign Subjects*, 20.

<sup>84</sup> Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” 256.

outside of their exclusive and intimate translational gazes upon each other, and allowing for a reassessment of the meaning of bicultural accommodation and Aotearoa New Zealand's national future.

## Chapter 3

### From Survival to Survivance: Decolonizing Ethics in Settler Novels in Taiwan

Discussing Taiwan's postcoloniality or "localization" [*bentuhua*] without considering its Indigenous peoples create a serious blind spot.... For the Indigenes, the colonizer-colonized relation does not only describe the fifty years of "foreign" Japanese rule but even more appropriately the domination of the Han people who, regardless of the time of their arrival, have always played the role of the colonizers.

— Paelabang Danapang (Sun Dachung), *The World of the Mountains and the Sea*.<sup>1</sup>

Can minor settler narratives do the work of decolonization? The question has implicitly guided our queries so far. In re-reading minority literature for its settler function and decolonizing potentials, this study has upheld the decolonization of settler colonial relations as the ethical and political project that minor settler texts either revert from or respond to. This chapter asks explicitly how minor settler texts have reflected, both formally and thematically, the desire for decolonizing relations with Indigenous peoples and historiographies, and interrogate the discursive and epistemological regimes in which these projects of decolonizations have been envisioned. To directly engage the narratives of decolonization, this chapter discusses two identity groups in Taiwan who occupy the position of minor settler not because of belated settler migration or demographic disadvantage, but due to layered colonial processes that

---

<sup>1</sup> Paelapang Danapang (Sun Dachuan), *Shanhai shijie: taiwan yuanzhuming xinling shijie de moxie* [The world of the mountains and the sea: Writing Taiwan Indigenous experiences] (Taipei: Lianhe Wenxue, 2000), 107. Translations from Chinese sources and texts in this chapter are my own, unless otherwise noted.

relegated them subjects of invading sovereignties. In other words, this chapter examines settler texts from Taiwan whose projects of local belonging and identity do not immediately refer to multicultural politics of inclusion and recognition, as are the cases in the preceding chapters, but rather postcoloniality and decolonization. As their representations of identity and belonging are already laced with the ethical and political desires for decolonization, this chapter asks how these narratives of decolonization are complicated by dynamics of settler colonialism and the distinct demands of Indigenous decolonization, to distinguish between postcolonial ethics of self-reflection and (con)textualization and Indigenous ethics of obligation and relation.

In this chapter, my discussion of minor settler differs from previous chapters. I contrast Taiwan's postcolonial Han settler majority with the supposedly completely assimilated Pingpu, or Plain Indigenous peoples. On the one hand, while an overwhelming demographic majority, Taiwan's Han settler collective maintains a minority self-identity from the memories of colonial trauma, the threat of Chinese aggression, and its persistent lack of nation-state status.<sup>2</sup> Taiwan's Han majority, over 95% of the overall population,<sup>3</sup> are settler migrants from China, who arrived on the Indigenous Austronesian island sometime during the past four hundred years,<sup>4</sup> but who also experienced the violent interruption of their settler sovereignty in the 20th century by Japanese colonization (1895-1945) and the military rule of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government under 39 years of martial law (1949-1987). The colonial suppression of Han

---

<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of Taiwan's beleaguered position of global insignificance, see Shu-mei Shih, "Globalisation and the (in)significance of Taiwan," *Postcolonial Studies* 6, no. 2 (2003): 143-53.

<sup>3</sup> In the most updated population registry data (June 2014), Han Taiwanese number more than 95% in an overall population of 23,392,036 citizens. Only 536,509 (2.3%) belong to the officially recognized "Indigenous peoples" category. This census data, registering the birth, death, naturalization, or change of nationality, also calculates foreign (including Chinese Mainlander) spouses to number around 493,128. It does not distinguish between Han Taiwanese with different ancestral regional origins (in China). Information amalgamated from published registry data by the Department of Household Registry, Ministry of the Interior, accessed on July 10, 2014, [http://www.ris.gov.tw/zh\\_TW/346](http://www.ris.gov.tw/zh_TW/346).

<sup>4</sup> Early Han settlement in Taiwan was abetted first by the Dutch East Indian Company (1623-1662) and the rebellious Zheng Chenggong, otherwise known as Koxinga, who established the Kingdom of Tungning in Taiwan (1662-1683), before Qing rule was established on the island in 1683, making it a new frontier of the expanding Qing empire. For the history of these changing regimes and the conditions of early Han settlement, see Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), and Emma Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004).



settlers' sovereignty, as pointed out by prominent Indigenous scholar and political figure Paelabang Danapang in the opening quote, has led to Han Taiwan's near obsessive articulations of its postcoloniality and local identity, which is however articulated through the prevalent denial of its ongoing settler colonial hegemony.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, I contrast Han settler postcolonial articulations with Pingpu peoples' resurgence and decolonization, as Pingpu come to occupy the position of minor settlers by a reversed historical processes during Taiwan's multiple colonizations. Pingpu were Indigenous inhabitants on the Western coastal plains of Taiwan, and "Pingpu" is a contemporary catch-all term used to describe the more than a dozen linguistic and descent groups that fall under this definition, to replace similarly categorical but pejorative terms from colonial eras.<sup>6</sup> Bearing the front of Dutch and Han invasions in the 17th and 18th centuries, Pingpu peoples underwent a long process of land dispossession and cultural assimilation that rendered them auxiliary instruments in both Han and Japanese expansion of settler power in other Indigenous lands, notably in the island's mountainous interior, where more than a dozen distinct Indigenous peoples have traditional sovereignty. Recent literary and academic attentions on Pingpu historical memories thus not only reclaim their Indigenous identity, but also excavate the history of their complicity in settler campaigns. In her study of Taiwan as a Qing frontier, historian Emma Teng observes that "what we find in frontier regions such as Taiwan... is no simple dichotomy of colonizer/colonized, but a multilevel hierarchy of colonial officials (both Manchu and Han), Han Chinese settlers, and Indigenous people. Each group had its own interest—sometimes these interests competed with those

---

<sup>5</sup> Historian Edward Vickers makes a similar argument that the national narrative of Taiwanese "subalternity" has distracted the settler mainstream from its settler history. Edward Vickers, "Original Sin on the Island Paradise: Qing Taiwan's Colonial History in Comparative Perspective," *Taiwan in Comparative Perspective* 2 (2008): 83.

<sup>6</sup> Han authorities of Qing Empire designated them *shoufan* or "cooked savages," and Japanese colonial government identified them as *peipozoku*, literally plain tribes, both in contrast to the mountain-based *shengfan* (raw savages) and *takasagozoku* (high mountain tribes), see my discussion below. With regard to the groupings of different Pingpu peoples, anthropologist and ethno-linguists do not yet have a consensus and the discussion is ongoing. For a thorough review of scholarly opinions on Pingpu classifications, see the Pingpu Project, "Pingpu zhuqun de fenlei yu fenbu [The classifications and distributions of Pingpu peoples]," *Zhongyanyuan minzhusou shuwei diancang* [The digital archive of Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica], accessed July 18, 2015, <http://www.ianthro.tw/p/41>.

of other groups; sometimes they intersect.”<sup>7</sup> And Pingpu is the particularly vulnerable group caught in such volatile dynamics of alliances and conflicts. Given such historical messiness, and taking into account how Pingpu’s bid for official recognition has been delayed in part by the governmental Council of Indigenous Affairs once led by Paelabang,<sup>8</sup> heeding Paelabang’s important demand to reconsider Taiwan’s postcoloniality may prove to be more difficult than at first appeared. This chapter reads two contemporary Han and Pingpu texts as settler articulations against these historical complexities. While contemporary Han settler and Pingpu authors engage literary enterprises to articulate postcolonial and decolonizing identities, both groups’ involvements with settler colonial hegemony exert pressure on their narratives of decolonization and deepen their textual engagement with the ethical ambiguity in their respective decolonizing projects.

Juxtaposing Han settler’s postcolonial texts with Pingpu discourses of resurgence, I thus not only echo Paelabang’s caution against Han settler amnesia, but also distinguish between two decolonizing projects—decolonization against invading, foreign colonial sovereignty, and the decolonization of settler colonial relations. The chapter is concerned with the textual tear and tension generated when the two projects coincide in novelistic narratives, and formally, such clash results in the particular prominence of poststructuralist aesthetics in the two exemplary texts I study in the following pages. In the first part of the chapter, I focus on Han author Wuhe’s 1999 novel, *Remains of Life* (yusheng), a meta-fictional account of author-narrator Wuhe’s ethnographical research among Indigenous Seediq people, with the ostensible purpose of recovering the historical truth of a bloody Seediq rebellion against Japanese colonizers in 1930. Around the existential trope of survival and armed with poststructuralist mistrust of historical truths, Wuhe’s self-reflexive novel has been lauded as an ethical engagement with the Indigenous other beyond identity politics. My reading re-examines Wuhe’s literary strategies and the continental theories

---

<sup>7</sup> Teng, *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography*, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Since 2010, the Council of Indigenous Affairs have established a special task force to deal with Pingpu affairs. This is in response to Pingpu activists’ requests for full official recognition of their Indigenous status and rights, about which the Council have consistently demurred.

frequently employed by academic readers to interpret the novel, and argues that such ethics of survival interrupts the self-other divide at the cost of misinterpreting settler colonial relations and of trapping Indigenous peoples in the perpetual states of postcolonial survival. In contrast, in the second half of the chapter, I turn to Pingpu author Zhao Huiling's 2013 novel, *Return to Dadu Town* (daducheng quilai), and read its reconstruction of Pingpu history of forced migration and cultural assimilation as the contrasting practice of Indigenous "moral survivance" in Gerald Vizenor's formulation. Belonging to the Papora People, whose language, identity, and history is by now obscure and relatively less visible even among Pingpu peoples, Zhao relies on poststructuralist strategies to meld together fragmented tribal memories and ethnographical data from her contemporary vantage while exploring Papora participation in settler encroachment. I build on Vizenor's notion of survivance as an active continuation of native stories, and examine how Zhao's textual performances of Papora survivance also recenter Papora ethical responsibility to other Indigenous kins whom they have dispossessed during migration. Through Zhao's text, this chapter highlights the centrality of Indigenous epistemologies in decolonizing narratives and revisits in the conclusion minor settler negotiation between sovereignties from the critical perspective where Indigeneity intersects with the minor settler position.

### **Survival: The Contemporary Ethics of Life and Language**

Since its publication in 1999, *Remains of Life* has garnered much scholarly attention, crowning a decade of Wuhe's experimental literary output that many consider to be monumental in recent Taiwan literary history. David Der-wei Wang has proclaimed Wuhe to be "one of the most important phenomena of 1990s Taiwan literature," and that "twenty-first-century Taiwan literature must begin with Wuhe."<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> David Der-wei Wang, introduction to *Yusheng* [The remains of life], by Wuhe (Taipei: Maitian, 2011), 279; David Der-wei Wang, introduction to *Beishang* [Sorrow], by Wuhe (Taipei: Maitian, 2001), 8.

According to Wang and others, Wuhe's works reprise and reframe significant stylistic and thematic developments in modern Taiwan literature, not the least those of Taiwan's postcolonial writings. Chen Fang-ming, one of the most dedicated scholars to historicize and interpret Taiwan literature as inescapably postcolonial,<sup>10</sup> describes Wuhe as "not a nativist, but is more nativist than many of his contemporaries; he does not adhere to realism, but his writing is more realistic than writers of his generation; he is not a modernist, but his textual performance are extremely modernist. Wuhe's style is completely his own—while a typical product of Taiwan history, it persistently resists being absorbed by mainstream literary movements."<sup>11</sup> In the parlance of Chen's much revered work on Taiwan literary history, Chen has judged Wuhe to be one of the most quintessential author to voice Taiwan's layered colonial history, postcolonial reality, and its local subjection to global economic and military maneuvers. Wuhe's thematics, frequently macabre and psychological, are deeply intertwined with Taiwan's postcolonial and contemporary reality, sharply cynical of its official history and intimately concerned with the society's sense of chaos and confusion. Zhu Tienwen once reported that Wuhe describes his novels as *luanminshi*—in the style of riotous people or a confused mob—<sup>12</sup>and such riots and confusion among Wuhe's characters have much, if not everything, to do with the legacy of Taiwan's multiple colonizations and foreign dominations, and the remains of a schizophrenic national identity.

It does not surprise, therefore, that Wuhe's forays into Indigenous issues, first in his 1997 *Meditations on A-bang and Kalusi* (Sisuo Abang Kalusi) and then in *Remains of Life*, are taken by many to mark a significant point of self-reflection among Han Taiwanese writers' obsessive retelling of Han colonial trauma and insistent search for a postcolonial local identity.<sup>13</sup> Especially *Remains of Life*, with its more

---

<sup>10</sup> Chen's 2000 paradigm-setting essay has been translated in English as "Postmodern or Postcolonial? An Inquiry into Postwar Taiwan Literary History," in *Writing Taiwan: A New Literary History*, ed. David Der-wei Wang and Carlos Rojas (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 26–50. The original essay is collected with other important early analyses of Taiwan's postcolonial literature in Ying-xiong Zhou and Ji-hui Liu, eds., *shuxie Taiwan: wenxueshi houzhimin yu houxiandai* [Writing Taiwan: literary history, postcoloniality, and postmodernity] (Taipei: Maitian, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Fang-ming Chen, *Taiwan xinwenxue shi* [The history of modern Taiwan literature] (Taipei: Lianjing, 2011), 2:678.

<sup>12</sup> Zhu Tienwen, preface to *Yusheng*, by Wuhe, 22.

<sup>13</sup> F. Chen, *Taiwan xinwenxue shi*, 2:678-679; Wang, introduction to *Yusheng*, 290.

ambitious scope, its technical sophistication, and its focus on the Musha Incident—a bloody Indigenous uprising against Japanese colonial rule in 1930 that is frequently cited in history textbooks to testify Taiwan’s anti-Japanese heroism—have become his best known and most-read work; it received scores of awards and is still widely commented upon by academic readers both inside and outside of Taiwan. Both novels, as in almost all of Wuhe’s fictions, feature a first-person narrator “I” that is explicitly named and closely identifiable with the author Wuhe. While in *Meditations on A-Bang and Kalusi*, author-narrator Wuhe describes his frequent visits with Han photographer A-Bang and Indigenous writer Kalusi in the Indigenous Lukai village of Haocha, in *Remains of Life*, the same author-narrator records his residency over two years in the Indigenous Seediq village of Qingliu, referred in the novel intentionally by its Japanese name Kawanakajima. It is clear from the materials surrounding the novels—in Wuhe’s own epilogue, an afterword provided by the real-life writer Kalusi, Zhu’s preface, interviews, and publishers’ promotional materials—that author Wuhe’s actual visits took place in ways similar to their descriptions in the novel, that the places and communities were real, and characters perhaps close to life. Wuhe’s patient willingness to cultivate relationships with Indigenous places and peoples in these ways sets him apart from most of his contemporary Han settler authors, whose treatment of Indigenous realities is scant and distant, if any. And, as remarked by most readers of *Remains of Life*, Wuhe’s insistent exposition of his Han positionality and the frequent challenge voiced by his Indigenous characters call particular attention to the troubled relation between his position as an author-researcher and his Indigenous subjects’ rebellion against conventionally-assigned passivity. Self-reflexive, careful, and articulated through palpable friendship between Wuhe and some of his Indigenous interlocutors, it is little wonder that *Meditation on A-bang and Kalusi* and *Remains of Life* are hailed as unique events of Han literary engagement with Indigenous lives.

What is truly intriguing, then, is how rarely these novels are read in the context of Taiwan’s settler colonialism, Wuhe’s settler identity, and the reality of Indigenous lives and politics. Granted that *Meditation*

does not attract many sustained interpretations as its better known sequel,<sup>14</sup> it is intriguing how, with one single but notable exception, the many readers of *Remains of Life* seldom reference Indigenous political articulations and theories to evaluate the author-narrator's representation of Indigenous lives and opinions—that despite the openness ostensibly offered by Wuhe's metafictional aesthetics, the conversation it instigates remains one-sided, and the Han author-narrator's viewpoint is consistently privileged in these readings. *Remains of Life* is a first-person monologue that runs on for two hundred or so pages, without chapter or paragraphs breaks and frequently without standard punctuations; through this format the narrator-protagonist “I” records his two-year residency in Seediq village of Kawanakajima with remarkable self-reflexivity, not only reporting the conversations he conducts but frequently dwelling more on details surrounding the conversations, such as the textile environment of his note writing, or his turns of thoughts, biases, memories, and insecurities. The core of the narrative surrounds “I”'s investigation of the historical Musha Incident and the contemporary lives of the Indigenous descendants and survivors of the Incident—hence the “remains of life” in the title. Coming from a thinly veiled poststructuralist viewpoint, “I” informs the readers explicitly of his mistrust of historical truth, and Musha Incident acts as a particularly murky event for the novel's unraveling of grand narratives, not the least because in the Musha Incident, while thousands of Seediq people ended up being killed in Japanese retaliation, Seediq warriors were initiators of the brutal massacre of 136 Japanese police and civilians, mostly by beheading, and with the victims including many children and women. For the narrator, the degree of violence of Musha Incident means that it does not fit neatly into the postcolonial narrative of righteous uprising, and the predictable outcome of Seediq's near genocide by vengeful Japanese colonizers also raises the question concerning the uprising's eventual futility. “I”'s interest in the event, as he informs us throughout the novel, is to puzzle over the “legitimacy and appropriateness” of the Incident from the contemporary—

---

<sup>14</sup> *Meditation* is read frequently in conjunction with Wuhe's other works, particularly in overviews of Wuhe's career, and would receive relatively light treatment in these overviews. A notable exception would be Lin Liru's book length study of Wuhe's novel, where she discusses *Meditation* at length, although again mostly with regard to Wuhe's aesthetics and historical viewpoint. Lin Liru, *lishi yu ijyi: Wuhe xiaoshou yanjiu* [history and memory: A study of Wuhe's novels] (Taipei: Da'an, 2008).

both his and the surviving Seediq descendants'—points of view. With this pretext, he strings together the reported opinions from his interviewees and friends through his field notes and observations, thus presenting a cacophonous picture of survival by a narrative voice anxious to call attention to his biases and incomplete knowledge. On the surface, the text is thus insistently diverse: there seems to be many voices and opinions about the historical event; but formally speaking, the many voices all pass through the narrator's singular consciousness and its dialectical and destabilizing—namely deconstructive—manner of representation. If the self-reflexive narrative voice means to invite challenges to his ways of looking, most of the novel's readers have not accepted the invitation, but have focused rather on his poststructuralist aesthetics as a viable means to eschew totalism and an ethical way to represent Indigenous others. What intrigues me is, if Wuhe's novelistic form should serve to open up conversations between Han and Indigenous perspectives and to initiate serious considerations about Han-Indigenous political relations, why have critical evaluations of the novel remained almost solely devoted to the exegesis of Wuhe's aesthetics and ethics, without serious interrogations of his representations of Indigenous opinions and his visions of Han-Indigenous relations, *from an Indigenous point of view?*

The most symptomatic consequence of such one-sided reading is perhaps the tendency for academic readers to interpret the novel as a self-reflexive majority author's ethical exercise against politics of identity, in the assumption that the ethical is more radical, or in fact, more "political" than politics, particularly in light of several clearly political opinions voiced by Wuhe's Indigenous characters about settler colonialism and Indigenous autonomy, of which the narrator "I" is palpably suspicious. In this vein, Chen Chun-yen and Christopher Payne, emphasizing Wuhe's rejection of identity politics, both enlist continental theories of ethics by Jean-Luc Nancy and Emmanuel Levinas to highlight the novel's radicalism outside Taiwan's political intrigues.<sup>15</sup> Yet in the process, they sidestep political discussions about

---

<sup>15</sup> Chun-yen Chen, "Being-in-Common in Postcolonial Taiwan: Wuhe's *Remains of Life* and the Limits of Identity Politics," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 14, no. 3 (2012): 443–61; Christopher Payne, "Wushe, Literature, and Melodic Black Metal: The 'Nonpolitics' of Wuhe and the 'Political' ChthoniC," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 22, no. 2 (2014): 403–28.

the continuing suppression of Indigenous land rights and the prevalence of Indigenous social disadvantage. Even in Andrea Bachner's more critical reading of Wuhe's primitivism, her focus remains with Wuhe's insistence on the irrepresentability of history and his affirmation of Indigenous bare lives in the context of their survival of historical trauma.<sup>16</sup> With the sole exception of Liou Liang-ya, who contextualizes the novel amidst Indigenous resurgence movements,<sup>17</sup> most commentators feel no anxiety to consult Indigenous opinions in their reading of a novel that is relentlessly focused on Indigenous histories and realities; and even Liou's reading does not challenge Wuhe's modes of representation of Indigenous politics. Rather, while Liou analyzes Indigenous debates on resurgence as the content of the novel, she does not pursue the possibility that such Indigenous content may offer more fundamental challenge to the settler form that contains them. While the narrator "I" calls explicit attention to his own privileged position as a majority researcher/writer, no critic has gone beyond praising such self-awareness to critically assess how his narrative strategies serve to dissolve Indigenous political agency through processes of textual deconstruction. Thus curiously, while the novel is complimented as an important literary venture into Han-Indigenous relation, most read the novel for the ethical values of the Han author-narrator, his artistic rendering of historical ambiguity in the wake of Han Taiwan's historical trauma, and for his crossing the separation between Han and Indigenous peoples—largely in the absence of Indigenous counter-reading. In these lights, the novel seems to effect, not a more acute awareness of Indigenous dispossession, but the elevation of Han settler subjectivity and the continuing suppression of Indigenous subjectivity.

---

<sup>16</sup> Andrea Bachner, "The Remains of History: Gao Xiniang's *Soul Mountain* and Wuhe's *The Remains of Life*," *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 37, no. 1 (2011): 99–122.

<sup>17</sup> Liang-ya Liou, "Bianzheng fuzhen de keneng: Wuhe Yusheng zhong de lishi jiyi, nvren yu yuanxiang zhuixun [the possibility of dialectical resurgence: historical memory, women, and the search for Indigenous land in Wuhe's the Remains of Life]," *Zhongwai Wenxue* 32, no. 11 (2004): 141–63.



Now, while the critics' failure to substantially engage Indigenous opinions is symptomatic of existing academic habit to take Indigenous theory as only relevant to Indigenous affairs,<sup>18</sup> for our present purpose, it more importantly points to the settler structures of relation that Wuhe's sophisticated poststructuralist aesthetics fails to disturb. The novel's attempt at ethical relation with a radical Other and its post-structural gesture to self-reflexivity in fact obscure the political problems of settler colonialism that is at the root of Seediq displacement and disadvantage. In particular, throughout the novel, the narrator "I" identifies himself as a postcolonial survivor of colonial trauma and a self-imposed exile from the postcolonial nation state, and it is this gesturing that allows him to simultaneously relate to Seediq as fellow travelers in the "contemporaneity of survival"<sup>19</sup> and to foreground Han settlers' postcolonial experience, while circumventing the troubled political relations between him and his Seediq characters through a heightened awareness of textuality. In truth, it may be said that the novel is effective precisely for its skillful performances of some of the major features of postcolonial literature—the demystification of transparent subjecthood and national identity, the dialectic presence of the Other, the dispersal of historical truths— and it is with these very manifestations of heightened postcoloniality that *Remains of Life* more insidiously entraps Indigenous peoples as rhetorical figures in Wuhe's exploration of postcolonial identity.

*Revisiting the Ethics of Simultaneity*

In a much analyzed passage occurring early in *Remains of Life*, narrator "I" is confronted by an outspoken Indigenous woman, a cousin of Wuhe's neighbor (and thus named simply as "Cousin"), who questions his intention as a "great Han" in researching the "insignificant savages." She suggests Wuhe to

---

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Cook-Lynn has complained with regard to this prevalent tendency that "it is as though the American Indian has no intellectual voice with which to enter into America's important dialogues. The American Indian is not asked what he thinks we should do about Bosnia or Iraq." Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, "American Indian Intellectualism and the New Indian Story," *American Indian Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1998): 57.

<sup>19</sup> Wuhe, *Yusheng* [The remains of life], 4th ed. (Taipei: Maitian, 2011), 265.

“study Han people first,” since “Han people deserves some research.”<sup>20</sup> Enacting a reversal of conventional researcher-Native relation, Cousin’s challenge to Wuhe is attributed by Andrea Bachner as the originating moment of the narrator’s self-reflexivity throughout the rest of his visit and the remainder of the narrative.<sup>21</sup> In this scene, the Native engages with the researcher in real-time as a contemporary modern subject, with her own intellectual analyses of the society and the state; and the narrator, along with the readers, are thus told from the start to quit any fantasy of treating her as a simple object of research who does not talk back.

This interaction resonates with the postcolonial critical turn in many intellectual fields, and situates Wuhe’s novel within a wave of postcolonial interrogation of power and textuality in the production of knowledge. Most immediately, the scene calls to mind the kind of contextualizing, self-reflexive ethnographical writing heralded by James Clifford and George E. Marcus’s edited collection *Writing Culture*,<sup>22</sup> and the demand for coevalness in anthropological research voiced by Johannes Fabian.<sup>23</sup> Foregrounding the context in which narrator “I”’s interview with the Indigenous villagers takes place, Wuhe highlights research as a situated event, in which the researcher occupy the same space and time with the subject of their research. Fabian in particular condemns the anthropological practice of disguising such simultaneity in an attempt to produce “objective knowledge,” and in the process producing the Natives as anthropological objects suspended in place and time, unable to effect communication and transformation in relation to the researching subjects. In contrast, narrator Wuhe thus declares his difference from ordinary researchers: “Good that I am a writer. Bagang did not know that an observer’s eyes are different from the researcher’s. Researcher’s eyes are fixed because of this and that; observer’s eyes change because of this and that, and remain unchanged because this and that.”<sup>24</sup> While Wuhe maintains

---

<sup>20</sup> Wuhe, *Yusheng*, 39.

<sup>21</sup> Bachner, “Remains of History,” 111-12.

<sup>22</sup> James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>23</sup> Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

<sup>24</sup> Wuhe, *Yusheng*, 206.

the position as an observer, his identity as a writer means for him that he can record the transformations he undergoes during the processes of research, which differentiates him from researchers who are, in his opinion, fixated on their research agenda, and would record partial truths in order to produce the kind of knowledge they desire.<sup>25</sup>

The narrative's most notable effect is therefore an insistent adherence to the temporality of the present. His meandering narrative seems to pick up conversations, observations, and ideas in no particular order, allowing various contemporary characters to speak their views as they wander into narrator's eyesight and earshot, all while the narrator interjecting his comments agreeing or disagreeing. The resulting text is immediate, polyphonic, chaotic. In this way, Wuhe describes an array of Indigenous means of survival at the present moment—among which is the narrator's neighbor "Girl," an ex-prostitute whose private spiritual and daily experiences of the Seediq landscape are not understood by her fellow villagers, a shopkeeper who speaks accent-less mandarin Chinese, an old man wearing Japanese clothing and practicing Zen Buddhism and Bushidao, a few mentally unstable characters maddened by traumas no one can fully recall, and some more or less educated elite whose talks of Seediq customs and sovereignty are at times a rhetorical ploy in electoral politics, at times an idealistic political goal, or yet at other times ineffectual laments. Wuhe is committed to represent these characters as living contemporary facets of Indigenous realities, in contrast to anthropological museumization of Indigenous cultures.

It is on grounds of such simultaneity that many of Wuhe's readers find the text to be an ethical encounter with the radical Other. Because so much writing about the Indigenous cultures rejects their coevalness, Wuhe's insistent presentation of their everyday livelihood seems a deliberate antidote to such discursive procedures of othering. Most readers of *Remains of Life* thus read subversion and liberation in Wuhe's insistent presentism, the disturbance in narrative order, and the simultaneous celebration of survival after catastrophe: David Der-wei Wang argues that the narrative chaos reflect the impossibility of

---

<sup>25</sup> Wuhe's most explicit critiques against researchers occur in *Meditation of A-bang and Kalusi*.

naturalized chronology after the trauma,<sup>26</sup> and Chen Chun-yen and Bachner consider the narrative presentism an attempt to resolve historical trauma by affirming life and living relations at the present. In these readings, Wuhe's narrative form is itself seen as a staunch protest against official national and colonial history, or, in a gesture that recalls Bhabha's double-time of national narratives,<sup>27</sup> as celebrations of people's everyday performances that interrupt the linear narratives of national pedagogical time.

Reading Wuhe as a settler author troubles this reading. While the narrative disturbs the nation's historical narrative, its fragmented pieces of opinions and life stories still constitute a narrative, one that is deliberately chaotic, associative, and organized in the Han narrator-writer's acts of observing, interviewing, speaking, and writing. While Liu's point is well taken, that Wuhe does indeed include sensitive representations of Indigenous perspectives and even ends the narrative proper with an Indigenous voice, it still must be examined how these Indigenous voices are organized to compete with each other's and the narrator's voices, balanced out in textual relativity that echoes, not the Seediq ethics or ways of thinking, but rather the narrator's highly self-reflexive and ambiguous dialectical process of thought. The self-reflexivity of the narrator is ultimately the ethos of the entire narrative, saturating even the representations of Indigenous viewpoints. Similarly, the commonality and sympathy between the Han narrator and the Indigenous Seediq peoples as exiles and survivors are achieved through the slipperiness of such narrative juxtaposition and association, despite the possibility that the two's experiences of exile and survival may compare only in a qualified and limited way.

If Cousin's admonishment has prompted Wuhe to reflect his observing and writing position, the narrator arrives at the curious conclusion that Han people are in fact traumatized, just like the Indigenous subjects that he intend to research:

---

<sup>26</sup> Wang, introduction to *Yusheng*, 295.

<sup>27</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margin of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), 291–322.

In fact many people survive wars and live as survivors; I didn't realize it at all in Lukai, but it comes to me now that many urban residents in our modern time are survivors of the wars. "You Han people have a lot to be researched," I suddenly remember this statement by Girl's Cousin. Yes, from the end of the War to 228 to the White Terror in the 50s..., maybe it is too close to home, so close that we want to avoid it in the kind of disgust one feels when one's body touches a stranger's nearby. Let those people who are better suited to research and confront it. I feel fortunate that there is a Musha Incident in history that allows me to come to Kawanakajima to eat this small hotpot in warm and lone quietude.<sup>28</sup>

In this passage, the narrator-researcher admits to the complex psychological reasons why a Han researcher would turn to the trauma of the Indigenous others instead of confronting his own historical trauma. The War mentioned in the passage, the Second World War, ended Japanese colonization of the island; and 228, or the February Twenty-Eighth Incident in 1948, is the monumental event which initiated a period of violent suppression of the Han Taiwanese natives by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government, extending into decades of White Terror and autocratic military rule of the Nationalist government. By the time of Wuhe's writing, at the eve of the popular election that would put the Nationalist government out of power for the first time in Taiwan, these events had become potent and familiar political symbols of local Han Taiwanese's decades of suffering as colonial subjects. In the biographical sketch at the beginning of the novel, the narrator-protagonist has told us that he chooses exile over participating in political movements in the 1980s, where these events and their meaning would have been excavated, debated, and eventually enshrined in Taiwan's political landscape. As the narrator explains that he is reluctant (or unable) to confront these historical trauma because of its closeness and that Musha Incident seems a fitting substitution, he at once implies that the Seediq historical incident is properly distant and other, but sufficiently comparable that it works as an outlet for his desire to research and to confront

---

<sup>28</sup> Wuhe, *Yusheng*, 66.

histories of trauma. While he lays bare of his psychological reasons for studying the Musha Incident—it is a projection of his own traumas that he cannot directly confront—he also projects the meaning of political trauma onto the Musha Incident and the status of postcolonial survivors onto his Seediq characters. The postcolonial lens of colonizer/colonized, aggressor/survivor, and nation/people hence becomes the major operative binaries throughout the novel, and when the narrator meditates on Seediq affairs, concerns about Han Taiwanese are never far from the horizon.

While it may seem that such self-reflexive identification allows the Han narrator to identify with Indigenous trauma and for the narrative to break down the binary division between Han and the Indigenous, it effectively imposes a particular brand of Han historiography onto Seediq lifeworlds. The postcolonial historiography that casts Han Taiwanese peoples as victims of historical trauma, colonial disorientation, and statist authority is embodied by the narrator's personal mistrust of the nation and his reference to Han Taiwanese trauma such as those mentioned in the quotation here. He may have professed that his research on the Musha Incident and Seediq survival is a projection of his more problematic relation with Japanese colonization and the Nationalist regime, but it is conspicuous how he relaxes visibly in the face of the Musha Incident. It is “fortunate” that Musha Incident has happened so that he can investigate some of the issues—that between state and people, between power and survival, between politics and life—at a somewhat comfortable distance. Such comfort in assessing another's history should disconcert its readers. While the narrator's self-reflection allows him to discover the unnaturalness of the naturalized “national” narrative, the questionable position of Han researchers, and the disorientation and trauma in Han, and if these reflections indeed bring Seediq characters in relation with the Han researcher, Han-Seediq relation is here represented by the epistemologies of Han Taiwanese postcolonial experiences, not the other way around.

Again we return to the question of settler colonialism. Most of Wuhe's readers, interpreting Han-Indigenous relation as a self-other (or master-slave) relation, celebrate textual intermingling and border-crossing even though the principles of such hybridity originate from contemporary Han settler experience

—a suspicion of state power and colonial categories and a reverence for individual free-willing that are results of Han Taiwanese’s history of colonial and autocratic rule. The problem is that the Indigenous peoples in Taiwan to Han Taiwanese are not simply the radical Other whose incomprehensible strangeness should be acknowledged and then crossed through self-aware partiality. Han settlers are rather agents of settler colonial dispossession of the Indigenous peoples—not primarily because of cultural barrier or social discrimination, but because Taiwan’s settler coloniality has been kept invisible, and because the Indigenous peoples have never been granted sovereignty equal to the settler polity. To allow Indigenous peoples’ membership in the settler society by the rules of the settler collective is not a radical change of Han-Indigenous relation, but is to preempt the confrontation with the question of Indigenous sovereignty and Han settlers’ lack of legitimacy. The narrator “I,” relaxing in the acknowledgement of his partiality as a researcher, seems unaware of the kind of tension between his settler identity and his Indigenous interviewees beyond bias, partiality, and cultural differences. The moment when the narrator perceives that “*our* land was occupied by the ‘state’—a violent institution embodying power,”<sup>29</sup> he has taken for granted his relation with the land of his residency in the possessive “our.” Although he disassociates with the state, he is part of the settler collective whose continual occupation of the land of Taiwan is mistakenly represented as neither an act of violence nor the operation of power. In fact, he has configured himself part of a populace with natural rights and ties with the land, amidst which the Indigenous peoples are already consenting members who clamor only for more recognition, economic equality, and political rights. It is in this light that the narrator’s crossing into Indigenous lifeworlds via a partial and postcolonial narrative must be questioned.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 31.

The consequence of casting Indigenous experience as equivalent to settler postcoloniality in this particular text is the narrative's inability to commit to Indigenous political agenda, particularly in comparison to the narrator's more pronounced commitment of a "Contemporary ethics of being." One of Wuhe's avowed purpose in his "research" is to decide on the "justification and appropriateness of the Musha uprising" and the attendant second incidence. During his research, Wuhe receives several responses: those who hog public positions (and thus unreliable) insist that the uprising is merely traditional practice of *chucuo*, or headhunting; those who have activist ideals of recovering Seediq homeland commemorate it as a heroic assertion of Indigeneity; many don't care or don't want to talk about it; and an old man, whose encounter with Wuhe ends the novel, implies that its moral violations have been rectified among the Seediq people through tribal rules. But the narrator, as he imagines the scene of the massacre, cannot think in Seediq terms and judged: "the individual becomes simply a point in the ritual and loses his individual autonomy. Individual violence vanishes amidst collective violence; individual will is completely suppressed in collective will...."<sup>30</sup> The absolute split between the collective and the individual, and between collective order and individual freedom, coincides with the narrator's own mistrust of any political identity that serves only to harm the "apolitical individuals." Associating such collective violence to colonialism and authoritative state power, the narrator implicitly construes Indigenous collectivity as similarly oppressive political entities.

Connecting such ethics of individual life with the simultaneity of survival, the narrator has used "the Contemporary" throughout the narrative to designate the historical and intellectual context where he and his Indigenous characters are situated. While "contemporary" is not complete synonymous to simultaneity, in either Wuhe's Chinese original or our English translation, they are closely associated to designate the shared temporality between the narrator, his characters, the text, and its readers. Yet "the

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 236.



Contemporary” is more than just a typological designation of “our time”; the narrator is deliberate in pointing out the particular ethical and historical perspective rendered by the temporality of the Contemporary. The term acts almost as a character with agency, who demands certain kinds of ethics of the narrator and through whose perspective the narrator has undertaken his investigation: specifically, the ethics of life. In response to the collectivism of the headhunting rituals, the narrator identifies the Contemporary as a feeling subject with whom he identifies: “I feel angry and sad for so many individuals who could not escape and become lost in the collective violence during the chucao era. The Contemporary grieves for those individuals who were submerged by the collective in history.”<sup>31</sup> The Contemporary’s ethos, as the narrator emphasizes in the narrative, and which author Wuhe reiterates in several interviews, is that of survival and living: “the Contemporary takes ‘being’ as its first principle.”<sup>32</sup> It is because of this first principle of being that the narrator and the narrative together question the legitimacy of Seediq uprising and the political discourses of Indigenous survival. According to this principle, the narrator suggests that the Indigenous characters are not only survivors of colonial encounter, but also, curiously, survivors of certain Seediq traditions and the politicalization of Seediq identity. In a strange twist of narrative juxtaposition, the Seediq characters seem to have survived not only colonial rule, but also their own Indigeneity.

Chen Chun-yen has contended that Wuhe’s emphasis on the Contemporary and his insistence on writing Seediq characters as coeval with Han have freed him from identity politics and allowed him into the realm of ethics. “His sympathy for the aboriginals does not lead to an endorsement of minority identitarianism.”<sup>33</sup> However, while a calcified minority identity is undoubtedly undesirable, Wuhe’s narrator operates on a binary that finds Indigenous collective identity as external to individual freewill and

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>33</sup> C. Chen, “Being-in-Common,” 454.

Indigenous being which, outside the novel, is not necessarily accurate. From contemporary Indigenous political discourse to the traditional (and lost) ritual of *chucuo*, the narrator destabilizes Indigenous authority in the same way he destabilizes colonial and state government authority, but leaves almost intact the ethics of the contemporary time, which valorizes the atomic individual and his/her good will towards the other. Tellingly, the kind of ethical relation Wuhe demands in the novel has been interpreted by Chen in terms of Jean-Luc Nancy's "being-in-common" and by Christopher Payne with regard to Emmanuel Levinas's formulation of ethics. While Nancy and Levinas disagree with regard to the exact relation one has with the Other, both rely on the shared finitude or mortality between self and Other (or simply another) as the foundation of ethical relations. Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz* makes explicit that the shadow of the Holocaust is responsible for such Contemporary ethics of survival as a reaction against the Other's death. Agamben echoes Wuhe's "Contemporary" when he cites Terrence Des Pres' *The Survivor*, for whom "the true ethical paradigm of our time is... the survivor, who, without searching for ideal justifications 'choose life' and fights simply to survive."<sup>34</sup> While De Pres's view downplays the feeling of shame that Agamben finds still essential to survival, the identification of survival with "choosing to live" makes the condition of survival a universal one that describes the human: "in human beings, life bears with it a caesura that can transform all life into survival and all survival into life. In a sense... survival designates the pure and simple continuation of bare life with respect to truer and more human life. In another sense, survival has a positive sense and refers... to the person who, in fighting against death, has survived the inhuman."<sup>35</sup> Wuhe's survivors, the "remains of life" in the title of his novel, must then be understood in this universal register. It is on this basis that Wuhe's narrator claims himself also a survival: lamenting human destruction of nature, the narrator says, "I was sad for nature and disappointed about my own species, almost to the point of despair. So at age forty five, looking at the mountain, looking at the water, and then looking back at human beings, I felt genuinely that I have arrived at the remaining years

---

<sup>34</sup> Agamben, *Remnants*, 92.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

of my life.”<sup>36</sup> As Agamben speaks of a caesura, the narrator’s slow peeling away from society and eventually from the entire species marks the moment when his life becomes a form of survival. Yet it is also at this moment, when he identifies the entire species as inhuman—or at least that their treatment of nature is unnatural—that he speaks from a position that seems more genuine. Having survived means having escaped death. The problem is, as the narrator’s position is arrived at philosophically, as he contemplates the landscape in the Seediq country, his Indigenous characters are not survivors in the same sense. Death is not a philosophical possibility in Indigenous lives, but a mechanism through which Indigenous peoples are consigned to either physical, identitarian, or cultural deaths.

If settler recognition of the Indigenous Others must only occur by recognizing the Indigenous as marked for death, it is a curious ethics that indicates no change of relation, since it simply describes the process of settler colonialism. This recalls the “logic of elimination” that Patrick Wolfe identifies as the foundational principle of settler colonialism,<sup>37</sup> where Indigenous are not ignored, but actively suppressed through amalgamation, containment, and erasure, as well as the techniques of recognition that traps Indigenous in historical no-where land. The ethics of decolonization must do the opposite: settlers must recognize the Indigenous in life, a life that is beyond survival, a life that is not defined only by “not death”—i.e. a life that is exactly not bare life. When narrator Wuhe captures bare life as the foundational truth of his understanding of contemporary Indigenous life, he entraps both his ethical self and his Indigenous subjects in the realm of exception. Just as what Agamben observes with modern democracy, where political subjectivity is imagined in the place marked with their subjection.

The danger of an ethics based in survival is fully evident when we also take into account how Agamben omits settler colonialism as an originary model of modern sovereign power and the Indigenous peoples as those who have always been and are still living in a state of the exception in modern settler states. Reading Agamben’s examples of modern sovereign power from the United States, Jodi Byrd

---

<sup>36</sup> Wuhe, *Yusheng*, 245.

<sup>37</sup> Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2000): 387–409.

definitively demonstrates Agamben's glaring omission of concurrent U.S. policies that cast Native Americans in various states of exceptions.<sup>38</sup> Scott L. Morgensen further explains that such neglect is not merely a citational mistake; rather, he identifies "a naturalisation and continuation of settler colonialism within Agamben's theoretical apparatus and the horizons of critical theory."<sup>39</sup> Namely, when Agamben cites slave societies as the originary event of modern states of exception, it normalizes settler colonial internment of Indigenous peoples in both literal and figurative spaces outside the law. As Morgensen argues, "the space-outside-law... defines slave societies only to the extent that the lands placed in exception to terminate Indigenous tenure became available to new biopolitical violences";<sup>40</sup> enslavement and internment as they happen in the United States depend on more originary states of exception to which the Indigenous peoples are still subjected to.

Where Wuhe's submission to the ethics of survival is more interesting than simple hypocrisy or blind-sightedness of a "settler ethics" is the fact that Wuhe also writes in postcoloniality, which is the remanent of a previous state of exception. While Taiwan's settler history began four hundred years ago, the implementation of modern settler governmentality in Taiwan was fulfilled more completely by the mediation of modern statecraft of the Japanese colonialists. This placed Han Taiwanese in an indirect settler relation with the Indigenous peoples in Taiwan: it is by Japanese colonialism that Taiwan comes under modern sovereign jurisdiction, and while Indigenous peoples in Taiwan are excepted from the general law that is practiced in Taiwan, Han Taiwanese are similarly excepted from the Japanese legal system by virtue of being colonial subjects. These layered states of exception continue after the War, when the Nationalist government placed the whole of Taiwan under martial law in which the Indigenous people were allotted a further state of exception that excepted them even in the structure of the martial law.

---

<sup>38</sup> Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, 190-1.

<sup>39</sup> Scott L. Morgensen, "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 70.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

When the martial law lifted and Taiwan had its first democratic election in 1989, as Taiwan's Han and local majority sought a postcolonial national identity, they had at the same time inherited the structure of a modern sovereign nation, that is at its core still sustained by a settler colonial structure and its originary positing of the Indigenous peoples in a state of exception.

This creates, in my reading, a strange melancholia for the state of exception in the narrator, a state in which a relation can be established with the Indigenous peoples through both's status as bare life, even as Han people's settler violence is the originary event that enables Taiwan's "severance" from China and its management as colonial territory under Japanese colonial ambition. The classification of postcolonial settler self as survivor has the double purposes of explaining settlers' post-traumatic identity and of relating to Indigenous peoples as fellow-travelers in the aftermath of the colonial history. If we return to the image of simultaneity, Wuhe in the afterword to the novel has maintained that there is a "simultaneity of survival."<sup>41</sup> Yet, as we have seen, the slippery mis-identification of postcolonial settler and Indigenous survivals puts in doubt the ethical viability of such simultaneity. This is to say, perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, unlike anthropological "fields" that are distant sites of projected historical backwardness, within the border of the modern "postcolonial" nation state, simultaneity may actually function to deny Indigenous difference. Indigenous peoples are granted simultaneous recognition in exchange for their Indigeneity—"you are now a modern subject just like us, that means your Indigeneity is compromised and that there is no longer special first people of the land." In other words, there is a split in the function of time in settler denial of Indigenous sovereignty that corresponds to the split the state imposes between Indigeneity and Indigenous bodies: Indigenous land (and the era when Indigenous bodies identify with Indigenous land) is a thing of the past, because Indigenous bodies are becoming modern, assimilated, and thus no longer Indigenous.<sup>42</sup> In such scenarios, settler gestures to relate to the

---

<sup>41</sup> Wuhe, *Yusheng*, 265.

<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

Indigenous peoples are predicated on the elision of Indigenous peoples' ongoing rights as Indigenous peoples and on the imposition of postcolonial analytics on Indigenous histories and reality.

A related textual effect of such sliding between settler and Indigenous status as postcolonial survivors is the narrator's occasional appropriation of Indigenous identity as a rhetorical figure as the underside of modern nation state. Similar to the state of survival that he finds to be universal, Indigeneity has become during the course of the novel into something available for sharing and claiming, without necessary reference to Indigenous rules of relation and induction. It is most apparent in the narrator's somewhat surprising mentioning of American painter Georgia O'Keefe in his narrative: since the narrator has claimed to refrain from subjects outside of Taiwan, he explains that his mentioning of O'Keefe is not a violation of the rule because "she is an individually independent and autonomous "indigenous of the earth." Narrator "I" explains further that "O'Keefe must escape the collective violence in civilized life to become an "indigenous of the earth."<sup>43</sup>

In the narrator's description of "indigenous of the earth," there is no communal basis for O'Keefe's "indigenous" identity, excepting her refusal of certain versions of modernity. The word the narrator uses for earth here—*dadi*, literally translated as "great land"—invokes land in its universality. If Indigenous cultures, including Seediq, are "Indigenous" precisely because they have insoluble and ontological ties to specific local landscape, Wuhe's formulation of "indigenous of the earth" is conspicuously abstract and universal. It seems that the identification of "indigenous of the earth" with a rejection of modernity in favor of connection to land is what allowed the narrator to claim, earlier in the text, that he is "Pingpu Siraya Han" (133). While Siraya is now an Indigenous people recognized by the municipal authority of Tainan City, at the time of Wuhe's writing, Siraya was considered "disappeared" and there was no officially sanctioned methods to ascertain one's Pingpu ancestry. While commentators such as Liou and Chen Chuan-yen take Wuhe's gesture as expressions of the ethical gesture of "becoming minority," in the

---

<sup>43</sup> Wuhe, *Yusheng*, 237.

face of Pingpu revitalization movements, it seems a rather cavalier gesture that reinforces the assimilation of Pingpu identity into the Han majority. Rather than promoting concerns for Indigenous issues, the gesture may more powerfully naturalize settler's right to the land of Taiwan, promoting, in other words, the settler's indigenization. I do not mean here that Indigenous identity should be patrolled along the lines of colonial categories or state policies, nor do I wish to negate the reality of intermarriage and the effect of cultural encounter, mixture, and assimilation. But I do want to suggest that most Indigenous peoples have established manners to account for kinship relations and require communal obligations and collective consent for adoptions. While these protocols may change according to pragmatics and social context, they sustain certain "ego-boundary"—to use Paelabang's phrase—of Indigenous identity, which is crucial for Indigenous survival. It should be noted here that the narrator has not claimed to be one of his Seediq hosts as easily as he mentions Siraya. Although he surmises "I think that I am becoming at least a third A'tayal" (A'tayal is the larger Indigenous group to which Seediq belongs), the narrator's claim to A'tayal identity is relatively more tentative and reserved. Yet, without comparable reserve nor protocols of induction, his reference to Siraya and O'Keefe's status as an individual Indigenous of the earth seems rather based in individual experiences—especially that of self-imposed exile—and the evacuation of Indigenous political identity through discourses of survival and bare life.

*Against the Poststructuralist Grain: Coming Up to Indigenous Ethics*

The colonist is not content with stating that the colonized world has lost its value or worse never possessed any. The "native" is declared impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of values but also the negation of values. He is, dare we say it, the enemy of values. In other words, absolute evil.

—Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*<sup>44</sup>

It takes imagination and courage to picture what would happen to the West (and to anthropology) if its temporal fortress were suddenly invaded by the Time of the Other.

—Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other*<sup>45</sup>

Now, given the text's blatant rejection of transparency, we must wonder whether the narrator's gestures in rejecting Seediq cultural nationalism do not in fact press the readers to notice and to criticize such Han-centric narrative moves. Read against the grain, the text may in fact be making a critical commentary on the limitation in the "Contemporary ethics" that the narrator so consciously embodies. The narrator almost demand such a reading when he emphasizes the partiality inherent in his "contemporary" viewpoint: "Ultimately I must speak for 'the Contemporary.' I was born in the Contemporary, grew up in the Contemporary, lived in the Contemporary, I can only speak in the Contemporary.... Amidst concepts and vocabulary that may become dated in any moment, I must stress again that the Contemporary takes 'being' as its first principle."<sup>46</sup> The narrator's repeated self-positioning in this sentence is remarkable, particularly as it comes before his solemn declaration of the Contemporary's principle of being, and I would argue that he is potentially angling for counter readings against such "Contemporary" ethics.

The resonance between Wuhe's narrative and continental philosophy that we have seen above alerts us to the very specific context in which the novel is frequently consumed—that of cosmopolitan intellectual circle. The context implies a certain blindspot with regard to the Indigenous, where they are automatically incorporated in the global intellectual order as the Other, variously silent, minor, surviving,

---

<sup>44</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 6.

<sup>45</sup> Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 35.

<sup>46</sup> Wuhe, *Yusheng*, 114.



or bare. This is not the kind of coevalness Fabian advocates in his critique of anthropological discourse. In *Time and the Other*, Fabian distinguishes between physical simultaneity, epochal time, and the co-presence of different ordering principles of specific beliefs and social reality, and his perception of coevals indeed consists in the intersection of multiple temporal orders. Invoking Maxwell Owusu's work, Fabian tells us that he is "tempted to say that the Western anthropologist must be haunted by the African's 'capricious ancestors'" to the same degree as African anthropologist feels a sense of oppressive dread in the presence of Western anthropologists.<sup>47</sup> As such, coevalness is not simply the admission of co-presence in the empty time and space, but the interpenetration of different temporalities; so that Indigenous temporality can be allowed to order modernity and apparently non-Indigenous space and subjects. Or, in a different formulation proposed by Doreen Massey, as we realize that space is not a static empty container of time, but is itself a product of interrelations, coevalness means not the meeting of bodies in empty time and space, but rather the meeting between different configurations of space/time.<sup>48</sup> In Mishuana Goeman's use of Massey's space/time, Indigenous mapping of land and nation thus disrupts settler grammar of place through distinct space/time of Indigenous lifeworlds.<sup>49</sup> Following this line of thought, what is missing in the text is not the representation of multiple Indigenous lives and voices, but perhaps a space where Indigenous values, ethics, and ways of ordering the world may enter and make an impact on the formal qualities of the text.

In *Remains of Life*, Indigenous values of writing and story-telling have been rendered almost invisible. Wuhe's Indigenous characters in this novel may provide biting comments on the power structure of research relations, but they have not been allowed to speak about knowledge and narrative; rather, as I have argued, their Indigeneity is contained within narrator "I"'s poststructuralist form and Contemporary ethics. We can however find some traces of Wuhe's engagement with Indigenous literary forms in

---

<sup>47</sup> Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 34-35.

<sup>48</sup> Massey, *For Space*, 69-70.

<sup>49</sup> Goeman, *Mark my Words*.

*Meditation of A-Bang and Kalusi*, where one of the main characters, Kalusi, is depicted as a historian of his tribe in Haocha. Contemplating Kalusi's double identity as hunter and writer, and how writing may have a different meaning to Lukai people than him, narrator Wuhe there admits to his inability to embrace Indigenous ways of writing:

Although I don't worship "writing," but apparently writing is longer lasting. Meanwhile, I understand that some people are opposed to writing, arguing that writing fixes what's originally living. They rather hold on to the 'tradition of oral history,' in which 'improvised creation' can always be added, retained or excluded in repeated retelling by natural selection, and thus forever maintain a living oral tradition for eons—I am not opposed to this, but in the face of this view, I must admit that I am a "wordsmith" whose conservatism is almost emasculating.<sup>50</sup>

There is a tinge of self-deprecating regret in narrator Wuhe's awareness of his limitation. It is felt furthermore as a lack and an outsider position that he cannot shed—"I have regrets, I regret that I always keep a pair of clear-sighted 'observing' eyes of an 'outsider.'"<sup>51</sup> In these two passages, Wuhe's emphasizes that his inability to engage with Indigenous modes of knowledge and writing is not necessarily a choice, and it would be a fair question to ask whether it is possible for a settler text to center Indigenous values and ethics, no matter how closely it represents an intimate knowledge to Indigenous communities and realities. It may indeed not be a reasonable or honest request for a settler text to embody Indigenous epistemology. However, it is not as difficult to imagine a critical readers' responsibility to respond to such texts with more serious attempts to explore its limitation and omissions. In this way, it may be far more important for us to read texts like *Remains of Life*, not as a recommendable model of poststructuralist ethics of relation for its settler readers, but as an occasion to explore its missteps and pitfalls.

---

<sup>50</sup> Wuhe, *Sisou*, 227.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

## Narrative Performance of Papora Survivance

Not native. No. Not simply native. Note. Natives are too easily exterminated as you know... the alter/native is a summnelse.

— Kamau Brathwaite, “Caribbean Cultures: Two Paradigms”<sup>52</sup>

Commenting on the historical mistake made by European in fabricating Indigenous Americans’ “Indian” identity, Vizenor conceptualizes “indian” as a term historically loaded with settler fantasy and oppressive authenticity—what he calls alternatively as “manifest manners” or “terminal creed”—imposed to negate Indigenous survivance. Playing on postmodern theories of simulation, Vizenor then labels contemporary Indigenous stories of resistance, resourcefulness, and creation as oppositional “postindian” narratives that both rebel against oppressive authenticity and take control of the postmodern instruments of expression. Vizenor defines these terminologies in the preface of *Manifest Manners*: “The simulation of the indian is the absence of real natives—the contrivance of the other in the course of dominance. Truly, natives are the storiers of an imagic presence, and indians are the actual absence—the simulations of the tragic primitive.... Postindians are the new storiers of conversions and survivance; the tricky observance of native stories in the associated context of postmodernity.”<sup>53</sup> Vizenor’s own creative works embody this theoretical gesture, and are incessant explorations of textual inter-referentiality that articulate Native identity and stories of survivance in relation to the postmodern and globalized reality of Native peoples and cultures.

---

<sup>52</sup> Edward Kamau Brathwaite, “Caribbean Culture: Two Paradigms,” in *Missile and Capsule*, ed. Martini Jürgen (Bremen: Universitate Bremen, 1983), 35.

<sup>53</sup> Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), vii-viii.

I turn to Vizenor's formulation of Indigenous survivance as a counter-theory to the kind of apolitical ethics of survival imagined by Wuhe's narrator in *Remains of Life*, particularly in light of recent Pingpu name rectification movements. As many Pingpu peoples are considered extinct by the mainstream fiction of their complete assimilation, survival in these cases consists particularly not of the existence of biological life nor the assertion of a continuous "authentic" tradition, but in the "vision and vital condition to endure, to outwit evil and dominance, and to deny victimry."<sup>54</sup> While Wuhe's novel deals with a moment of historical trauma, after which survival becomes individual, everyday, and apolitical, Zhao Huiling, in writing about the gradual and ongoing "disappearance" of a Pingpu Indigenous people, offers a different narrative of survival. If Wuhe bases survival on individual freedom from any collectivity, for Zhao, Indigenous survivance is necessarily communal, historical, and political. In Zhao's historical representation of Papora history, the everyday survival of Papora people's biological life does not equal to the survivance of their Indigeneity: the loss of Papora relation to land, Papora naming system, Papora ethical and kinship relation, and Papora language have all amount to the loss of Papora ways of life. However, while Wuhe might celebrate the continuation of Papora biological life without Papora identity as freedom from political identity, Zhao's narrative describes how the biological life of Papora descendants may be vessels where Papora identity and bloodline is cached. As I argue in this section, Zhao's novel adopts a narratology informed by Papora social relations and epistemology as well as contemporary Indigenous political activism. Her narrative work is part of the very labor by which a Papora identity is retrieved and re-imagined.

Zhao's narration of Papora history is relevant to our current study, besides its implication for the study of Indigenous writings in Taiwan, but foremost because it depicts the unique situation of the Pingpu people in Taiwan's settler colonial history—they have participated, willingly or unwillingly, in both Han settler endeavor and Japanese colonial attempts to contain and dispossess other Indigenous peoples of the island. In other words, they occupy a curious position in settler colonial structure where they are at once

---

<sup>54</sup> Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 36.

both minor settlers and Indigenous peoples. They are, in Veracini's diagram of settler colonial population structure, those Indigenous peoples who are marked for "uplifting"—to effectively disappear *as Indigenous* by being assimilated into the settler collective—in contrast to the denigrated Indigenous peoples who are to be suppressed, eliminated or otherwise excluded from the settler national future.<sup>55</sup> Zhao's task in writing Papora history and in conveying its contemporary existence thus involves an exploration of Papora's complicity in settler projects and their intergenerational obligation to other Indigenous peoples who they have helped to displace. Therefore, while Zhao's novel resembles other Sinophone Indigenous writings in Taiwan in retelling previously forgotten histories via Indigenous-centered forms of story-telling, it uniquely recounts Papora settler migration in the same narrative form and thus produces an account of Papora obligation to both its sunken Indigenous identity and other Indigenous peoples that is rooted in Papora kinship relation and traditional ethics—rather than abstract moral philosophy as we have seen in *Remains of Life*.

*Returning to Dadu Town* is Zhao's first novel and an ambitious attempt at describing the long history of Papora migration and assimilation over more than a century. While no scholarly reading has been published about the novel to date, the novel is advertised as the very first novel about the Pingpu peoples in central Taiwan,<sup>56</sup> and Zhao's preface explicates her intention to supplement the persistent Han-centrism in Taiwan literary market with the untold history of Pingpu migration. Funded in part by National Cultural and Arts Foundation, Zhao's project to voice Pingpu history is not contradictory to the official push for multicultural localism—in fact, Zhao's subject fits comfortably with the frenzy to discover Taiwan's local history and its "indigenous" identity, in which Pingpu bloodline is frequently seen as integral to Han settler lineage and, for that reason, is sometimes seen as a reason to justify Taiwan's

---

<sup>55</sup> Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 17-28.

<sup>56</sup> There are increasing numbers of fictional works about Pingpu peoples in different parts of Taiwan, mostly by writers identify as Han.

national and ethnic independence from China.<sup>57</sup> Complicating the apparent cohesion between Zhao's novel and Taiwan's mainstream localism, however, most press coverage of the novel's release stresses Zhao's identity as a Papora descendant, despite the lack of official recognition of Papora people's Indigenous status, or the most likely apolitical, symbolic nature of such recognition, even if it were to be granted. Before late 1990s, Pingpu identity has disappeared from public discourse for about fifty years,<sup>58</sup> and Zhao's insistent identification as Pingpu aligns her novel with the emerging Pingpu Name Rectification Movements—which, if taken seriously as it should be, challenges Han settler legitimacy rather than justifies it.

Pingpu, sometimes translated as Plain Indigenous or Plain Aborigines, is the Mandarin term now widely used in Taiwan to refer to those Austronesian peoples who have originally resided on the western plains of Taiwan when Han settlers first arrived, as opposed to those traditionally residing in the island's central and eastern mountains. Wedged between Han settler ways of life and those Indigenous peoples who remained largely tied to their traditional lands and lifeworlds in the central mountains, Pingpu people's Indigeneity has been multiply circumscribed, inscribed, and ambiguous during the four hundred years of settler occupation. Under both Qing and Japanese rules, they were seen as a special population group, who are half-way civilized but still savagery. Censused by the Qing government, taxed and forced into imperial service, and set up as nominal land title-owners which eventually cheated most Pingpu peoples out of their land, they become increasingly entangled with Han settler collective through agricultural economy, intermarriage, Han schools, and the prevalent use of Hoklo, the dominant settler dialect.<sup>59</sup> Han settlers and Qing officials labeled them as “cooked savages” (*shoufan*) and enlisted them as a defense force against the “raw savages” (*shengfan*) of the mountains. Japanese colonial government,

---

<sup>57</sup> For a salient analysis of the assimilation of Indigenous identity in Taiwan's localism, see Huang Hsin-ya, “xiandaixing yu taiwan yuanzhumin wenxue: yi xiaman lanboan yu ligelale awu zhuoping weili [modernity and Taiwan Aboriginal literature: in the cases of Syaman Rapongan and Ligelale Awu],” *Zhongwai Wenxue* 35, no. 5 (2006): 81–122.

<sup>58</sup> Melissa J Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?: The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> For descriptions of early Pingpu history, see Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography* and Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?*

adhering to the Qing classification system, divided the Indigenous peoples into the Plain Indigenous peoples, or *peipozoku*, and the Mountain Indigenous peoples, *takasagozoku*. And while *takasagozoku* were managed under special laws, *peipozoku* are subjected to ordinary administration.<sup>60</sup> After Chiang Kai-Shek's nationalist government arrived, Pingpu people's Indigenous identity eventually disappeared from official population record. With the exception of the relatively secluded Kav'lan people of the eastern plain, vast majority of Pingpu descendants have no official Indigenous status and Pingpu identity survives largely through fragments of rituals, customs, and language of the older generations.

However, Pingpu aspiration for official recognition is met with indifference from Han settler majority and suspicion from already recognized Indigenous peoples. Taiwan's Indigenous policy is currently dominated by the allocation of certain administrative resources and the limited numbers of reserved traditional territories, managed by the executive arm of the government, through the Council of Indigenous Peoples, and the Council have repeatedly responded to recent Pingpu petitions for name rectification with a persistent reference to the "due process."<sup>61</sup> One of the Council press releases from 2010, when Paelabang Danapang was its minister, cites the greatly divergent historical and social conditions Pingpu peoples have experienced, especially its integration in Han population, as a reason to delay official recognition in favor of "cultural revitalization" for the time being. Although a task force has been established to discuss Pingpu affairs, its progress is slow and Pingpu petitions continue.<sup>62</sup> This difficulty to include Pingpu Indigeneity in current schemes of political reconciliation indicates an important deficiency—while current policy treats Indigenous peoples as "post-" colonial, who are compensated for the trauma they have endured previously, it cannot acknowledge the ongoing settler domination which continues to suppress Pingpu's Indigenous identity. Unlike the Indigenous peoples of the central and eastern mountains, Pingpu peoples have resided on the same plots of land which the

---

<sup>60</sup> Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 133-173.

<sup>61</sup> See press releases from the Council website at <http://www.apc.gov.tw>.

<sup>62</sup> As recently as July 2014, Pingpu groups filed petition to the Council seeking name rectification . The press release in response to this recent petition reiterates the points stated in 2010.

settlers come to occupy. They challenge settler legitimacy directly. Since in settler colonial structures, Indigenous identities are marked to disappear to make space for settler indigenization, Pingpu peoples' Indigenous identity, once assimilated, remains negated.

*Returning to Dadu Town* must be read against the background of current Pingpu political and cultural movement. Her choice to identify with an Indigenous people who are marked as extinct, and to reassert such identity in a novel, entails a political stance starkly different from Wuhe's Han writer. While Wuhe's Han narrator seeks to blur both his and the Indigenous Seediq peoples' political identity and to universalize the concept of indigeneity as the opposite of modern nation state, for a Pingpu writer, such notion of the "indigenous of the earth" is hardly a flight from power; on the contrary, it manifests settler need to eliminate Indigenous differences. However, Zhao's narrative, rather than merely resurrecting Papora cultural identity or insisting on legal reparation in the settler-dominated legal "due process"—as suggested by official discourses of the Council of Indigenous Peoples—more importantly offers an account of Indigenous ethics, which dictates an inter-personal and inter-tribal system of relation and obligation. An alternative to Taiwan's current postcolonial hermeneutics of fault and reparation or the poststructural humanism of Wuhe's text, this Indigenous system of obligation allows Zhao to express both Papora grievances as a displaced Indigenous people and to assess their problematic complicity with settler-pioneers in the process of their forced migration.

*Returning to Dadu Town* is a somewhat unwieldy narrative just shy of 500 pages that do not follow conventional narrative order. Opening with the names and the birth and death dates of two Papora women, in two single lines resembling epitaphs, the novel ostensibly follows the lives of two Papora women, Hong Asi and Hong Ali from roughly 1872 to 1941. However, while the two women at first seem like the protagonists of the historical novel, they in fact never occupy the narrative focus for more than a chapter at a time and their personal histories give way repeatedly to stories of numerous other characters in the two women's extended families, communities, and those outside of their social circles but sharing



the geographical locality at the vicinity of *Dadu Town*. Moving at ease between characters' perspectives and consciousness and mixing a few genres, the narrative in fact tells the story, in many different voices, of the long history of Papora dispossession since the 17<sup>th</sup>-century. In a 30-page long verse prelude, in the voice of a Papora ancestral ghost, we have an account of Papora resistance and defeat under Dutch, Koxinga, and Qing invasions. The bulk of the narrative contains long or short episodes which feature the experiences and perspectives of different characters—Asi's Pazeh grandmother, her Papora grandfather, her Han mother, her Papora husband, Pingpu peoples in neighboring towns, and A'tayal hunters who are driven away by Pingpu pioneers, to name just a few—which together sketch a multifaceted picture of Papora's migration from their homeland on the western plain of the island, their settlement in Dadu Town (or present-day Puli), the community's experiences under different state governments, and eventually the imminent disappearance of Papora identity. The style of these episodes largely recall nativist realism, telling everyday experiences of the common people in the times of tumultuous change, although the realism is altered according to Papora Indigenous epistemology where ancestral ghosts speak and the land acts. The perspectives do not stay within Papora community, moreover, as a few episodes feature Han settlers and highland Indigenous peoples, who provide alternative views of Papora's history of defeat, migration, and survivance. The back blurb of the novel emphasizes the diversity of the novel's cast, painstakingly naming 11 distinct ethnic groups that make appearances in the novel—including “Hoanya, Pazeh, and Kaxabu among the Pingpu settler-pioneers, Posia, Thao, Bunun, A'tayal, and Seediq among the Indigenous peoples of the interior mountains, and Han settlers from Quanzhou, Zhazhou, and those of Hakka identities.” To complicate the already complex picture, the narrative is at times intruded by a palpably contemporary narrative voice, who offers commentaries and interpretations of the events, sometimes in the name of “I” or “we.” As such, the narrative seems deliberately heteroglossic, mixed, and unstable.

However, these characters are not strung together through the consciousness of a character or narrator, as we have seen in *Remains of Life*, nor are they introduced along a linear chronology. They are

not juxtaposed at random, either. Instead, I would argue that the entire narrative develops relationally, or rhizomatically, in accord with Papora ways of accounting kinship relations. Just as the narrative dwells in great length on representing Papora rituals and naming practices, through which any Papora individual understands their being as inextricably bounded in their rhizomatic kinship and affiliative networks of relation, the narrative form, with its repeated ramifications, seems to rehearse a similar ritual. In other words, the novel not only offers a description of Papora history and identity, but more importantly in its formal quality, may be said to have produced a semblance of Papora world order.

*Carrying the Ancestor: Individual Lives and Collective Memory*

Papora ritual of “carrying the ancestor” is for our reading the key imagery of Papora identity in the novel as well as the novel’s narrative structure. It dominates the first section of the novel, just as it is the first part of Papora’s traditional three-day celebration. The ritual of “carrying the ancestor” entails the journey living Papora villagers would undertake to convey their deceased back to the living world for their worship and participation in the subsequent celebration, but it is not simply a ritualistic and symbolic journey. As described by limited oral historical accounts and as represented in the first section of novel, Papora villagers would travel on foot to where their ancestral spirits are believed to reside (either a burial ground or a particularly spirited part of Papora traditional land), call out for the ancestors to follow them home, and then bend down with their hands stretching backwards, forming a carrying gesture on which the ancestral ghosts would lie, in order to be carried back to the living descendants’ home to be fed.<sup>63</sup> This gesture, adds Zhao’s narrative, is also the gesture a Papora was traditionally buried. In Zhao’s fictional account, Papora villagers would talk to the ancestral spirits they are carrying during the journey, explain

---

<sup>63</sup> Historian Hung Li-wan, while does not label the journey “carrying the ancestor” as Zhao does in the novel nor describe it in as much detail, has confirmed the physical journey as an important part of the annual ritual. Hung Li-wan. “shalushe (Salach) shi zhi kaocha: yi ‘jisi gongyie qianshen nanbaishe’ wei zhongxin [Excavating Salach history: on ‘Qianshen north-south collective of worship.’” In *Pingpu yanjiu lunwenji* [essay collection of Pingpu studies], edited by Ing-hai Pan and Su-chuan Chan. Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1995, 243.

where they are going and perhaps what had happened to the community and family in the past year. The communication goes both ways: the ancestral spirits would also impart knowledge and memory of the community and their individual lives to the living youngsters now carrying them. As the ritual consists of a physical journey through space, ritualistic bodily gestures taken by Papora villagers in order to become physical receptors and vessels of ancestral spirits, and verbal communication between Papora beings living or deceased, it encapsulates the inheritance of Papora identity across generations and despite migration. As Zhao stresses that a Papora should also be buried in the carrying pose, the ritual of “carrying the ancestor” becomes for the novel the main symbol of Papora identity and communal obligation. The living Papora in the ritual simulate the posture of the skeletal remains of their ancestors, who in both life and death continue to carry the spirits of earlier generations. The position of carrying the ancestors thus allow all generations to continue carrying other, more ancient generations on their back in a chain of obligations and reciprocity. As noted by historian Liwan Hong, in observing the practices of ancestral worship among a Papora subgroup, these ancestors do not belong to individual families but to the whole Indigenous village. According to Hong’s interpretation, the custom of collective worship serves the purpose of reinforcing communal relations and to prevent and deterring land sales to Han settlers, especially since the days of settler invasion.<sup>64</sup>

The ritual thus has important implication for the novel’s narrative and its purpose. Writing a people who are officially considered extinct—deceased—Zhao’s novel in effect seeks to convey Papora memory back to the living world. Being unfamiliar to the vast majority of Zhao’s readers in Taiwan, the prominence of descriptions of “carrying the ancestor” in the very first pages of the novel marks the narrative as indelibly non-Han and, as they read along, as distinctly Papora. Narratively, the ritual is therefore the conduit whereby Papora identity is first articulated. Asi, one of the two women whose life will be followed throughout the narrative, appears in this first episode of the novel as a young child of less than ten years old when Han settler invasion has begun for more than two hundred years. As an

---

<sup>64</sup> Hung, “shalushe.”

exemplary Papora character in the novel, Asi's first identifier in the novel is therefore her obligation to carrying her ancestors home every year and to learn about her genealogy. The communication between Asi and the ancestral ghosts begins with an introduction of each others' identities and genealogies. "Who are you," Asi asks as soon as she hears the spirits speak that she carries, and the spirits answer: "The unfriendly foreigners called me "fan king [or king of the savages]," and "I am a Papora *malau* [grandmother] of many generations ago. I am a Papora *atau* [grandfather] of many generations ago. I am following you home."<sup>65</sup> The genealogies between Asi and the spirits are established in such exchanges, whereby both the living and the dead confirmed that they are connected by Papora genealogical ties.

Such genealogical recognition seems in turn to confirm Asi's Papora identity even at the time of assimilation, as the anxiety of assimilation in the Papora community finds its first expression also in this episode. Asi, identifying herself as "fan"—"savage" in the sinic language," wonders at her identity as Papora: "The other *fans* in Puli say that my father is a Dadu fan. But my *yia*—or *kaya*, as the elders say [both meaning mother]—is Han. So do my little brother Fu and I count as Dadu fan?"<sup>66</sup> The ancestor, without answering directly, laments that, "Papora's children are getting fewer and fewer, and if there is no one left to carry so many Papora grandparents, we won't be able to find our way home," to which Asi eagerly answers with her willingness to continue the practice.<sup>67</sup> The ancestor's indirect answer seems to suggest that being a Dadu fan, or Papora, does necessarily lie in portions of blood and the details of genealogy, but in the younger generations' due obligation to carry the weight of their ancestors and to maintain a path of return. As much as this obligation is carried out as a physical burden in the ritual, being Papora, Zhao's narrative suggests, consists in the living descendants' acts of remembering, recalling, and invoking of Papora identity and history.

---

<sup>65</sup> Zhao, *Daducheng*, 19.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

The obligation to Papora collective ancestry seems to me to be the key to both the narrative structure of *Returning to Dadu Town* and Zhao's authorial position. As mentioned above, the novel's narrative veers away from the two women's lives constantly to branch out into other characters' perspectives and life stories. In light of the ritual of "carrying the ancestor" that opens the novel, it seems likely that the narrative structure is a performance of Papora kinship recounting—that neither woman's life story makes sense without an account of her familial lineage and affiliative networks. Rather than going into these side characters' lives as background stories necessary for the main characters, moreover, the narrative perspective is frequently given over completely to the other characters. As such, Asi and Ali are not so much main characters of the novel, but more likely parts of an entire social and historical network, who become in their part, conduits into other nodal points forming the different episodes of the narrative.

As an example, in the episode we have just read, Asi's experience in the ritual and her conversation with the ancestors quickly give way to the ancestor's voice, who informs us and Asi the two-hundred-year history of Papora dispossession since the Dutch East Indian Company made landfall, in a 30-page-long, first-person narrative poem. After the poem ends, Asi is not given the narrative space to respond to it. Rather, the narrative merely states that the ancestors are tired, and then move on to complete a brief description of the rest of the ritual. Asi's role here is ritualistic: while this episode begins and ends with her participation in the ritual, it does not concern her personally. Her task in this part of the narrative is to convey the ancestral poem, as in the rest of the narrative, where her life story is told as only one part of the picture of the entire community. As such, the first third of the whole novel departs almost completely from Asi, concentrating on the stories of Papora migration, from the western plains to the central mountains, as experienced mostly by Asi's grandfather—though these stories, too, occasionally become occupied by other voices. Ali, in a similar vein, would not appear in the narrative until half way through

the novel; but even after that, she is only intermittently the protagonists of short episodes. As the narrative is voiced by numerous characters in the vicinity of Dadu Town, what the novel presents is far from the story of private lives, but a congregate of an entire place-based communal history.

I dwell on the unusual function of the two women characters—Asi and Ali—because how Zhao’s use of these characters depart from conventional historical novels that have populated Taiwan literature, especially in the strain of nativist realism or even post-nativist literature that we discussed briefly previously. From classic nativist novels like Qiao Li’s *Cold Nights Trilogy*, to more recent post-nativist novels such as Congwei Wang’s *A Home Island* and Yuhui Zhao’s *Mazu’s Bodyguard*, a single family and its key members normally occupy the central focus of the narrative, whereby Taiwan’s historical events—colonization, war, Nationalist take-over, etc.—are represented as key historical contexts with which individual characters must contend or as social backgrounds against which private histories are lived out. In these novels, the key characters’ life stories are to be related, through whom the readers experience constraints placed on individuals by the historical periods. And in this way, a family’s destiny allegorizes the nation’s. While marketing materials around the publication of Zhao’s novel certainly appeals to this existing convention, on the other hand, the novel’s relative slight of the two characters would frustrate a reader’s anticipation for this conventional narrative form. The blurb on the back of the novel states that it is “through the life stories of two Papora women” that the book presents its diversely ethnic characters, but the fact that the novel goes on for a first hundred pages or so without much dwelling on the happiness and sorrow of the two character tip the reader off quickly to their unconventional roles in the narrative.

Partially, the fact that individuals and families are not the dominant organizing principle of Zhao’s construction of Papora history in Dadu Town can be related to the structure of Papora kinship relation that the novel presents, which is not linear as in Han patriarchy. Papora culture is matriarchal, but moreover its accounting of kinship relation is not dominated by the family name system, either in the father’s or the mother’s line. Zhao emphasizes the more rhizomatic accounting of Papora kinship relation in several places of the novel, where Papora matriarchs confront the crumbling of Papora social order

through the gradual adoption of Han names among Papora descendants. As Han last names are conventionally passed on through patrilineal lines, the gradual adoption of Han naming system among Papora threatens the accounting of Papora kinship relation—and with it, proper social relation that connect Papora with other members of the community horizontally as well as vertically. To Asi's great grandmother, therefore, the loss of Papora names is not only symbolic—it more importantly effects a different sense of subjectivity, history, and communal obligations. Asi's great grandmother Awushing, worried about her son's getting the Han family name "Hong," explains that her worries is more deep-seated than the name's symbolism: rather, "I am afraid that the ancestors can't remember this name. And neither can I."<sup>68</sup> Although the ritual of carrying the ancestor seems to suggest that a Papora descendant can assume her Papora identity by assuming her obligation, Awushing's worries indicate how much the naming practice serves as a reminder of the ancestral connection. Traditionally, Papora people do not have family names, but pass on parts of their polysyllable names to members of the younger generations to indicate kinship.<sup>69</sup> Rather than a family name designating patriarchal lineage, Papora names are deconstructed and become elements of new names for the younger generations, regardless of gender. The narrator explains to us that "a simple name would become a sturdy thread connecting many generations whereby all the complex memories could be closely woven into Indigenous [*fan*] clothes' enduring patterns. When a Papora calls another by her name, it is equivalent to calling her *kaya* [mother], *baba* [father], *kaya* of *kaya*, *baba* of *baba* ...."<sup>70</sup> Because Papora names are taken apart and reassembled through generations, they signal the collectivity of Papora kinship relation that crosses generations and may reach laterally beyond a single matrilineal line. A Papora individual, thus named, is an integral part of the communal existence, who carry Papora collective survivance both in acts and in name.

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 119.

This rhizomatic naming practice is further complicated when Han names are introduced into Papora societies. Both Asi and Ali have the Han last name Hong, which seems to suggest their familial connection *per* Han tradition. But as the narrative ends, we realize that they are no relation and do not, in fact, interact with one another throughout the narrative. The adopted name signals, more than family relation, a common strategy of survivance shared by different Papora individuals. The narrative dwells at length on Asi's great grandfather Wuyawuli's deliberation over the Han name Hong, which he is to give to his son. The Hong, explains the narrative from Wuyawuli's perspective, are one of two biggest settler families in Taiwan at the time, and Wuyawuli chooses to align his Papora family with this settler family in order to take advantage of their influences. The narrator describes that Wuyawuli does not find it contradictory to adopt a Han name and that Papora of Wuyawuli's generation comprehend his choices without much difficulty. It is important to acknowledge that, while historically the popularity of Han name among Pingpu peoples reflected the assimilatory policy of Qing governance, Zhao in her novel emphasizes the agency of Papora ancestors in choosing the right name for their descendants. Even when later Papora bear names that are different from their ancestors, the narrative suggests that these names may have a collective history no less significant for Papora memory. Of course as the narrative unfolds, it becomes clear towards the end of Japanese colonization that the Han names have in fact confused Papora traditional order—inheritance through matrilineal line is almost completely discontinued and the annual rituals eventually disappears—but novel's imagining of the historical origins of Papora names and tradition forms of Papora rituals seem to suggest how a Papora identity may still be possible in the remembrance of these traditions.

Similar to the annual ritual of “carrying the ancestor,” the names of living Papora descendants can be viewed as vessels of Papora history. And, just as the naming practice obscures singular bloodlines and hints at rhizomatic relations of inheritance, the narrative veers in many directions in its recounting of Papora history and the social history of Dadu Town. As such, instead of being the lens through which the narrative represents and comments on the public history of Taiwan, Asi, Ali, and other characters



featured in Zhao's novel are *components* of her construction of a Papora lifeworld that has left little trace in Taiwan's mainstream consciousness. If Zhao's novel is an attempt to call a part of Papora lifeworld into being, then it is significant that Zhao does not stay within one family and their immediate associates in her depiction of Dadu Town. The town, constructed by several different Pingpu peoples who fled their traditional homelands on the plain is rather a composite product of the interactions between characters—be them Papora, other Pingpu peoples, Han settlers, or non-Pingpu Indigenous peoples whose traditional territories are encroached with the establishment of the town. As such it is not a background propping up characters' private lives, but the main focus of the novel's constructed world.

*Returning to Taritsi: Settler Colonial Mimicry and Indigenous Contract*

The feature of assuming responsibility is therefore genuinely juridical and not ethical. It expresses nothing noble or luminous, but rather simply obligatory, the act by which one consigned oneself as a prisoner to guarantee a debt in a context in which the legal bond was considered to inhere in the body of the person responsible.

—Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*<sup>71</sup>

While Papora ritual and naming practices inform the novel's narrative structure, the novel contains multiple perspectives beside the dominant Papora ones—particularly those Indigenous peoples who are displaced by Papora migration. The narrative's contemporary task is thus not simply the unfolding and the carrying-forth of Papora memory among its own members, but also the recounting of Papora relation with and responsibility to those others they have encountered in during the processes of their migration and re-settlement. Within these histories, Papora identity as both Indigenous and aggressing settler-pioneer is most pronounced and troubling, and Zhao refuses to simply explain them

---

<sup>71</sup> Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 22.

away with a narrative of Papora victimhood. While the novel performs Papora identity foremost as individual responsibilities to traditional kinship relations, it similarly foregrounds Papora ethical orders in the remembrance of their settlement history. Through this lens, two distinct models guided Papora settlement in the space of the novel: one based in Indigenous codes of reciprocity, and one informed by Han settler economy. In Zhao's narrative, Papora migration is first arranged among several Indigenous peoples, between hosts and guests, and around the concept of *taritsi*, or Indigenous kins. Yet, the settlement later takes on a settler-colonial characteristics when the settlement is arranged as contractual agreements under Qing imperial law. As Zhao presents both concepts, she aligns the disappearance of Papora identity with the upholding of settler legal order, and as such suggests that assimilation entails not simply a crisis of Papora cultural disappearance, but more importantly the erosion of Papora ethics. Papora's assumption of a minor settler role happens at the same time as the gradual loss of Papora Indigenous identity, and Zhao seems to suggest that a restoration of Papora identity demands simultaneously a renewed sense of obligation between Papora and their other Indigenous hosts—a sense of obligation rooted, not in universal concepts of human rights or historical justice, but in Indigenous-centered systems of reciprocity and relation.

In the first part of the novel, Papora migration from their traditional homeland to the inland Dadu Town is sanctioned by the idea of Indigenous kinship, associated with the Pingpu concept of “*taritsi*.” Rendered in Sinitic language in the novel and pronounceable in Mandarin Chinese as *dalizhe*, the term is nevertheless markedly alien to most speakers of Mandarin Chinese and as such is coded as Indigenous. Zhao glosses the term in the preface to the novel as to mean “born of the same root, or Indigenous relatives” and the circumstances of Papora's migration are thus represented in the novel as an instance of Indigenous collaboration.<sup>72</sup> Importantly, the term has been used specifically to designate the collaborative and affiliative relations between Indigenous peoples in and around the Puli area, an inland basin where Dadu Town was located. Historically, the term features prominently in a 1824 contract signed

---

<sup>72</sup> Zhao, *Daducheng*, 7.

by several Pingpu village leaders and the Indigenous people of Hameilan village from the inland basin Puli, known among Pingpu scholars now as “Agreement to Allow Pioneering and Settlement for Security Reasons.”<sup>73</sup> A valuable document of Pingpu migration history, the contract details the circumstances of land loss and population decimation suffered by both Puli and Pingpu Indigenous villages, caused by Han settler aggression, and how the village leaders decided that Pingpu re-settlement in Puli would aid all parties. As historian Zhenhua Wen observes, the most remarkable aspect lies in the clear sense of ethnic identity among these different villages as explicated by the contract. It specifies that, upon hearing how Pingpu villages lost their homeland to Han swindlers, “Indigenous kins from Ami, Dashe, and Simaodan villages [in Puli] thought back on our origins, that we were originally *taritsi* relatives from the same lineage, branches of the same tree, scattered only because Koxinga invaded our territories... if we may invite our *taritsi* to live and cultivate with us, for one we can help each other resist vicious savages, for two our Pingpu *taritsi* will have a permanent residence....”<sup>74</sup> Surrounding this contract, Zhao in one early episode of the novel represents at length how Papora villagers, including Hong Asi’s grandfather, make the difficult but inevitable decision to take up their Puli *taritsi*’s offer and how they struggle to accumulate the necessary gifts and payments they are obligated to give to their Puli hosts for migrating to their homeland.<sup>75</sup> Because each distinct village has a strong sense of group identity and territorial connections, the decision to move into other Indigenous villages’ traditional territories is made not only with the acknowledged kinship relation between these Indigenous groups, but even more importantly the obligations expected of both host and guest. Zhao’s careful representation of this contract and its circumstances hints at the importance of the conventional protocol by which Papora people have negotiated enough legitimacy to belong in their new place of settlement.

---

<sup>73</sup> Chen-hua Wen, “qingdai zhongbu pingpuzhu qianxi puli fenxi [An analysis of central-region Pingpu migration to Puli during Qing rule],” *taiwan wen hsien* [Taiwan historical] 51, no. 2 (2000): 27–37.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Wen, “qingdai zhongbu pingpuzhu,” 31.

<sup>75</sup> Zhao, *Daducheng*, 82-89.

However, as the novel progresses and Papora settlement expands, Zhao introduces non-Papora voices to indicate how the Indigenous contract has taken up settler colonial characteristics, whereby Papora use of Indigenous contract comes to resemble Han settlers' use of land deeds to dispossess the Indigenous peoples. Midway through the novel, we find that Asi's family has been firmly set up Puli, in Dadu Tow. But as the town is becoming gradually swamped with more Han settlers following Pingpu pioneers, Asi's father Jingcheng decides to pioneer further inland, into areas where "sheng fan [unassimilated indigenes] frequently comes out to kill."<sup>76</sup> By implication, it is considered homeland by the unassimilated Indigenous peoples. When Jingcheng's Han wife Jiang Jing cautions him about the illegitimacy of his plan, saying "That is originally their ancestral land. Don't assume that they are gone and won't come back. I don't think they will let it go so easily," Jingcheng responds that they have obtained a contract with the Indigenous peoples:

"Alishi village's leader, who proposed this pioneering mission, said that he has already obtained from shengfan the rights to open and cultivate that tract of land. This is a world with Imperial law. Our investment is secured with a *fanqi* ["savage" contract]. Don't worry."

"Imperial law? In the first few years of my marriage to you, there was no imperial official who dares to even come into this savage land. How can you talk about imperial law? If the savages in the mountain were truly submissive to imperial rule, they would not have been called "raw." Did you Pingpu people eat too much of Han peoples' saliva? Having learned only a few trick, you now know how to write those wicked contracts to swindle each other? Who can be regulated by such insignificant piece of paper? To ask them to give you those deceptive hand prints and foot prints?"<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 226.

Jingcheng's invocation of imperial law apparently strikes Jiang as ironic. While Papora peoples were dispossessed of their traditional homeland through unfair contracts under the imperial legal system, for Jingcheng to invoke the same law in an attempt to pioneer other Indigenous land simply replicates the same settler colonial tactics his ancestors have suffered. A “savage contract” is an invention of Qing imperial governance in Taiwan, and refers to contracts made between settlers and Indigenous peoples over the ownership and usage of a piece of Indigenous land. Although the Indigenous peoples are designated as de jure owners, according to sociologist Ka Chih-ming, Qing government’s insistence on turning Plain Indigenous peoples into “landlords” in these contracts alienate them from their ancestral land, and eventually enforces them to relinquish any practical relation to their land, aside from a symbolic lump sum of “rent” that they have no means to enforce collection after a short period of time.<sup>78</sup> As the novel has described this particular technique of settler invasion in relation to Papora’s loss of ancestral land in earlier episodes, which leads to Papora’s initial migration inland, here Jiang Jing’s accusation of Jingcheng’s use of the same technique highlights the insidious perpetuation of settler colonial structure beyond the initial Han-Plain Indigenous encounter and the paradoxical similarity between Han settlers and their first Indigenous victims after more than a century of settler colonial expansion. Compared to the previous instance where Papora migration is seen as a demonstration of Indigenous affiliation and collaboration, Jingcheng’s contract here is backed by the settler world order. With no mentioning of Indigenous affiliations, gifts, and obligations between host and guest, the codes of conduct that sanction Papora’s initial migration has been abandoned for maneuvers that may be construed as settler colonial.

Zhao highlights this uncanny similitude between Han and Papora settler migration by introducing non-Pingpu perspectives, from both Han and A'tayal viewpoints. Jiang, being Han, criticizes Jingcheng’s actions from an unstable position. Growing up with the privilege of being Han, but belonging to a poor family so that she must submit to be married off to a Plain Indigenous man, she is implicated in the settler

---

<sup>78</sup> Chih-ming Ka, *Fan toujia: Qingdai Taiwan zuqun zhengzhi yu shufan diquan* [The Aboriginal landlord: Ethnic politics and Aborigine Land Rights in Qing Taiwan] (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2001).

colonial structure but is not granted historical agency to either enforce or alter the relation. Her discomfort is unsettling but non-transformative. To disturb the Papora perspective, however, the narrative subsequently switches to one of two short sections dominated by the perspectives of the A'tayal people, whose subgroups occupy the area where Jingcheng is set to pioneer in the novel. In this segment, two A'tayal youths echo Jiang Jing's earlier comparison between Han and Papora pioneers, cautioning each other to "never trust the Pingpu peoples. They are not qualified as Indigenous. They have learned all the deceptive tricks that the Han people used on them, and now they are turning on their weakened *taritsi* brothers" (232). Through A'tayal eyes, the narrative describes the pioneered land as an image of destruction and death, while recalling how A'tayal elders are forced to leave their ancestral land due to Pingpu and Han pioneering. These scenes of displacement are echoes of Papora memories in the earlier pages of the novel, where the decision and internal turmoil of Papora migration into the mountains is elaborated over roughly a hundred pages. The return of the term *taritsi* in this episode is of course significant. As much as the juxtaposition of Papora, Han, and A'tayal perspectives undermine Papora legitimacy to pioneer further beyond their original settlement in Puli, the recurrence of *taritsi* suggests a manner in which further Papora settlement may be negotiated, if the concept of kinship relation and mutual obligation is upheld between Papora pioneers and the Indigenous host.

To return to the narrative structure of the novel, if Zhao's narrative resembles the rhizomatic structure of Papora kinship relation, the concept of *taritsi* suggests that Papora ethics and interpersonal relation extends beyond Papora communities. Especially as they migrate to Dadu Town, Papora identity becomes enmeshed with the inter-Indigenous and place-based network, for whose survival, *taritsi* becomes the necessary ethical obligation. Zhao's juxtaposition of Papora, Han, and A'tayal voices thus seems not simply an attempt to decenter any one ethnic group's grand narrative and political identity, as we have seen in the last section with Wuhe's poststructuralist dialectics. Although it does prevent the assertion of any ethnic identity at the expense of another's history, it does not prevent the political assertion of ethnic identity as Wuhe's narrative sometimes does. Instead, by introducing the concept of *taritsi*, Zhao provides

a model of relation in which differently identified groups may negotiate a network of obligations and collaboration in the service of mutual survival. The importance of the original “Agreement” in the narrative here may be partially elucidated in light of Chadwick Allen’s analysis of treaty discourse in Native American and Māori activist literature. Allen, in his monograph *Blood Narratives* has pointed out that, while postcolonial theories are mostly suspicious of texts and their truth claims, and thus focus on the duplicity of colonial-period treaties, Indigenous activists frequently uphold the truth values of settler-Indigenous treaties. Since these treaties implicitly or explicitly justify Indigenous sovereignty at the time of treaty—they have at least enough sovereignty to sign treaty agreements—upholding the equal relationship between the two parties of the treaty and demanding compensation in settler violation of the treaty becomes an activist strategy to re-assert Indigenous sovereignty, and political and territorial rights.<sup>79</sup> Although in Zhao’s novel we have Indigenous-to-Indigenous contracts, rather than settler-Indigenous ones, Zhao’s emphasis on the concept of *taritsi* may be understood in a similar way. That is to say, Papora identity, as well as other Indigenous parties’ identities, is pronounced if such statements of intention can be upheld as historically significant and legally viable. In the same token, the problem of Qing Indigenous contract is not so much the signing of these contracts, but how these contracts are violated and abused in subsequent settler land-grabs. The assertion of *taritsi* relations would not invalidate the meaning of all Indigenous contracts, but rather would entail a formal context where Indigenous sovereignty and identity can be mutually identified. As such, the A’tayal characters in the novel complain about Pingpu incursion as A’tayal, and Zhao’s predominantly Papora narrative has an obligation to hear the A’tayal voices if it were to honor traditional Papora ethics. Dadu Town, as constructed by the narrative, is a historical location riddled with mutating ethnic constructs and gradually conflicting codes of conducts.

---

<sup>79</sup> Chadwick Allen, *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

In previous discussions, we rely on Papora ritual, naming practices, and the concept of *taritsi* to analyze Zhao's narrative as Papora-centered. Yet, as scholarly accounts on Papora tradition is relatively scant and almost certainly not part of public knowledge, part of the function of Zhao's novel is the representation of these almost forgotten aspects of Papora life. We are thus faced with the question of the author's palpable intervention into *creating* a Papora identity and ways of life that are unverifiable outside of the novel, the author's account, and the fading memory of Papora elders. As Zhao explicates in her author's preface, much of her research for the novel consists of her first-hand interviews with a quickly fading generation Papora elders, but she also admits that she has to fill in the gaps with fiction.<sup>80</sup> We have therefore been conducting a circular reading, where we read the novel's structure through an ethnographical understanding that we gain from the novel in the first place. Whether our reading and whether Zhao's imagination of Papora rituals reflects traditional Papora life *authentically* is impossible to determine. As Zhao states in the preface, "from my understanding as an author, *Returning to Dadu Town* is a political novel" and, in a parenthetical remark that follows, "because I have to rely on contemporary languages to rebuilt fragments of relevant history, the novel is inevitably dominated by my subjective perspective. I hope that the readers can enter and depart from my limited text with conscious effort and produce personal readings that are both critical and creative."<sup>81</sup> It seems in this statement that Zhao is subjecting her novel to deconstruction, similar to the self-reflexive narrator in Wuhe's novel, who also deliberately exposes his writing position. But Zhao's assertion that the novel is political and her urgency to construct a Papora lifeworld also point to her unwillingness to allow Papora identity and history to dissolve in deconstruction. In fact, as we have discussed, in the current political context, the "disappearance" of Pingpu cultures and its assimilation into Han mainstream cultural matrix have been the reason why

---

<sup>80</sup> Zhao, *Daducheng*, 10, 8.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.



Pingpu peoples are constantly denied Indigenous status. As much as this view takes postcolonial hybridity as justification for the erasure of Papora political identity, Zhao's novel must disentangle Papora identity from the assimilatory tendencies in discourses of postcolonial hybridity. It has the difficult task of asserting a distinct Papora ethnic identity and history while acknowledging the fragmentation of Papora memories and the fact that her construction of Papora identity is born of a political desire.

This dilemma creates a markedly contemporary authorial voice that interrupts the otherwise realistic narrative with commentaries and interpretations of the unfolding events. The voice, like Wuhe's narrator (albeit much less explicit), has a distinct ideological position. But while Wuhe's narrator speaks with a fidelity to individual freedom and apolitical life, Zhao's authorial voice is a decidedly postcolonial one, with an eagerness to assure the readers of Papora ethnic identity and their strategies of resistance amidst settler aggression. In the episode of Jingcheng's pioneering we have seen above, for example, this authorial voice intrudes to ensure us that Jingcheng is not completely unaware of the damage to Papora world order his acts effect. Although Jingcheng defends his pioneering enterprise in front of his wife, he is shown to be deeply troubled and conflicted in private. As he boasts about his achievements to his daughter, the narrator comments that "his pride successfully suppressed the sadness that he cannot explain even to himself."<sup>82</sup> Yet the narrator quickly provides the explanation which eludes Jingcheng: "such internal conflict, about camphor-cutting, had to do with Papora ancestors' respect for land."<sup>83</sup> Then in regard to the pioneering enterprise as a whole, the narrator explains further that "these Pingpu investors seemed to have realized that they must emulate strategies of mainstream capitalist enterprise in order to compete with Han settlers. Their aspiration for exploration and development became gradually more similar to the Han settlers who had taken so much advantage of their ancestors."<sup>84</sup> The narrator's omniscient commentary, compounded with the slightly anachronistic mentioning of "mainstream

---

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 229.

capitalist enterprise” in describing Pingpu intentions, provides an interpretive framework for Papora’s paradoxical position as Indigenous settlers, that is however external to the psychological drama of the characters. This explanation, in other words, do not belong to the historical context of the characters and their Papora society, but rather belongs to our time—to the author and her readers.

The intrusion of the contemporary perspective into Zhao’s construction of Papora traditional lifeworlds can feel rather jarring, and I return in the conclusion to discuss the aesthetic problems this creates. Yet in terms of Pingpu political aspiration and Zhao’s task to write into being a Papora political identity, the reader’s inevitable awareness of authorial intervention makes reading *Returning Dadu Town* a political experience. Rather than a purely historical novel that describes Papora assimilation and supposed disappearance as a finished affair, Zhao explicitly asks the readers to identify with her and interpret Papora history as a testimony of their distinct ethnic identity. To that end, while the narrative voice sometimes give commentaries anonymously, as in the above example, towards the end of the narrative, it has come to interpellate the reader in her act of interpretation. While depicting a scene where a last recital of Papora tradition song triggers other Papora villagers’ melancholy, for example, the narrator explicitly asks the reader to participate in the interpretation of the event: “A sense of unfathomable sadness permeated all around her [the singer]. But if we think against the grain, her clearly articulated sadness indeed comforted the members of the community, who had also gone through much hardship in their own lives.”<sup>85</sup> Taking out the qualifier, “if we think against the grain,” would have made the passage realistic—a truth claim commonly acceptable for a work of fiction. The addition of the qualifier however transforms the sentence semantically. The song is only comforting *if* the writer and the reader are willing to think against the grain, against the obvious tragedy of Papora cultural extinction. While an actual reader is at liberty to disagree with this act, the sentence invites the reader’s conscious choice to participate in the author’s project and to find positive articulations of Papora identity.

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 475.

In some aspects, Zhao's authorial voice functions similarly to Wuhe's narrator. Both intervenes in history through a contemporary viewpoint, and in a sense attempts to tease out the contemporary significance of the history. The difference lies in their different understanding of the stakes of the contemporary viewpoints and the ethical responsibility of this presentist interpretations of history. For Wuhe, *Remains of Life* aims to deconstruct political interpretations of history by directing the narrative attention to individuals departure from politics. In *Returning to Dadu Town*, on the other hand, Zhao's characters' private lives are indelibly parts of Papora history, and thus contemporary Papora political aspiration, because how Papora individuals *are* bearers of Papora collective identity. And this obligation is consciously extended to the authorial voice herself, who states openly that she is "a contemporary author of Papora ancestry," during an episode where she interprets a Papora marriage as yet another attempt at Papora ethnic survival.<sup>86</sup> As much as the novel dwells at length on how Papora identity is carried forth by the living Papora descendants, the author, identifying herself as a Papora descendant, shares this exact burden. As we have seen with regard to the ritual of carrying the ancestor, a Papora descendant's participation in physically carrying forth Papora ancestral being makes them Papora. It is in this sense that the novel, and Zhao's self-positioning as Papora, may be seen as contemporary vessels of Papora survival. Hence while the novel ends with the apparent end of Papora identity—with Ali's body buried straight, not bending as if carrying an ancestor—the title of the novel emphasizes return. Not only is the narrative a return to a historical scene of Papora community, with the authorial voice bridging Papora history and contemporary Papora politics, it seems to also herald the return of Papora identity among the living in the form of the novel. Zhao's writing of the novel is in a way her calling and carrying into being her Papora ancestry, which in turn ascertains her Papora identity.

Then, if the novel and Zhao's writing of it may be seen as an re-enactment of Papora rituals, it is possible to reconcile Zhao's contemporary voice with Papora epistemology in a similar framework. Papora

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 265.

language is effectively dead,<sup>87</sup> but linguistic borrowing, as Zhao presents in her characters, can be as valid for articulating Papora survival. In the ritual scene, young Asi calls her ancestors into being in a combination of Papora vocabulary and Hoklo, the dialect spoken by the majority of Han settler, and performs Papora survival that is at once situated in Asi's place and time. Comparably, we may say that Zhao calls a Papora community into being through the language of postcolonial theories, that Papora identity at this point in time, and in the acts of one particular Papora descendant, is rendered visible and valid through the borrowed language of our time. Similar to the physical journey Asi takes, the novel is a singular performance of Papora survival, tied to the Papora individual enacting the ritual, the media of a literary novel that she employs, and the kinds of contemporary language she employs. In other words, Zhao's novel, as it calls Papora identity and history into being, does not have the power to fix the meaning of Papora inheritance or to dictate forms of future attempts. It must be read as a singular enactment of such political act and, in Allen's phrase, as an "occasion" for the "performance of Indigenous identity."<sup>88</sup> But as such, it offers the logic and rules through which this singular fictional work makes sense, and perhaps that is the space where Papora identity can be asserted, if the reader is willing to make a political choice to read the novel through the world it presents.

## **Coda**

Zhao's novel, by imagining Papora heritage and ethical codes while acknowledging its contemporary existence, serves as a vessel of Papora identity and ethics. In this chapter, I argue that Papora epistemology invoked in the novel allow her to represent Papora complicity in Han settler colonialism per the demands of Papora ethics. In contrast, Wuhe's poststructuralist work unwittingly

---

<sup>87</sup> Li, 134-138.

<sup>88</sup> Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 10.

perpetuates certain settler colonial assumptions as it seeks to take apart political identities in favor of individual and artistic freedom.

It is not an easy argument to make. Like Wuhe's narrator, most of us are born and raised in a contemporary where individual freedom, bare life, and the escape from strident boxes of race, nationality, class, or genre, have been the ethical principles that should prevent large-scale atrocities and should guarantee our individual good lives. For many postcolonial theorists, such flight and freedom is inherently political, in that it rejects state politics and hegemonic power. And judging from the enthusiastic scholarly responses to Wuhe's novel, *Remains of Life* encourages just such reading. While Anderson has identified literary novels as one key instrument of nation formation, Timothy Brennan and Kwame Anthony Appiah have also suggested how postcolonial novels may subvert such formulation by unsettling its own narration.<sup>89</sup> As a consequence, as literary novels are written and read in our contemporary as private acts, they seem to lend themselves more readily to the "subversive" qualities of individual interpretations and freedom championed in Wuhe's novel, where narrative topples itself so that it does not impose another imagined falsehood.

What I hope to articulate in this chapter is the fact that, no matter how unstable or how deconstructive, a poststructuralist novel like *Remains of Life* still constructs a picture of the world, a social network with values, and an imagined community among its readers. This imagined community may not identify with a national community as demarcated by the state or it may not have a sense of a communal belonging, but it nevertheless subsists in a picture of a congregate of atomic individuals who, having disparate backgrounds and convictions, coexist in the island of Taiwan as a people. They may have a different temporality than the national homogenous empty time, as argued by Bhabha,<sup>90</sup> but they are

---

<sup>89</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006); Timothy Brennan, "The National Longing for Form," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K Bhabha (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), 44–70; Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 2 (1991): 336–57.

<sup>90</sup> Bhabha, "DissemiNation."

imagined to occupy the same space—a space imagined as homogenous and empty. It is on this very ground that Indigenous interventions like Zhao’s must be heeded.

Zhao’s text, as I have hinted, is not necessarily more successful aesthetically. The burden of constructing a forgotten history, representing an alien epistemology, and acknowledging the limited positionality of such attempt—all within an unconventional narrative form—makes the novel difficult to read and absorb. *Remains of Life*, on the other hand, while difficult, remains one of Wuhe’s most read and best-liked work. Beside the obvious fact that the ethos of *Remains of Life* is more readily relatable to our theory-trained eyes and that the work, fourteen years later, belongs now to an established genre of poststructuralist fictions, it may still give us pause as to whether there are limitations as to how the genre can be utilized and whether the aesthetics of the genre can be a subject of interrogation itself. We may want to ask, if Zhao’s novel is an attempt to perform Papora survival, how effective is this performance if its difficulty alienates her readers so much that they cannot quite access her message. Yet, in light of Jodi Byrd and Michael Rothberg’s argument that Indigenous literature suffers a problem not of voicing, but of reception, it<sup>91</sup> may be possible for us to consider other possible ways of understanding the aesthetics of the novels.

Arif Dirlik has cautioned against our tendency to make ethnic texts bear the pressure of ethnic identity and the burden of activism. He is worried that, on the one hand, such reading is putting unreasonable weight on artistic expressions and, on the other, such reading answers political problems with cultural solutions, substitution public concerns with a private one.<sup>92</sup> While on the surface, Wuhe’s demand for writerly freedom seems to echo Dirlik’s bid for authorial autonomy and Zhao’s insistent Papora worldview contradict Dirlik’s thesis, at the heart of the two texts, I believe that it is texts like Wuhe’s that more dangerously offer private and cultural solutions for our pressing political problems in

---

<sup>91</sup> Jodi A Byrd and Michael Rothberg, “Between Subalternity and Indigeneity: Critical Categories for Postcolonial Studies,” *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 1 (2011): 1–12.

<sup>92</sup> Arif Dirlik, “Literature/Identity: Transnationalism, Narrative, and Representation,” *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 24, no. 3 (2002): 209–34.

regard to Indigenous people's political status in Taiwan. Despite Wuhe's pronouncement that he upholds his rights as an author to write nonsense, his readers have been eager to read his nonsense as political defiant, as expressions of ethical responsibility in the face of the political impasse of Taiwan's settler colonial structure. While Zhao's novel is under as much danger of simply being included as one voice in the increasingly diverse Taiwan literary scene, and thus becomes part of the cultural and private solution to the political stagnation and mainstream oblivion to Papora issues, it is equally possible for us to see how it consciously assumes activist responsibilities. The key to the effectiveness of a poststructuralist text in providing us with alternatives to unjust status quo perhaps ultimately lies in our ways of reading.

## Conclusion

### On Minor Settler Belatedness

I am conscious of the revisionist impulse in this study. While the majority of the literary texts under study here are not among the canon of minority literature, my reading reacts to the paradigms that would define them in terms of minority lines of flight, diasporic or racial melancholia, or postcolonial struggles with national identities and cultural autonomy. Without denying the significance of these interpretations, my reading takes a second, supplementary look on these texts' settler assumptions and their function in the settler society of which they are a part. And I conclude, tentatively still, that minor settler texts would need to center Indigenous values in order to challenge their settler function. Because the authority of decolonizing processes do not ultimately lie with the settler subjects, minor settler authors that aim to challenge their own settler function are stunted, not by the inadequacy of its own vision or a flaw on the their nationalist desire (such as Appiah or Brennan observes with postcolonial literature),<sup>1</sup> but because the solution of settler colonialism and the processes of decolonization do not belong to them or their narrative. Their narratives, as settler narratives, perform the auxiliary functions of historical remembrance and self-reflection that in the end demand their willing cession of political control and—occasionally—narrative certainty.

Minor settler texts and the ways of reading such texts are thus always somewhat secondary and somewhat belated. This is perhaps counterintuitive in light of our current intellectual habit to empower minority voices and to include a diversity of values; but the auxiliary posture of minor settler literature and its reading is necessitated by the heretofore pervasive silencing of Indigenous values, and our

---

<sup>1</sup> Timothy Brennan, "The National Longing for Form," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K Bhabha (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), 44–70; Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 2 (1991): 336–57.



acknowledgement that settler narratives frequently facilitate Indigenous silence. Although these minor settler narratives respond to a prior, perhaps more menacing settler hegemony, their own narratives can still facilitate the maintenance of the settler regime. Minor settler texts are thus belated in a similar way as the 19th-century European travelers to the Orient that Ali Behdad describes.<sup>2</sup> Arriving after the Empires have already done their work in the colonies, these travelers were keen on criticizing the corruption and destruction brought by the Empire while riding on the very same Imperial infrastructure in their physical and textual travels in the Orient. Being marginal gives minor settler texts a similar clarity about the workings of settler hegemony, but it also situates them within the same settler hegemony as their condition of residency and voicing.

And, also resembling Behdad's belated travelers, minor settlers are belated textually. In most cases, texts that consciously explore their own minor settler dilemmas come later, later than texts by the earlier generations, which are more pressing expositions of historical injury on racialized bodies and their clamoring for better treatment. My intervention here similarly comes after academic works on racism and indentureship suffered by Chinese immigrants and the manifest postcoloniality in the imagination of a Chinese diaspora. This institutional timeline—if I am permitted to write my own study into the institutional history—not only demonstrates the systematic and global amnesia of settler domination and Indigenous dispossession, but parallels a strain of literary development in minor settler texts in settler societies. Some of the texts I study, those that actively respond to minor settler colonial history, are revisionary in their challenge of previous motifs of struggle and arrival. This is to say, if Chinese immigrant texts have been narrating a diachronic destiny, a trajectory from migration to integration or from entrapment to freedom, minor settler texts halt this desire to move onward and forward. There is, as a consequence, a deliberate stalling in minor settler narratives, especially when they engage heavily with the issues to do with Indigenous decolonization, because the existing model of development, integration

---

<sup>2</sup> Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

or freedom, replicates a colonizing narrative that is internally and inherently contradictory to the myth of justice implicit in the idylls of integration and freedom.

We must remember, however, that such narrative stoppage is not achieved uniformly—neither in its form, degree, nor political implications. It is important to note that narratives in their conventional forms desire resolution and release, and moving feet and minds desire at least momentary respite from standing or wandering in wait. This halting both in minor settler narrative and collective imagination is thus necessarily deliberate—sometimes forced—with uncertain successes, moments of relapses, and divergent tactical attempts.

In a larger consideration of Chinese immigrant literature, when Chinese minor settler texts halt their itinerant narrative to converse with Indigenous history and sovereignty, we are in the face of Chinese immigrant literature's most local, most diverse extremities. In these texts, deterritorialization is no longer a celebration of freedom or self-congratulatory resistance against hegemony, but a realization that the land they are traveling to is not void of spiritual history or protocols of proper entry, and that there is an obligation to these protocols before territorialization may be carried out properly (or be rejected, or other—we cannot dictate it). The study of minor settler texts is thus itself incomplete. It depends on more conversations with the ongoing development of Indigenous theories and political movements.

(Note that of course that there are protocols of entry for immigrants entering settler states as well, which are discriminatory and inconsistent with the avowed liberal democratic ideal the settler states advertise themselves. I am not making an argument for immigrants' subjugation to the xenophobic and racist attitudes towards immigrants that are at work in many sovereign nations around the globe in history and at present, nor am I suggesting that an Indigenous-run state or a truly bicultural nation would be more generous on the issues of immigration. The circumstances surrounding the coup at Fiji in 2000 as well as the prevalent suspicion towards Asian immigrants among Māori in the 1990s and 2000s hint at the possibility of certain Indigenous hostility towards immigration—although such hostility must also be understood in the context of colonial and settler colonial history and the ongoing neocolonial global

dynamics. I do agree, however, that while we criticize the kind of immigration policy at work among currently recognized sovereign nations, this is not an excuse to deny Indigenous exercises of their sovereignty on the hypothetical grounds that “it may just be the same.” It is fundamentally different to discuss how a sovereign government should manage its population and issues of immigration, and to deprive a people of their sovereignty for fear that they won't manage their population the way we—the non-Indigenous peoples—expect them to.)

Politically, do settlers just wait? I would think not. It is important to keep remembering and learning about the layered histories of our material situatedness; there are works to be done in the meantime when one supports the struggle for Indigenous sovereignty. I believe the work of settler writers and scholars now is to learn about their, other settlers', and Indigenous people's histories, and to imagine how our worlds may look radically differently from each other's point of viewpoints. It is the task for minor settler texts and their readers to continue to devise ways in which they can articulate self-understanding without delusion, deception, and wishful-thinking.

## Bibliography

- Abel, Elizabeth, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland, eds. *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1983.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- . *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone Books, 2000.
- Alcoff, Linda Martín. *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Allen, Chadwick. *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 2006.
- Andrade, Tonio. *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Appiah, Kwam Anthony. "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 2 (1991): 336–57.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Awatere, Donna. *Māori Sovereignty*. Auckland: Broadsheet Publication, 1984.
- Bachner, Andrea. "The Remains of History: Gao Xinjiang's *Soul Mountain* and Wuhe's *The Remains of Life*." *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 37, no. 1 (2011): 99–122.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- . *Speech Genres and Other Later Essays*. Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Translated by Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.
- Ballantyne, Tony. "Writing Out Asia: Race, Colonization, and Chinese Migration in New Zealand History." In *East by South: China in the Australasian Imagination*, edited by Charles Ferrall, Paul Millar, and Keren Smith, 87–109. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2005.
- Bartley, Allen, and Paul Spoonley. "Constructing a Workable Multiculturalism in a Bicultural Society." In *Waitangi Revisited: Perspectives on the Treaty of Waitangi*, edited by Michael Belgrave, Merata Kawharu, and David Vernon Williams, 2nd ed., 137–48. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Behdad, Ali. *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994.

- Belgrave, Michael, Merata Kawharu, and David Vernon Williams, eds. *Waitangi Revisited: Perspectives on the Treaty of Waitangi*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Bell, Avril. "Being 'At Home' in the Nation: Hospitality and Sovereignty in Talk about Immigration." *Ethnicities* 10, no. 2 (2010): 236–56.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Vol. 1, 1913-1926*, edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Tonnings, translated by Henry Zohn, 253–63. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Bennion, Tom. "Lands Under the Sea: Foreshore and Seabed." In *Waitangi Revisited: Perspectives on the Treaty of Waitangi*, edited by Michael Belgrave, Merata Kawharu, and David Vernon Williams, 2nd ed., 233–47. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margin of the Modern Nation." In *Nation and Narration*, edited by Homi K Bhabha, 291–322. London: Routledge, 1990.
- . *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- . ed. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Bojjjernue, Basuya (Pu Zhongcheng). *Bei yiwang de shengyu: yuanzhumin shenhua lishi yu wenxue de zhuisu* [The forgotten land of spirits: Indigenous myths, history, and history]. Taipei: Wunan, 2007.
- Booth, P., and Y. Martin. "Inv-Asian." *Eastern Courier*, April 16, 1993.
- Brathwaite, Edward Kamau. "Caribbean Culture: Two Paradigms." In *Missile and Capsule*, edited by Martini Jürgen, 9–54. Bremen: Universitate Bremen, 1983.
- Brennan, Timothy. "The National Longing for Form." In *Nation and Narration*, edited by Homi K Bhabha, 44–70. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Brooks, Lisa Tanya. *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Brown, Melissa J. *Is Taiwan Chinese?: The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Brubaker, Rogers. *Ethnicity without Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Bruyneel, Kevin. *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974.
- Byrd, Jodi A. "In the City of Blinding Lights: Indigeneity, Cultural Studies and the Errants of Colonial Nostalgia." *Cultural Studies Review* 15, no. 2 (2009): 13–28.
- . *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

- Byrd, Jodi A., and Michael Rothberg. "Between Subalternity and Indigeneity: Critical Categories for Postcolonial Studies." *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 1 (2011): 1–12.
- Byrnes, Giselle. *The Waitangi Tribunal and New Zealand History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Catton, Eleanor. *The Luminaries*. London: Granta, 2013.
- Chang, James. "Māori View on Contemporary Immigration: Implications for Māori-Chinese Interactions." In *The Dragon and the Taniwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand*, edited by Manying Ip, 185–208. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009.
- Chen, Chun-yen. "Being-in-Common in Postcolonial Taiwan: Wuhe's Remains of Life and the Limits of Identity Politics." *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 14, no. 3 (2012): 443–61.
- Chen Fang-ming. *Houzhimin Taiwan: wenxues shilun ji qi zhoubian* [Postcolonial Taiwan: essays on Taiwanese literary history and beyond]. 2nd ed. Taipei: Maitian, 2007.
- . *Taiwan xinwenxue shi* [The history of modern Taiwan literature]. Taipei: Lianjing, 2011.
- . "Postmodern or Postcolonial? An Inquiry into Postwar Taiwan Literary History." In *Writing Taiwan: A New Literary History*, edited by David Der-wei Wang and Carlos Rojas, 26–50. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Cheyfitz, Eric. *The Politics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonialism from Tempest to Tarzan*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
- Ching, Leo T. S. *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Chiu Kuei-fen. *Houzhimin ji qiwai* [Rethinking Postcolonial Criticism in Taiwan]. Taipei: Maitian, 2003.
- Chock, Eric. "The Neocolonialization of Bamboo Ridge." *Bamboo Ridge*, 1996.
- Chock, Eric, and Darrell H. Y. Lum, eds. "Paké: Writing by Chinese in Hawaii." *Bamboo Ridge* 42 and 43 (1989).
- Chow, Rey. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Chung Yulan. "pingpu zhuqun yu Puli pendi: quanyu kaifa wenti de tantao [Pingpu ethnic groups and the Puli Basin: Studies on land development]." In *pingpu zhuqun de quyu yanjiu lunwen ji* [Regional studies of Pingpu ethnic groups], edited by Yi-chang Liu and Ing-hai Pan, 97–140. Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1998.
- Ciotti, Joseph E. "Historical Views on Mauna Kea: From the Vantage Points of Hawaiian Culture and Astronomical Research." *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 45 (2011): 147–66.
- Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Constable, Nicole. "Introduction: What Does It Mean to Be Hakka?" In *Guest People: Hakka Identity in China and Abroad*, edited by Nicole Constable, 3–35. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996.

- Cook-Lynn, Elizabeth. "American Indian Intellectualism and the New Indian Story." *American Indian Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1998): 57–76.
- Crossley, Pamela Kyle. *The Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Translated by Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- DeLoughrey, Elizabeth. *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009.
- . "The Litany of Islands, The Rosary of Archipelagoes': Caribbean and Pacific Archipelagraphy." *ARIEL* 32, no. 1 (2001): 21–51.
- . "The Spiral Temporality of Patricia Grace's 'Potiki.'" *ARIEL* 30, no. 1 (1999): 59–83.
- DeLoughrey, Elizabeth, and George B. Handley, eds. *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment*. 1 edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Monolingualism of the Other; Or, the Prosthesis of Origin*. Translated by Patrick Mensah. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- . *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. Translated by Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Diaz, Vicente M., and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui. "Pacific Cultural Studies on the Edge." *The Contemporary Pacific* 13, no. 2 (2001): 315–42.
- Dirlik, Arif. "Literature/Identity: Transnationalism, Narrative, and Representation." *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 24, no. 3 (2002): 209–34.
- Edmond, Jacob. "The Borderline Poetics of Tze-Ming Mok." *The New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 10, no. 1 (2008): 108–33.
- Evans, Julie, Ann Genovese, Alexander Reilly, and Patrick Wolfe, eds. *Sovereignty: Frontiers of Possibility*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012.
- Evans, Patrick. "'Pakeha-Style Biculturalism' and the Māori Writer." *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 24, no. 1 (2006): 11–35.
- Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Fan, Ming-ju. *Wenxue dili: Taiwan xiaoshuo de jongjian yuedu* [Literary geography : spatial reading of Taiwanese fiction]. Taipei: Maitian, 2008.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

- Feng, Pin-chia. *The Female Bildungsroman by Toni Morrison and Maxine Hong Kingston: A Postmodern Reading*. New York: Peter Lang, 1998.
- Ferrall, Charles, Paul Millar, and Keren Smith, eds. *East by South: China in the Australasian Imagination*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2005.
- Fleras, Augie. *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Multicultural Governance in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Palgrave, 2009.
- Fleras, Augie, and Paul Spoonley. *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Fujikane, Candace. "Between Nationalisms: Hawaii's Local Nation and Its Troubled Racial Paradise." *Critical Mass: A Journal of Asian American Cultural Criticism* 1, no. 2 (1994): 23–58.
- . "Introduction." In *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i*, edited by Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura, 1–42. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008.
- . "Sweeping Racism under the Rug of 'Censorship': The Controversy Over Blu's Hanging." *Amerasia* 26, no. 2 (2000): 158–94.
- Fujikane, Candace, and Jonathan Y. Okamura, eds. *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008.
- Gilroy, Paul. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Glick, Clarence Elmer. *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese Migrants in Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980.
- Glissant, Edouard. *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Translated by J. Michael Dash. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1989.
- . *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- Goeman, Mishuana. "Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place: The Visual Memoir of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie." In *Theorizing Native Studies*, edited by Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, 235–65. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- . *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Goethe's Botanical Writings*. Translated by Bertha Müller. Woodbridge, CT: Ox Bow Press, 1989.
- Grace, John Te Herekikie. *Tuoharetoa*. Auckland: Reed, 1959.
- Hanisch, Carol. "The Personal Is Political." In *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation*, edited by Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, 76–78. New York: Radical Feminist, 1970.
- Hardimon, Michael O. *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994.



- Hau'ofa, Epeli. "Our Sea of Islands." In *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works*, 27–40. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008.
- Hayot, Eric. "Immigrant Fictions: Unfailing Mediation in *Dictée* and *Becoming Madame Mao*." *Contemporary Literature* 47, no. 4 (2006): 601–35.
- Hereniko, Vilsoni, and Rob Wilson. *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.
- Ho, Jennifer. *Consumption and Identity in Asian American Coming-of-Age Novels*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Holt, John Dominis. *Waimea Summer*. Honolulu: Topgallant, 1976.
- Ho'omanawanui, Ku'ualoha. "This Land Is Your Land, This Land Was My Land": Kanaka Maoli versus Settler Representation of 'Āina in Contemporary Literature of Hawai'i." In *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i*, edited by Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura, 116–54. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008.
- Houng Lee, Ann-Marie. "Chinese Arrows." In *Look at Me Like That All Day: Stories*, 42–71. Auckland: Fictionland, 2003.
- Huang Hsin-ya. "xiandaixing yu taiwan yuanzhumin wenxue: yi xiaman lanboan yu ligelale awu zhuoping weili [modernity and Taiwan Aboriginal literature: in the cases of Syaman Rapongan and Ligelale Awu]." *Zhongwai Wenxue* 35, no. 5 (2006): 81–122.
- Hung Li-wan. "shalushe (Salach) shi zhi kaocha: yi 'jisi gongyie qianshen nanbaishe' wei zhongxin [Excavating Salach history: on 'Qianshen north-south collective of worship'." In *Pingpu yanjiu lunwenji* [essay collection of Pingpu studies], edited by Ing-hai Pan and Su-chuan Chan. Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1995.
- Ip, Manying. "Chinese." *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, November 2, 2012. <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/chinese>.
- . "Maori-Chinese Encounters: Indigene-Immigrant Interaction in New Zealand." *Asian Studies Review* 27, no. 2 (2003): 227–52.
- . , ed. *The Dragon and the Taniwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009.
- JanMohamed, Abdul, and David Lloyd. "Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse." *Cultural Critique* 6 (1987): 5–12.
- Johnston, Anna, and Alan Lawson. "Settler Colonies." In *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, edited by Henry Schwartz and Sangeeta Ray, 360–76. Maldon, MA: Blackwell, 2000.
- Ka, Chih-ming. *Fan toujia: Qingdai Taiwan zuqun zhengzi yu shufan diquan* [The Aboriginal landlord: Ethnic politics and Aborigine Land Rights in Qing Taiwan]. Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2001.
- Kame'eiehiwa, Lilikalā. *Native Land and Foreign Desires*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992.
- Kaopio, Matthew. *Written in the Sky*. Honolulu: Mutual, 2005.

- Kauanui, J. Kēhaulani. *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- . “The Multiplicity of Hawaiian Sovereignty Claims and the Struggle for Meaningful Autonomy.” *Comparative American Studies* 3, no. 3 (2005): 283–99.
- Kawharu, Ian Hugh. *Waitangi: Māori and Pakeha Perspectives on the Treaty of Waitangi*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- King, Michael. *Being Pakeha*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985.
- Kukutai, Tahu H., and Robert Didham. “In Search of Ethnic New Zealanders: National Naming in the 2006 Census.” *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 36 (2009): 46–62.
- Kwon, Brenda. *Beyond Ke‘eaumoku: Koreans, Nationalism, and Local Culture in Hawai‘i*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Lee, Lily, and Ruth Lam. *Sons of the Soil: Chinese Market Gardeners in New Zealand*. Pukekohe: Dominion Federation of New Zealand Chinese Commercial Growers Inc., 2012.
- Lin, Liru. *lishi yu ijyi: Wuhe xiaoshou yanjiu* [history and memory: A study of Wuhe’s novels]. Taipei: Da’an, 2008.
- Lionnet, Françoise, and Shu-mei Shih, eds. *Minor Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
- . , eds. “Thinking Through the Minor, Transnationally.” In *Minor Transnationalism*, 1–23. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Liou Liang-ya. “Bianzhang fuzhen de keneng: Wuhe *Yusheng* zhong de lishi jiyi, nvren yu yuanxiang zhuixun [the possibility of dialectical resurgence: historical memory, women, and the search for Indigenous land in Wuhe’s the *Remains of Life*].” *Zhongwai Wenxue* 32, no. 11 (2004): 141–63.
- . *chilai de houzhimin: zailun jiejian yilai Taiwan xiaoshou* [Belated postcoloniality: Post-martial law Taiwanese fiction]. Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2014.
- Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Luangphinit, Seri. “Homeward Bound: Settler Aesthetics in Hawai‘i’s Literature.” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 48, no. 1 (2006): 54–78.
- Lukács, Georg. *The Historical Novel*. Translated by Hannah Mitchell and Stanley Mitchell. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.
- Lum, Darrell H. Y. “Local Genealogy: What School You Went?” In *Growing Up Local: An Anthology of Poetry and Prose from Hawai‘i*, edited by Eric Chock, James R. Harstead, Darrell H. Y. Lum, and Bill Teter, 11–15. Honolulu: Bamboo Ridge, 1998.
- Massey, Doreen. *For Space*. London: Sage, 2005.
- McClintock, Anne. “The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term ‘Postcolonialism.’” In *Colonial Discourse / Postcolonial Theory*, edited by Francis Baker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen, 253–66. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994.

- McGowan, Barry. *Dust and Dreams: Mining Communities in South-East New South Wales*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000.
- Merry, Sally Engle. *Colonizing Hawai'i: The Cultural Power of Law*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Millar, Paul. "Canton Bromides': The Chinese Presence in Twentieth-Century New Zealand Fiction." In *East by South: China in the Australasian Imagination*, edited by Charles Ferrall, Paul Millar, and Keren Smith, 156–72. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2005.
- Mok, Tze-Ming. "Hereditary Fiction: The Mok Tapes." *Meanjin*, 2004.
- . "Race You There." *Landfall*, 2004.
- . "The Beach." *Landfall*, 2003.
- . *Yellow Peril*, n.d. Accessed December 30, 2013.
- Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. "I Still Call Australia Home: Indigenous Belonging and Place in a White Postcolonizing Society." In *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, edited by Sara Ahmed, Claudia Castañeda, Anne-Marie Fortier, and Mimi Sheller, 23–40. Oxford: Berg, 2003.
- . , ed. *Sovereign Subjects: Indigenous Sovereignty Matters*. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2007.
- Morgensen, Scott L. "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now." *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 52–76.
- . "White Settlers and Indigenous Solidarity: Confronting White Supremacy, Answering Decolonial Alliances." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, May 26, 2014. <https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2014/05/26/white-settlers-and-indigenous-solidarity-confronting-white-supremacy-answering-decolonial-alliances/>.
- Mullaney, Thomas S., James Patrick Leibold, Stéphane Gros, and Eric Armand Vanden Bussche, eds. *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.
- Murayama, Milton. *All I Asking for Is My Body*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988.
- Murphy, Nigel. "Appendix: Sources of Information for the Study of Maori-Chinese Encounters." In *The Dragon and the Taniwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand*, edited by Manying Ip, 338–60. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009.
- Najita, Susan. *Decolonizing Culture in the Pacific: Reading History and Trauma in Contemporary Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Nicholas, Robert. "Contract and Usurpation: Enfranchisement and Racial Governance in Settler-Colonial Contexts." In *Theorizing Native Studies*, edited by Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, 99–121. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- O'Sullivan, Dominic. *Beyond Biculturalism: The Politics of an Indigenous Minority*. Wellington: Huia Press, 2007.
- Okamura, Jonathan Y. "Aloha Kanaka Me Ke Aloha 'Aina: Local Culture and Society in Hawaii."

- Amerasia* 7, no. 2 (1980): 119–37.
- . *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawai'i*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.
- . “Why There Are No Asian Americans in Hawai'i: The Continuing Significance of Local Identity.” *Social Process in Hawai'i* 35 (1994): 161–78.
- Ooi, Kathy. “Insider Dilemmas: The Politics of Reading and Writing Ethnic Minority Fiction.” In *The Dragon and the Taniwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand*, edited by Manying Ip, 319–37. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009.
- Orange, Claudia. *The Illustrated History of the Treaty of Waitangi*. Wellington: Bridget Williams, 2004.
- Owen, Norman G., ed. *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005.
- Palumbo-Liu, David. *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. Stanford University Press, 1999.
- . *The Deliverance of Others: Reading Literature in a Global Age*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Pateman, Carole. “The Settler Contract.” In *Contract and Domination*, edited by Carole Pateman and Charles W. Mills, 35–78. Maldon, MA: Polity Press, 2007.
- Payne, Christopher. “Wushe, Literature, and Melodic Black Metal: The ‘Nonpolitics’ of Wuhe and the ‘Political’ Chthonic.” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 22, no. 2 (2014): 403–28.
- Pearson, David. “‘The Majority Factor’: Shaping Chinese and Māori Minorities.” In *The Dragon and the Taniwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand*, edited by Manying Ip, 32–55. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009.
- Perdue, Peter C. *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Pukui, Mary Kawena, and Samuel H. Elbert. *Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English, English-Hawaiian*. Rev. and enl. ed. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986.
- Pukui, Mary Kawena, and Alfons L. Korn, trans. *The Echo of Our Song: Chants and Poems of the Hawaiians*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1973.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative*. Translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Vol. 2. 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Rifkin, Mark. *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- Rodney, Morales. “Literature.” In *Multicultural Hawai'i: The Fabric of a Multiethnic Society*, edited by Michael Haas, 107–30. Garland Library of Social Science 1108. New York: Garland Press, 1998.

- Rodrigues, Darlene. "Imagining Ourselves: Reflections on the Controversy over Lois-Ann Yamanaka's *Blu's Hanging*." *Amerasia* 26, no. 2 (2004): 195–207.
- Rolls, Eric. *Sojourners: Flowers and the Wide Sea*. St Lucia, Australia: University of Queensland Press, 1992.
- Romaine, Suzanne. "Contested Visions of History in Aotearoa New Zealand Literature: Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch*." *The Contemporary Pacific* 16, no. 1 (2004): 31–57.
- Ross, Ruth M. "Te Tiriti O Waitangi: Texts and Translations." *New Zealand Journal of History* 6, no. 2 (1972): 129–57.
- Saranillio, Dean Itsuji. "Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters: A Thought Piece on Critiques, Debates, and Indigenous Difference." *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3–4 (2013): 280–94.
- Shaw, Harry E. *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- Shepherd, John Robert. *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
- Shih, Shu-mei. "Against Diaspora: The Sinophone as Places of Cultural Production." In *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader*, edited by Shu-mei Shih, Chien-Hsin Tsai, and Brian Bernards, 25–42. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
- . "Comparison as Relation." In *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*, edited by Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman, 79–98. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013.
- . "Globalisation and the (in)significance of Taiwan." *Postcolonial Studies* 6, no. 2 (2003): 143–53.
- . "Sinophone American Literature." In *The Routledge Companion to Asian American and Pacific Islander Literature*, edited by Rachel Lee, 329–38. New York: Routledge, 2014.
- . "Theory, Asia, and the Sinophone." *Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 4 (2010): 465–84.
- . *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Silva, Noenoe K. *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Simpson, Audra, and Andrea Smith, eds. *Theorizing Native Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Smith, Andrea. "Native Studies at the Horizon of Death: Theorizing Ethnographic Entrapment and Settler Self-Reflexivity." In *Theorizing Native Studies*, edited by Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, 207–34. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People*. 2nd ed. London: Zed, 2012.
- Snelgrove, Corey, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel. "Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 2 (2014): 1–32.

- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Rethinking Comparativism." Edited by Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman. *New Literary History* 40, no. 3 (2009): 609–26.
- . "The Politics of Translation." In *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 179–200. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Stephenson, Peta. "Beyond Colonial Casualties: Chinese Agency in the Australian Post/Colonial Endeavour." In *East by South: China in the Australasian Imagination*, edited by Charles Ferrall, Paul Millar, and Keren Smith, 366–88. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2005.
- Stepien, Edward R. *Ni'ihau: A Brief History*. Working Paper Series. Manoa, HI: University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1988.
- Sullivan, Robert. *Star Waka*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999.
- Sumida, Stephen H. *And the View from the Shore: Literary Traditions of Hawai'i*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991.
- . "Sense of Place, History, and the Concept of the 'Local' in Hawaii's Asian/Pacific Literatures." In *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*, edited by Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Amy Ling, 215–37. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.
- Suzuki, Erin. "Consuming Desires: Melancholia and Consumption in *Blu's Hanging*." *MELUS* 31, no. 1 (2006): 35–52.
- . "Haunted Homelands: Negotiating Locality in *Father of the Four Passages*." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 56, no. 1 (2010): 160–82.
- Takaki, Ronald. *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983.
- Tawhai, Alice. *Festival of Miracles*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006.
- . *Luminous*. Wellington: Huia Press, 2007.
- Teaiwa, Teresia. "Reading Paul Gauguin's *Noa Noa* with Epeli Hau'ofa's *Kisses in the Nederends*: Militourism, Feminism, and the 'Polynesian' Body." In *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*, edited by Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson, 249–64. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.
- Teng, Emma. *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Teuton, Sean Kicummah. *Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- The Pingpu Project. "Pingpu zhuqun de fenlei yu fenbu [The classifications and distributions of Pingpu peoples]." *Zhongyanyuan minzhusou shuwei diancang* [The digital archive of Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica]. Accessed July 18, 2015. <http://www.ianthro.tw/p/41>.
- Tilley, Christopher. *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Place, Paths, and Monuments*. Oxford: Berg, 1994.
- Trask, Haunani-Kay. "Decolonizing Hawaiian Literature." In *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and*

- Identity in the New Pacific*, edited by Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson, 167–82. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.
- . *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*. Rev. ed. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999.
- . “Settlers of Color and ‘Immigrant’ Hegemony: ‘Locals’ in Hawai'i.” In *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i*, edited by Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura, 45–65. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008.
- Tyau, Kathleen. *A Little Too Much Is Enough*. New York: Norton, 1996.
- Veracini, Lorenzo. *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Vickers, Edward. “Original Sin on the Island Paradise: Qing Taiwan’s Colonial History in Comparative Perspective.” *Taiwan in Comparative Perspective* 2 (2008): 65–86.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Walker, Ranginui J. “New Zealand Immigration and the Political Economy: Indigenous Decry Switch from Biculturalism to Multiculturalism: Claim Right to Restrict.” *The Social Contract* 4, no. 2 (1993): 86–95.
- Wang, David Der-wei. introduction to *Beishang* [Sorrow], by Wuhe, 3–11. Taipei: Maitian, 2001.
- . introduction to *Yusheng* [The remains of life], by Wuhe, 297–303. Taipei: Maitian, 2011.
- . *Ruhe xiandai, zenyang wenxue?: shijiu, ershi shiji zhongwen xiaoshou xinlun* [The making of the modern, the making of a literature: new perspectives on 19th- and 20th-century Chinese fiction]. 2nd ed. Taipei: Maitian, 2008.
- . *Xiaoshou Zhongguo: Wanqing dao dangdai de zhongwen xiaoshou* [Narrating China: Chinese fiction from the late Qing to the contemporary era]. 2nd ed. Taipei: Maitian, 2012.
- Wang, David Der-wei, and Carlos Rojas, eds. *Writing Taiwan: A New Literary History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Watson, Irene. “Settled and Unsettled Spaces: Are We Free to Roam?” In *Sovereign Subjects: Indigenous Sovereignty Matters*, edited by Aileen Moreton-Robinson. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2007.
- Wen, Chen-hua. “qingdai zhongbu pingpuzhu qianxi puli fenxi [An analysis of central-region Pingpu migration to Puli during Qing rule].” *taiwan wen hsien* [Taiwan historica] 51, no. 2 (2000): 27–37.
- Wevers, Lydia. “First, Build Your Hut.” Edited by Julianne Schultz and Lloyd Jones. *Griffith Review* 43, no. Pacific Highways (2014). <https://griffithreview.com/articles/first-build-your-hut/>.
- Williams, Mark. “The Other from Elsewhere: Arrested Encounters in Bicultural New Zealand.” In *The Dragon and the Taniwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand*, edited by Manying Ip, 300–318. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009.

- Wilson, Rob. *Reimagining the American Pacific: From South Pacific to Bamboo Ridge and Beyond*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race." *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (June 1, 2001): 866–905.
- . "Recuperating Binarism: A Heretical Introduction." *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3–4 (2013): 257–79.
- . "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2000): 387–409.
- . *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event*. London: Cassell, 1999.
- Wong, Alison. *As the Earth Turns Silver*. London: Picador, 2009.
- . "Personal Narrative: As the Earth Turns Silver." In *Localizing Asia in Aotearoa*, edited by Paola Voci and Jacqueline Leckie, 68–73. Wellington: Dunmore Publishing, 2011.
- Wong, Sau-ling Cynthia. *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Wood, Houston. *Displacing Natives: The Rhetorical Production of Hawai'i*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.
- Wu, Cynthia. "Revisiting *Blu's Hanging*: A Critique of Queer Transgression in the Lois-Ann Yamanaka Controversy." *Meridians* 10, no. 1 (2009): 32–53.
- Wuhe. *Sisuo Abang Kalusi* [Meditations on A-bang and Kalusi]. Taipei: Maitian, 2002.
- . *Yusheng* [The remains of life]. 4th ed. Taipei: Maitian, 2011.
- Yamamoto, Eric. "The Significance of 'Local.'" *Social Process in Hawaii* 27 (1979): 101–15.
- Yamanaka, Lois-Ann. *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996.
- Zhao Huiling. *Daducheng, guilai* [Returning to Dadu Town]. Xinbei City, Taiwan: yinke wenxue, 2013.
- Zhou Ying-xiong, and Liu Ji-hui, eds. *shuxie Taiwan: wenxueshi houzhimin yu houxiandai* [Writing Taiwan: literary history, postcoloniality, and postmodernity]. Taipei: Maitian, 2000.
- Zhu Tienwen. preface to *Yusheng* [The remains of life], by Wuhe, 3–27. Taipei: Maitian, 2011.