

Postcolonial Negotiations in the Pacific

—“Japanese Identities” in Literary Texts from Hawai‘i—

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Abstract

1980年代、90年代の日本及びハワイの文学テキストには、日本の植民地主義、軍事的侵略の歴史や、観光、「土地開発」等の経済活動、人種やジェンダーの意識を問題系とする「ポストコロニアル」の意識が共通して見られる。太平洋諸島の現地民社会と、太平洋におけるアメリカの政治・経済・文化的覇権との双方に対する日本人の係わりを描くことにより、それらのテキストは日本人の「自己植民地化」の行為と植民地化された「自己」のありようを批判的に表現する。太平洋での文化的な相互干渉や異種混淆、往還的移動を基調とする「ポストコロニアル表象」を通して、「日本」「日本人」を問い直すことが可能である。一方、日本のテキストが日本の植民地主義に対する太平洋諸島からの「異議申し立て」を描こうとするのと比べ、ハワイのテキストは新しい「自己」の表現を創造しようとしている。それは暫定的でローカルな「自己」であり、自らへの批判と「他者」への批判を行うとともに「他者」との調和をも模索しながら変容してゆく「自己」である。

Keywords : postcolonial, local, Hawai‘i writing, Japanese colonizer/colonized, diaspora identity

This article discusses representations and re-creation of “Japanese identities” by contemporary writers from Hawai‘i, mainly in the 1980s and 1990s. To what extent are Japanese colonialism and neo-colonialism reflected in their works? How different/identical are those writers’ and Japanese contemporary texts on the Pacific?

1. Japanese postcolonial consciousness, and the complex dynamics and “Japanese American cultures” in Hawai‘i

It is possible to read in a postcolonial framework some Japanese works dealing with the Pacific, wherein action plots reveal symptoms of resistances to and the plays of imperialist power. As Japanese colonialism makes use of Western colonialisms to justify Japan’s expansion to the Pacific, so Japanese postcolonialism utilizes the Pacific to reproach the West. Japanese colonialism asserts its distinction from Western colonialisms by representing its own colonizers as closer to colonized Asia/Pacific people, while its postcolonialism stresses self-criticism so that the Japanese might imagine that they, rather than Asia/Pacific people, are victims. Japanese colonialism preached

“affection” towards the colonized, looking on them as “potential Japanese.” The immediate post-war postcolonial mode seen in the original version *Godzilla* was replaced by (neo)colonial — industrial and tourist — desires in the 1960s-1970s and again appeared in the 1980s not only in film but also in writing. The *shosetsu* (novels) for adults began to deal with the Pacific, which had been mainly a setting of didactic juvenile fiction, films, travel writing, war literature, short stories and poetry. *Shosetsu* on contemporary Micronesia such as Tanaka Koji’s *The Small Islands of God* (1981), Ikezawa Natsuki’s *The Stratosphere on a Summer Morning* (1984), Arai Man’s “The Sunset Beach Hotel” (1986) and Nobuhiko Kobayashi’s *The Hottest Island in the World* (1991) attempt to create new representations of self/other. These texts criticize economic, cultural and technological imperialisms of the US and Japan by using formulaic tropes of the fear of war and nuclear bombs, dead soldiers’ souls, tourism, business, and the Micronesian problematic issue of political independence and economic dependence. The writers focus on Micronesia’s retaliation against Japanese characters. The recent works disapprove of the Japanese colonialist ideology of “sameness,” representing Micronesia(ns) as rejecting thorough assimilation. Yet Micronesia remains a space for adventure and love and a place connected with the Japanese historically, culturally, genealogically, and genetically. The texts unwittingly show Japanese writers’ difficulties in depicting the “(distant) other” as resisting conventional colonialist depictions. Their criticism of imperial centers through their own and/or their characters’ escape still has difficulties in overthrowing the unequal binarism of center/periphery, civilization/savage, and colonizer/colonized that comprises the nucleus of Orientalism. The repeated circulation between “centers” and “peripheries” in Ikezawa’s *Macias Gilly’s Downfall* (1993) moves their boundaries not only to articulate but to undermine the persistence of Orientalism with regard to the Pacific (Sudo).

Japanese postcolonial consciousness is also represented in literary texts from Hawai‘i, into which the tendency towards political and cultural decolonization in the Pacific, and racial conflicts and cultural blending in Hawai‘i are woven together. In sympathy with Polynesian indigenous writers, “local” writers in Hawai‘i appropriate and transform non-local vision of the “South Seas” or the “South Pacific” by outsiders such as settlers, tourists and explorers. Among those writers who grew up in Hawai‘i, writers of Asian ethnicity have been taking the initiative of such postcolonial resistance. Rob Wilson points out:

Until the rise of decolonizing literature in the Pacific during the late 1960s in Papua New Guinea and Maori New Zealand, and in the 1970s as centered around the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and writers like Albert Wendt, Subramani, Patricia Grace and Vilsoni Hereniko, various genres of Western discourse coordinated, fantasized, and measured the cultures of the Pacific. [...] a literature of the Asian Pacific community of Hawaii did not emerge until the late 1970s and is still coming into self-conscious expression. (370)

Using vernacular words like “haole” (white folk) and “pidgin” in their works, the local writers of

Asian descent are tied to each other as “non-haole.” In Darrell Lum’s words, “[t]he literature of local writers has a distinct sensitivity to ethnicity, the environment (in particular that valuable commodity, the land), a sense of personal lineage and family history, and use of the sound, the languages, and the vocabulary of island people” (4). This unity also rests on a shared plantation past which their ancestors experienced. Lois-Ann Yamanaka, a Japanese writer from Hawai’i, says, “I write in the pidgin of the contract workers to the sugar plantations here in Hawaii, a voice of eighteenth-century Hawaii passed down to now third- and fourth-generation descendants of various ethnic groups. Our language has been labeled the language of ignorant people, substandard, and inappropriate in any form of expression – written or oral. . . . [...] I was encouraged to write in the voice of my place without shame or fear” (Hagedorn 544). Eric Chock capsulates “modern Hawaiian literature” into the words “a shared sense of belonging and identity” expressed by Hawai’i people (7). He claims “pidgin” as authentic local speech:

It is no secret that language has always been a crucial factor in Hawaii’s history. It is no secret that the so-called “blending of cultures” often manifested itself in a clash of languages, sometimes in a competition for sovereignty. It’s no secret that our own government, through its various organs, has attempted to suppress varying forms of languages in favor of one common language. And that ain’t pidgin they talking about. (7)

It is asserted that “the very success and strength of pidgin in literature should lead to the development of heroic works in pidgin” (while there is criticism of using pidgin in literatures from Hawai’i, that it “badly limits and weakens the literature’s appeal to wider audiences”) (Sumida 101). As Stephen Sumida suggests, the situation of Asian Americans in Hawai’i, who “may seem still lack deep historical roots in the islands,” is paradoxical:

While people outside the Asian American groups tend to venerate the antiquity of what is presumed to be these people’s Asian cultural heritage, this same veneration tends to ignore or belittle contemporary Asian *American* cultures. It thus contributes to a denial that such cultures, quite distinct from Asian ones, have been developing for more than four generations in Hawai’i and elsewhere in America. (91)

In Hawai’i, assertion of ethnicity is not necessarily a decolonizing movement. It could be insertion into the mainstream at the expense of decolonization. In this complex dynamics of Hawai’i, its local Asian writers attempt to highlight, animate, and re-create such contemporary Asian *American* cultures, which are based on plantations. Scarcely any writers from Hawai’i today “turn frequently and directly to ‘the traditions and languages’ of ‘Asia rather than to those of America and Europe’ in order to work ‘within their own environment’ and ‘to tell the story of their homeland’” (Sumida 107).

On the other hand, Asians, as well as “haole” people, are “others” to native Hawaiians, although Susan Najita suggests the distinctions between local and native that have proven to be an obstacle to the decolonizing project (132). In fighting a radical assertion of different “Island” identity against US mainland and mainstream culture, Hawaiians of Japanese and Chinese extraction have often worked into the “Asian-American” context (and indeed largely supported Statehood). So while they have usefully asserted local identity and developed “pidgin” as a viable literary language, they have not always had the general effect of supporting the expression and political rights of native Hawaiians. There is now native Hawaiian literature as opposed to “local” (hybrid Islander) one. The native Hawaiian writer Haunani-Kay Trask asserts:

Contemporary writers who claim, through generational residence in Hawai‘i, that they are Hawaiian or representative of what would be a unique national literature of Hawai‘i, if we were an independent country, confuse the development and identification of our indigenous literature. Asian writers who grew up in Hawai‘i and claim their work as representative of Hawaiian literature or of our islands are the most obvious example. [...]

Despite their denials and confusions, Asians in Hawai‘i are immigrants whose ancestors came from Asia. They represent an amalgam of immigrant cultures, sometimes called “local” in our islands. Obviously, they are not Hawaiian, nor can our culture suddenly become theirs through the use of Hawaiian words, expressions of Hawaiian spiritual values, or participation in *nāmea Hawai‘i* (“things Hawaiian,” such as hula, purification rituals, etc.). Neither length of residency nor occasional use of our language transforms non-Natives into Hawaiians. (1999b, 169)

Because of their “identity theft” or “falsification of place and culture,” she insists, “contrary to most contemporary Hawaiian work, Asian writing is not counter-hegemonic; it is not particularly critical of the dominant literary culture or canon” (Trask 1999b, 170). She also asserts on any local Asian writers’ works that the “celebration of pidgin English becomes a gloss for the absence of authentic sounds and authentic voices” (1999b, 170). As seen later, the local “immigrant identities” of the Japanese in Hawai‘i, negotiating with those of “the Japanese,” “mainland Japanese-Americans,” “mainland Americans,” “local haoles,” and “Native Hawaiians,” are marked by self-division or even self-abhorrence and split between the colonizer and colonized. Trask describes in her poem “Dispossessions of Empire” the Japanese as imperialists equal to Americans, rather than the same (partly Americanized) “non-haoles” as other Pacific peoples:

Aku boats lazing
on the aqua horizon;
waves of morning, a seawind
sun, salt hanging

in the steamy Kona
glare, lava black shore
rippling along rocky
outcrops, porous with *loli*.

Slow-footed Hawaiians
amidst flaunting
foreigners: rich
Americans, richer

Japanese, smelling
of greasy perfume,
tanning with the stench
of empire. (1999a, 20-21)

Trask's awareness of the Japanese as neo-colonialists ranking with Americans can also be seen in contemporary postcolonial self-awareness of both Japanese and Asian Hawaiian writers. However, the way to intervene in neo-colonialist and imperialist cultural hegemonies is different: native writers focus on their traditional "indigenous cultures," and local writers, their contemporary "hybrid cultures," while Japanese writers, their perceived "other cultures" of Pacific Islanders.

The decolonization of Hawaiian literature rests on a foundation of native resistance which can be dated to the planters' revolt of 1893 but which gathered political and cultural force from the 1970s. Trask points out that the national political and cultural movement's growth "was preceded by a fundamental transformation in Hawai'i's economy" and suggests the shift before and after "Pearl Harbour":

From dependence on cash crops of sugar and pineapple, and on military expenditures in the first half of the 20th century, Hawai'i's economy shifted to an increasing dependence on tourism and land speculation with rising investment by multi-national corporations in the second half of the century. (1987, 163)

This economic shift allows nostalgia for the now "old" plantation days of heroic labor, influencing the formation of the "local" identity of "plantation peasant" seen in contemporary Asian writers' works from Hawai'i. They depict the "Japanese" not so much as oppressors of native Hawaiians and other Asians as in Trask's poem, as oppressed by the white or Western culture.

The early work in which the representation of "Japanese identities" in Hawai'i is condensed is Milton Murayama's *All I Asking for Is My Body* (published as a complete novel in 1975) and O. A.

Bushnell's *The Stone of Kannon* (1979). In these works, the Japanese immigrants are wretched under the plantation system and its "haole" colonists' rule. However, those works do not depict the Japanese as oppressors towards other Asian/Pacific people or rebels against American colonialists. Rather than denouncing various Japanese/American authorities, the texts lay more stress on building a new worker community that still preserves ethnic cultural values. They also emphasize those people's ties between and beyond generations despite their conflicts. Stephen Sumida points out that *All I Asking for Is My Body*

rests finally on a moral truth that evidently is not commonplace when applied to the ethnic groups and their situations in this novel. The usual misreading of the novel lies in a stereotypical, shallow – and racist – assumption that the American son must triumph over his immigrant parents in a war between their respective cultures, especially when these cultures are supposedly as incompatible as the Japanese and the American, and especially when the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor near the novel's end. This misreading is based on notions about "assimilation," whereas to the contrary the novel's local-boy protagonist Kiyo mocks those nisei who try to be "haolefied," to imitate white people. The novel's true import rests not on such generalizations about cultures and nationalities but in a radically different, humane way of viewing relationships between its issei and nisei generations and envisioning the Japanese *American* culture they share. (115-116)

Bushnell is a Hawai'i-born, third-generation descendant of a mix of European immigrants to Hawai'i including Portuguese and Norwegians. He attempts in *The Stone of Kannon* to tell the story of the Gannen Mono, the First-year Men, the first Japanese to arrive in Hawai'i in 1868 (the first year of the Emperor Meiji) to work on the sugar plantations. He writes in the preface: "If you are wondering why a writer who cannot claim a Japanese ancestor is telling this story, the answer is both simple and saddening: no novelist of Japanese ancestry has yet done so" (vii). From this standpoint of the "other," Bushnell assumes and values what the Japanese immigrants and their American descendants share, instead of emphasizing the conflicts between the two sides:

Even though few Gannen Mono could read or write, all had been taught the virtues that count in the shaping of a man. Those important virtues of *on*, *giri*, and *gimu* – in other words, the values of loyalty, gratitude, obligation, honor, courtesy, and industry – have enriched the lives of all of us who have grown up in the Hawaii the settlers from Japan and their descendants have helped to make. (ix)

Such local non-native consciousness of "Japanese American cultures" is not based on postcolonial critique of the Japanese as colonizers. It is more concerned with filling the gaps in the national "melting pot" – racist and assimilationist – story.

2. “Japanese diaspora identities”: resistance and reconciliation

Despite these early influential works, there is a shift in representations of “Japanese identities” in 1980s and 1990s works from Hawai‘i. The rest of this essay will use those novels and collected stories and poems from Hawai‘i published since the 1980s that take up “Japanese diaspora identities,” and in which resistance against and reconciliation with American/Japanese authorities are mainly focused on. First we will see works by Gary Pak and Chris McKinney, which emphasize the involvement of Japanese imperialism in Asia/Pacific subjects as well as local/metropolitan haole subjects. Next, works by Japanese writers from Hawai‘i (Jessica Saiki, Marie Hara, Juliet Kono, Lois-Ann Yamanaka, and Milton Murayama) will be examined, in which local Japanese postcolonial consciousness is concerned.

Japanese oppressors/oppressed in Hawai‘i

The above-mentioned doubleness of Japanese oppressors and oppressed is more clearly seen in Gary Pak’s *The Watcher of Waipuna and Other Stories* (1992). In the stories, he expresses postcolonial complexities in Hawai‘i with native Hawaiian, Japanese, and haole characters. The Japanese as the colonizer opposing, and conspiring with, haole, and the Japanese immigrants (and their descendants) as the colonized, joint strugglers with native Hawaiians against haole, play important roles in the stories.

In “The Watcher of Waipuna,” a retarded Hawaiian, Gilbert Sanchez, takes over the role of “the watcher of Waipuna” from a “half-crazy” Japanese old man, Nakakura. The latter has been vigilant against “the frogmen who had come to Waipuna from the ocean during the War and were now hiding in the dense mangrove forest along the coast, some forty-plus years after the Big Surrender” (Pak 1992, 21). Besides these vestiges of Japanese military colonialism, this story also depicts envoys of new economic colonialism of Japan. Japanese businessmen furnish funds for haole counterparts who attempt to buy Sanchez’s property with an eye to a quick profit. These marginalized Japanese immigrant and native Hawaiian form a united front against those old and new colonial inroads. In “The Trial of Goro Fukushima,” a Japanese gardener is wrongly executed for murder of the wife of the plantation manager. Unable to speak English, this Japanese boy is enigmatic for haole people, who think that “behind Goro’s always courteous smile a dark evil had been hidden” (98). This story describes the highhanded white and wretched colored, using a Japanese boy as the latter. People of “mixed blood” (*hapa*) show their sympathy for Goro, yet not struggling to save his life. They make a non-haole minority together with the Japanese, serving the local haole hegemony but being suspicious of it. In “The Garden of Jiro Tanaka,” a Japanese retired park keeper, Tanaka, finds in his garden a beautiful plant playing music, with a ripened fruit which is “soft and cool” and has “the smell of the ocean.” Long hoping for grandchildren, this “tired old man near the end of a comfortable yet uneventful and meaningless life” (168) can dream of playing

with children every night because of the fruit epitomizing the “tropical Pacific” or “Hawai’i.” Tanaka, having lived under haole control as a dependent on handouts from white economy, finds himself deeply connected to the plant, or the Hawaiian land, and unable to do without it. When it wilts, he is troubled by a nightmare of a tempest, and it recovers not by any artificial ways like manure or fertilizer but only through a natural rainfall. This nisei’s experience of transition from a routinely “Japanese-like” life to a new phase of unshackled “native” modes is a process of obtaining a “Japanese Hawaiian” identity.

These erratic “Japanese identities” created in Japanese relationships to people (natives and haole) and nature in Hawai’i are re-viewed from a Korean immigrant viewpoint in Pak’s novel *Ricepaper Airplane* (1998). A Korean old man, Uncle Sung Wha, who dreams of returning to Korea, tells a Korean youth, Yong Gil, who grew up in Hawai’i, his own experience in Japanese-ruled Korea and Manchuria, Japan, China, and Hawai’i as “history.” This story is also Sung Wha’s dying words. He says:

“No forget what I telling you, Yong Gil. Dis is history. Dis is what happen in da past. [...] No make forget, like how da haoles trying make us forget everything what was like befo’. Dey trying brainwash everybody, tell us how lucky live here, lucky come Hawai’i, lucky live in America, all dat bullshit. Dose buggahs, dem stay changing what really wen happen every time dem write and rewrite one history book. [...] Dose Indians, dem should let them Pilgrims starve. (Pak 1998, 25)

For the Korean, who had been oppressed both in Korea and a plantation in Hawai’i, there is not “any difference between the American and the Japanese way of enslavement” (218), just as seen in Trask’s poem. American and Japanese imperialisms are both the targets of resistance not by “bullets” but by “words”:

“[...] I tell you, Yong Gil, nobody can tell one story like da people from our village. And das one truth. Yo’ *harabagi* – my uncle, my *ajisi* – he da spokeperson fo’ da entire village. Da Japanee come into da village and yo’ *harabagi* go make da kine fantastic-kine stories, he tell dem. And dem Japanee believe! Dem believe everything what yo’ *harabagi* tell dem, no matter haw fantastic da story.

“[...] He can fool anybody. If he living today, dey call him one good actor. Like Gary Cooper. Or Charlie Chaplin. Maybe even mo’ bettah dan dem. [...]” (240-241)

This book’s postcolonial intervention is based on the idea of “cleaving to colonial power in order to cleave from it” (to borrow Elleke Boehmer’s term “cleaving” [104-111]) as in any other anti-colonial nationalist text. Yet Pak’s text shows that Korean nationalism’s peculiarity stems from Japanese modernization and imperialism: Japan modernized itself not directly through Western

languages and cultures but through translating them into Japanese and assimilated its colonized people, viewing them as the “potential” Japanese. Pak writes: “Though we hate the Japanese, a good many things come from Japan that are helping our movement. [...] These books are important. They are written by the Great Russian revolutionaries. Until the time comes when they can be translated into Korean, we’ll have to read these Japanese translations” (139).

For Korean immigrants, Japanese workers are not acceptable simply as the same plantation laborers ruled by haoles: “All da Koreans in da plantation wen get all worked up dey hear dis. Dey break dey hoe handles and attack da Japanee workers. Was one big, big fight. Korean . . . dey nevah da Japanee, even dey come same-same boat ovah heah” (178). Criticism is also leveled at Korean elders, teachers, and *yangban* (the upper privileged classes), who are “just as bad and cruel as the Japanese, perhaps even worse” (66), and “ourselves”:

We’re a colony of Japan, do you understand that? We Koreans still have our faces and our souls now, but soon, if this is to continue, we’ll be Koreans in face only. Our insides will be Japanese. Then, instead of rebelling against the Japanese, our insides will rebel against our outside. We’ll be rebelling against ourselves. Do you understand what I’m saying? And for some Koreans that’s what’s happening right now! (123)

However, just as in Korea certain “benefits” of Japanese invasion are admitted, in Hawai’i, individual differences begin to break up collective ones:

But dis guy, dis schoolteacher – I think his name Wata-something, Watanabe, or something li’dat, I forget – but anyway, dis schoolteacher, somehow I feel he okay. He no look like beat you up, treat you bad, da kine dey had all ovah Korea. Later on, on da plantation, I meet plenny Japanee, but almost everyone, dey jus’ come from Japan: dey young, dey really no like what dey government doing in Korea. But was real strange find one guy like da schoolteacher dat time ’cause I thinking all Japanee, no matter what, dey all da same, dey all lousy and all like boss you ’round, steal yo’ things. (174-175)

Shared politics can also overcome racial/cultural differences:

And how’s my old friend Yamamura, that anarchist? One of a few Japanese whom I trust. I owe my life to him. Don’t have the money to pay him back, but I’ll give it back later. That’s a promise. I will. He understands. He knows we revolutionaries are poor. But yes, I should stop in Japan, where my good friend will welcome and feed me. He’ll make a bed for me. And then off I’ll go, flying to Korea. (241)

The novel deals with the anguish and survival of Korean culture and morale (symbolized as a

“tiger”) under imperial authorities and their cultural hegemonies and assimilationism. Such strong assertion of national identities is not to be seen in Pacific representations by Japanese writers from Japan and Hawai‘i. Yet Pak’s works are akin to those Japanese works from Japan in that they represent the Pacific Islands as a locale of anti-imperialist resistance and depict the ambiguous Japanese self as both oppressors and oppressed. This oscillating self or self-critical aspect makes Pak’s and those Japanese works and their postcolonial consciousness seem, in Trask’s words, “not counter-hegemonic.”

The Tattoo (1999), by Chris McKinney, who is of Korean, Japanese, and Scottish descent, operates in the same manner. The Japanese protagonist, Ken, who killed his father to protect his half-Korean and half-haole wife, Claudia, tells his life story in prison while being tattooed by his mute haole cellmate with a Chinese character which means “the void” or “emptiness.” This tattoo artist says to himself:

Sure, if you take all the pidgin out, exchange Ken with some white guy from West Virginia, then there’d be an audience. But Ken was Japanese and brought up in “paradise.” Paradise was never the compelling setting unless it was falling or lost. (McKinney 80)

Here the text paradoxically distinguishes itself from “normal” English texts by its language, setting, and ethnically marked characters.

The text first establishes ludicrous and grotesque stereotyped “Japan” associated with the protagonist: first of all, the title “tattoo.” The protagonist’s name is Kenji “Ken” Hideyoshi (“ken” means “sword”; Hideyoshi is the first [not last] name of the most powerful feudal lord in the late sixteenth century). His ultra-nationalist grandfather idealizes the Edo period as the time in which Western people and cultures were expelled (a conception based on the wrong understanding of the period). Ken has a “samurai”-like rigorous father and a “musume”-like beautiful mother. The text also uses Momotaro (one of the most popular figures of Japanese folktales), *Abarenbo Shogun* (a popular Japanese TV drama on *shogun* Yoshimune, not Yoshitsune, another historic figure, as said in the text), and Miyamoto Musashi (one of the greatest swordsmen). The text also has characters typically identified with American and Japanese imperialism: a native Hawaiian playing a role of mediator for Ken, an “outsider,” to be “somebody” respected in Hawai‘i, not “just a Jap” as in the US mainland (133). This native Hawaiian hates haoles, who had “taken his land” and “killed his culture” or “his humanity” (63). Also appears a Korean immigrant, Ken’s mother-in-law, the proprietor of a strip bar and former “comfort woman” of the Japanese Army.

The text attempts to divorce a stereotyped image of “samurai” from Japanese imperialism/nationalism. Ken, a modern *samurai*, whose hero is Musashi, has violent Japanese looks, reminding old Koreans of the Japanese occupation of Korea. He kills three Koreans whom Claudia’s mother sent to him to hamper his marriage to Claudia, one of them her cousin, the namesake of her great-grandfather, symbolizing for her the Korean survival of Japan’s occupation.

After facing the suicide of his Hawaiian friend, Ken also kills his father, who, hating both haoles and Koreans, always wages the “race-war” with Claudia. In eradicating those “pure” “authentic” nationalist Korean, Hawaiian, and Japanese, and Ken’s parting with his wife and baby, the text represents and beautifies an image of *samurai* as an anti-authoritarian subject emblemized by the tattoo of “空” on his back, which epitomizes Musashi’s mystique of swordsmanship. By virtue of being “Hawaiian,” Ken delivers this traditional mystique from its modern image of the imperial Japan’s morale. This heroic persona also represents a void left by historical, cultural, ethnic conflicts in Hawai‘i, a void as new local identity produced by and separated from such conflicts.

Pak’s and McKinney’s texts, as well as Japanese texts, treat the Pacific as a setting for dreams, adventures, homicide, flight, or unusual incidents registered amongst a group of people themselves unusual for being a migrant minority. They do not so much portray Islanders’ everyday life as the works by Japanese writers from Hawai‘i examined below.

Japanese postcolonial racial/gender consciousness in Hawai‘i

Works in the 1980s-1990s by Japanese writers from Hawai‘i, Jessica Saiki, Marie Hara, Juliet Kono, Lois-Ann Yamanaka, and Milton Murayama, focus on ordinary people’s, not uneventful, but everyday lives. Nevertheless, those works share with contemporary Japanese writings on the Pacific some traits of Japanese postcolonial consciousness: there is a critique of both Western (US) and Japanese neo/colonialism and racism, realization of not belonging to the Islands and of the difficulty in going native, local Japanese identity not being congruous with a “traditional” Japan associated with militarism, patriarchy and ultra-nationalism. The double ambivalence to the West and Asia/Pacific in Japanese postcolonialism is lasting and depicted in the contemporary works from Japan and Hawai‘i.

From the 1970s, gender consciousness has appeared in “migrant” or “local” writing. Jessica Saiki’s collections of short stories *Once, A Lotus Garden* (1987) and *From the Lanai and Other Hawaii Stories* (1991) and Marie Hara’s *Bananaheart & Other Stories* (1994) specify problems of the “Japanese” in Hawai‘i from viewpoints of ordinary Japanese women from Hawai‘i. Hara’s “Honeymoon Hotel, 1895” depicts what is called “picture brides,” young Japanese women who come to Hawai‘i by command of their parents to marry plantation workers from the same province, whom they know only by photos.

Resigning herself to the situation, Sono tasted her disappointment without self-pity. [...] Luck was not to be Sono’s domain, and untested expectations were always a mistake. [...] If there was enough food to eat, enough clothing to wear, enough fuel for warmth and enough family to gather around in enjoyment of a pleasant evening, that was enough for her lot in life. [...] She could hear the voices of the women in her clan reminding her to be thankful that her widowed mother had one less mouth to feed. (Hara 13)

The writers sarcastically show in their stories how obedient, persevering, resigned women, as defined by the Orientalist image of *musume*, change in Hawai'i, how different their descendants are from them, and how intricate their relations are. In Saiki's "The Old Ways," aged Japanese women long for "the ways of their parents in Japan," feeling incongruous and regretting the American ways of their children and grandchildren in their love of coiffures, cars, English names, dancing, and so on. On the other hand, the old women are also aware of other Japanese immigrants who attempted to live again the old ways in Japan but return to the Islands after a while: "they were too used to things here . . . True what people say, 'Lucky come Hawaii'" (Saiki 1987, 25). In the end,

old country thoughts, like re-touched studio photographs represented only the best, Sunday clothes. Distance of time and place made them appear more beautiful than they were. (1987, 26)

Despite such differences due to generation/place, racism towards and by the Japanese is invariable. In Saiki's "Windows," a white child invites her Japanese friend to her home, saying to her: "if anyone should ask you tomorrow, say you're only *half*-Japanese, okay?" (1987, 28). For the white girl's grandmother, "half-haole and half-Japanese" (*hapa*) children are "altogether different" from "squinty eyed" children, whom she does not want her granddaughter to play with. Conversely, to a Japanese mother who was born and raised in Hawai'i and lives in the American mainland, and her "hapa" daughter, Hawai'i seems to be "the tropical Eden" ("Hapa Hapa/Half and Half," Saiki 1987). The girl actually can make some friends in her Hawai'i school, but her neighbor girls, Japanese sisters, who giggle to her with "the dreadful word 'hapa'" and throw stones at a crippled mutt, are cold devils spoiling the "paradise" for her. Hara exposes such unjust bias in a humorous way:

I wondered idly what you would have to do to get such fierce wrinkles. O-Baban, almost ninety, didn't seem to have so many of them. Did you have to be *haole* to shrivel so much? Would half of me shrivel while the other half stayed tight? Would I wrinkle from head to waist or feet to waist? Or would it be the right half or the left half? They said I was *hapa*. Which half would turn *haole*? ("The Gift," 86-87)

Such Japanese racism is aimed not only at "hapa" and "gaijin" or foreign people. Saiki's "Once, a Lotus Garden" also indicates that it is leveled at Okinawans (Saiki 1987).

Saiki draws attention to relations between "haole" men and Japanese women, a difference of the consciousness of the mainland/local "haoles" towards the Japanese, and a relationship between a Japanese local man and a Japanese national woman. In "Oribu" set in Hawai'i in 1946, a Japanese couple and their daughter serve a "haole" couple. The "haole" husband, Oliver Finch, has a great liking for a Japanese-style garden and bath (*ofuro*). His Japanism is not confined to them: the

Japanese daughter (*musume*) has a red-haired, white-skinned little boy called “Oribu” (Olive – “Japanese people can’t pronounce ‘l,’ ‘v’ and ‘r’s’ too good . . .” [Saiki 1991, 6]). Saiki writes, “I don’t think this is the first time such a thing happened in the islands” (1991, 6). In “Portraits,” which is set in Hawai’i in 1938, Japanese fears of the “haoles” and biases about them are such that Japanese parents keep their daughter away from a white man although they are only friends. Whites’ taste for *musume* in a more contemporary version is depicted in “Specter.” A “haole” man, who found the traditional Japanese lifestyle the salvation of his nervous breakdown, seems to be “indeed Japanese”: “Clad in a dark brown *yukata*, Stillwaite himself, except for his white skin and Nordic features, embodied the oriental man lounging at home in a cotton kimono. [...] His eyes are slanted! Delicate in build, he moved his arms and legs as a man doing Chinese calisthenics” (1991, 88). This “Orientalist” does not begrudge what he has to pay for a local Japanese girl, who is usually “Miss Teeny Bopper” but plays the role for him of a typical *musume* – “the adorable Japanese woman, composed and uncomplaining, courteous, quiet and pliable as putty” – dressed up like a *geisha* (90).

In addition to such tragic/comic empty interdependent relationships between “haoles” as colonizers and the Japanese as the colonized, complicated interrelationships in Hawai’i are described in respect of local/mainland and gender conflicts. “From the Lanai” tells of a white couple who employ Japanese plantation laborers. To those Japanese, the wife, the mainlander, finds herself a stranger, feeling “like a rich British colonist in India or Africa with a bevy of servants catering to every whim” (Saiki 1991, 42), while the husband, who grew up in Hawai’i, feels comfortable with them. “Tada’s Wife” depicts a Japanese couple, the wife from Tokyo, an extensive reader, and the illiterate husband from Lunalilo, the Hawaiian countryside. To him she is exotic like “an umber-hued tundra bird transplanted to Hawaii” (1991, 45), whereas he is “a diamond in the rough” and she has visions of “molding” him into “her idea of a cultivated person” (48). This colonial-marriage-trope story concludes three years after their marriage, when, as everyone around them has warned, she returns to Japan with their daughter, leaving him despairing in Hawai’i.

To this discourse on Japanese identities from Hawai’i compiled in Saiki’s and Hara’s stories, Juliet Kono, Lois-Ann Yamanaka, and Milton Murayama add different representations. In “Ojichan,” Kono writes her grandfather’s unique story, mingling a Japanese folktale *Urashima Taro* and his experience of a huge tsunami in Hawai’i. The hybrid story is very impressive to her, related to the complexity of her world:

I imagined myself on the back of *Urashima Taro*’s turtle transporting me deeper and deeper into the depths of the high-towered, pot-bellied building where the priest sat meditating in front of the Buddha. (Kono 1988, 56)

Suddenly, the cane turned into a swaying green sea. The rice birds flew up and swirled around like a fish. And I was riding *Urashima Taro*’s turtle once more – driving deeper and deeper into

the green. (58)

This Japanese old tale adapted for local Hawai'i is a vehicle for depiction of Japanese Hawaiian diaspora identities.

As to intergenerational conflict, Kono expresses it from an “upstart and wayward” sansei-daughter’s viewpoint in “Reconciliation”:

You’re forgiving
of the small imperfections
you find in your drawings
as you have long forgiven
those found in me.

Mother, I have a confession.
I, too, have long forgiven you
for never having finished school
beyond the eighth grade,
for speaking with an “island” accent,
for us being poor,
and Japs. (1988, 83-84)

Such discontent of an “American” daughter towards Japanese parents is depicted in Kono’s later work as criticism both of them and herself. The tone is both sarcastic and humorous. In “Before Time,” she enumerates every thinkable “unorthodox” beings, discrimination traditionally made in terms of “race,” class, vocation, corporal characteristics, creed, family, language, accent, and so on:

They said to marry only Japanese,
and only *some* of our own kind;
not zuzuben, batten, kotonk,
hibakusha, eta, Uchinanchu –
night-soil carrier, big-rope people.
Before time, they said not to marry
keto, gaijin, haole – hair people, foreigner, white;
saila boy, Chineese, club foot, one thumb, chimba, mahu, glass
eye,
harelip, bolinki, pigeon-toe, Pologee, Uncle Joe’s friend,
Kanaka, cane cutter, mandolin player, night diver,
Puerto Rican, tree climber, nose picker, Filipino,

thief, bartender, jintan sucker, Korean, paniolo,
farmer, bearded,
mustachioed, Teruko's brother, daikon leg, cane hauler, left-
handed, right-handed, smartaleck, Christian, poor
speller, commie, Indian, leper, Hakka, cripple,
drunk, flat nose, old, Jew Pake, chicken fighter,
pig hunter, moke, ice cruncher, opium
smoker, one-side-eyebrow raiser, fat,
olopop, skinny, Punt, thick lip,
albino, kurombo. (1995, 123)

On the other hand, her "A Scolding from My Father" describes a warning against her:

What kind Japanese you?
Nothing more worse in this world
than one Japanee
who like be something
he not.
No matter how much you like –
no can!
No can *be* haole.
[...]
No can *be* Chineese.
[...]
And no can *be* Hawaiian.
[...]
Why you like be something you not?
You no more shame or what?
Eh, you no figa too,
that maybe these guys
they no *like* you
suck around them? (1995, 124-125)

These works are penetrated by a theme of rejecting both disdain and longing for what one is not. This is a significant theme for creating a new identity to overcome generation, ethnic, and gender conflicts, which political authorities always take advantage of to justify their control. Kono represents this theme by depicting Japanese women who attempt to be as they are. As such attempts, the struggles of a Japanese wife nursing her "haole" mother-in-law with Alzheimer's

disease are presented in “The Elizabeth Poems” in her *Tsunami Years* (1995) and also developed in her short story “Rock Fever” (2001) published in *Bamboo Ridge*.

Lois-Ann Yamanaka, by contrast, depicts a warped sense of self-hatred and inferiority complex in relation to haoles in “Tita: Japs,” a poem in her *Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre* (1993). “I ain’t one fuckin’ Jap like them. / Their eyes mo slant than mine and yeah, / I one Jap, but not that kine, / the kine all good and smart and perfect / [...] / That kine Jap is what I ain’t” (1993, 31). In her three novels following this impressive poetry, she offers a different perspective on Japanese diaspora identities by describing Japanese girl protagonists. *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers* (1996) insists on taking the protagonist’s “self” as it is with her struggle with her own feeling ashamed of Japanese ways and longing for “haole” ones. It similarly shows the urge to conform to dominant images. Yet the text also shows the drive to escape conformity within the migrant enclave. She is sworn at by her father for the first time in her life: “You always make like we something we not, I tell you. When you going open your eyes and learn, hah? You ain’t rich, you ain’t haole, and you ain’t strong inside. You just one little girl” (1996, 260). She hates her Japanese classmates who all have “the same Japan pencils in Japan pencil cases” and “the same bubble-gum-smelling erasers,” all have “the same scent on the same day,” and “all have straight, long black hair with long bangs behind the ears” (190). Against this pressure of “sameness,” which penetrates Japanese colonialism, the protagonist has no word but “Oh yeah?” But Yamanaka asserts the necessity to object to such oppression: “Say something. / Say something. / Say anything but ‘Oh yeah?’” (195). As her grandfather, who came to Hawai’i from Japan in 1907 as a plantation laborer, valued a package containing soil from Japan, so the protagonist puts some soil off Haupu Mountain in a package. The American girl’s package with some soil is similar to her Japanese ancestor’s in appearance. Yet their contents are different: hers is not Japanese but Hawaiian. On the other hand, Yamanaka expresses attachment to “Japanese identities” through the protagonist’s sense of distance from her uncle who, living in Guam, has a “real nice haole accent” but does not know about Japanese shows that she watches on TV (264-265).

With this ambiguity kept as her work’s texture, Yamanaka in turn describes protests against “haole” teachers in *Blu’s Hanging* (1997) and reconciliation with a “haole” boy in *Heads by Harry* (1999). In *Blu’s Hanging*, the protagonist girl becomes conscious of her own value through her Japanese teacher’s anger with her “haole” colleagues:

“You are so condescending, Tammy, it’s pathetic. I’m a Jap to you. And my friends are all brownies. It’s written all over your face every minute of every day. I’ve had to put up with your judgment of us and your snide remarks for months now. I’m no dummy, so don’t you ever talk down to me, you undastand” – Miss Ito’s pidgin English comes out. I’ve never heard her use it. “Cause you keep acting stupid, Tammy, you keep on lifting your haole nose in the air at me and my friends, you going hear worse things than ‘haole’ come out of this Jap’s mout’.” (Yamanaka 1997, 128)

Miss Ito's "pidgin" English – local hybrid culture “cleaving to/from” hegemonic power – functions as a medium to represent Japanese Hawaiian identities like a new version of *Urashima Taro* in Juliet Kono's story. At the same time, it is an indignant voice of a local woman – but not an entirely subaltern in Gayatri Spivak's term – that breaks local “non-haole” people's silence. This silence, as Stephen Sumida suggests, “has been forced upon these people of Hawai'i by authority and circumstance, in punishment, perhaps, for someone's having spoken out in insubordination,” and is no longer a virtue (227).

In *Heads by Harry*, a Japanese family takes charge of a “haole” boy, holding a sense in common that they are local non-natives who cannot belong to their place completely.

I still don't know who was happier – Billy or Mommy. Billy, who needed somebody like Mommy, unconditional with her biting, blunt, local kind of love, or Mommy, who needed someone to mold into another teacher's success story of which Aunty Mildred had none. Billy was part of our family, the kind of haole that wasn't a condescending mainland haole. He was a local haole who took no offense to the word, and laid-back with his body. (Yamanaka 1999, 95-96)

As the protagonist's brother makes clear, ethnic pride and self-hatred are both dead ends: “Us Japanese even think we're better than Okinawans and Ainu and they're Japanese too. All us damn locals crumbing around the floor for the same crumbs. [...] I mean, *everybody* hate the Japs. Excuse me for living. Even we hate us, and we Japs. That's why we all rather have hapa kids, so the blood mix – we no like be pure Jap no more” (221). Nevertheless, the protagonist attempts to be only friends (not lovers) with the “haole” boy forever despite his love with her (and probably vice versa).

Yamanaka's Pacific Island is said to be more “mysterious and exotic” than outsiders' (a comment by *Atlantic Monthly* presented on the cover of *Heads by Harry*). Her main characters, local youngsters, are involved in such “queer” issues as “homosexuality” and “autism” as well as having two “real” fathers. Yet “mysterious and exotic” is outsiders' judgment. As mentioned earlier, Milton Murayama's Pacific also tends to be “misread” by metropolitan complacent perspectives. However, as with Kono's and Yamanaka's works, the aim of Murayama's texts is not at celebrating younger American generations' triumph over older Japanese migrants. Murayama's works also attempt to present new diaspora culture and standpoints by depicting resistance and reconciliation, although his Hawai'i is not so “mysterious.” Following his influential novel *All I Asking for Is My Body*, Murayama's two 1990s novels are focused on plantation Japanese identities in Hawai'i. In *All I Asking for Is My Body*, the viewpoint is fixed on Kiyoshi (Kiyō), who can see in proper perspective the conflict between Toshio (Tosh) – his elder brother and the first-born son (*chonon*) – and their parents. In *Five Years on a Rock* (1994) and *Plantation Boy* (1998), the focus is on their mother, Sawa, and Toshio respectively. Despite their confrontation, Sawa and Toshio both vainly attempt to

renounce their plantation life, unlike Kiyoshi who can break with this identity by settling on the US mainland. The focus change from Kiyoshi into Sawa and Toshio in his works, it may be said, makes clear that Murayama's interest is not in depicting Japanese people's escape from plantation colonialism but in creating new Japanese identities from Hawai'i that are inseparable from such colonialism.

In *All I Asking for Is My Body*, "pidgin" symbolizes the way of resistance by the Japanese in Hawai'i to both "haoles" and the older-generation Japanese. Murayama writes "we spoke four languages: good English in school, pidgin English among ourselves, good or pidgin Japanese to our parents and the other old folks" (1988, 5). This suggests that the resistance against the educational (US official) authority is more intense but seems latent to the authority and that the resistance against the older-generation Japanese is reconciliatory. In plantations ("organized toilets"), "Mr. Nelson was top shit on the highest slope, then there were the Portuguese, Spanish, and *nisei lunas* with their indoor toilets which flushed into the same ditches, then Japanese Camp, and Filipino Camp" (96).

Freedom was freedom from other people's shit, and shit was shit no matter how lovingly it was dished, how high or low it came from. Shit was the glue which held a group together, and I was going to have no part of any shit or any group. (96)

Everybody in Kahana was dying to get out of this icky shit-hole [...]. Besides, once you fought, you earned the right to complain and participate, you earned a right to a future. (98)

However, in Murayama's texts, such a "fight" is not only against oppressors but also "self": freedom from plantations means overcoming "plantation mentality" rather than escaping from them or eliminating autocratic authorities. "Gaman" (perseverance, endurance or patience) is a key concept of *Five Years on a Rock*, the title exaggerating a proverb "Three years on a rock," which means that "perseverance will win in the end." Sawa, coming to Hawai'i as a "picture bride," endures physical and mental suffering from her husband, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and unbreakable poverty caused by the plantation system. "We're taught from infancy to *gaman* and *gambaru*. Patience and perseverance are second nature" (Murayama 1994, 49). "We *gaman* too much [...]; it's a Japanese disease" (144). It is not so much a virtue as how to get on in life. Such a persevering Japanese woman can be regarded as a postcolonial agent against her husband and sons, who attempt to flee from plantation labor, and also against characters in contemporary Japanese texts who escape from reality in Japan into the Pacific Islands. She persuades her husband, who sticks to his trade of fishing only to reduce his family to more poverty, to return to the plantation in order to pay debts that his father left them. Her patience brings them back to the plantation system to surmount "plantation mentality," which fetters her husband even though he escapes from the plantation. In this sense, her *gaman* challenges both plantation colonialism and feudal patriarchy.

For Toshio, clearing off their debts, which is actualized through Kiyoshi's gambling in his army life (this is depicted in *All I Asking for Is My Body* as an unexpected twist at the end of the story), does not lead to overcoming his "plantation mentality." In *Plantation Boy*, Toshio keeps making strenuous efforts to become an architect and obtains a license in the end. Yet he realizes that "the same old plantation plot" is everywhere, especially after statehood, "the final nail in the coffin" (143). However, he wishes to choose to "strike out on [his] own" rather than to "keep working for [their] colonial paymaster" (178). The key concept of this story is "anger," Toshio's rage towards "haoles" and his parents.

Shit! The plantations wen bring our parents to work the canefields! We born here! We fought the Japs and the Nazis! We only thirty-five percent of the population, but we took eighty percent of Hawaii's casualties! We wen earn the right to be here! We wen work and die for it! [...]

(169-170)

You made me quit high school! You made me work in the canefields! I went to night school for my diploma! You didn't do a thing for me! Because of you I now have to compete with college graduates fifteen years younger! And you want to pile some more on me! I'm finished with you! I sacrifice ten years!

(152)

Murayama writes: "You can pretend to be anything in Hawaii" (162). Peasants act like *samurais*, Japanese people like "haoles," and colonized like colonizers. Such pretence or self-colonization (Westernization or modernization) is the essence of Japanese colonialism, and challenging towards it is the point of Japanese postcolonial discourse, as suggested earlier. Not pretending to be anything, Sawa and Toshio are tenacious but forceless, nonviolent resisters armed with perseverance and anger respectively, both against American and Japanese colonialism/authoritarianism.

* * *

Contemporary writings both from Japan and Hawai'i show postcolonial consciousness, that is, (self-)critical attitudes towards Japanese colonial and military invasions, tourism, economic enterprises, and racial and gender consciousness. Those writings criticize Japanese people's self-colonization and their colonized self by depicting their relationships to both Pacific Islands and people and US/haole political, economic, and cultural hegemonies in the regions. Such postcolonial representations indicate complicated textual negotiations in the Pacific and create "Japanese identities" being hybridized and migrating.

Despite the great similarity of contemporary works from Japan and Hawai'i, their postcolonial modes are different in that the Japanese writings deal with retaliations of the Pacific Islands

towards the Japanese; Hawai'i's recent works accentuate creating new identities, which are provisional and local, based on self-criticism, and both challenging and reconciliatory.

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