國立臺灣大學文學院外國語文學系

博士論文

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

College of Liberal Arts

National Taiwan University

Doctoral Dissertation

不能言說的出口：弱勢文學作為一種翻譯的可能

Unspeakable Things (Un)spoken: Minor Literature as Translation

劉欣如

Hsin-ju Liu

指導教授：廖朝陽 博士

Advisor: Chaoyang Liao, Ph.D.

中華民國 108 年 6 月

June, 2019

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all of those with whom I have had the pleasure to work during this and other related projects. Each of my dissertation committee has provided me with extensive guidance during my defense.

I would first like to thank my advisor, Professor Chaoyang Liao. His attitude continually and convincingly helped me whenever I ran into a blind spot or a question. He allowed this dissertation to be my own work, but steered me in the right direction with patience.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Professor Liang-ya Liou, Professor Guy Beauregard, Professor Chun-yen Chen, and Professor Amie Parry. Their works and courses have shown me the global concern and brought me to a much broader scope in modern comparative literature. In addition, their questions (as well as advice) during the defense helped me clarify the problem I encountered during my process of research. Without their input, the dissertation could not have been conducted.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents and to my partner for supporting me with continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and throughout the process of writing the thesis. This would not have been possible without them.

中文摘要

本文旨在探討如何將不能言說之事物藉由翻譯的方式再現。受到托妮·莫里森（Toni Morrison）的演講所啟發，本文將探討弱勢文學中如何再現那些不被言說之物。作為經典文學的炮灰（抑或是養分），不被（也不可）言說之物在弱勢文學之中找到了論述的背景。也因此，為了能更有效率地檢視這些不能言說之物，本文將視弱勢文學中的語言表現為一種翻譯方法，進而探討酒井直樹翻譯理論中，對於翻譯體制的批判與反思。本文也將討論弱勢文學中的翻譯活動如何透過語言的去疆域化以及再疆域化來銘記、消除、還有扭曲對於邊界的概念。

第一章藉由探討珍·瑞絲（Jean Rhys）的〈藻海無邊〉和車學敬（Theresa Hak Kyung Cha）的〈聽寫〉來凸顯自我與他者的對立關係如何在弱勢文學的翻譯行為中再現。第二章透過阿蘭達蒂·洛伊的兩本小說，〈微物之神〉及〈極樂之邦〉來深入討論邊界的跨越以及心靈創傷如何以翻譯行為解析。延續前兩章的討論，第三章以跨越國界的方式試論翻譯行為何以能替不能言說者達到語言行動（speech act）的目的。對華特·班雅明來說，「純語言」（pure language）雖不是一種真正將各語言揉雜而成為一體的語言，它也引進作為翻譯原型或是理想的互補性。將弱勢文學視為一種翻譯可能體現其作為一種後設語言覺識以及跨文化理解的能力。此種觀點將可使不同文本重新被閱讀以及互相交流。
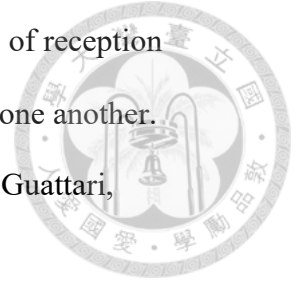
關鍵字：弱勢文學、翻譯、翻譯理論、德勒茲、酒井直樹

Abstract
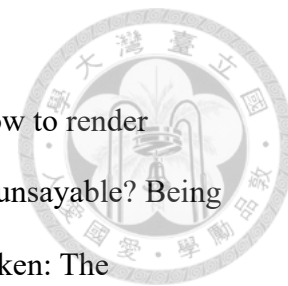
The core of the thesis is to answer the following questions: How to render speakable what was formerly unspeakable? How to say something unsayable? Being inspired by Toni Morrison's lecture— "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature"— the thesis aims to explore the representation of the unspeakable things unspoken in selected works of minor literature. As the canon fodder, the unspeakable things are patently presented in minor literature; therefore, the investigation would like to explore the possibility of presenting the unspeakable things through a translation practice which is more evident and effective in minor literature. During my process of analysis, the linguistic practice in minor literature would be conceptualized as an act of translation through a reading of Naoki Sakai's works which problematize the conventional idea of translation. The thesis would also like to explore how the act of translation in minor literature inscribes, erases, and distorts borders through its deterritorialization and reterritorialization of languages.

Chapter One explores the self/other opposition with a discussion of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*. Chapter Two digs deeper into the issues of psychic traumas through the act of translation and border-crossing in Arundhati Roy's two novels, *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Continuing the previous discussion, Chapter Three opens up the possible speech act for the unspeakable things unspoken with a transnational approach. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the interlinearity of the Benjaminian "pure language." According to Walter Benjamin, pure language is not an actual language; it does not refer to a merging of all languages into a singular linguistic system. Pure language introduces a concept where all languages complement each other in intention. Reading minor literature as a form of translation might mark a

meta-linguistic capability for intercultural understanding; this mode of reception

might help different texts to be reapproached and reconnected with one another.

Key Words: translation, minor literature, Naoki Sakai, Deleuze and Guattari,

comparatizing

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction: How to Render Speakable What Was Formerly Unspeakable?

We can agree, I think, that invisible things are not necessarily "not-there"; that a void may

be empty but not be a vacuum. In addition, certain absences are so stressed, so ornate, so

planned, they call attention to themselves; arrest us with intentionality and purpose, like

neighborhoods that are defined by the population held away from them.

　　—Toni Morrison, *Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in*

　　American Literature[1]

　　In a lecture originally titled "Canon Fodder," Toni Morrison engages the canon

debate and further reinforces the literary presence of African Americans as well as the

cultural awareness that comes with it. Morrison tries to expose African American

people's struggle to imagine themselves artistically due to their absent and silenced

status in American literature. She terms the literary absence of African Americans as

"willful oblivion." In her discussion of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, she showed

how the Afro-American presence has shaped the choices, the language, and the

structure in the canonical text without recognition. The presence of Arican Americans

in literature remains unspeakable as well as unspoken. Morrison urges her audience to

pose questions about the authors' and critics' erasure of African Americans from a

---

[1] Presented as The Tanner Lectures on Human Values at the University of Michigan, October 7, 1988. Morrison, Toni. "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature." The Tanner Lectures on Human Values. University of Michigan, October 7, 1988. 121-163. Tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/documents/morrison90.pdf (accessed March 18, 2018). In my opinion, the unspeakable things do not have the vocabulary to conduct a speech; they remain unspoken for lack of recognition. For the unspeakable things to be spoken, Morrison proposes a reexamination into canonical texts to look for the prescribed absence of the unspeakable things.

1

society that is seething with their presence (136). By examining the effects of this willful oblivion, one could see the tactics hidden beneath the surface of African Americans' invisibility in American literature.
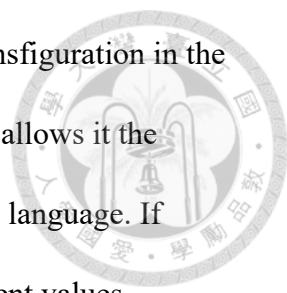
Morrison argues that African American people are the subjects of their own narrative and participants of their lived experience. They need not be imagined by other people as if they were "not there." Therefore, for Morrison, it is high time to recognize the "stressed and planned" absence of African Americans in American literature. She views the absence as a form of silence, as the "unspeakable things unspoken" (135-36). To break the silence and find the lost things, Morrison urges, a reexamination of American canons is needed. It is a search for the ghost in the machine.

How to render speakable what was formerly unspeakable? How to say something unsayable? How to locate the ghost in the machine? In a way, Toni Morrison manages to recover the silenced voice of African Americans in literature through her works. For instance, in *Beloved*, the narrative is presented in the form of a fragmented story. Morrison's linguistic practice enables her to search for the "ghostly matter"[2] and further turns it into words. In other words, this linguistic practice makes what was formerly monologistic become heteroglossic (from one voice to various voices). Morrison breaks the silence through the introduction of multiple voices. That is to say, what she tries to do is to shape a silence while breaking it: it is a way to define a neighborhood by the population held away from it.

---

[2] In *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Avery Gordon believes that the return of ghostly matters functions as the trace of an absent presence; it is an evidence of things that cannot be seen. In *Beloved*, Gordon argues, ghosts are things that have not been forgotten: they are inducts of uneasy minds. The return of the ghost/Beloved is the claim of the past on the present.

2

To speak the unspeakable means that it has to go through a transfiguration in the form of linguistic exchange. The transfiguration of the unspeakable allows it the access to the right to speech, that is, to be considered as a legitimate language. If discourse is considered as a symbolic asset that could receive different values depending upon the market it is offered, the unspeakable needs to be spoken under a legitimate condition in order to be "on the market." That is to say, in order to have access to the right to speech, the unspeakable should be transfigured into a legitimate language.

These linguistic exchanges happen on a symbolic market which Pierre Bourdieu terms as the linguistic market. Bourdieu uses the notion of the linguistic market to indicate the way certain languages are valued over others. In his discussion of the economics of linguistic exchanges, Bourdieu brings up an idea that a discourse could only be recognized if "it conforms to the legitimate norms." This premise further elaborates the notion of the legitimate language: It is a discourse which one speaks "not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished" (648). Economically speaking, production is controlled by the structure of the market; therefore, in order to gain the chance to be on the market as a legitimate speaker, one has to possess linguistic capital. Linguistic capital is allocated according to the power relations of the linguistic market. Therefore, only a legitimate speaker could have a favorable lingual utterance.

A legitimate speaker with linguistic capital could render speakable what was formerly unspeakable because of her right to speech. Toni Morrison introduces the unspoken things in *Beloved* because she transmits the ghostly matter to a legitimate

linguistic market. Morrison transmits the unspeakable to the market by her linguistic practice: she passes her words for a legitimate language. Morrison's linguistic practice involves transmitting something unspeakable to something recognizable on the linguistic market; it could be considered as a form of translation.
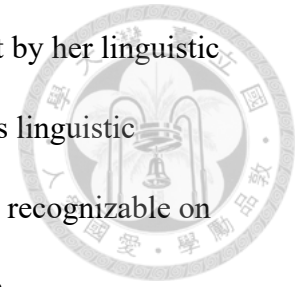
Nevertheless, there is a gray area in the act of transmitting: Morrison's speaker is trying to highlight the ghost in the machine of the linguistic market. As opposed to the legitimate speaker, her speaker becomes an imposter of a legitimate speaker so that she gets to deliver the speech without getting caught by the censorship of the dominant language. According to Bourdieu, a legitimate speaker should possess the ability to use the right words, correct grammar, tone, register, body language, and so forth. These become the norms that give authorization and govern linguistic investment of the dominant language. Morrison's speaker is different from Bourdieu's notion of the legitimate speaker; however, the speaker still needs to transcode her linguistic capital in order to translate the unspeakable. The right to speech could be seen as the imperative to be heard. No speech is speech if it is not heard. To say the unsayable, the act of translation is not only necessary but also inevitable.

I would like to see the transcoding of the unspeakable onto the linguistic market as a translation. When handling the planned oblivion in *Beloved*, Toni Morrison applies her linguistic capital and wins the right to speech for the unspeakable things unspoken. In the lecture mentioned above, Morrison proposes a reinterpretation of the American canon in order to uncover the "unspeakable things unspoken." What is more, to depict the ghostly matter in *Beloved*, she uses the language of authority without submitting to its power. She minoritizes the language of authority/legitimate

4

language. She practices the language of authority with a minority twist, political elements, and collective values. Her linguistic practice in *Beloved* is a practice of a "minor literature" which is termed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.
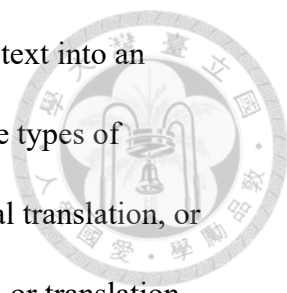
Hence, being inspired by Toni Morrison's linguistic practice, the thesis aims to investigate the representation of the unspeakable things unspoken in selected texts of minor literature. Being the "coarse food" for canons and the subject of the willful oblivion, the cannon/canon[3] fodder (the unspeakable things unspoken) could be evidently presented in minor literature (Morrison 123). This notion becomes the title[4] and subject matter in the thesis. The thesis would like to explore the possibility of presenting the unspeakable things unspoken through a translation practice which is more evident and effective in minor literature. Although Morrison's discussion of the canonical work, *Moby Dick*, deals with the unspeakable things unspoken, the subject still needs "reinterpretation" to be recognized. It is precisely her revisiting of the work allows the unspeakable things a narrative space: she brings them to a legitimate linguistic market so that the presence of the African Americans is no longer invisible. I would argue, to address the problem of the unspeakable things through examining texts of minor literature may be more effective. Therefore, before conducting a thorough discussion, a review of the general idea of translation helps consolidate the investigation.

Translation, in its conventional sense, is the communication of the meaning from

---

[3] Morrison loads the term with double meaning. The unspeakable things unspoken are treated as cannon fodder for canons for their disposability. From my perspective, a concrete example would be the underrepresentation of some ethnic groups or the whitewashing in the Hollywood film industry.
[4] Also, the "un" enclosed in parenthesis in the title indicates that even after the act of translation, the unspeakable things could not be ensured an actual speech. There is a possibility, but no guarantee.

5

one language into another. It is the transmittal of a source-language text into an equivalent target-language text. Roman Jakobson distinguishes three types of translation: intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic.[5] Intralingual translation, or rewording, takes place within one language; interlingual translation, or translation proper, translates verbal signs into another language; intersemiotic translation, or transmutation, consists of the interpretation of linguistic signs through systems of non-linguistic signs (Jakobson 233). According to Jakobson, interlingual translation is the commonsense concept of translation; it is the prototype of translation. Nonetheless, the prototypical translation cannot cope with the unspeakable. There is one problem among many inside Jakobson's division: If the interlingual translation is the only "proper" one, how and why can the others be categorized as translations? Hence, a different translation approach needs to be introduced to transcode the unspeakable. Jakobson's division of translation is rather narrow. His notion of intersemiotic translation is a unidirectional metalingual practice in which linguistic signs are codified into non-linguistic ones. He does not bring out a reverse operation: the translation of nonlinguistic into linguistic signs.

A reverse operation of Jakobson's intersemiotic translation is suitable for rendering speakable what was formerly unspeakable. It recasts a nonprescriptive vibe without rejecting the traditional translation. Semiotically speaking, translation involves a wide range of text-manipulative activities;[6] it could explore possible translation modes with reinterpretations that are capable of shaping and coding of the

---

[5] In his renowned text, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation."
[6] The text here is not the conventional view which limits it to documents or books. It could also apply to films and other works.

unspeakable. In a similar manner, Naoki Sakai proposes a hermeneutic approach to translation so as to reconsider the current comprehension of translation.

Other than a mere operation of transferring meanings from one language into another, an examination of Sakai's theory of translation helps to elaborate the act of translation in minor literature.

In *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*, Naoki Sakai explores the notion of translation; he uses the concept of translation to inquire into sociality in his theoretical work. For him, translation is an everyday situation and happens whenever people interact through speech. In the work, he points out that the way most people understand translation is problematic; he further includes the hermeneutic and historical function of translation in his discussion.

The Regime of Translation and the Homolingual Address

Sakai states that Jakobson's idea of interlingual translation (translation proper) is the regime of translation which "*articulates* languages so that we may postulate the two unities of the translating and the translated languages as if they were autonomous and closed entities through *a certain representation of translation*" (2). The Jakobsonian translation proper introduces the regime of translation as an institutionalized assemblage of protocols, rules of conduct, canons of accuracy, and ways of seeing. According to Sakai, translation is replaced by "the representation of translation" and considered as a form of communication between two closed language entities.
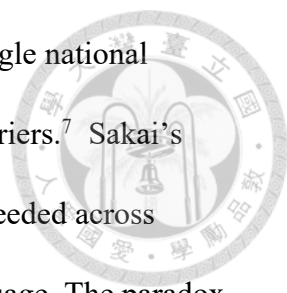
Sakai's main point is to problematize the regime of translation by showing the binary logic of the "homolingual address." He critiques the homolingual address and

7

proposes the heterolingual address to draw attention to the problematics of translation proper. According to Sakai, there are two different attitudes/stances utilized in the act of translation: the homolingual attitude and the heterolingual attitude. People who take the homolingual attitude tend to ignore "the untranslatable" during translation process and equate "translation to communication" (14).

The homolingual address is a form of "homosociality": different regimes could also be homolingual, for the regime of translation institutes specific economy of homogeneity as well as heterogeneity through translational practices (Sakai 8). Things such as ethnicity, nation, and culture are premised on a homolingual plane within the regime of translation. It is marked by the introduction of "the schema of co-figuration" (15).

This particular schema renders the possibility of co-figuring the unity of ethnicity or nation-states with another language unit; it is a way for people to imagine a nation or ethnicity as a homogeneous sphere. In addition, it also presupposes the homogeneous nature of the social relation between a given addresser and addressee. The homolingual address does not need to take place within the same language unit. According to the translation proper, the addresser and the addressee could address each other even though they belong to different languages: they figuratively speak the same language. In other words, translation under the regime of homolingual address is guaranteed with "communication" which is anterior to "address" (6).

For example, the homolingual address postulates that readers of the Japanese "copy" could understand Foucault's works as much as readers of the French "original" (Sakai and Soloman 7). The homolingual address in the regime of

translation imposes an idealized mutual comprehension within a single national language and mutual incomprehension across national language barriers.[7] Sakai's discussion discloses the paradox in the schema: The translation is needed across languages; however, people could figuratively speak the same language. The paradox is exemplified in Jakobson's idea of interlingual translation. In Sakai's opinion, Jakobson's interlingual translation (translation proper) is the homolingual representation of translation even if the act takes place between different languages. For Sakai, the Jakobsonian interlingual translation can be termed as a homolingual mode of translation "[a]s long as the position of the translator is set aside and viewed to be secondary" (Sakai 5). The address in this translation model "is still homolingual in the sense that two different language communities are posited as separate from one another in the representation of translation, and that translation is understood to be a transfer of a message from one clearly circumscribed language community into another distinctively enclosed language community" (5-6). Inspired by Sakai, I would like to see the translation practice adopting the attitude of the homolingual address the homolingual mode of translation. To maintain the premise that all address is homolingual and unfiltered in the representation of translation, a translator becomes necessary but invisible. To complicate the problematic of translation, Sakai proposes the notion of the heterolingual address to historicize the homolingual presumption.

The Heterolingual Address

As a critical alternative to the homolingual address, the heterolingual address

---

[7] For instance, Scarlett O'Hara in the film, *Gone with the Wind*, was once translated as Hao Sijia, and Rhett Butler as Bai Ruide in Taiwan; this made the audience relate to the characters more, regardless of different cultural contexts between the two places (both Hao and Bai are common Chinese last names, and the translation did make some Taiwanese mistake them as the two leading characters' last names).

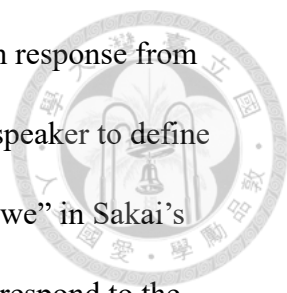criticizes the historical hegemony of the former. The heterolingual address is an address in discontinuity, and in which one addresses oneself as a foreigner to another foreigner. According to Sakai, in the mode of heterolingual address:
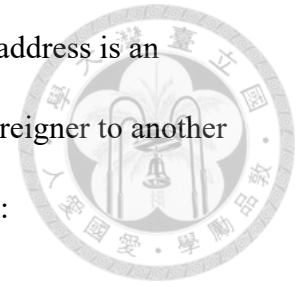
> [Y]ou are always confronted, so to speak, with foreigners in your enunciation with your attitude is that of the heterolingual address. Precisely because you wish to communicate with her, him, or them, so the first, and perhaps most fundamental, determination of your addressee, is that of the one who might not comprehend your language, that is, of the foreigner. (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 9)
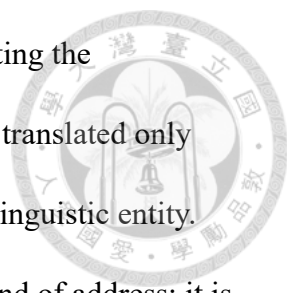
Sakai states that translation adopting the attitude of the heterolingual address is a process which intends to understand difference. It is a process invested with histories, hermeneutics, traditions, and stereotypes through which people get to locate the foreign while delineating the self. Unlike the homolingual practice, a heterolingual attitude helps to understand the idea of self/other in a nonaggregate way. The use of "we" in the heterolingual mode of translation refers to "a linguistically heterogeneoud ensemble" (Sakai 4).

Being attentive to the use of "we," Sakai tries to speak and listen for those who are "neither reciprocal apprehension nor transparent communication was guaranteed" (4). The homolingual use of "we" could induce misunderstanding and misapprehension. In fact, the notion of "we" consists a mixed audience. By saying "we" to such an audience "was to reach out to the addressees without either an

10

assurance of immediate apprehension or an expectation of a uniform response from them" (4). In spite of being the homolingual "we" that is used by a speaker to define an accepted collectivity between the speaker and the audience, the "we" in Sakai's notion is "a nonaggregate community." Since the addressees would respond to the speech act "with varying degrees of comprehension," the mode of address is heterolingual in its nature (4). The otherness of the audience is not repressed but inscribed through this heterolingual information delivery and exchange: It is a process to confront rather than assimilate the Other.

Thinking of the act of translation in a heterolingual address, Sakai problematizes the conception of a "pure" community that is shaped by the foreign. In the heterolingual address, the act of inception and reception of every utterance occurs as "the act of translation, and translation takes place at every listening or reading" (9). In the heterolingual address, "addressing in enunciation is not supposed to coincide with eventual communication, so that it is demanded of the addressee to *act* to incept or receive what is offered by the addresser" (8). Moreover, the act of translation, unlike the homolingual one, does not promise a transparent communication; it expects that "every utterance can fail to communicate because heterogeneity is inherent in any medium, linguistic or otherwise" (8). It is an act of translation that calls for a counter-translation. By applying the attitude of the heterolingual address to translation, Sakai problematizes the conventional idea of translation. Therefore, the heterolingual address in translation can be seen as the language of the foreignness/otherness inside the addresser and the addressee. Because it is impossible to transmit the unspeakable to the dominant linguistic market if translation still abides by the homolingual model,

Sakai's idea of heterolingual address opens up the possibility of putting the unspeakable onto the market. That is to say, the unspeakable can be translated only through a heterolingual practice for it does not belong to a specific linguistic entity. The unspeakable things unspoken can be considered as a specific kind of address; it is an address of reaching out without guaranteeing the arrival at the destination. Since the unspeakable cannot express/address on its own, an agent who engages herself in the heterolingual mode of translation is essential. We could see the transmitter as a translator, and an examination of the translator's position helps to define different modes of address. According to the translator's position, homolingual address stresses the invisibility of the translator. The translator is viewed as "a somewhat heroic prestigious agent" (6) since she has the right to speech (but is paradoxically erased owing to the logic of homolingual address). The translator's task is to mediate communicational exchange with members of another community.

However, the heterolingual address describes an attitude of the translator who does not belong to any particular linguistic community. In a heterolingual address, the addresser "is always confronted with foreigners" in the act of enunciation since neither the unitary language unit nor the plural language units can be taken for granted (10). The position of the translator in a heterolingual address is thus indeterminate and hybrid: "[T]he translator acts as a heterolingual agent and addresses herself from a position of linguistic multiplicity (9).
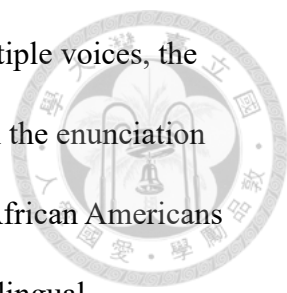
Viewing translation from a position of linguistic multiplicity, the unspeakable things unspoken could find their way to speech; however, they still need the translator for they do not possess enough linguistic capital that could make them enunciative

speakers. The task of the translator not only belongs to "the professionally assigned translator," but the rest of us as well, are also responsible for it (10). The liminal position of the translator makes it possible for us to understand translation outside the homolingual address. The translator in the heterolingual address reveals an essential indeterminacy in the formation of subjectivity: she becomes "a subject in transit" owing to her position (11).
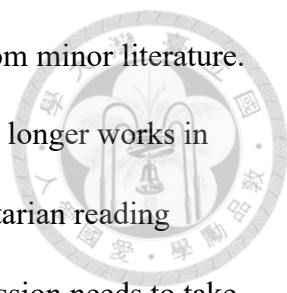
The Subject of Translation

The translator who engages in a homolingual address is invisible; however, in a heterolingual address, the translator is neither an addresser nor an addressee. Due to the translator's ambiguous position, the translator in a heterolingual address becomes a subject in transit: she is both an addressee and not an addressee, and she is both an addresser and not an addresser. In a heterolingual address, the translator, the addresser, and the addressee cannot be viewed simultaneously:

> In respect to personal relationality as well as to the addresser/addressee structure, the translator must be internally split and multiple, and devoid of a stable positionality. At best, she can be *a subject in transit*, first because the translator cannot be an "individual" in the sense of *individuum* in order to perform translation, and second because she is a *singular* that marks an elusive point of discontinuity in the social, whereas translation is the practice of creating continuity at that singular point of discontinuity. (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 13)

13

Just because the enunciation of the unspeakable is infused with multiple voices, the presence of the translator discloses the inherent discontinuity within the enunciation and the positions that follow. For instance, the planned absence of African Americans in *Moby Dick* is hard to discern when readers read it from the homolingual perspective. The planned absence is "an elusive point of discontinuity in the social," and Morrison is able to mark the point. In order to create continuity in discontinuity, she rereads *Moby Dick* and locates the heterolingual address of the unspeakable. Her disclosure of the canon fodder is also a practice of translation. To create "continuity at that singular point of discontinuity," the translator cannot be the monolingual individual of the regime of translation; her individual personality is destabilized because she no longer translates in a unified language community (13). The essential ambiguity of the translator is the evidence of her sociality, and her translation leaves the trail of the foreign within the heterolingual process. The subject in transit also reveals the paradoxical status of the foreign through translation: the foreign is both incomprehensible and comprehensible for it is in transition to something familiar owing to the position of the translator. The act of translation tracks the unspeakable things unspoken; "the untranslatable, or what can never be appropriated by the economy of translational communication, cannot exist prior to the enunciation of translation. It is translation that gives birth to the untranslatable" (14).

Translation and a subject in transit as the translator are inevitable for rendering speakable what was formerly unspeakable. Toni Morrison succeeds in finding the ghost in the machine through reexamining Herman Melville's canonical text, *Moby*

Dick;[8] however, I would like to locate the ghost the other way—from minor literature. Since the assumption of inherent homogeneous language entities no longer works in the translation practice adopting the heterolingual address, a minoritarian reading could help us have a more refined discussion. In doing so, the discussion needs to take various kinds of languages into account, such as hybrid languages and broken languages, which are the attributes of minor literature.

While Morrison explores the idea of whiteness in *Moby Dick* to investigate the African presence as an objectified "image of reined-in, bound, suppressed, and repressed darkness" in the American psyche (*Playing in The Dark* 38-39), I would like to examine the willful oblivion of the unspeakable things from a less mainstream, but more effective, minoritarian aspect.

As a kind of literature that employs the minoritization of major language, minor literature fleshes out the heterolingual condition through its various modes to address. Minor literature can be seen as a translation that confronts us with the problem of subjectivity and otherness. Since the trail of the foreign discloses the inexpressible within the expressible, minor literature could embrace the nomads in one's own language/s.

Minor Literature and Translation

In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari pose a question to help recognize the multilingualism of modern world and culture:

---

[8] Morrison notes that there are images of "impenetrable whiteness" in pre-Civil War American literature. Morrison explores the ideology of whiteness, claiming that in *Moby Dick*, it is an ideology formed in fright. And in *Moby Dick*, Africans serve as the repressed darkness in the American psyche; therefore, Morrison wants to see how Melville explores the racial difference in the context of whiteness.

How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve? … How to become the nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one's own language? Kafka answers: steal the baby from its crib, walk the tightrope. (19)
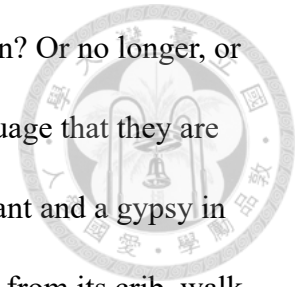
The condition described above can be applied to deconstruct the precondition of what Sakai terms as the regime of translation. The translator is like the one who walks on the tightrope because of her liminal status in the heterlolingual address. There is a purpose in the use of language in minor literature: to stretch the language out of its major shape; it is a deterritorialization of the major language. The deterritorialization of the major language also introduces the heterolingual attitude into the major language's former homolingual construct.

As a type of literature indicating the instability and violence of language, minor literature does not make recognizable sense, but expresses intensities, captures forces, and takes action. Its goal is not fostering or extracting meanings, but bringing forth intense expression. And since the unspeakable could not express/address itself directly to its audience, as a genre that highlights the instability of language, minor literature helps to render speakable what was formerly unspeakable through an act of translation.[9] Deleuze and Guattari define three characteristics of minor literature: the

---

[9] Mainstream literature (like *Moby Dick*) could also deal with the subject of the unspeakable. Some mainstream literary works might deal with the same topic with loanwords and language changes. Nevertheless, the way the topic is treated in mainstream literature is an expression rather than a translation; it does not match the criteria of minor literature. The agent involved in the expression can say what he/she means because it is his/her self-expression. Through the expression, the readers understand the addresser's idea about the unspeakable, and the addresser is sure that his/her homogeneous audience can incept what he/she wants to say. Conversely, the agent in minor literature

16

deterritorialization of major language, the connection of the individual to a political

immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation (18). They draw on Franz

Kafka's works as examples to elaborate their theory. Kafka was born in a

German-speaking family in Prague. As a Jew in Prague, the hostile relation between

those who spoke German and those who spoke Czech is evident for him. Being

bilingual, Kafka created his works resulting from the collision of his idea of culture,

territory, and the politics. From these conflicts, Deleuze and Guattari draw discussion

about minor literature.

Minor literature does not designate specific kinds of literature; its revolutionary

condition fleshes out the site of polyphony. Polylingualism accurately echoes with

Sakai's heterolingual address; it is also a way to prevent the homogenization of

language. Polylingualism "actively prevents language from becoming homogeneous,

it keeps it in a state of constant imbalance, and thus makes it creative" (Lecercle 196).

The deterritorialization of major language posits minor literature beyond formal

criticism; it is not fixed in a certain category, but an expression machine. Capable of

treating and developing its contents, minor literature is much more able to work over

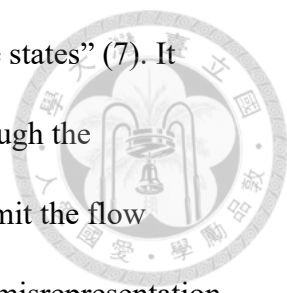the unformed expressive materials (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 6).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka's writing machine[10] is constituted by

contents and expressions that have been "formalized to diverse degrees by unformed

---

deals with something that is not (just) his/her own. What makes translation different from common speech is "an attitude or stance that is neither that of the addresser nor the addressee" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 53). The agent has to say what he/she has to say without expressing him/herself. He/she is responsible for the original text, and this is his/her task as a translator.

[10] For Deleuze and Guattari, a machine could be defined as a system of interruption or breaks; every machine is a part of a system of machines, and they integrate some flows. Therefore, they characterize Kafka's works as a writing machine that has no "privileged points of entry" (3). The technical and bureaucratic machines that Kafka depicts in his works function in the real by a disassembling and deterritorialization; it is a process expresses a minority struggle.

materials that enter into it, and leave by passing through all possible states" (7). It would seem that the flow between the machines is transformed through the interruption; it does not have a final cause (or a definite start). To limit the flow through an illusionary idea of a fixed subjectivity, for instance, is a misrepresentation. It is difficult to see the flows in the homolingual situation. Minor literature enables us to get past the illusionary subjectivity and see the fluidity of those flows: "the problem is not that of being free but of finding a way out, or even a way in, another side, a hallway, an adjacency" (7-8). Hence, the minor practice of major language transforms the presentation of translation (in Sakai's words, the regime of translation) into a writing machine of the heterolingual address. As a result, the unspeakable things could find a point of entry onto (and around) a legitimate linguistic market because of the deterritorializing feature of minor literature.

Apart from the first feature, minor literature has other features that are different from the mainstream literature: its political nature that links each individual to politics. Minor literature unveils that each individual does not have a rigidly produced subjectivity; the subjectivity is woven through his/her political experience. Closely related to the second feature is the collective and enunciative value of minor literature. Accordingly, the political nature is inseparable from the third feature, its collective value. The individual speaks in a collective voice in minor literature; the statement is collective for it never refers back to a specific subject. Minor literature is not only an asubjective assemblage; it is also non-representative and deterritorializing. In this way, a language of sense is traversed by a line of escape to "liberate a living and expressive material that speaks for itself and has no need of being put into a form" (21). It is the

18

condition of a collective enunciation that is "lacking elsewhere in this milieu" (18). The language of sense cannot render speakable what was formerly unspeakable for it follows a homolingual model. But instead, the deterritorialization no longer belongs to a language of sense though it derives from it. Through turning a language of sense into polyphonic and heterolingual, deterritorialization marks the porous border that the unspeakable could get in.

The three features of minor literature share common notion with Sakai's heterolingual mode of translation. I would argue that for one to have a proper understanding of Sakai's heterolingual mode of translation, minor literature could serve as one of the effective approaches because of its unique linguistic practice. Minor literature reflects the multiplicity of language and the transitory positionality of the translator engaging in the address. It also destabilizes the cofiguration of both dominant and minor languages as the translator moves through different positions as the addresser, the addressee, and the arbitrator. Minor literature and the heterolingual mode of translation facilitate one another. Sakai's idealistic demarcation of the homolingual and the heterolingual attitudes towards translation would be more sophisticated if we can ascribe some empirical validity to his ideal through investigating minor literature.

For this reason, the linguistic practice in minor literature would be conceptualized as translation in the thesis. I would also like to see how minor literature minoritizes the regime of translation and extends a way to examine the praxis of social relations with its heterolingual stance. Therefore, the investigation aims to probe into "the unspeakable things unspoken" through minor literature. The
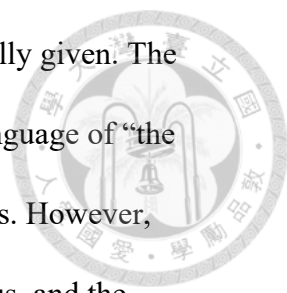
thesis would also like to explore how the act of translation in minor literature inscribes, erases, and distorts borders through its deterritorialization and reterritorialization of languages.

In order to provide a platform for discussion on the problems mentioned earlier, the thesis intends to investigate through a text analysis of minor literature for speculative rationale. There would be works selected from minor literature across countries. The investigation intends to see how the unspeakable is translated in minor literature. The structure of the thesis indicates my thought process in trying to answer my question about the unspeakable things unspoken. Like Morrison's revisit of *Moby Dick*, I try to read into the problem of individuation by revisiting the postcolonial classic and Asian American classic as the point of departure of the thesis. Reading them as minor literature reopens a dialogic space for the problem of subjectivity. Then, moving from personal to family, and move onto a whole nation, Chapter Two displays how my research scope can be expanded. Moreover, the wound described in the chapter undergoes a turn from literal to figural in terms of trauma narrative. In Chapter Three, I apply a transnational approach to see if Taiwan can be included in the discussion. The movement of the thesis is from personal identity to a family trauma, and then to a national one. Finally, it aims to search for the transnational possibility for dialogue.

Chapters Overview

Chapter One aims to explore the self/other opposition in a heterolingual way. Minor literature problematizes the self/other opposition as its initial step of denunciation of homolingual address. In a homolingual address, the presumed

opposition between the self and the other is accepted as an empirically given. The representation of translation facilitates an encounter between the language of "the self" and the language of "the other" as if they are respective entities. However, according to Sakai, the actual practice of translation is heterogeneous, and the self/other opposition in homolingual mode posits a paradigm regardless of this heterogeneity. Minor literature, on the other hand, uses the figure of "the other" as a liminal moment that destabilizes the self/other opposition as well as discloses social relations in language.

In order to see how minor literature subverts the fixed self/other opposition, the chapter would look into the failed individuation in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*. Both works unfold the imposed cofiguration of the self/other opposition with their heterolingual approaches to translation. *Wide Sargasso Sea* seeks to humanize the racial characterization of the West Indian madwoman in *Jane Eyre*. Written as a prequel to *Jane Eyre*, the novel describes the life and youth of the "madwoman in the attic" in *Jane Eyre* with a detailed background. It writes back to the homolingual and imperial narrative of *Jane Eyre*. Described as a "poor ghost" by Rhys, Bertha Mason turns into Antoinette Cosway in *Wide Sargasso Sea*; it tells the story which was never narrated in *Jane Eyre*. The work deals with topics of ethnic inequality and the malice of displacement and assimilation of subjects. In *Dictée*, Cha explores the complicated situation of individuation. *Dictée* is a story about the liminal state the protagonist situates herself as a Korean American; it shows that the quest for a fixed identity is impossible for the subject. The work explores the process of subject formation through the female speaker, the diseuse,

21

within the narrative. Through the diseuse's translation, *Dictée* unravels the oblivious condition of the diseuse's mother, her Korean fellowmen, and herself.

Wide Sargasso Sea and *Dictée* both deal with the problem of unspeakable pasts and undetermined subjectivity. Both works, by definition of Deleuze and Guattari, can be viewed as minor literature: they are written in major languages with minor twists. Translation in minor literature reveals the fundamental disjunction and discontinuity of individuation as well as social relations; it is a way to think from within the schema of cofiguration. It is not just a way to locate the unspeakable pasts; it is also an attempt to translate the enigmatic messages that are repressed through the individuation process. Moreover, cogitating *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Dictée* from the perspective of translation might help to reconsider the two works with various nuances. The failed individuation process in the two works might contain a difference in multiple degrees, owing to their diverse social and historical milieux. Therefore, this chapter wishes to investigate these varied nuances of the failed individuation process by examining the two works.

Chapter Two wants to dig deeper into the issues of psychic traumas through the act of translation. The text analysis intends to examine the repressed psyche in Arundhati Roy's two novels, *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Roy's act of translation reopens the unspeakable wounds from the past. *The God of Small Things* unfolds the family traumas of a high-caste Syrian Christian Indian family, and Roy further develops the representation of trauma with progress in scope as well as in depth in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Published two decades apart from her first novel, Roy is able to further explore the issues of trauma, history,
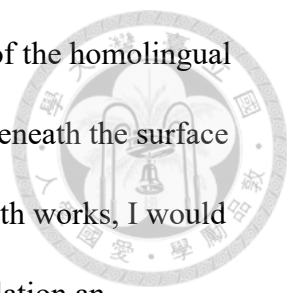
22

and border under the big frame of globalization. The two works illustrate the process of translation of traumatic events from a family to a nation. The method also crosses the linguistic and national borders because the characters in both works are forced to face the fear of resurrecting past traumas.
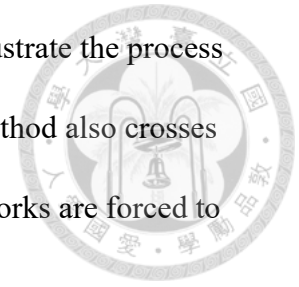
In *The God of Small Things*, the narrative focuses on the drowning of a little girl. The event separates the central characters, the two-egg twins, Estha and Rahel, after their journey into the river resulted in the drowning of their English cousin, Sophie Mol. The traumatic event interweaves with another strand of the tragic separation of the twins' mother and her lover, Velutha, who is casteless and classified as an untouchable. The secrets of the family are revealed through the traces of the traumatic events.

In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Roy expands her scope to a broader scale so as to map out the diverse stories in modern India. The novel weaves stories of people across the Indian subcontinent—from crowded neighborhoods of Old Delhi and the roads of the new city to the valleys of Kashmir. The novel contains many stories: a hijra (trans woman), a man from the untouchable caste passing for a Muslim, a government official in the intelligence service, a rebellious woman who kidnaps an abandoned baby, a freedom fighter in Kashmir, to name just a few. These stories somehow surpass the subject matter in *The God of Small Things*. *The God of Small Things* unravels the caste system and the inrooted patriarchy in India, whereas, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* discloses other marginalized groups' life in India in a way that goes beyond a postcolonial perspective.

The traumatic events in both works are unspeakable and unspoken; however,

they demand to be told in some way. They reside on the other side of the homolingual

mode of translation, and they have an effect of dislocation. To get beneath the surface

to understand the enigmatic transformation of traumatic traces in both works, I would

like to apply Jean Laplanche's notion of de-translation to give translation an

additional psychoanalytical twist. De-translation, according to Laplanche, is a

reopening of the old translation as well as a veering towards the other. Subjects who

want to make sense of themselves do not want to restore an intact past; they welcome

a deconstruction of the old, insufficient, and partial construction that could generate

enough power to re-translate. Residing on the negative side of translation,

de-translation is a liberation of thinking from the defensive mode: it helps to cope

with traumas which are unavailable to consciousness. Being unspeakable and

unspoken, traumas paradoxically demand to be seen and heard.[11] Translation in both

works avail to transform traumas from the unconscious to the world of consciousness:

it is a return of the repressed.

 Besides detailing traumatic events, Roy also marks the shift from a family's

story to a nation's narrative with her two works. In addition, the change helps explore

the idea of bordering. When translation (the homolingual one) takes place, a border[12]

between one language and another is given which separates one group of people from

another. However, minor literature's practice discloses that the idea of a border is

unnatural and arbitrary. Bordering is a movement, an action in progress; it is not

readily accomplished. The characters in both works encounter the liminal situation

---

[11] A traumatic event is not experienced as it happens, it would come back later in connection with
another place and in another time. The paradoxical demand of trauma springs from its delayed response
and overdue address.
[12] The concept of bordering is linguistic, spatial, and national. It could be a split of the space of one
language and another, as well as the division between one national language and another.

24

where they situate as subjects in transit in their own narratives. Besides inquiring into the border problem, the chapter would go further to probe into the modalities of bordering.
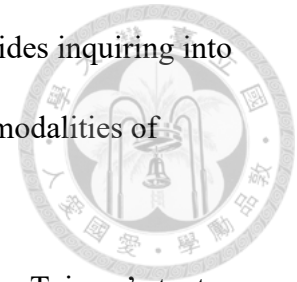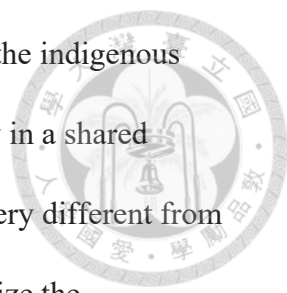
Chapter Three hopes to engage a transnational comparison from Taiwan's texts. In the hope of opening up the possibility of an address of the unspeakable things unspoken, the first two chapters intend to approach the possibility through minor literature. By exploring topics of subjectivity, traumas, and borders, the investigation generates a type of transnational apprehension. The transnational apprehension also exposes the problematic production process of these topics on both global and local scales.

With specific historical experience and memory, the coloniality of Taiwan could and should be included in the discussion to reflect the coloniality of knowledge production. With intense discussion and publications about Asian American literature and postcolonial studies, some Taiwanese scholars somehow prioritize their stress on the American classic texts and studies. As a result, local texts become the canon fodder during the process of knowledge production in Taiwan. Swerving from conventional readings of classics towards local minor literature might help us discover alternative modes of knowledge production. Thereupon, this chapter would like to connect Taiwan's local narratives with the established genres of minor literature and postcolonial discourse. To connect is an act of comparatizing; the method could include Taiwan within the already saturated conversation.

The discussion would begin with Syaman Rapongan's *The Death of Ngalumirem*.

As a Tao/Yami[13] writer in Lanyu, Syaman Rapongan writes about the indigenous epistemology focusing on the ocean and develops oceanic solidarity in a shared experience as islanders. The oceanic point of view in his works is very different from the conventional Sinocentric one. Syaman Rapongan's stories criticize the Sinocentrism and lack of ocean consciousness in Taiwan literature. Since he cannot criticize the Han-centric consciousness with Tao, he has to write in Chinese—with a twist of Tao language. Syaman Rapongan's marginal position as a writer as well as his subject of writing can be considered as a form of minor literature. His works help people incorporate the maritime history of Taiwan into their established knowledge; his deterritorialized language contains the power to blur the border (linguistic together with spatial) between Taiwan and Lanyu. Through the act of translation in minor literature, people could see how this deconstruction of linguistic entities and enclosed borders is conceivable, and it could further produce a network for Taiwan to be situated globally.

The Sinocentrism of Taiwan literature has more or less prevented the island from being included in the discussion of postcolonial studies. According to Shu-mei Shih, Taiwan should be involved in such discussions because of its serial colonized state;[14] however, it is marginalized in postcolonial studies. Understanding Taiwan in terms of oceans rather than landmasses could offer a valid critique of the mainlander KMT's

---

[13] The younger generation in Lanyu (Orchid Island) refer themselves as Tao people; however, the term "Yami" is generally used in English scholarship. In order to "comparatize," I choose to place both terms here.

[14] There seems to be an impasse concerning Taiwan's contested (post) coloniality. The indeterminable state about the outset of Taiwan's postcolonial phase indicates that Taiwan has a liminal (as well as marginal) space in the discussion of postcolonial studies. Did Taiwan enter the postcolonial phase with the end of Japanese rule in 1945? Or at the end of the KMT's martial law? Or is Taiwan still under the neocolonial rule of the US? This indeterminacy has been transformed into creative power in Taiwan's literature, films, and historical narratives. Hence, to comparatize Taiwan globally is an act of challenging the established categories.

26

regime of national imagination (which is, if we follow Sakai's translation as a trope, the regime of translation). Besides, the method could also connect Taiwan's discourse with other cultures and societies by way of "comparatizing" (Shih 2).[15]
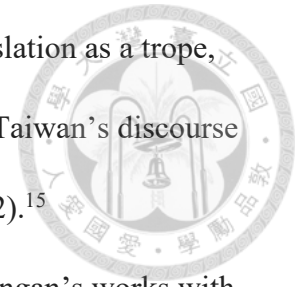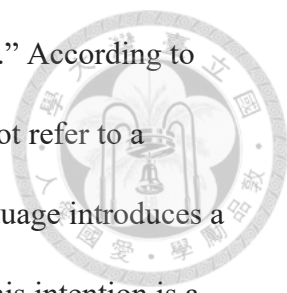
In light of the oceanic consciousness, analyzing Syaman Rapongan's works with comparative contexts of, for example, Jean Rhys and Jamaica Kincaid could offer interconnectedness results from the potentiality of relations. Syaman Rapongan illustrates his Tao epistemology through his portrait of fishing seasons and tidal currents. He also describes how Tao men choose between Tao life in Lanyu and the cultural assimilation in Taiwan. The islandness and oceanic worldview allow the characters of Syaman Rapongan envision certain solidarity with other island dwellers around the globe. The embodied oceanic experience depicted in his works enables him to translate the oceanic worldview and the oblivion of Taiwan's islandness. It may be the start of a new wave to study Taiwan in comparative contexts aside from recognizing and theorizing the legacy of Japanese rule and the KMT nationalism. Although Syaman Rapongan might not be viewed as the representative of Taiwan literature owing to his marginal position, looking into his works through the perspective of minor literature could still bring forth insightful discussion. How the characters react and relate to Taiwan in *The Death of Ngalumirem* could help reconsider Taiwanese subjectivity as well as expand the discussion to a global scale.

In order to have a thorough investigation on the topics of subjectivity, traumas, and borders, the thesis would focus on how translation serves as a different perspective in the already saturated discussion and studies. The thesis concludes with

---

[15] As a site of crossings, Shih proposes to situate Taiwan globally, comparatively, and relationally in *Comparatizing Taiwan*.

a discussion of the interlinearity of the Benjaminian "pure language." According to Walter Benjamin, pure language is not an actual language; it does not refer to a merging of all languages into a singular linguistic system. Pure language introduces a concept where all languages complement each other in intention. This intention is a form of interconnection translated with the mutual complementary intentions of various languages. The Benjaminain interlinear translation is a manner of becoming in terms of practice; the practice fleshes out an "afterlife" of the text only in translation. The afterlife reveals itself in translation as a "higher sphere not in transcendental meaning;" it is an afterlife with historicity (Benjamin 72). The text undergoes a change in its afterlife; it is the changing modes of reception by posterity. The historical modes of reception help texts in the past to be reapproached and bring them to the present. Thereupon, the interlinear translation possesses a meta-linguistic capability for intercultural understanding. Reading minor literature as a form of translation might mark the becoming of language manifested in a continuous practice to create an empirically verifiable continuity out of discontinuity.

Chapter One: Minor Literature, Subjectivity, and the Other

She is not *béké*[16] like you, but she is *béké*, and not like us either.

—Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

The problem of failed individuation, the unspeakable pasts, and undetermined subjectivity is explored in various postcolonial texts; however, how to comprehend the formation process of a displaced subject? By viewing the formation process of the displaced subjects in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée* as a minoritarian form of translation practice, the intricacy of the displaced subjects in both texts can be examined with nuances. In Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's nanny Christophine tries to explain Antoinette's ambiguous racial identity to Mr. Rochester; however, even though Christophine is aware of Antoinette's creolized status, she is unable to place her in a simple dichotomy of black/white or West Indian/English. As a prequel to *Jane Eyre*, many people consider *Wide Sargasso Sea* as an exemplary model of postcolonial writing back.[17] Rhys's discourse produces what is not already recognizable, and it has the power to disrupt and dislocate. Writing with a language that could not be considered as her own,

---

[16] Béké is the Creole word for a white person.

[17] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin adopted the phrase "writing back" from Salman Rushdie and consider it as postcolonial writers' way of engaging in the imperial discourse. The idea of "writing back" questions the reductive representation in the colonial mode. See Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989.

Rhys's language seems foreign, and it is a feature of minor literature. In order to have a detailed analysis, I would like to summarize the text.
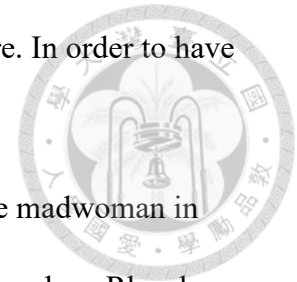
As a child, Jean Rhys was impressed with the depiction of "the madwoman in the attic" in *Jane Eyre*. While this ghostly character frightens most readers, Rhys has doubts and sympathy for this madwoman because of her Creole identity. She cannot realize why Charlotte Brontë would depict a Creole woman as a madwoman, and she needs to "write her life."[18] Begins in the 19th century Jamaica, *Wide Sargasso Sea* takes a creolized narrative perspective as a deconstructive challenge to *Jane Eyre*. As a "writing back," the novel portrays the process of how Antoinette Cosway turns into Bertha Mason. The story is arranged into three parts with three narrators: In part one Antoinette remembers her childhood and teenage life before her marriage to Rochester. Part two discloses Rochester's pressure as an Englishman who tries to dominate in the new environment. Part three opens with Grace Poole's narrative; she is Bertha Mason's nurse/jailor. The novel ends with Antoinette's narrative when she steps in the role of the madwoman in the attic at Thornfield.

The Plot

The story opens in the time of the abolition of slavery throughout the British colonies in 1834. Antoinette's family estate falls into ruin after the death of her father (a former slaveholder) and after the Emancipation Act of 1833. Later her mother Annette remarries a rich Englishman, Mr. Mason, in the hope of improving the living on the plantation. The renovated plantation and the display of wealth intensify resentment of the neighboring ex-slaves. One night, a mob sets fire to the house, and

---

[18] Rhys talks about Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre* in an interview: "She seemed such a poor ghost, I thought I'd like to write her life." In *The Guardian*, August 8th, 1968.

it kills Antoinette's mentally disabled little brother. After the fire, Mr. Mason goes back to England, and Annette is kept in a country house after her mental breakdown. Then, when Antoinette turns seventeen, Mr. Mason comes back and informs her that he has friends coming from England, and he also implies that one of them would marry Antoinette.
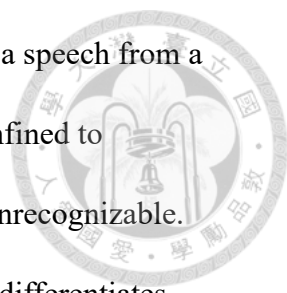
The second part begins after Antoinette's marriage to a nameless Englishman.[19] As a second son who stands to inherit nothing under the English law, the husband admits that he marries Antoinette for her dowry. One day, after receiving a letter from a man called Daniel Cosway, Rochester believes that he is tricked into marriage with a madwoman who comes from a mad family. He starts to distance himself from Antoinette, and this makes her distraught. Being mentally unstable, Antoinette is taken to England by her husband and is under the care of Grace Poole. At the end of the story, Antoinette no longer knows where and who she is. One night, after stealing keys from Poole, she gets out of the attic, takes a candle, and prepares to burn down the house.

Postcolonial Writing Back as Translation

One could never again read *Jane Eyre* quite the same way once he/she has read *Wide Sargasso Sea* (*WSS*). Just like what Toni Morrison did in her finding for the African presence in the whiteness of *Moby Dick*, Jean Rhys engages herself with Brontë's canonical text and tries to redress the poor ghost's grievance. Being rewritten within the specific historical context of Jamaica, *Wide Sargasso Sea* can be re-approached from the perspective of minor literature. Although already considered

---

[19] Although the man is nameless throughout the text, his image is apparently based on *Jane Eyre*'s Mr. Rochester; therefore, I would use Mr. Rochester to refer to Antoinette's husband in the discussion.

as great literature, we could recognize its capacity which allows for a speech from a minoritarian perspective. The language in minor literature is not confined to communication and representation; it fleshes out things which are unrecognizable. The three narrative modes in *WSS* mark the polyphonic feature that differentiates itself from the dominat discourse in *Jane Eyre*, as there is only a homolingual as well as the imperial address in *Jane Eyre*.

The polyphonic narrative breaks down the homolingual regime, and the heterolingual deployment of English corresponds with Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature. Firstly, *WSS* enacts the deterritorialization of language through mixing English with the Caribbean English/French patois. For example, when Antoinette asks her nurse why there are few people visit their estate, Christophine tells her the reason is that the beauty of Antoinette's mother displeases other ladies: "The Jamaican ladies never approved of my mother, 'because she pretty like pretty self' Christophine said" (Rhys 9). As a Martinique woman who marries an Englishman and lives in Jamaica, Annette's French descent is unwelcomed in British Jamaica. The Caribbean English and the injection of patois highlight the foreignness of the major language and entail a becoming strange of the typical signifying regime. By deterritorializing English with the Caribbean English and French patois, the language in *WSS* charts specific colonial historicity which is formerly invisible in *Jane Eyre*. The deterritorialization sends the dominant language into a panic with these displacements.
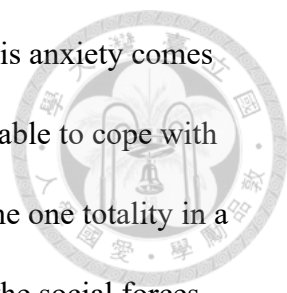
As the user of "perfect English," Mr. Rochester is uneasy about this linguistic flux when he and Antoinette spend their honeymoon on Windward Island: "The two women stood in the doorway of the hut gesticulating, talking not English but the

32

debased French patois they use in this island" (39). For him, the deterritorialized language is debased and condemnable. The deterritorialized language has no standard or norms; it does not ground on the English ideals of syntax, grammar, and rhetoric. Nonetheless, Mr. Rochester believes that English is appealed to a given standard capable of excluding those who do not fulfill the norms. He resents the two women speaking French patois just because it is not the legitimate language.

Christophine's language also offends him when she refers English coffee as "bull's blood" and claims that hers is better because it is not "horse piss like the English madams drink" (50). He could not appreciate the rhythmic and musical feature of Christophine's language: "Her coffee is delicious but her language is horrible…"(50). He fails to understand the historical and multicultural tendency because the people do not speak "his" language. The use of language indicates the social status one possesses; however, Christophine's Caribbean English does not imply she is unable to speak "properly." As a matter of fact, Christophine "could speak good English if she wanted to, and French as well as patois, she took care to talk as they talked" (12). By smuggling the patois and unstandardized English into the narrative, Rhys successfully deterritorializes the major language.

Besides, *WSS* has its political nature, which is also the second characteristic of minor literature. And this political nature is inseparable from the third characteristic, its collective and enunciative value. The particular individual concern is immediately related to social forces in *WSS*. In the book, Antoinette's identity crisis arises when she and Tia, her childhood friend, have an argument near the river, and when she faces Tia after the mob sets fire to the estate. Mr. Rochester marries her because as the
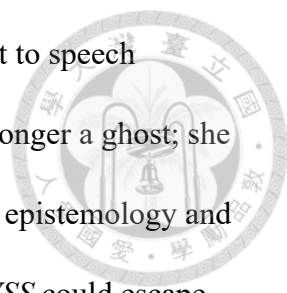
33

second son in the family, he is not allowed to inherit the property. His anxiety comes

from not only his inability to rein in his wife, but also his not being able to cope with

his Englishness in Jamaica. These individual concerns do not become one totality in a

homolingual space. They are cramped and interlaced together with the social forces

that compose them: they enact a mode of "collective enunciation" (Deleuze and

Guattari, *Kafka* 18).

One example of the collective enunciation of the West Indian social scene is

depicted in Daniel Cosway's letter to Mr. Rochester. In the letter, Daniel reveals that

although he is a black Creole, he is the half-brother of Antoinette. The letter also

discloses the life on a plantation before Emancipation; it implies that Daniel Cosway

is the son of Mr. Cosway and a slave woman. His remark also indicates that it is

common that slave owners sexually exploit the women on plantations. In the second

part of the novel, when Antoinette and Mr. Rochester are going back to England, a

nameless boy begs Rochester to take him along: the boy is thought to be Rochester's

bastard.[20] What's more, it also marks a decisive moment in transforming Antoinette's

life: the ideological assumptions of the metropolis illustrated in the letter start to

construct her as the other. *WSS* infuses individuals with political energies, and it

further shows that it is impossible to separate an individual enunciation from a

collective enunciation in minor literature: "Everything is political…" (Deleuze and

Guattari, *Kafka* 4).

Bertha Mason's unaccounted madness finds its way to speech through Rhys's

---

[20] Deborah Kimmey has discussed the unnamed boy's identity in "Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: Metatextuality and the Politics of Reading in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*."

linguistic practice. Rhys gives "the madwoman in the attic" the right to speech through her heterolingual address. In this way, Bertha Mason is no longer a ghost; she is a Creole woman who is trapped within the articulation of English epistemology and ontology. By turning the familiar into the foreign, the narrative in *WSS* could escape from the homolingual influence of English. It is a translation that, according to Sakai, intends to understand the difference. *WSS* presents a mode of address that is different from *Jane Eyre*; it is an address precedes the regime of translation.

The novel opens with a paradoxical whiteness; the whiteness is not unmediated and is presented as a norm that has to be learned by nonwhites. As a member of the former slave owner family who loses the social standing after the Emancipation, Antoinette no longer enjoys her white privilege. She and her mom are a different kind of white people. They are different from the white people in Spanish Town due to their impoverished economic status. They are rejected not only by the former slaves but also by other white people. They are not the real and legitimate white people; their whiteness is questioned when the former slave population calls them "white cockroaches" (Rhys 13).

The ideology of whiteness is further "minoritized" into a lesser form: "Real white people, they got gold money. … Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger" (14). The status of white nigger dislocates the homogeneous concept that there is a pure racial status maintained by the settler class. The homolingual notion of the whiteness could be viewed as a cofiguring schema constructed by colonizers to control people in the colony. The schema endows the white people with power and constitutes them as an

35

aggregative community.

An example would be that both Rochester and Daniel Cosway share the established English notion of colonialism and patriarchy. They connect the idea of whiteness with Englishness and take pride in the assumed white privilege. As a cofiguring schema, the whiteness is problematized by the heterolingual address arising from Antoinette's displaced subjectivity as a white nigger. The idea of a white nigger becomes an oxymoron due to its contradictory merging of "white" with "nigger."

For the settler class, a white nigger is even worse than a black nigger, for he/she breaks down the homogenous imagination of whiteness. Contrary to Rochester's contempt for the multilingual milieu in Jamaica, Antoinette does not assume her act of addressing would be comprehended automatically. She is aware that she would be confronted with dialogic foreigners, like Tia and Rochester, in her enunciation. She occupies a position in which "multiple languages are implicated within one another" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 9). Her identity exposes the whiteness as a representation of imperial impersonality and convention. Sakai argues that a heterolingual agent acts as a translator can "listen, read, speak, or write in the multiplicity of languages" (9). However, it is unattainable for Antoinette to become the translator of the heterolingual address because Rochester's renaming erases her agency.

Rochester starts to call Antoinette Bertha after receiving Daniel Cosway's letter (Rhys 68), and she is transformed into the madwoman who is bound to set fire to Thornfield Hall: "Now at last I know why I was brought here and what I have to do"

36

(112). Antoinette is trapped within the homolingual address in *Jane Eyre* when

Rochester changes her name to Bertha, and her erased subjectivity fails to make her a

heterolingual translator: "when he wouldn't call me Antoinette, and I saw Antoinette

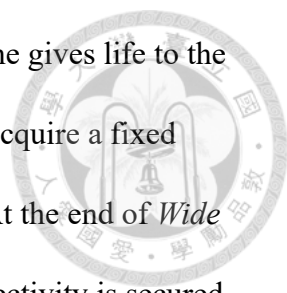drifting out of the window with her scents, her pretty clothes and her looking-glass"

(107). Antoinette possesses a liminal subjectivity as a Creole woman, and her liminal

status grants her the potential to be the agent of the heterolingual address. Nonetheless,

Antoinette's subjectivity is appropriated by the homogeneous whiteness, and her

disjointed subjectivity results in her trauma and marginalization. The problem of

subjectivity is crucial in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and Rhys manages to translate the

displaced and imperceptible subjectivity of Antoinette Cosway/Bertha Mason through

various narrative perspectives.

"Qui est là? Qui est là?"²¹ Translating the Displaced Subjectivity in *Wide*

Sargasso Sea

In a conversation with her husband, Antoinette laments, "So between you I often

wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever

born at all" (Rhys 61). Antoinette's sense of estrangement illustrates her confused and

contradictory Creole identity. She receives conflicting social messages resulting from

her Creole identity; she recalls various violence acts against her family, from the

labels of "white cockroaches" and "white niggers" to the burning of the family estate

at Coulibri (25). Both the black community at Coulibri and the white community in

Spanish Town reject Antoinette; her mixed identity thwarts her process of subject

formation and leads to the destruction of her sense of self. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean

---

²¹ "Who's there?"

Rhys seems unable to place Antoinette's subjectivity even though she gives life to the madwoman in the attic in *Jane Eyre*. Antoinette eventually fails to acquire a fixed subjectivity because she is displaced within *Jane Eyre*'s narrative. At the end of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, she is placed "there" where Rochester's English subjectivity is secured "here"; subjectivity becomes the effect of distinguishing between a subjectified here and an objectified there. The formation of a subject is a schema of cofiguration; there is a discursive apparatus that makes it possible to represent a certain subject such as a colonial English subject.

In *WSS*, the representation of subjectivity becomes the homolingual cofigurative regime that the relation between the "I" and the "other" is viewed as two opposing unities. According to Sakai, a person figures out the unity of ethnic or national language together with another language. Sakai contends that Japanese language has given rise cofiguratively to the figure of Chinese language. A national community "could constitute itself only by making visible the figure of an other with which it engages in a translational relationship" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 15-16). The opposition of "the West and the Rest" helps the West represent itself with "the exemplary figure of the Rest," and they are conceptually different (16). Jane Eyre's subjectivity is secured through the depiction of the madwoman in the attic. By the same token, the unnamed husband in *WSS* secures his subjectivity by displacing Antoinette in the attic.

Antoinette/Bertha Mason becomes "the other" in both novels, and she seems unable to find an other to represent herself as a fixed subject. As a child, she could not identify with Tia because she is the daughter of the former slave owner, and she could

not identify with Rochester because she does not believe the place that confines her is England. She fails to become a British woman; she is a ghost in the mirror, a madwoman in the attic. Even though she is different from the three subjects mentioned above, she also bears some resemblance to the three. Her uncertain subjectivity causes predicaments in her life course.
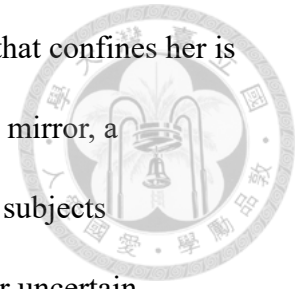
Thereupon, in order to examine how the representation of subjectivity is treated as a homolingual regime, I would like to look into the schema of subjectivity.

Subjectivity is a term used by sociologists and cultural critics to signify the way that subjects situate themselves in relation to power. It is a notion referring to the capacity of a subject to posit himself/herself as an independent agent who determines his/her own thoughts and actions. A subject is not a born identity but is transformed into a solid being through his/her contact with culture. Therefore, subjectivity is thought to be culturally and socially constructed; it is a subject of culture. The word subject can be understood in two ways: subject to other people by control; and tied to one's identity by self-knowledge. The process of subject formation refers to the influence of normalizing power on individuals, and then it "produces" or "fabricates" subjects.

In the nineteenth century, subjectivity refers to an essential individuality and the sense of one's perceived self. Foucault defines subjectivity as the way to understand the power relations which form us as subjects; it is "a form of power which makes individuals subjects" ("Afterword" 212). Foucault also argues that "human beings are made subjects" (208). There are three modes of the objectivizing of the subject: scientific classification, dividing practices, and self-subjection. The first mode of

objectified subjects tries to delineate scientific classification; for example, "the

objectivizing of the speaking subject in grammaire generale, philogy, and linguistics...

Or again, …the objectivizing of the productive subject, … Or, …the objectivizing of

the sheer fact of being alive in natural history or biology" ("The subject and power"

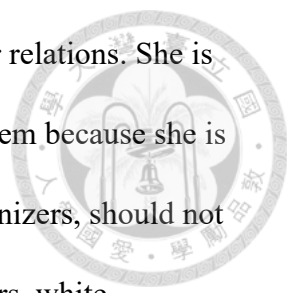777). These discourses of life, labor, and language are structured into disciplines.

The second mode is called "dividing practices." Through the process of division,

the subject is objectified either inside himself or from others, like "mad and sane, the

sick and the healthy" (778). Foucault gives examples like the isolation of lepers

during middle ages, the rise of modern hospitals, prisons and clinics, and also

stigmatization and normalization of sexual deviance in modern Europe. The third

mode focuses on how a human being turns him/herself into a subject of an abstract

field of experience. The subject is not being constrained in a passive mode like the

other two modes; the process of self-formation is active in this mode.

The process of self-formation is mediated by an external authority figure like a

confessor or a psychoanalyst. The three objectivizing modes intertwine the

complicated power relations: they transform subjects into docile bodies through

scientific classification and dividing practices from outside and self-subjection from

within. Disciplines produce subjected and docile body;[22] the aim is to generalize the

docile subject required by rational, efficient, technical society. He/she has to be

obedient, hard-working, and useful.

In *WSS*, Antoinette fails to become a docile body; she does not have a fixed

---

[22] Foucault uses the term "docile bodies" to illustrate the unity of the analyzable and manipulated bodies. The docile body is "subjected, used, transformed and improved"(136). The project of docility represents a new scale of control; therefore, the docile body could be viewed as the homolingual regime of subjectivity.

identity because she is caught in the labyrinth of complicated power relations. She is

not like the English ladies in Spanish Town; she is different from them because she is

poor. Both Tia and Antoinette believe that white people, as the colonizers, should not

be poor. Poor whites are not real white people; they are white niggers, white

cockroaches.

Ann Laura Stoler focuses on the figure of the colonizer in her book, *Carnal

Knowledge and Imperial Power*. She argues that the specific colonial cultural

cofiguration on the Dutch East Indies needs further study on the formerly neglected

role of colonizers. She contends that what it means to be a European differs across

colonial contexts. According to Stoler, colonial racisms are not just about the

subversive colonized, but also about the colonizer. Poor whites who threaten the

colonizer subjectivity are particularly subject to colonial racisms. They are considered

a threat to white prestige and an embodiment of European degeneration. Although

Antoinette is the daughter of the former slave owner, she is not a colonizer like

Rochester. Colonizers are not unified; they do not share common interests and

thoughts. Those in power mark the boundaries; they classify the differences between

Us and Them. According to Stoler, poor whites and white women are closely linked

to "a European self-image of well-deserved privilege and priority" in colonies (25).

The emergence of poor whites in the colony should be avoided; the presence of white

people is a set of colonial concerns and politics. The presence of poor whites is a

threat to colonial politics. What is more, white women also represent a threat from a

different order. Colonial racism becomes heightened when white women "are cited in

a range of colonial situations" (25). Their entry into the colonial situations marks as
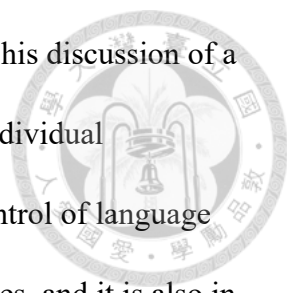
41

wellas threatens the limits of "white prestige and colonial control" (26). On one hand, white women are blamed for provoking the desires of the native men in colonies. On the other, white male power can be achieved by controlling the behaviors of white women.
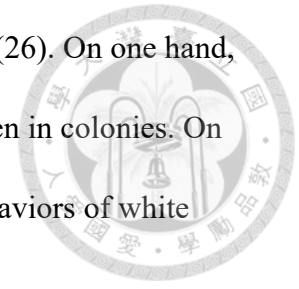
As a white Creole, Antoinette can not be classified as a white woman that marks "white prestige and colonial control." Rochester senses the unclear subjectivity of Antoinette: he describes Antoinette's eyes as showing traces of a non-white. However, he chooses to transform her subjectivity from her ambiguous and creolized state to a fixed English one. He transforms Antoinette's subjectivity by changing her name from Antoinette to Bertha. The change of identity allows Rochester to amend his weakening consensus resulting from his awareness of discrepant interests, class, and ethnic differences in the colony:

> I hear him every night walking up and down the veranda. Up and down.
> When he passes my door he says, "Good-night, Bertha." He never calls me
> Antoinette now. He has found out it was my mother's name. "I hope you will
> sleep well, Bertha"− it cannot be worse,' I said. 'That one night he came I might
> sleep afterwards. I sleep so badly now. And I dream.' (*WSS* 68)

Through the renaming, Antoinette is made subject against her will. She is displaced within the English discourse; Rochester tries to make Antoinette become a "knowing subject." Antoinette's renaming is a way for Rochester to make her an English subject and an Englishman's wife.

Louis Althusser theorizes the process of identification through his discussion of a

knowing subject. Althusser contends that a knowing subject is an individual

conceived as a sovereign, rational, and unified consciousness, in control of language

and meaning. This is the subject accepted in commonsense discourses, and it is also in

accord with Foucault's idea of the docile body. Althusser terms this process of

identification as interpellation. He elaborates the process by describing an everyday

situation: an individual walks down the street and hears a police officer hailing "Hey,

you there!" The hailed one would most likely turn around. He/she becomes a subject

in this process of interpellation. Althusser indicates that interpellation happens

because the individual:

> [H]as recognised the hail was really addressed to him, and that 'it was
>
> really him who was hailed' (and not someone else). Experience shows that the
>
> practical telecommunications of hailings is such that they hardly ever miss their
>
> man: verbal call or whistle, the one hailed always recognizes that it is really him
>
> who is being hailed. And yet it is a strange phenomenon, and one which cannot
>
> be explained solely by 'guilt feelings', despite the large numbers who 'have
>
> something on their consciences.' (Althusser 163)[23]

Althusser theorizes the process of hailing to elaborate the constitution of the

individual as a subject within language and ideology. Well-functioning subjects

practice these ideologies as if they are natural and undisputed. For Althusser, when

---

[23] See "On Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. (Notes Towards an Investigation)." *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books, 1971.

the hailing calls the subject, nine times out of ten the hailed person is the one that the law intended. However, in *WSS*, Antoinette responds to the hailing differently.
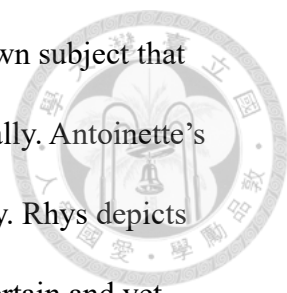
Although Rochester's call is meant for her, she responds with a question: "My name is not Bertha; why do you call me Bertha?" (Rhys 81). She fails to be a knowing subject because of her overlapping jurisdictions of identity. She points out that her renaming is a way to transform her into a unified, self-consistent subject: "Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that's obeah too." (88). She is the one that is wrongly hailed during the process. Normally, successful interpellation works well in the homolingual regime; however, it is problematic within the colonial context in *WSS*.

Therefore, Antoinette becomes a misinterpellated subject[24] who reveals the hailing process as a pretense of state apparatuses reinforced by our willingness to receive that hail. Her response questions the accuracy of the call and further fails to attain the intended results. Antoinette's misinterpellated state complicates the Althusserian interpellation. It also implies that the subject formation is successful in the process of interpellation only in the homogeneous unity.

By responding to Rochester that his call is not accurate (it is for her and not for her), Antoinette discloses that her process of interpellation is different from the Althusserian one. In her misinterpellated state, she gets to recognize the violence of interpellation. Nevertheless, the complicated social and cultural practices still make

---

[24] James Martel's famous work complicates Althusser's interpellation with a notion of misinterpellation. He attempts to develop a critical mode of reading related to anarchism. Martel argues that the misinterpellated subject who does not suppose to answer the hail but responds it anyway, thus it entails a kind of anarchic possibilities of challenging the power structure. However, my use of misinterpellation is different from his; mine is a subject state where the hailed is forced to be placed there and answer the hail against her will. For further discussion about Martel's "misinterpellated subject," see *The Misinterpellated subject*. Duke University Press, 2017.

her a "knowing subject" at the end of the narrative; she is an unknown subject that needs to be subjectified so that she could be understood homolingually. Antoinette's misinterpellation discloses the naturalized conception of subjectivity. Rhys depicts Antoinette's process of misinterpellation as a translation of her uncertain and yet liminal subjectivity. Through Antoinette's final "knowing" of England and of her being an English subject, Rhys is able to uncover the constitutive structure of subject formation: "Now at last I know why I was brought here and what I have to do" (Rhys 112). Antoinette is displaced "there"; she has to be "there" in order to be the hailed.

Being "there," as the madwoman and the ghost in *Jane Eyre*, helps construct the English subjectivity and consolidate the sense of Englishness. Antoinette has to be transformed into Bertha so Rochester could comprehend her as the insane other. Paradoxically, although positioned as the other, Antoinette's subjectivity is constituted homolingually and cofiguratively. Her process of subject formation can be articulated as the homogeneous way of translation, and Rochester's calling her as Bertha, I would contend, is a homolingual address. According to Sakai, a homolingual address is "a regime of someone relating herself or himself to others in enunciation whereby the addresser adopts the position representative of a putatively homogeneous language society and relates to the general addressees, who are also representative of an equally homogeneous language community" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 3-4).

In *WSS*, Rochester's homolingual address reveals the paradox: the incommensurability between the addresser (Rochester) and the addressee (Antoinette) is made continuous and recognizable after the subjectification. In order to make the discontinuity become continuous, Antoinette has to go through this translational

45

process following a cofiguring schema of being English. However, because this translation is in fact "the representation of translation," it treats the people in colonies as two eclosed entities: the colonizer and the colonized. Antoinette's incommensurability during her subjectification is no longer a solid difference; it is more like a "feeling" to her (14). In other words, her subjectification pinpoints the ambiguous aspect in the Althusserian interpellation: the process functions well in the homolingual regime; however, an individual like Antoinette could still be forced to answer the hail through the act of translation.
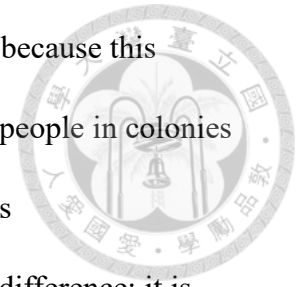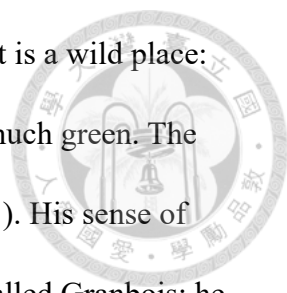
To some extent, Antoinette's "madness" does not result from being an outsider/other; it results from her compelled subjectivity of being the hailed other within the cofiguring schema. Antoinette does not get to go away like Christophine; she is compelled by law[25] and remains within the discourse (being "there" in order to be hailed).

Owing to this paradoxical state, the interpellation process works at least twofold. On the one hand, it makes an individual a knowing as well as "knowable" subject, for an outsider of this kind only appears after translation (the homolingual one). On the other hand, the hailer/addresser represents and consolidates him/herself through the figure of the other cofiguratively. The power which resides in the conceptual difference "allows for the evaluative determination of the one terms as superior over the other" (Sakai 16).

Rochester's need to strengthen his sense of self indicates the other aspect in the

---

[25] She refuses to leave Rochester simply because: "[h]e is my husband after all" (66). And when Christophine asks her to "pick up the skirt and walk out," she replies that everything she owns belongs to Rochester because "That is English law" (Rhys 66).

renaming of Antoinette. Upon arriving in Jamaica, he remarks that it is a wild place: "Everything is too much, … Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near" (Rhys 41). His sense of being an Englishman is fading away in a "cool and remote place" called Granbois; he is misplaced in this colorful and wild place (45). He needs to act like an Englishman; otherwise, he would be just another poor white who could be considered as a white nigger. Like Annette, he needs to be reintegrated socially through marriage; he has to look like white people:

> I played the part I was expected to play. She never had anything to do with me at all. Every moment I made was an effort of will and sometimes I wondered that no one noticed this. I would listen to my own voice and marvel at it, calm, correct but toneless, surely. But I must have given a faultless performance. If I saw an expression of doubt or curiosity it was on a black face not a white one. (Rhys 45)

Rochester, like Annette, still "planned and hoped" (10) to live as the white should. He secures his English subjectivity through other white people's response. Their response functions as a mirror that could be used to examine his "performance."

Maintaining the white prestige is essential in the colony. Ann Stoler argues that sometimes the unfit and unseemly whites would be institutionalized in orphanages, workhouses, mental asylums, and old-age homes in nineteenth-century British colonies (*Rethinking Colonial Categories* 151). These unfit whites would be shipped

47

back, out of the view of both the local and the white. Hence, it is crucial for Rochester to act like an Englishman: it empowers him.
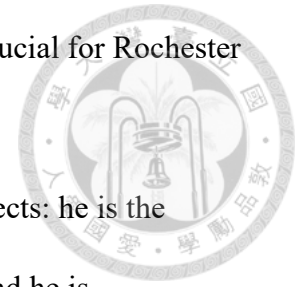
Rochester's sense of powerlessness emerges from various aspects: he is the second son who does not have the right to entitle the inheritance, and he is overwhelmed by the environment in Jamaica. He needs to secure his sense of self through exerting control over others. He safeguards his self by labeling people around him as foreign and debased; he also assigns evaluative remarks on things in order to regain power over his fear of powerlessness. He tells Christophine that "[t]here must be some law and order even in this God-forsaken island" when she tries to persuade him to leave some money to Antoinette and leave Jamaica alone (96). What he does is to initiate a homolingual context where his power is secured. And yet, Christophine replies: "No police here, … No chain gang, no tread machine, no dark jail either" (96). She refuses to recognize "the law" and rejects to be displaced in the homolingual address.

Their dialogue fails to be conducted on the heterolingual basis; therefore, Christophine is excluded from the narrative[26] where she could no longer exert her influence when Rochester threatens her with the magistrate's letter. He tries to displace her in the homolingual regime just like he displaces Antoinette by renaming her and interpellates her as an English subject. We could see how this process of subject formation is ingrained with a double movement: by hailing the one there, one gets to further secure his/her sense of self. According to Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan

---

[26] In the renowned discussion of the celebrative reading of Christophine's confrontation with Rochester, Carine Mardorossian argues that it is crucial to note that this confrontation paradoxically forces her to leave the island as well as the narrative. (See Mardorassian, Carine M. "Shutting up the Subaltern: Silences, Stereotypes, and Double-Entendre in Jean Rhys's '*Wide Sargasso Sea*.'" *Callaloo*, 22.4 (1999): 1071-1090.)

Gubar, the male consent and the imposed image of women are represented through mirror images in *WSS*. How the female characters view themselves through the mirror reveals their subjugation to the norms.
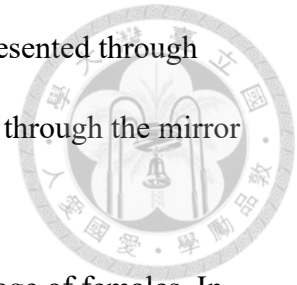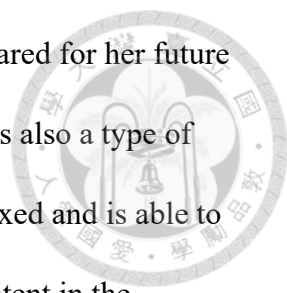
The recurring image of mirror in *WSS* implies the imposed image of females. In the first part of *WSS*, Annette is described as the one who "still planned and hoped—perhaps she had to hope every time she passed a looking glass" (10). When Annette sees Antoinette wear Tia's worn dress home after she loses the bet to Tia, Annette plans to reintegrate into society through marriage, for a life that the white should live. The image of poor whites threatens the normalization of being the European that requires a bearing, a standard of living, and a set of cultural competencies. Annette subscribes to white standards to make sure that she and Antoinette are welcome members of the white community. To be the one who can maintain the image of white prestige, she goes to social events such as dances and picnics, and she also manages to get "yards of muslin" so Antoinette could have new dresses to wear.

As one of the white women in *WSS*, Aunt Cora also conforms to the norms of white prestige; she sends Antoinette to a convent school to make sure that she would be counted as white in the future. It is a form of institutionalization. The colonial community differentiates itself from the colonized in the aspects of "housing, dress codes, transport, food,[27] clubs, conversations, and recreation" (Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge* 32). In the convent school, Antoinette learns how to needle, "gabble

---

[27] When Antoinette loses the bet to Tia, she tells her that she can get all the money she wants; however, Tia replies that she does not think so. Tia tells Antoinette that she is a white nigger because she eats salt fish, which is thought to be the food of the poor because they don't have money for the fresh ones.

49

without thinking," and dress "with modesty" (Rhys 34). She is prepared for her future role as the wife of an Englishman. Although the life in the convent is also a type of statecraft used to cultivate a knowing subject, Antoinette seems relaxed and is able to talk to other girls about hair, clothes, and the nuns. Antoinette is content in the convent school where there is less description of the looking glass;[28] it is her refuge (33).

Looking glass (or reflection) works as a metaphor for the imposed female self-perception dominated by the system of patriarchy. The image of the looking glass shows up again in part three when Antoinette is brought to England:

There is no looking-glass here and I don't know what I am like now. I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me. The girl I saw was myself yet not quite myself. Long ago when I was a child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass was between us – hard, cold and misted over with my breath. Now they have taken everything away. What am I doing in this place and who am I? (Rhys 107)

Antoinette does not get to see a looking glass in Thornfield because she already becomes the subject that is required in *Jane Eyre*, she becomes "the madwoman in the attic." Antoinette becomes a mere ghost that haunts Thornfield; she is misplaced as Bertha—the ghost "surrounded by a gilt frame" (112). Through her misinterpellation as Bertha, her sexuality too is controlled under the conceptual structure of what it

---

[28] One of the nuns, Helene, does her hair without a looking-glass. However, the young nun from Ireland once looks at herself in a cask of water to check her dimples. In the convent, some nuns would advise the girls not to use mirrors to prevent them from being vain.

means to be English, or, an English wife.
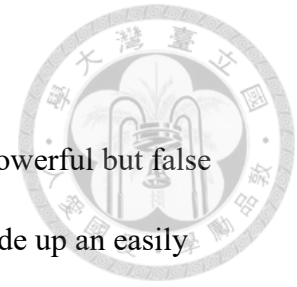
According to Stoler, colonial authority is established on two powerful but false premises. The first is "the notion that Europeans in the colonies made up an easily identifiable and discrete biological and social entity; a 'natural' community of common class interests, racial attributes, political affinities and superior culture." The second is "the related notion that boundaries separating colonizer from colonized were thus self-evident and easily drawn" (Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge* 42). In light of the second premise, various forms of sexual control also secure the categories of colonizer and colonized.

Gender specific sexual control distinguishes the power position through reproducing "middle-class conventions" (Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable" 635). Daniel Cosway tells Rochester about Antoinette's sexual history and her relation with Sandi is one example: "You are not the first to kiss her pretty face" (Rhys 76). His information about Antoinette is the turning point in their marriage. Rochester's sexual control over Antoinette works along with the renaming of her: to construct her as a knowing subject. Moreover, he becomes enraged when Christophine tells him that Antoinette could remarry after he goes back to England. The sexual possession stands for the pattern of relative strength; it is a social trope to depict different centers of power.

This pattern of relative strength is not only illustrated in Rochester and Antoinette's relation, but it is also displayed in Rochester's relationship with other female characters. In the novel, he sexually exploits Amelie; however, she gets to leave for Rio with the money he gives her because she is not subjectified like
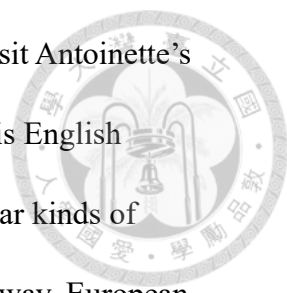
51

Antoinette. Her sexual relationship with him allows her to gain personal profit and small rewards; nevertheless, it is individual negotiation without social and legal claims.
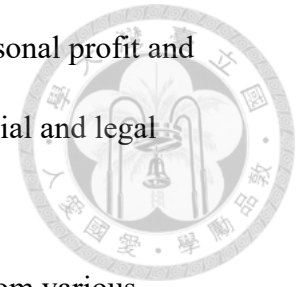
Sexual control over women in the colony is implied in *WSS* from various perspectives. While Rochester is about to leave Jamaica with Antoinette, a nameless servant boy who is thought to be his son shows up in the hope that he could go with them. In this regard, Deborah Kimmey suggests that the boy is nameless like his father, and his father refuses to recognize a "half-savage" child (Kimmey 121). This suggests that Rochester, like old Cosway and many other slave-owners in the colony, takes advantage of his power to gratify himself and has sexual relationships with women in the colony. We could see how this gender-specific sexual control is, in fact, a class and racial marker involved in a wider set of power relation. Sexuality could also work as the marker of otherness; it provides norms for distinctions of difference.

Stoler argues that social and political differentiation of the colonized and the colonizer "intensified after the entry of European women" (*Carnal Knowledge* 32). It is not that the European women are avid racists in their own right; it is because their presence enforces the distinction between the colonizer and the colonized. As the "non-Victorian" wife, Antoinette's overt sexuality startles Rochester. Although they both enjoy the sex in the beginning, Rochester later rejects Antoinette's sexuality either because of his Victorian unconscious or his fear of tainting his sense of self. He tries to secure his sense of being an Englishman by transforming his Creole wife into a Victorian one.

Colonial identity comprises a racial and class-specific core, and that is also one

of the reasons why the English ladies in Spanish Town would not visit Antoinette's

family. The image of a Victorian wife helps Rochester to stabilize his English

subjectivity, for the presence of white women/wives sets up particular kinds of

colonial settlements that need spatial and social segregation. In this way, European

men are no longer the ones "who muddied the distinctions between ruler and ruled"

(Stoler 33).

Stoler contends that in the colony, before the coming of the European women,

the European men were encouraged to find local companions so that they could be fit

for work, physically and psychologically. The presence of the European women

demands new regulations to tighten their ranks, clarify their boundaries, and delimit

their social space. Antoinette's Creole identity not only threatens to blur the colonial

division but also problematizes Rochester's subjectivity. Rochester's sense of self is

strengthened after he knows about Antoinette's sexual history in Daniel Cosway's

letter. His sense of self intensifies each time he calls Antoinette Bertha; the

disappearance of Antoinette coincides with his increasing presence as an Englishman

(And by that, he is no longer the second son who is desperate for his father's

approval).

Even though Antoinette is dominated through her process of subjectification, her

process is still riddled with contradictions. Her identity as a white Creole positions her

between the English imperialist and the colonized blacks. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

indicates that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a novel which "rewrites the canonical English text

within the European novelistic tradition in the interest of the white Creole rather than

the native" ("Three Women's texts" 253). In my opinion, Antoinette possesses a

53

position of complicity with the hegemonic system not only because she is a white

Creole, but also because she becomes rich after Annette marries Mr. Mason. She

maintains a position of complicity with the dominant power structure: "The black

people did not hate us quite so much when we were poor. We were white but we had

not escaped and soon we would be dead for we had no money left. What was there to

hate? Now it had started up again and worse than before… " (Rhys 20).

Through their alliances with Mr. Mason, Annette and Antoinette become

partakers of the colonial English values. On the first day to the convent, two colored

teenagers laugh at Antoinette. Her cousin Sandi comes to help her, but she is shy

about her colored relatives. "I knew who he was, his name was Sandi, Alexander

Cosway's son. Once I could have said 'my cousin Sandi' but Mr. Mason's lectures

had made me shy about my coloured relatives" (30). Here, she exhibits some racial

stereotypes towards the black people. Similar situation happens when she loses the bet

to Tia; she calls her "cheating nigger" (14). In this sense, Antoinette is a victim as

well as an accomplice in colonial rhetoric.

As Spivak contends that *Wide Sargasso Sea* remains a text that favors the

narrative of white Creoles, Rhys reproduces the notion with her depiction of colonial

sexuality. Her depiction of Annette's being sexually abused by the black man in the

asylum and Antoinette's meetups with Sandi implies the colonial sexual threat

towards white women. According to Stoler, there is a colonial presumption about

white women's sexuality:

European women were absent from men's sexual reveries in colonial literature,

54

men of color were considered to see them as desired and seductive figures.

European women needed protection because men of color had 'primitive' sexual

urges and uncontrollable lust, aroused by the sign of white women. ("Making

Empire Respectable" 641)
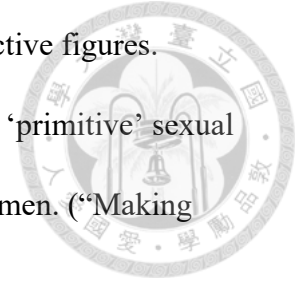
Even considered as mad, Annette is still sexually attractive: "the man lift her up out of

the chair and kiss her" (Rhys 81). After seeing this, Antoinette lashes out at

Christophine: "You shut up devil, damned black devil from Hell" (81). Antoinette

internalizes the colonial rhetoric of the sexuality about white women and draws racial

lines between her and Christophine after the incident while sexual abuse of black

women is neglected and without detailed depiction in the text. In this respect, *Wide*

Sargasso Sea does repeat certain underpinnings of white prestige. Although

Antoinette is not really recognized within the dominating order, she belongs racially

to the colonizers' site of power as a white Creole. Her ambivalent conception of race

may result from her treating race as a matter of convenience; she responds fluidly and

opportunistically to racial-political issues.

The paradoxical state is codified as a political danger predicated on mental

instability, economic vulnerability, and cultural minority. To the blacks, Antoinette is

"a white cockroach," and to white people, she is "a white nigger." On the other hand,

this also exposes the arbitrary logic by which the regulations of control are made. The

hailing process of Antoinette is not as successful as the Althusserian one: the

displacement of Antoinette complicates the whole process because it takes place in a

heterolingual context. Rochester displaces Antoinette as Bertha in the hope to make

her a homolingual subject. Antoinette also displaces herself to cope with her madness

resulting from her first displacement, through a question that answers itself: "*Qui est*

là? Qui est là?" "*Ché Coco, Ché Coco*" (Rhys 25). It is important to note that unlike

the Althusserian hailing, the question is posed and answered by the same one.

Antoinette acknowledges her displacement of "being there" to be hailed while

still tries to avoid total subjectification. Although saved from poverty after her

mother's marriage, she becomes aware that, like the clipped wings of Coco, she too is

given a trapped subjectivity. In her last dream, she hears her mother's dead parrot,

Coco, call:

I heard the parrot call as he did when he saw a stranger, *Qui est là? Qui est là?*

and the man who hated me was calling too, Bertha! Bertha! … Tia was there.

She beckoned to me and when I hesitated, she laughed. I heard her say, You

frightened? And I heard the man's voice, Bertha! Bertha! … Someone screamed

and I thought, *Why did I scream?* I called 'Tia!' and jumped and woke. (112)

This last dream illustrates the various hailing voices in the process of Antoinette's

subject formation. By answering the question with a third person voice "Coco is

here," it implies that Antoinette's displacement of being there: I am *there*, there in

England, there in his place, there in the place of colonial desire. Like her mother, her

marriage with Rochester leads her to a caught-up situation between a subjectified here

and an objectified there. The response to the question, "I am there" discloses

Antoinette's subject position as the object of desire. Therefore, her last call "Tia!"

56

implies her idealized subjectivity and resistance.

On the night of Coulibri's fire, Antoinette runs out of the house and sees Tia: "I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her" (27). Tia represents Antoinette's idealized subjectivity despite her racial awareness. However, when she gets near to Tia, she is hurt by Tia's throwing stone: "I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass" (27).

Antoinette's identification with Tia is both susceptible and curious. The tragic betrayal of Tia not only comes from their racial difference, but also results from Antoinette's inherited complicity with the hierarchical colonial system. She only identifies with the other (black people in this case) with reference to her subjected position (when her house burns down and when she needs Christophine's protection from her husband). Thus Tia becomes the unattainable mirror image[29] for her in the fire of Coulibri. It appears that in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the black women could get away without the consent of others. Tia could leave Antoinette after taking her pennies and trade her old dress with hers. Amelie leaves for Rio and does what she wants after getting the money she needs. Christophine walks out of the narrative "without looking back" after her confrontation with Rochester (97). It is not that these black women are more empowered as they seem to be. It is because the narrative is

---

[29] Jacques Lacan proposes the idea of "mirror stage" as part of infant's development from 6 to 18 months. He later develops the concept to explain how the ego is dependent on external objects, meaning, an other to formulate the idea of "I." For a Lacanian discussion of the looking-glass, see Lee Erwin, "'Like in a Looking-Glass': History and Narrative in *Wide Sargasso Sea*." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 22.2, (1989): 143-158. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1345800.
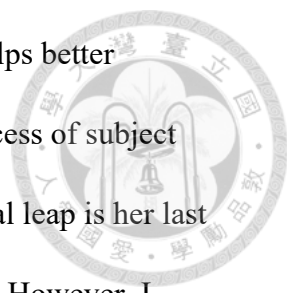
simply not theirs. Their subjectivity could not be perceived in the narrative; they disappear from the text the moment they become subjects of their own.

The idealized depiction of the black women enables Antoinette to situate herself in a place where she could maintain her saneness in her process of subject formation. Thus their erasure from the text crushes down Antoinette. Their power does not possess social and legal claims in the narrative which favors white people and white Creoles. Antoinette's last call of Tia is her last attempt to get away from the colonial narrative in which she is subjectified as the colonized ghost, the madwoman in the attic, and paradoxically, as the Englishman's wife. She wants to be like the black women who could "walk out without looking back" even though this means death for her. Her imagination of the other side[30] of the mirror illustrates her binary conception of black/white, Caribbean/England, West/ Rest, etc. Even if she has little knowledge of the other side, she is willing to believe in the other side: "There is always the other side, always" (77). Because she is already displaced in the homolingual regime of the colonial rhetoric, her sole solution to leave this regime is to place herself within another text through a total exit from this colonial text.

Although there is no clear examination of the other colonized characters in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (for example, Tia and Christophine), Rhys's text could still be considered as the initial attempt to translate a displaced subjectivity. The text problematizes the distinction between the self and the other through translating the

---

[30] Antoinette's trauma might also result from her limited binary conception. Through the metaphor of "the other side," it is clear that there is a continuous plane divided into two through an abstract barrier in the conception of two sides. She turns to the other side to find comfort and reconciliation when she is misinterpellated as Bertha. But in fact, in either scenario, she still possesses the male last names: Antoinette *Cosway* and Bertha *Mason*; she is controlled by men both in Jamaica and England. Spivak's assertion of Antoinette's complex status in *WSS*'s colonial rhetoric is justifiable on this point.

complicated interpellation process. Taking as a trope, translation helps better

understand the complicated forces working within Antoinette's process of subject

formation. Critics like Judie Newman believes that Antoinette's final leap is her last

revolt against slavery, claiming that her act aligns her with Jamaica. However, I

would argue that this final leap is not just an act of resistance; it is more of a tragic

outcome resulting from Antoinette's enforced subjectivity. As the displaced subject,

Antoinette could have the potential to move between homolingual and heterolingual

discourses should she maintain her ambivalent subjectivity. Nonetheless, she does not

get to be the subject in transit owing to her compelled subjectivity comprised by the

asymmetrical power relation of race, gender, class, and culture. Her stance points out

the intricacy of the subject in transit: it is laborious to be the subject in transit for you

would be subjected to various politics.

According to Sakai, one could be a subject in transit, "at best" (*Translation and

Subjectivity* 13). A subject in transit does not become a heterolingual translator

spontaneously. Although experiencing constant internal split and unstable

positionality, Antoinette fails to be the heterolingual addresser; therefore, she could

not disclose the inherent discontinuity thoroughly. Thus, the muted voices[31] in *Wide

Sargasso Sea* become the cause of dissatisfaction residing in many readers and critics.

The want of the heterolingual translator in *Wide Sargasso Sea* reveals that there is still

something left unvoiced. In order to further explore the homolingual constitution of

the self/other binary, I would like to examine the deployment of the heterolingual

translator in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*.

---

[31] For instance, the voices of black people and black Creoles.

"To begin there. *There*. In Media Res." Becoming Translator, Becoming Subject, and Becoming Other in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*[32]
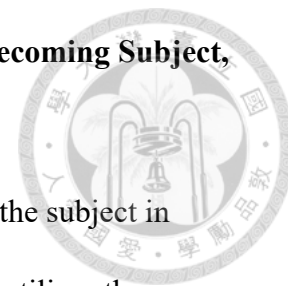
In Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette fails to become the subject in transit because of her displaced subjectivity. As a translation which utilizes the heterolingual attitude, *Wide Sargasso Sea* demonstrates the way in which the subject constitutes herself through the representation of translation. It is crucial to probe into the role of the subject in transit as the translator in minor literature to inspect the discontinuity between the addresser and the addressee. In Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*, the female addresser, the diseuse, serves as the translator who could "enunciate for an essentially mixed and linguistically heterogeneous audience." She is a heterolingual agent that listens, reads, speaks, and writes "in the multiplicities of languages" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 9). She is "a singular that marks an elusive point of discontinuity in the social" (13); she begins her translation *there*, a place where Antoinette is constrained:

Further, Further inside. Further then. To middle. Deeper. Without measure. Deeper than. Without means of measure. To core. In another tongue. Same word. Slight mutation of the same. Undefinable. Shift. Shift slightly. Into a different sound. The difference. How it discloses the air. Slight. Another word. Same. Parts of the same atmosphere. Deeper. Center. Without distance. No particular distance from center to periphery. Points of measure effaced. To begin there.

---

[32] There is a difference between the title: DICTEE and *Dictée*, and I choose to use *Dictée* because it implies a sense of foreignness, a French accent of the "*é*" could connote the sense of minoritizaion. And I italicize "there" to highlight the displaced subjectivity in *Dictée*; the subject is placed "there" to be hailed by various politics.

There. In Media Res. (Cha 157)

The act of translation in *Dictée* intends to reshape the notion of subjectivity; it helps

rethink subjectivity in a Deleuzian becoming manner. Deleuze's subject is not stable

or pre-existent; it is always in the process of becoming-other, shaped by internal

differences. Similarly, Sakai's revision of subjectivity through the heterolingual

manner shares an analogous notion.

Therefore, since "all becoming is a becoming-minoritarian," it would be useful

to approach the notion of subjectivity through the translation practice in *Dictée* (*A*

Thousand Plateaus 291). *Dictée* is a text that defies summary owing to its multigenre

assemblage. It is a text that bears witness to the effects of Korea's multiple traumatic

pasts of Japanese colonialism, French Catholic missionary presence, American

imperialism, and the division of South and North Korea. Comprehending the textual

terrain of *Dictée* is vital to adapt oneself to the mapping of this plural text. Therefore,

for the initial introduction of this subversive work, I would like to turn to account the

promo flyer[33] of the book:

> *Dictée* is a series of narratives in nine parts with each of the Nine Muses
>
> identifying each of the sections: Clio/History, Calliope/Epic Poetry,
>
> Urania/Astronomy, Melepomene/Tragedy, Erato/Love Poetry, Elitere/Lyric
>
> Poetry, Thalia/Comedy, Terpischore/Choral Dance, Polymania/Sacred Poetry.
>
> The narratives trace names, events and histories of existing persons, individuals

---

[33] For information of the flyer and other publications of Tanam Press, see
http://motherland.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/dictee/

personages in history and other fictitious characters embodied in nine female voices. Each of the sections are self-contained chapters, each an evocation of the past through speech, through the research of language that may open avenues to MEMORY, to the elemental process of recollection. (Tanam Press 1981)
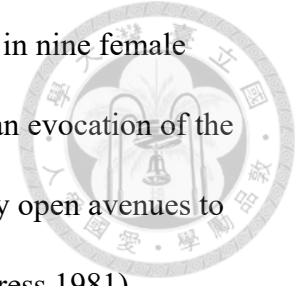
The complex subject matter is handled through various narratives to challenge as well as invite the readers to a site of rapports de forces (relations of forces). It is a collage including things such as Greek mythology, French and English language lessons, religious prayers, modern Korean history, autobiography, Asian ideograms, and translations. Cha tries to reveal the ignored pasts through her textual deployment in *Dictée*, and she also translates the process of subject formation with an analog of language acquisition and dictation exercise. In the beginning, the diseuse translates the process of interpellation through a dictation exercise. The dictator instructs the student to do the dictation and then asks her to translate the sentence from French to English: "Aller à la ligne . . . point . . . point . . . virgule" (1). The student's translation; however, does not omit the punctuation marks as she is supposed to: "Open paragraph . . . period . . . period . . . comma" (1).

The errors in the language exercises indicate the overtone of direct interpellation. These errors also imply the potential for improvisation. It is the Althusserian interpellation in a textualized form which calls into question a neutral pedagogical authority. The dictation comes after an incorrect opening: an epigraph attributed to the wrong poet and an invented list of muses. The initial epigraph of *Dictée* is falsely

attributed to Sappho[34] and followed by a list of nine muses in which "Elitere"[35] is

not one of them. The false opening immediately sets the tone for *Dictée*: It is not a

story told from the beginning; it is an exploration of exilic displacement.
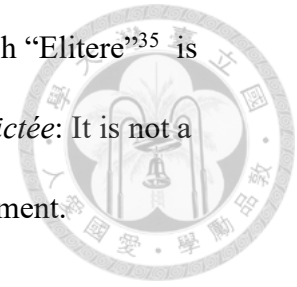
Initial Reception of *Dictée*

Dictée's narrative does not start from the beginning; it tells the story wherever

the addresser wishes (7, 11). First published in 1982, it attained some critical attention

but was somehow ignored by Asian American critics. At first, critics praised the text

because of its postmodern decentering. Since realist autobiographical writings

dominated Asian American literature in 1980s, *Dictée*'s avant-garde context thus led

to its initially limited reception. *Dictée* is not what was expected of Asian American

literature because of its discursive heteroglossia, uncertainty, and ambivalence.

Timothy Yu has discussed the reception of *Dictée* in *Race and the Avant-Garde:

Experimental and Asian American Poetry Since 1965*. According to Yu, *Dictée* was

put aside and then rediscovered by Asian American critics and began to be included in

the canons of Asian American literature by the mid-1990s (102-07).

Dictée became the cornerstone of Asian American literature because of a

collection of critical essays written by some of the most recognized Asian American

literary scholars. Elaine H. Kim and Norma Alarcón's 1994 collection, *Writing Self,

Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictée by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha,* marked

the paradigm shift for Asian American Studies.
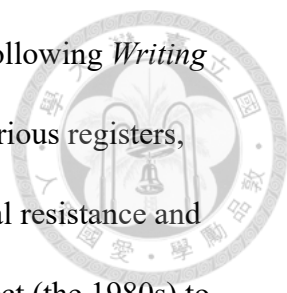
Critics[36] like Elaine H. Kim, Hyun Yi Kang, and Lisa Lowe looked at Cha's

---

[34] Sappho was the lyric poet of ancient Greece. She is one of the first female writers who put women into the text, world, and history.

[35] The muse replaced here is "Euterpe," the muse of Lyric Poetry.

[36] The articles are contained in the anthology co-edited by Kim and Alarcón. See Kang, "The

work as a postcolonial resistance to domination and assimilation. Following *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, critical works continue to be produced with various registers, working as a site of convergence for the exiled subjects' postcolonial resistance and postmodern decentering. The critical reception of *Dictée* from neglect (the 1980s) to acceptance (the 1990s) manifests Cha's inquiry into the multiple social positions that subjugate an individual without romanticizing a unified diasporic community. In order not to form another discussion of uncritical multiculturalism, I would like to enable a productive reading of *Dictée* from a perspective of minor literature.

Dictée and Minor Literature

Dictée possesses the three features of minor literature: First, it is a text about marginalized figures in a majority culture. The work is written in the language(s) of the majority culture, and it decenters and deterritorializes the major language(s) in the process. Cha deploys deterritorialized languages to further transform dictation and translation in the initial part of the book. Both English and French are applied in *Dictée*; however, the two languages are deterritorialized from the original English and French syntaxes through Cha's dictation exercises, unfaithful translations, the arrangement of words, and fragmentations.

The initial segment of the dictation and translation, according to Lisa Lowe in "Unfaithful to the Original: The Subject of *Dictée*," fails to reproduce a subject successfully because the dictation needs "recourse to student's more familiar 'native' language" (40). The errors that come after the instruction of "Ecrivez en francais"

'Liberatory Voice' of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's Dictée," Kim, "Poised on the In-Between: A Korean American's Reflections on Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's Dictée," and Lowe, "Unfaithful to the Original: The Subject of Dictée."

[Write in French] and "Traduire en francais" [Translate in French] suggest that English is also an adopted language for the student (Cha 8). The linguistic alienation is doubled since English is not a more familiar native language that the student could recourse to. The juxtaposition of the French dictation and English translation marks the linguistic deterritorialization. The unfaithful translation produces a sense of heterogeneity that makes strange of both English and French.

Cha's use of French in *Dictée* is unexpected for many readers;[37] it takes up the most space after English in *Dictée*. In Hee-Jung Serenity Joo and Christina Lux's article, "Dismantling Bellicose Identities: Strategic Language Games in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's DICTEE," they point out that the lack of accessibility and evasiveness of the text resist a bellicose identity. *Dictée* refuses to be the realist autobiography of Asian Americans by avoiding the hailing of different voices:

Concretely, *DICTEE* resists a bellicose identity by turning to French to elude the forces of Japanese imperialism in Korea, turning to English to resist French Catholic domination, turning to Korean to critique US neo-colonialism, turning to Chinese to destabilize the notion of a homogeneous Korean ethos, and employing "vulgar" French to interrogate the authority of classical Latin. (Joo and Lux 2)

---

[37] Critics like Elaine H. Kim talk about their discomfort in reading the text in *Writing Self/Writing Nation*. The sense of alienation, estrangement, and unsettling recognition they experience come from *Dictée*'s deployment of multiple languages. Kim was put off by the book due to *Dictée*'s juxtaposition of foreign forms of French, Latin, Korean, etc. L. Hyun Yi Kang found herself "literally yelling at the book" for instead of recognizing herself in the text, and she was frustrated by its lack of accessibility. She perceived "the slipperiness of the book" that "seemed to speak to a highly literate, theoretically sophisticated audience that I did not identify with" (76).

These languages deterritorialize each other through *Dictée*'s unexpected juxtaposition of them. The mis-dictation and mis-translation of French are accentuated by the presence of other languages, English in particular. The errors in the initial dictation displace the assumed link between English and the US national identity. Cha critiques the institutions of power through her deterritorializing dictation. She makes the punctuation visible and deterritorializes the grammar of both English and French:

> She had come afar   period   tonight at dinner
>
> comma   the families would ask   comma open
>
> quotation marks   How was the first day   interroga-
>
> tion mark   close quotation marks   at least to say
>
> the least of it possible   comma   the answer would be
>
> open quotation marks   there is but one thing   period
>
> There is someone   period   From afar   period
>
> close quotation marks (Cha 1)[38]

Besides the "incorrect" presence of the punctuation, the content of the dictation is also disrupted by the mismatched questions and answers. The correct dictation should look like this:

> She had come afar. Tonight at dinner
>
> , the families would ask, "How was the first day?

---

[38] This citation follows the original typography in *Dictée*.

" At least to say the least of it possible, the answer would be

"There is but one thing.
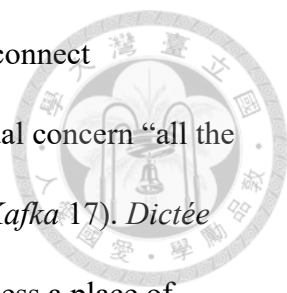
There is someone. From afar."[39]

The grammar and the content are both disrupted by the incorrect dictation. The

answer to the question, "How was the first day?" also invites readers to ponder the

incommensurable power relation between the addresser and the addressee. In the

"correct" version of the dictation, the student knows exactly what to do: he/she knows

to take orders from the dictator without leaving traces. He/she knows when to

capitalize letters and when to place proper punctuation. The invisibility of the

punctuation works like the regime of translation; it presupposes a symmetrical

equivalence between English and French. The erased "comma" or "period" indicates

that the dictator and the student seem to understand each other tacitly. The

discrepancy between Cha's dictation and mine (length, arrangement, etc.) suggests

that in the conventional dictation, paragraphs are made to correspond to each other in

an equal schema without fail. Furthermore, because the punctuation marks would not

be noted down literally in usual circumstances, it lays bare the indiscernible power of

interpellation. Cha's dictation corresponds with Sakai's problem of translation: it

manifests the incommensurability by making strange the conventional dictation.

Secondly, the text prevents an ahistorical celebration of multilingualism and

relocates the political possibilities with its displacement of various languages. *Dictée*

is a political text because of its unconventional form and content. The situation of the

---

[39] I adjust the conventional dictation to match Cha's original one. But it is impossible to arrange the
lines exactly like hers.

protagonist, her parents, and her fellowmen in Korea makes them "connect immediately to politics," and the political nature makes the individual concern "all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 17). *Dictée* exposes the contradictory role of Asian Americans: they do not possess a place of Asian origin or belong to the place where they reside. From the American perspective, *Dictée* is not a text committed adequately to America. From the Korean perspective, *Dictée* is a text that utilizes colonial and imperial languages. The contradictory politics are shown in Cha's allocation of languages.

As an Asian/American text, the presence of the US nation-state takes up little place in *Dictée*. The power of state shows up at the moment where Cha's mother obtains her US passport, and in the "Petition from the Koreans of Hawaii to President Roosevelt" (34-36). The petition and the immigration documents (56) call attention to the US as a colonial power, and further problematize the political grounding of Asian American studies. In the petition, the Koreans who live in Hawaii appeal to the US to intervene in the Japanese colonization of Korea:

We, the common people of Korea, have lost confidence in the promises Japan made at the time … The United States has many interests in our country. The industrial, commercial, and religious enterprises under American management, have attained such proportions that we believe the Government and people of the United States ought to know the true conditions of Korea and the result of the Japanese becoming paramount in our country. We know that the people of America love fair play and advocate justice towards all men. (Cha 36)
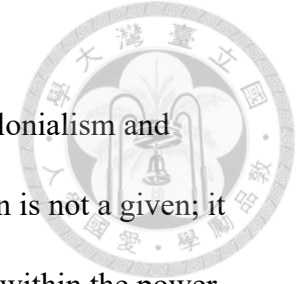
The petition demonstrates how Korean Americans are subject to colonialism and neo-colonialism. What it means to be an American/Japanese/Korean is not a given; it is the outcome of different politics. The unlikelihood of "fair play" within the power institution is highlighted by the disparate language exercises throughout the text.

Dictée is a minor literature text that challenges the smooth linguistic transition which moves to a unified state. *Dictée* questions the binary of "either" (Korean) and "or" (American) through elaborating on the idea of in-betweenness. Elaine H. Kim discloses the in-betweenness in the text, "[s]he is not more recognized as an 'American' by Americans than as a 'Korean' by Koreans, who 'say you look other than you say. As if you didn't know who you were'" (19). The identity crisis that Kim expresses indicates that every individual concern is related to politics in *Dictée*.

Thirdly, *Dictée* is not a text about a particular quest for the identity of origin. The text works through a collective value to express different possibilities and sensibilities. *Dictée* refers to no specific subject in the text; "there are only collective assemblage of enunciation" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 18). The political action in the text takes on a collective value. It is an enunciation of collective multiplicity which decenters languages and focuses on constructions of power without a re-territorialization of new binary systems. Kevin A. Morrison argues, "Cha was well aware that the physical form of a book—not just the words and images but the book's totality—is a means of expression [, a]n expression that…emanates not from the individual author but from the social and artistic collectivities to which one belongs" (10). The voices in *Dictée* do not speak for a unified Korean American or Korean experience. The female

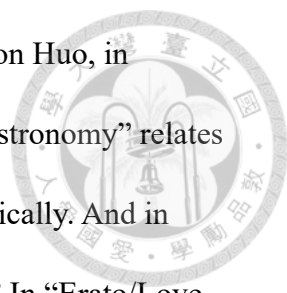speaker (diseuse) in the text expresses the heterogeneity in the enunciation:

> It murmurs inside. It murmurs. Inside is the pain
>
> of speech the pain to say. Lager still. Greater
>
> than is the pain not to say. To not say. Says
>
> nothing against the pain to speak. It festers in-
>
> side. The wound, liquid, dust. Must break. Must
>
> void. (3)

The diseuse expresses the internal pain resulting from the desire to speak, and the indefinite and anonymous sense prepares the pain for an enunciative event. The return of sounds augments to such a pitch that is autonomous and self-generating (3). Beginning as bared noises, groans, and bits torn from words, the returning sounds try to become the pitch that could enter the field of attention. Therefore, in order to enter that field, a translator who can speak in a forked tongue is inevitable. She has to possess the linguistic capital that allows her recognition on the majoritarian market.

The diseuse is a translator, a vessel of collective voices disclosing the unspeakable past and history silenced by the capitalized History. *Dictée*'s historical background creates a strong sense of the colonized's struggle and the feeling of rootlessness.

The nine chapters explicate stories, histories, and lived experiences through a proxy of a female speaker, the diseuse. For example, the Korean martyr Yu Guan Soon's March 1st movement against the Japanese occupation in 1919 shows up in

70

"Clio/History," and followed by a story of Cha's mother, Hyung Soon Huo, in "Calliope/Epic Poetry" during the Japanese imperialism. "Urania/Astronomy" relates writing to the body and implies that writing could be acted out physically. And in "Melpomne/Tragedy," there is a personal address to "Dear Mother." In "Erato/Love Poetry," St. Therese of Lisieux appears in a costume with cinematic notes for mise-en-scène (93).

The narrative of St. Therese of Lisieux splits into two parts showing the cinematic perspective that constructs meanings through the collision of shots; it is a textualized montage. The chapter ends with a close-up still photo of Maria Falconetti as Joan of Arc in Carl Theodor Dreyer's film, *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc (1928)* [The Passion of Joan of Arc]. The left sides of this chapter display a love story of an unfaithful husband and his wife. "Elitere/Lyric Poetry" is written in fragmented and ungrammatical English and French. It is divided into two parts: "ALLER" and "RETOUR" [GO and RETURN]. "Thalia/Comedy" contains two letters to "Laura" in typewritten and handwritten forms to elaborate Cha's notion of memory and time. "Terpsichore/Choral Dance" deals with the quest for an origin and the possibility to deliver speeches not from the beginning but in the middle. The last chapter "Polymnia/Sacred Poetry" tells a story about a girl leaving away from home to find the cure for her sick mother. The nine narratives try to intertextualize the past with the contemporaneous present.

However, as mentioned earlier, "Elitere" is not one of the nine muses. Cha replaces "Euterpe" with an invented "Elitere." The muse that expresses affective silence replaces the muse that gives pleasure and delight. Elitere is out of place among

71

the Greek muses, and the readers are invited to find out the real muse during the reading process. Critics have a lot of interpretations about this false muse. In "Unnaming the Same: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*,"[40] Shelley Sunn Wong considers the muse as a new coinage of "elite" and "literate" (115). Besides, Michael Stone-Richards believes that "Elitere" means "*elle y taire/tears*: there she weeps, there she says nothing, passes over in silence" (170n52).

Nonetheless, "Elitere" sounds similar to "elle itère" (she iterates) in French, and it echoes with the content of "ALLER" (GO) and "RETOUR" (RETURN) in the text. The chapter shows a recurring voicing activity that wishes to be uttered "from behind the partition" (Cha 132). It is through this recurring exercise that enables the diseuse to "break open the spell cast upon time upon time again and again. With her voice, penetrate earth's floor, the walls of Tartaurus to circle and scratch the bowl's surface" (123). The diseuse resurrects the past "so as not to repeat history in oblivion" (33). According to Sakai's notion, she becomes a translator whose position is that of one who "accepts to have no choice but to 'extend and propagate toward the outside' in a condition of chronic uncertainty about the outcome" (Morris xx).

The Translator in Transit

Dictée's nonstandard English translation of the French dictation exercise shows the power behind the dictation; it reveals differences in repetition. Josephine Nock-Hee Park argues that *Dictée*'s dictation is a practice that refuses to become invisible, the punctuation signals the "fact of dictation, the command of dictating" imposed on the subject (Park 215). The diseuse's intentional exhibition of the

---

[40] Wong provides a detailed discussion of the replacement of "Euterpe" with "Elitere."

punctuation makes her become a female translator that reveals the boundaries heterolingually. *Dictée* illustrates many levels of discourse as well as the plurivocal exchange within multilingual, cross-cultural, and indigenized contexts.
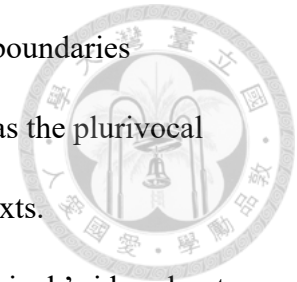
The failed dictation and unfaithful translation correspond to Spivak's idea about the task of a translator. In "The Politics of Translation," Spivak contends that the translator has to translate the text with its original logic, rhetoric, and silence, and she must surrender to the original text. She has to "solicit the text to show the limits of its language" (183). The female translator should also have the love and intimacy for the original text. Her task is to "facilitate this love between the original and its shadow, a love that permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay" (181). The diseuse unquestionably shows the love and intimacy towards her original texts, for they are texts of her own, of her family and countries. And owing to the plurivocality of the original texts, the translator has to work in a heterolingual mode.
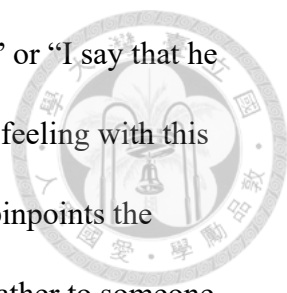
According to Spivak, a translator "cannot translate from a position of monolingual superiority" (195). Her concern of a female translator shares common interest with Sakai's. Both Spivak and Sakai recognize the significance of the positionality and visibility of a translator. According to Sakai, there is more than one type of homolingual address. In most cases, the writer's language is also the reader's; it is an "insider dialogue" addressing other members within the same community. He also reminds us that it is a homolingual address when the writer "addresses herself to readers whose language is definitely not hers," as long as "the position of the translator is set aside and viewed to be secondary in the representation of translation"

73

(*Translation and Subjectivity* 5). On the other hand, Spivak's translator has to be familiar with the original language, and she too has to be intimate with its rhetoric and logic. Only then she would be able to translate the silence of the text. The diseuse does not possess a stable identity; therefore, she could translate the language of "in-betweenness." Her position allows her to perceive the intensities and possibilities inside the text and translate them to a heterolingual plane. Her position is always reshaping, always in the process of becoming within the text.

Josephine Park also claims that the diseuse situates herself on a border "between these other presences and their voices; she takes the place of the spoken punctuation marks that would not disappear seamlessly into the dictation text" (216). The diseuse reveals that "all speech must be channeled through a painful moment of embodied delivery; it must be conveyed across the interruptions of punctuation marks and multiple demarcations" (216). Park brings out the problem within the process of translation. The process overlooks the "painful moment of embodied delivery" of the representation of translation. She underlines the in-between space rather than suppressing the linguistic and cultural differences of the source text. She shows that there is "[n]o particular distance from center to periphery" (Cha 157).

The diseuse occupies an ambiguous and unstable position which draws attention to the disjunction in the translational enunciation of the translator. She is a subject in transit, an addresser, and a translator. She does not speak as an "I" (of the original enunciation), nor does she address to a "you" in the act of translation. The pronominal disjunction in the act of translation is intensified in the translational enunciation. Sakai explains that when the translator wants to express the addresser's statement of

74

"It is fine today," she should restate: "I say he said 'It is fine today'" or "I say that he said that it was fine that day." *Dictée* gives its readers the estranged feeling with this pronominal disjunction. Elaine Kim's first reaction to the text also pinpoints the disjunction: "I thought that Theresa Cha was not talking to me but rather to someone so remote from myself that I could not recognize 'him.' The most I could hope for, I thought, was to be permitted to stand beside her while she addresses 'him'" (3).

The pronominal disruption results from the "double framing" of the translator who "must speak in a forked tongue, and her enunciation must necessarily be one of mimicry" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 12). A subject in transit as well as a translator, could not "be anyone who can conduct a conversation in the language of the original," since it would also be a homolingual address (Spivak 188). The translational enunciation could be thought as a quotation with variations; it is a repetition with difference.

In the section of "DISEUSE," we are given a description:

She mimicks the speaking. That might resemble speech. (Anything at all.) Bared noise, groan, bits torn from words. Since she hesitates to measure the accuracy, she resorts to mimicking gestures with the mouth. The entire lower lip would lift upwards then sink back to its original place. She would then gather both lips and protrude them in a pout taking in the breath that might utter some ting. (One thing. Just one.) But the breath falls away. With a slight tilting of her head backwards, she would gather the strength in her shoulders and remain in this position. (3)

75
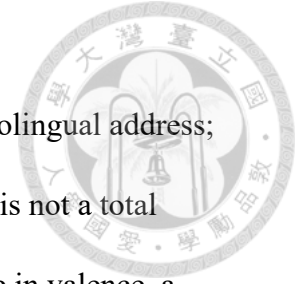
The diseuse reproduces a speech in a signifying fashion of the homolingual address; however, something else emerges during the process. The mimicry is not a total imitation; it is "a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 10). The interwoven becomings shown in the mimicry connect each other in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further. The diseuse's speech is not just an imitation or resemblance; it is "an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight" that can no longer "be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying" (10).

In "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," Homi K. Bhabha argues that in colonial discourse, the colonizer desires for "a reformed, recognizable Other, as *a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (126). Correspondingly, the diseuse's sly and unfaithful translation shows how her act of mimicry uncovers the continual slippage, excess, and difference within the subject formation process. The diseuse's act of mimicry becomes a way to represent a difference and mocks the interpellating power of the normative model in the discourse. Mimicry as repetition also pervades *Dictée* at all levels. The becoming state of the diseuse displays through a collage of quotations from borrowed texts including letters, cinematic still photos, and diagrams. It is a free flow of textuality and intertextual borrowings as well as attention to the play of difference within and outside the subject.

The story of Yu Guan Soon pairs with the stories of St. Therese and Princess Pari. The final pages of *Dictée* also bring the readers back to the cover photo of a ruin. The

maternal address in the final pages, "Lift me up mom to the window" (Cha 179), also

recalls the carved Korean characters in the frontispiece:

Mother

I miss you

I am hungry

I want to go home.

Fig. 1. Frontispiece, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée*, 1982.

The recurring practice in *Dictée* forms "a circle within a circle" (175), and it seems to

present a structure of continual repetition. However, the repetition is not an

unthinking act; it is a parodic reframing, an assertion of difference. *Dictée*'s repetition

is a dialectical structure which enables the text to move between various alternatives

and at the same time suspends the opposing binaries.

Through the making strange of these borrowed and varied texts, *Dictée*

demonstrates parodic citationality in the extreme; it is a translational process of the

derivative. I would argue that in *Dictée*, the diseuse translates the ignored past

memories and the process of interpellation by way of "showing." The idea of showing

77

means that the diseuse shows the unequal cofiguration of a subject within an Asian American context through the montage of these borrowed texts.[41] In order not to be forgotten in the repetitive oblivion, she has to "justify" her translation with "the visibility of the present" (Cha 140). She needs to bring back the forgotten through displacing real time by pairing and repetition. The showing is textual as well as visual; readers too experience the minoritarian condition in Cha's collage of the whole book.

The overlapping parts and the fragmented practices articulate a nuanced and unfaithful voice of the diseuse. The diseuse's translational enunciation challenges readers' attempt to conceive a stable subject (whether Korean or Korean American).
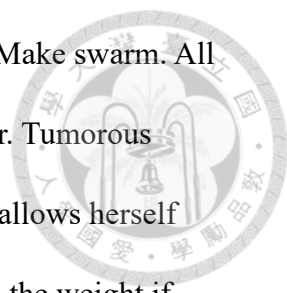
There is No Place Like Home:[42] The Subject of Becoming in *Dictée*

The subject in *Dictée* is always in the dilemma of facing national and linguistic boundaries because of her position. To map out her journey, "[s]he begins the search the words of equivalence to that of her feeling. Or the absence of it. Synonym, simile, metaphor, byword, byname, ghostword, phantomnation" (Cha 140). She tries to push the boundaries through assembling the derivatives into a speech of its own. Positioned as the subject in transit, the diseuse "cannot be either the first or second or even third 'person' undisruptively" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 13). The unfixed subjectivity of the diseuse introduces a "disjunctive instability into the putatively *personal* relations among the agents of speech, writing, listening, and reading"; it is not a personal relationship between an addressing "I" and an addressed "you" (13):

---

[41] Although the texts are from various genres and sources, they are not entirely irrelevant to Cha, or the diseuse.
[42] I rephrase it from the lines of Dorothy in the movie, *Wizard of Oz*. In this 1939 movie, when Dorothy finishes her quest at the end, she repeats "There's no place like home" three times and wakes up on her bed in Kansas. However, in *Dictée*, there is no place that could be called "home."

She allows others. In place of her. Admits others to make full. Make swarm. All

barren cavities to make swollen. The others each occupying her. Tumorous

layers, expel all excesses until in all cavities she is flesh…She allows herself

caught in their threading, anonymously in their think motion in the weight if

their utterance… (Cha 3-4)

The diseuse does not represent a specific group from the marginalized minority; on

the contrary, she is capable of voicing a collective enunciation. She is responsible for

various voices because of the "in-between" space where she resides allows her access

to these voices:

> *She would take on their punctuation. She waits to service this. Theirs.*
>
> *Punctuation. She would become, herself, demarcations. Absorb it. Spill it. Seize*
>
> *upon the punctuation. Last air. Give her. Her. The relay. Voice. Assign. Hand it.*
>
> *Deliver it. Deliver. (4)*

Sakai claims that the opacity which the translator illustrates in the translational

enunciation discloses "the space of in-between," which is also a space for subjects in

transit. It is a community that "cannot be contained in or by a nation" (*Translation*

and Subjectivity 36); therefore, a fractured "I" appears in the address of discontinuity.

The "seizing upon the punctuation" approaches the problematic subjectivity: it reveals

how the national language is put into practice in the regime of translation. In *Dictée*,

Cha unveils the untotalized process of the Althusserian interpellation through her

79

inaccurate translation of French and English dictation exercises. The lines of flight are

formed by the juxtaposition and repetition of words and sentences to highlight the

foreignness and otherness of subjectivity.
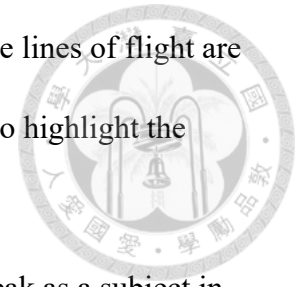
At the beginning of the novel, Cha describes the anxiety to speak as a subject in

transit:

Traduire en francais:

1. I want you to speak.

2. I wanted him to speak.

3. I shall want you to speak.

4. Are you afraid he will speak?

5. Were you afraid they would speak?

6. It will be better for him to speak to us.

7. Was it necessary for you to write?

8. Wait till I write.

9. Why didn't you wait so that I could write you? (8-9)

The anxiety to speak revealed above comes from the reassignment of the

addresser-addressee relation to the personal relation "of first person vis-à-vis second

person" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 13). In this putative personal relation, a

presupposed homolingul address between "I" and "You" treats the translator as an

indifferent observer who "denies immediate involvement" (53). The power relation

between the dictator and the one who takes the dictation is clear. The one who takes

80

the dictation must copy down what the dictator said, and his/her "total faithfulness" to the original text is demanded. This repetition shows that there are some voices that are not recognized. Some want to speak, and some demand to write or to be written. The diseuse analogizes the process of dictation and the process of interpellation to show the incommensurability of subject formation.

A dictation is often given by the authority figures within some institutions and educational systems. This practice makes the dictation become an analog of political and cultural mediation. It is not merely a dictation exercise; it makes readers sense the power behind the dictating instructions. According to Lisa Lowe, there is a gap in this process of reproduction between "the oral and the written" (39). The one who takes the dictation becomes a forced translator in this condition, and this kind of translator is neither a subject of enunciation nor does she has the love to the text. The forced translator could be construed as the one who does the translation so as to attain a subjectivity that is, in fact, under the reign of a homolingual representation. Therefore, the translation with punctuation marks would be "unfaithful to the original" if we comprehend translation in terms of the communication model of equivalence and exchange.

However, Cha manages to utilize the "unfaithful" translation to elaborate the political labor within the discontinuous process of subject formation. What Lowe terms as "unfaithful" is in fact a practice that is able to disrupt the schema of cofiguration; it heightens the problematic of subjectivity. In *Dictée*, Cha exposes at least two sides of the subject formation process through the analogy of dictation and interpellation. One is the impossibility of faithful/totalized translation/subject

formation, and the other is the deviation/resistance reproduced by the individual.

According to Lowe, "the nonequivalence of the French and English text" foregrounds "the failure of translation as a topos of faithful translation" (41). She also points out that "translation is both an apparatus of cultural domination—the names of Korean subjects are forcibly translated into Japanese under Japanese colonialism, the narrator is 'translated' as a namesake of Saint Therese—as well as the means by which the dictation is adulterated, resisted" (42). The dictation indicates that translation never takes place in a smooth space where individuals comprehend each other perfectly. Cha unveils the untranslatability and unbalanced circulation with her recurring practice of repetition:

> History, the old wound. The past emotions all over again. To confess to relive the same folly. To name it now so as not to repeat history in oblivion. To extract each fragment by each fragment from the word from the image another word another image the reply that will not repeat history in oblivion. (33)

In order not to repeat "history in oblivion," Cha retells the forgotten and erased pasts in the form of heterolingual address.

The process of naming is a kind of interpellation as well. Cha translates this process by presenting differences between each sentence to her readers, for the process would not be a congealed unity. As it is challenging to recognize the untranslatable, Cha has to repeat each sentence, each word, with minimal differences to show the deviation and the resistance inside the process of subject formation. The

repetition of the phrases and fragmentations produces lines of flight and takes the

fixed meaning out of the original syntax. With this practice, the sense of language is

"traversed by a line of escape—in order to liberate a living and expressive material

that speaks for itself and has no need of being put into a form" (Deleuze and Guattari,

Kafka 21). The language is "torn from sense, conquering sense, bringing about an

active neutralization of sense, no longer finds its value in anything but an accenting of

the word, and inflection" (21). The meaning is taken out, and only the structure

remains:

To bite the tongue.

Swallow. Deep. Deeper.

Swallow. Again even more.

Just until there would be no more of organ.

Organ no more.

Cries.

Little at a time. The commas. The periods.

The pauses.

Before and after. Throughout. All advent.

All following.

Sentences.

Paragraphs. Silent. A little nearer. Nearer.

Pages and pages

in movement

line after

line

void to the left void to the right, void the

words the silences.

I heard the signs. Remnants. Missing.

The mute signs. Never the same.

Absent. (69)

The anxiety and the pain to speak are expressed through the passage above, and this

also suggests the diseuse's repetitive speech is always reshaping and deterritorializing,

for the tongue is swallowed each time the diseuse speaks. She is able to listen for the

mute signs of the past and voids. These mute signs are both remnant and missing[43]

until the diseuse resurrects them to the present, with her wounded and multiple

tongues. A French dictation followed by the inaccurate English translation on page

66-67 indicates the paradoxical feature of these signs: "J'écoutais les cygnes" (66)

and "I heard the swans" (67). The translation of "swans" immediately draws attention

to its meaning in the context. And then, a slightly mutated "J'écoutais les signes"

appears on page 68, which translated as "I heard the signs" (69).

The wordplay of cygnes and signes maps out the diseuse's enunciative journey.

The translation of "swans" is a mistranslation of "cygnes," although cygnes mean

---

[43] For the subject in the heterolingual address, these signs are remnants, and for the subject of the homolingual one, they are invisible and lost.

swans in French, they are also homophones of "signes" [signs]. The diseuse plays

with the meaning of cygnes/signes. The juxtaposition of cygnes and signes in the

diseuse's act of translation shows the complex process of interpellation.

Cha also gives a detailed description of speech production with four anatomical

images of the air passages, neck, throat, and vocal folds for phonation and breathing

(74). She tries to detach speech from the organs which produce sounds. The diseuse

possesses "cracked" and "broken tongue" that leads to her broken speech (75). Her

injured tongue makes her fit for the position as a translator of the unspeakable things
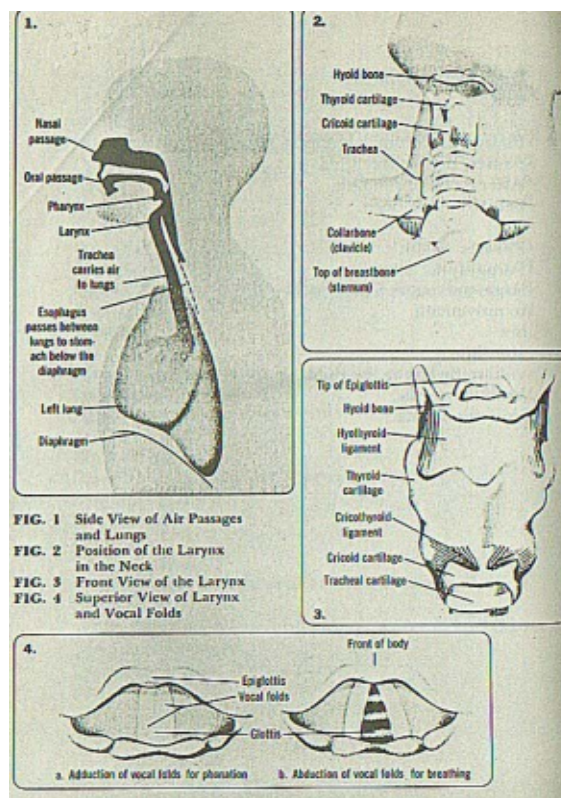
unspoken.

Fig. 2. Detail, "Urania/Astronomy" Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée*, 1982.

The wound of the diseuse also appears in Urania/Astronomy to reveal her in-between

space. In this passage, the diseuse is described in a hospital-like facility waiting to

85

have her blood sample extracted. As her blood flows out, her potential to carry stories

of others shown (64): "Too long. Enough already. One empty body waiting to contain.

Conceived for a single purpose and for the purpose only. To contain. Made filled."

The diseuse bleeds out so that she can be a vessel filled by others' stories:

       Stain begins to absorb the material spilled on.

She pushes hard the cotton square against the mark.

       Stain begins to absorb the material spilled on.

Something of the ink that resembles the stain from

the interior emptied onto emptied into emptied upon

this boundary this surface. More. Others. When pos-

sible ever possible to puncture to scratch to imprint.

Expel. Ne te cache pas. Révèle toi. Sang. Encre.[44] Of its

body's extension of its containment. (65)[45]

The depiction of blood, ink, and the cotton somehow blurs the boundaries of inside

and outside. It seems to suggest that the seeping-out of blood makes it no longer

belong to the vessels inside the body. It is a formless condition which corresponds

with the diseuse's fluid subjectivity. The remaining cut is a hole that "increasing its

size larger and larger until it assimilates the boundaries and becomes itself formless"

(131). The diseuse exposes the porous and unfixed boundaries when she finally comes

out of hiding. The blood of the past becomes her writing ink. She does not need to do

---

[44] "Ne te cache pas. Révèle toi. Sang. Encre" means: "Do not hide. Reveal yourself. Blood. Ink."
[45] The citation follows the original typography in *Dictée*.

the side-by-side translation to highlight the incommensurability.

The formless being problematizes the concept of a boundary; it reflects on cultural identity, and it also questions the implicit closure in one's subjectivity which assumes boundaries. In a conference paper "Translation and the Schematism of Bordering," Sakai proposes a trope of "translation as a filter" to scrutinize the assumed inside and outside of a language and problematizes the regime of translation. In the regime of translation, translation is represented through a strict distinction between an interior and exterior of a language. In *Dictée*, the diseuse conveys the regime of translation through her depiction of the whiteness:

> Ever since the whiteness.
>
> It retains itself, white,
>
> unsurpassing, absent of hue, absolute, utmost
>
> pure, unattainably pure.
>
> If within its white shadow-shroud, all stain should
>
> vanish, all past all memory of having been cast,
>
> left, through the absolution and power of
>
> these words.
>
> Covering. Draping. Clothing. Sheathe. Shroud.
>
> Superimpose. Overlay. Screen.
>
> Conceal. Ambush.
>
> Disguise. Cache. Mask. Veil.
>
> Obscure. Cloud. Shade. Eclipse. Covert. (132)

The whiteness[46] that surpasses all is the regime of translation that makes the conceiving of the single master narrative possible. It conceals the possibility of other narratives with cloth-like mediums.

On the other hand, the whiteness could also be considered as the cinematic white screen that devours other images and takes the diseuse "backward" (Cha 95). The cinematic whiteness implies the transition between scenes: it is there, as a part of the montage, but the audience does not notice its existence. The cinematic whiteness too is a mute sign that would be sensed through translation applying the heterolingual attitude. Unlike the whiteness that would cover everything, the whiteness of the screen is a space which "the shadows move across, dark shapes and dark light" (94). The transition of "the white, then the black" marks a situation of indistinction and indifferentiation. The whiteness is a membrane whence the "[c]ontents housed in membranes" could spill (64). The spilling contents become stains that "absorb the material spilled on" (65).

Sakai proposes a trope of translation as a filter to challenge the conventional view of translation. According to Sakai, there are two sides of this metaphorical filter. He proposes that a filter contains two sides: "something that passes through and something that does not pass through." A filter is a "semi-permeable membrane" where permeability and impermeability coexist and "a certain blocking entity comes to acquire the characteristics of a filter" (Sakai, "Translation and the Schematism of

---

[46] The covering whiteness attunes to Toni Morrison's concern about the whiteness in American literature in her lecture, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken." Similarly, Jean Rhys also exemplifies *Jane Eyre*'s homolingual (racial) whiteness in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.
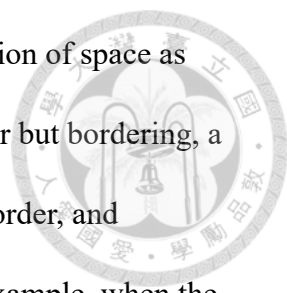
88

Bordering").

This coexistence of the two sides of a filter reveals a certain complexity of this trope. On the one hand, "[t]he basic material property of a filter is to be something that obstructs, something that hinders movement, even if it is full of holes permeable, and thus those things that cannot pass through it are gathered in the filter and help in stasis" (Sakai). On the other, Sakai reminds us that viewing a filter as a barrier ignores the fact that the filter "differentiates into two distinct areas a space which is presumably connected on this side and that side" (Sakai). It is one contiguous space that is divided into two. The filter seems to divide a continuous space into two: a homolingual side and a heterolingual side.

On the homolingual side, it implies a condition "saturated by different systems of grammatical rules (rules that are organized by means of phonetics, syntax, and so forth)." And these rules restrict one's capacity "to cognize the external world." On the heterolingual side, the presence of filter itself "leaves indeterminate the two areas divided by the filter," and the filter of permeability determines each space relatively. The filter becomes a void or absence on the heterolingual side, to see translation "as an act that links the gaps or ruptures between the two areas, rather than as a substantial barrier of filtration dividing a continuous space into different areas" (Sakai).

Sakai also contends that the filter as a trope could exhibit a new force in the discussion of subjectivity. At times, Sakai argues, "discussions of subjectivity jump too quickly to conclusions by way of spatialized trope of a language, a spatialized figure with a clear contour" (Sakai). The spatialized discussions of subjectivity

89
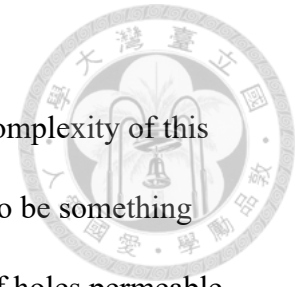
correspond to the demarcation of land: it is divided by the demarcation of space as enclosed areas. Thus, what is at issue here is not the notion of border but bordering, a process of inscribing a border. The spatial figuration of language, border, and subjectivity could be construed through the trope of the filter. For example, when the filter serves as a threshold, the upstream and the downstream flows do not blend together. The flows are viewed to be separate and enclosed; the permeability of the filter as the membrane is put aside by the exclusive partition of space. The translation from one language to another, the "us and them" binary, and the demarcation of domestic and foreign, for example, are all products of this kind of spatial figuration.

Nonetheless, as the subject in transit, the diseuse unravels the problem of this figuration; it is impossible to erase the filter or substantialize it as a barrier. The filter is the contact zone where the two sides meet; it is also a site of "becoming." It appears in the remained punctuation and the muted pasts. Cha's narratives begin in medias res, and she illustrates a middle ground, a ground of becoming. It is like a web of connections or circuits, and different elements interconnect with one another in a place of becoming.

Cliff S. Stagoll gives a specific explanation about the Deleuzian becoming:

[It is] the pure movement evident in changes between particular events. This is not to say that becoming represents a phase between two states or a range of terms or states through which something might pass on its journey to another state. Rather than a product, final or interim, becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms and tending towards no particular

90

goal or end-state. (21)

Elaine H. Kim also notes:

> For the most part, I read Asian American literature as a literature of protest and
> exile, a literature about place and displacement, a literature concerned with
> psychic and physical "home"—search for and claiming a 'home or longing for a
> final "homecoming." (ix)

However, *Dictée* conveys a sense of homelessness and the impossibility of a final
homecoming. According to Lisa Lowe, "a subject may be at once multiply hailed by
several ideologies whose conditions of production are heterogeneous and
incommensurable, or alternatively, and perhaps more importantly, a subject may be
insufficiently captured by an ideological formation such that an antagonism arises
against that formation from the material conditions in which that interpellation takes
place" (55). The diseuse's torn identity stresses this complicated condition:

> Documents, proof, evidence, photograph, signature. One day you raise the right
> hand and you are American. They give you an American Passport. The United
> States of America. Somewhere someone has taken my identity and replaced it
> with their photograph. The other one. Their signature their seals. Their own
> image. (Cha 56)

The passage describes the process of the constitution of a US national subject; the subject experiences uneasiness because her identity is replaced with "their photograph, their signature, and their image." Nonetheless, when the subject returns to her homeland, she finds out that she is also an outsider. She is situated in a double alienation because of her longing for a final homecoming.

This sense paves the subject's way to a becoming state. The diseuse is a subject of becoming who carries heterogeneous signs, and there is no beginning or end in her speech act. There is no such place like home that she could return to, only a middle ground. A subject of becoming is not defined by an organized structure of relative binaries, thus she could be realized through Deleuze and Guattari's notion of rhizome:

> It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and which it overspills. It constitutes linear multiplicities when n dimensions having neither subject nor object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency, and from which the One is always subtracted (n-1). When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 23)

The diseuse's speech is an overspilling activity, just like the blood seeping out from the wound. It is a broken speech laid on a plane bound for a referential recitation:

> *Being broken. Speaking broken. Saying broken. Talk broken. Say broken. Broken speech. Pidgin tongue. Broken word. Before speak. As being said. As spoken. To*
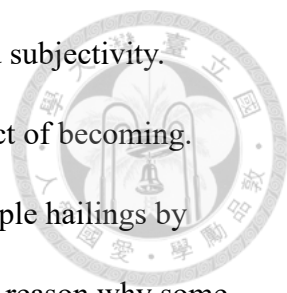
92

be said. To say. Then speak.

Immaterial now, and formless, having surrendered to dissolution limb by limb,

all parts that compose a body. Liquid and marrow once swelled the muscle and

bone, blood made freely the passages through innumerable entries, all give

willingly to exile. (Cha 161)
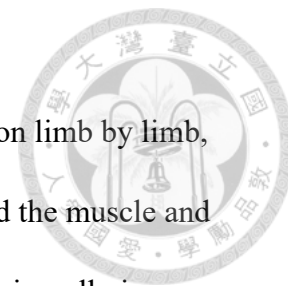
The repetition of the diseuse's broken speech shows the process of her metamorphosis

from a subject in transit to a subject of becoming. The foreignness she introduces with

her repetition cultivates a heterogeneous discourse and becomes a form of translation.

The notion of becoming further inspires Lawrence Venuti's idea of translation:

[N]ever to acquire the majority, never to erect a new standard or to establish a

new canon, but rather to promote cultural innovation as well as the

understanding of cultural difference by proliferating the variables within English:

"the minority is the becoming of everybody." (Venuti 11)

The subject of becoming's heterogeneous discourse does not yield to assimilation and

domestication. It indicates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign. The

subject of becoming is able to approach the incomprehensibility of the mute signs

from the perspective that she herself is a foreigner in her own speech. The subject of

becoming is the one who is heterogeneous to the assumed homogeneity of the nation;

therefore, she does not reside "in the nation or ethnicity"; she resides "in the

immigrant and the refuge" (Sakai, "Translation and the Schematism of Bordering").

93

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is entrapped by her displaced subjectivity.

Although she is a subject in transit, she is unable to become a subject of becoming.

Unlike the diseuse in *Dictée*, Antoinette cannot respond to the multiple hailings by

situating herself in a liminal position constantly. And this is also the reason why some

critics claim that she possesses a complicit position with the hegemonic system. She

becomes the subject of the regime of translation in the end, but not without resistance

of the last leap.

However, Antoinette's last leap could be considered as a longing for "a final

homecoming." And this longing for a return to the beginning might be one of the

causes of her tragedy. Conversely, the longing for "a final homecoming" is not

illustrated in *Dictée*; the narrative begins in medias res. The diseuse has shown us the

recurring pain in her process to speak as a vessel of collective voices of oblivion. Cha

tries to make readers notice the formless and flowing nature of subject formation with

her formulation of a subject of becoming. It is important to note that the subject of

becoming does not form one congealed unity, for a Creole or a hybrid does not

connote a fixed subjectivity in the making. The uncritical celebration of hybridization

or creolization can still be considered as homolingual when they are treated like

closed entities. In light of this, Cha applies a more sophisticated way to investigate the

connectivity during the process of subject formation.

Both *Dictée* and *WSS* try to elaborate the problem of subjectivity through a

mirror image. In Cha's depiction of a catechism with invented responses, she applies

an image of a mirror to reveal the representation of subjectivity:

Q: WHO MADE THEE?

A: *God made me.*

To conspire in God's Tongue.

Q: WHERE IS GOD?

A: *God is everywhere.*

Accomplice in His Texts, the fabrication in His

Own Image, the pleasure the desire of giving

Image to the word in the mind of the confessor.

Q: GOD WHO HAS MADE YOU IN HIS

OWN LIKENESS.

A: *God who has made me in His own likeness.*
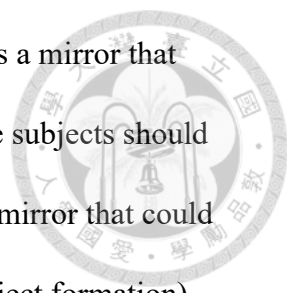
In His Own Image in His Own Resemblance, in

His Own Copy, In His Own Counterfeit Present-

Ment, in His Duplicate, in His Own Reproduc-

Tion, in His Cast, in His Carbon, His Image and

His Mirror. (17)

In the catechism, a subject is made through the image of God, a male who dominates diseuse's self-perception through his patriarchal standards. The subject should be constructed as a double of God, whose image can be understood as the hegemonic order. Similarly, in *WSS*, Annette and Antoinette are also influenced by the standards represented in the looking-glass. The mirror trope suggests an unbalanced relation in the process of subject formation. The females in both works are dictated by what is

95

showing to them as the unquestionable mold for docile subjects. It is a mirror that does not reflect the subjects as they are; it reflects the image that the subjects should be. The side-by-side translations of diseuse work as a metaphorical mirror that could reflect the "errors" produced through the process of translation (subject formation). There is not an identical reflection in the mirror in *Dictée*; the mirror image can be read as a trope of subjectivity.

A mirror, in its common sense, is a polished surface that forms an image through light; thus the reflection and the subject should look the same. As a schema of cofiguration, a subject should be formulated through these norms without fail. The visible errors or discrepancies of the side-by-side translations in *Dictée* unravel the impossibility to return to the original. Therefore, by presenting incongruous images in the mirror, Cha presents an unequivalent schema which visualizes the incongruous images from both sides of a mirror. The "I" in the catechism does not take after the image of God, and it thus illustrates the fluidity of the boundaries between inside and outside.

Luce Irigaray reconceptualizes the relation between the self and the other; she calls for a displacement of the I-other relationship by examining the historically privileged males. The unitary narrative "I" would inevitably go hand in hand with an "other," the female. Therefore, the discrepant mirror images reveal the inaccessibility to the "I" in this I-other relation. The "I" in the catechism would never look exactly the same as God, the male.

In "Erato/Love Poetry," we see a woman who is limited by her status as a woman and a wife:

96

She is married to her husband who is unfaithful to her. No reason is given. No

reason is necessary except that he is a man. It is a given.
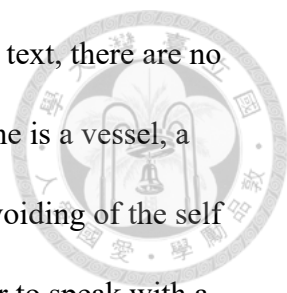
He is the husband, and she us the wife. It is a given. He does as he is the man.

She does as she is the woman, and the wife. Stands the distance between the

husband and wife the distance of heaven and hell…You only hear him taunting

and humiliating her. She kneels beside him, putting on his clothes for him. She

takes her place. It is given. (102)

The woman's subjectivity is constructed in relation to the husband; her place is given

to her. This given place that she takes situates herself in the position of the other. The

situation is similar to Antoinette's reply to Christophine's proposal to leave Rochester:

"He is my husband after all" (Rhys 66). Antoinette's taking up the given place is one

of the reasons why she fails to be the translator even if she was once the subject in

transit. She is entrapped by the image in the mirror and feels uneasy because she

knows the image is not her own. She thus internalizes this colonizing drive and

exhibits complicity with the order of property and subjectivity.

In *Dictée*, the diseuse dismantles the dominant structure by presenting different

otherness with her patterning of mirror images. She refuses to recognize the mirrored

self in the process; she de-subjectifies that imposed subjectivity by refusing to be the

supposed "other." The diseuse becomes the voyeur of her own process of subject

formation. She empties herself and becomes a void that allows other to take her place

97

(Cha 3). It is interesting to note that as a multigenre and multimedia text, there are no photos, letters, or texts that give us the description of the diseuse. She is a vessel, a void, and a membrane waiting to be filled with others' voices. The voiding of the self is the ritual which prepares her in a state of becoming-other, in order to speak with a language lent to her.

Dictée makes its readers question the missing or deviated parts in the process of subject formation through discrepancies between French and English texts and the void that is produced through the gaps during the process of dictation. In the near end of *Dictée*, the diseuse states, "Tenth, a circle within a circle, a series of concentric circles" (175). Through the recitation of prayer and practicing of devotions during a nine-day period of the nine muses (19), the diseuse is able to conclude her ritual in a form of circles of convergence: it is a circuit; a circulation in the form of return to the point of departure. This return is different from Antoinette's return at the end of *WSS*; it is a return to the middle, a beginning in medias res.

The diseuse herself becomes the tenth muse in her ritual, along with a cropped picture of nine girls in the back cover of *Dictée*. She would be the tenth muse that covers the incomplete stories of the others. The idea of the tenth ritual implies a return, but not to the original.

Fig. 3. Back Cover, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée*, 1982.

The diseuse applies the notion of "Bagua" (The Eight Diagrams) on pages 154 and 173 to illustrate the tenth diagram, "Chung Wei/重圍." It means a circle within a circle; however, there is another term for the tenth diagram, "Shi Fang/十方." Shi Fang means the ten directions (north, south, east, west, northeast, southeast, southwest, northwest, above and below). In Buddhism, the ten directions often appear with three existences, meaning past, present, and future existence, throughout space and time.
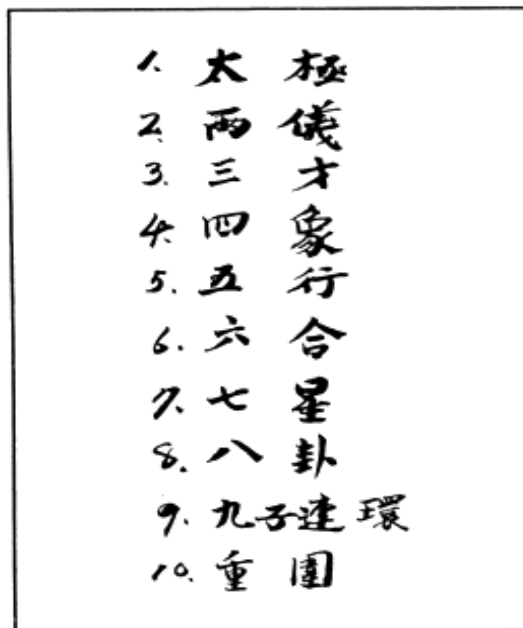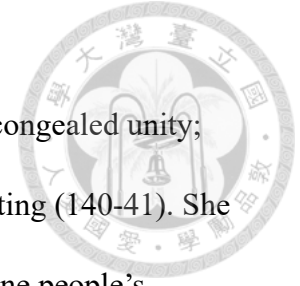

Fig. 4. Bagua, "Terpsichore/Choral Dance" Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée*, 1982.

That is to say, the diseuse's retelling of the stories does not form a congealed unity;

she becomes the time's voyeur and abolishes real time with her writing (140-41). She

would be the tenth muse that wraps up the narratives of the other nine people's

utterance and enunciation. She stains the whiteness (132), breaks its transparency

(132), casts shadows on the whiteness of screen (95), and finally renders voices to

muted colors:

> Muted colors appear from the transparency of the
>
> white and wash the stone's periphery, staining the
>
> hue-less stone.
>
> wall.
>
> For the next phase. Next to last. Before the last. Be-
>
> fore completing. Draw from stains the pigment as it
>
> spills from within, with in each repetition, extract
>
> even darker, the stain, until it falls in a single stroke
>
> of color, crimson, red, as flame caught in air for its
>
> sustenance. (162)

The diseuse transforms the whiteness with muted colors, which are colors toned down

like gray (it is also a mixture of black and white). The "muted" also implies the

unvoiced state during the process. The diseuse also brings her translation practice to

the next level: to paint/write/speak from the stains until they can be formed as a stroke

of color that resembles blood, which indicates the pain of oblivion. In this way, she becomes the tenth muse: the muse of oblivion, the muse of the unspeakable things unspoken. The diseuse has to experience the pain again and again in order to speak. A covered wound is unavailable to consciousness; the absorbing stains further problematize the question of border.

The problematic of bordering takes into account both the presence of border and its inscription. And by conjoining the discussion of translation, filter, and bordering together, a border with various registers might appear as the site for both belonging and non-belonging. *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Dictée* open spaces for discussion of displaced subjectivities. Both works dismantle habitual representations of narrative, textuality, and subjectivity. As the two texts show, the discussion of subjectivity could be further developed into a discussion of various fields. The act of translation in minor literature discloses the problematic of subjectivity, and other related questions (such as borders) could also be approached through a minoritarian perspective. In order to explore other possibilities, I would like to further connect it with a discussion of border, and the issue of trauma that comes from the act of border crossing in Arundhati Roy's two novels.
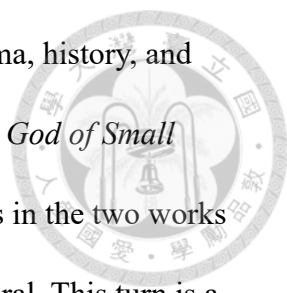
Chapter Two: Minor Literature, Traumas, and Borders
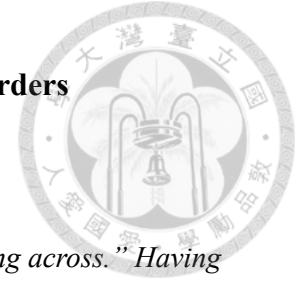
The word "translation" comes, etymologically, from the Latin for "bearing across." Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.

—Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*

Regardless of the normal assumption that "something always gets lost in translation," the British-Indian writer, Salman Rushdie, claims that something can actually be gained during the process. Rushdie claims that the act of translation makes the language become the target as well as the source. The linguistic fluidity in minor literature properly displays this "bearing across" ability. Applying the trope of translation to look into the reenacted fluidity capacity in minor literature might help understand the problem of border and migration. The "translated" condition of the modern subject seems to be a result of border-crossing—geographical as well as linguistic. The ability of "bearing across" is in line with the notion of the minoritized mode of translation, in a form that is closely related to the original but with a heterolingual effect. The minoritized mode of translation could thus be considered as the product of how subjects deal with dislocation. Translation that performs the fluid capacity does not assume "the normalcy of reciprocal and transparent communication in a homogeneous medium"; it bears across the homolingual boundary (Sakai,

Translation and Subjectivity 8). In this chapter, a discussion of trauma, history, and border would be explored through Arundhati Roy's two novels, *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The traumatic events in the two works demans to be heard and told; they undergo a turn from literal to figural. This turn is a conscious return to the origin of trauma in the hope of displaying the positive effect. In order to display the positive effect of sharing the traumatic events, a translation act is indispensable. Roy's translation of traumatic events creates a third space for the people with unspeakable pasts to share their stories and build a care community.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (*TGST*) blurs generic lines and disintegrates literary conventions. The tragic partition of India[47] and its following riots have long been the incessant topic of many Indian writers. There is a literary obsession haunted with images of division, and it is materialized by separating lines. As a fellow Indian writer Rohinton Mistry notes, the obsession and comments that Indian writers keep "repeating the same catalogue of horrors" in their works (151). For these writers, there is a continual urge to speak, to write, and to remember. Mistry further explains: "What choice was there, except to speak about it again and again, and yet again?" (151). Many contemporary Indian writers follow the postindependence Indian literary tradition, focusing on the Partition of 1947, and harp on constructing a memory of what can not be gorgotten.

Although Arundhati Roy situates her story in Kerala, a southern state of India,

---

[47] The "Partition" is the division of British India into the two states of Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan in 1947. Partition triggered riots, mass casualties, and a colossal wave of migration. People moved to what they thought to be safe places: Muslims heading to Pakistan, and Hindus and Sikhs towards India. Many people thus became displaced during the migration. The Partition separates the country by religion; however, they not only attach to their religious identity but also attach to the territory. For example, not all Muslims migrated to Pakistan; they remained the largest minority group in independent India. The trauma caused by the partition became the inspiration for many in India and Pakistan to produce literary and cinematic works of this event.

far from the Partition line, her work is still filled with the rhetoric of separation, where borders and boundaries are policed and preserved.
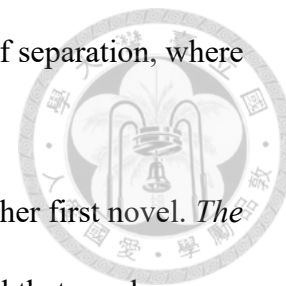
Roy seems to share this obsession of the horror of Partition in her first novel. *The God of Small Things*, her 1997 Man Booker Prize-winner, is a novel that speaks critically to and against various hegemonic discourses such as gender, class, and border. *TGST* sets its background in Kerala in 1969 and 1993; it explores Indian history and caste politics within the space of a family.
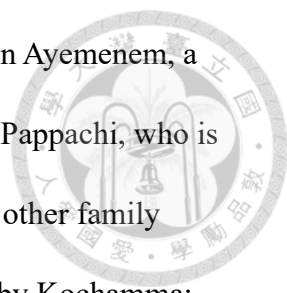
Although some critics criticize *TGST*[48] for misrepresenting Kerala and India in a bad light, it is still a narrative that illustrates India's anxiety to struggle against its colonial past and postcolonial identity. *TGST* does not represent an impoverished India according to a westernized imaginary of the slum reproduced in films and literature. Roy's depiction of India is different from the *Slumdog Millionaire*-like representations of India as the third world; her depiction of the underrepresented side of Kerala should not be viewed as a voyeuristic source for western slum tourism. Kerala in Roy's narrative is not equally accessible to all, especially for those who blame her for not representing India in a positive light. The narrative perspective in *TGST* is unbalanced and heterogeneous. The local discourse of Kerala is converged on a broader international context; the regulation of caste that manages Indian social relations is revealed as complicit with class inequality in the global economy.

---

[48] The Marxist Chief Minister of Kerala, E. K. Nayamar, said that Roy provided a "factually incorrect" depiction of the social condition in Kerala of the 1970s. R. S. Sharma also stated that Roy had failed to write a national allegory. Sharada Iyer too remarked that it is a story about an Indian village with an urban, westernized, and modern sensibility. Elleke Boehmer argued that the story is abstracted from its local context, commoditized for the western readership. See Sharma, "*The God of Small Things*: Booker out of/and Booker?" *The Fictional World of Arundhati Roy*. Ed. R. S. Pathak. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2001. 29-38. ; Iyer, "Ayemenem: Arundhati Roy's Literary Stage." *The Fictional World of Arundhati Roy*. Ed. R. S. Pathak. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2001. 137-142; and Boehmer, "East is East and South is South: The Cases of Sarojini Naidu and Arundhati Roy." *Women: a Cultural Review*. 11 (2000): 61-70. Print.
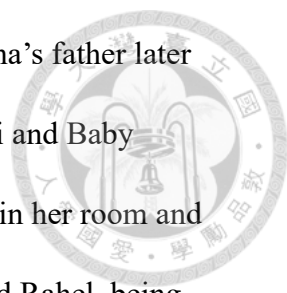
TGST tells the story of an upper caste Syrian Christian family in Ayemenem, a village in the Kottayam district of Kerala. The head of the family is Pappachi, who is an Imperial Entomologist living in Ayemenem after retirement. The other family members are: Pappachi's wife, Mammachi; his unmarried sister, Baby Kochamma; his Oxford-educated son, Chacko; his divorced daughter, Ammu; Ammu's dizygotic twins—Estha and Rahel; their cook, Kochu Maria; and Velutha, an untouchable who works for the family. The story is mainly composed of two parts: Rahel and Estha at the age of seven in 1969 and their reunion when they are thirty-one in 1993. At the beginning of the story, readers know that Rahel has returned to Ayemenem owing to the "re-return" of Estha in 1993.

Most of the story is narrated from the perspective of the seven-year-old twins. *TGST* begins with Ammu's return to Ayemenem after her unsuccessful marriage to a Hindu man. Chacko also returns to Ayemenem and takes over the family's pickle factory, *Paradise Pickles & Preserves*, after Pappachi's death and his divorce with his British wife, Margaret. One of the major events is that the family is expecting the arrival of Margaret and Sophie Mol, Chacko's daughter. Chacko invites them to spend Christmas after Joe's death (Margaret's second husband). While Sophie Mol becomes the focus of the family, Rahel and Estha stroll around on the riverbank and find a deserted boat. Velutha helps the twins fix the boat, and then the twins often cross the river in that boat to visit the History House, an abandoned house on the other side of the river.

Velutha is an untouchable and a communist, whom Ammu and Chacko have known since they were young. Ammu is drawn to Velutha during the stay of Sophie

Mol and Margaret; they begin to meet up secretly at the river. Velutha's father later discovers their relationship, and he reports their affair to Mammachi and Baby Kochamma. In consequence of the illicit affair, Ammu is locked up in her room and blames the twins for being the reason for her confinement. Estha and Rahel, being hurt by their mother, decide to run away and live in the History House. When the twins are about to use the boat to get to the other side of the river, Sophie Mol discovers their plan and asks to tag along. While the three kids are crossing the river, the boat tips over because of the heavy rain; the twins reach the shore safely while the rapids carry Sophie Mol away. Searching in vain for Sophie Mol, the twins later go to the History House and fall asleep on its veranda.

Meanwhile, Velutha is also in the History House, but they do not notice the presence of each other. He is torn and exhausted because he is humiliated by Mammachi for confronting him with his affair with Ammu. The missing of the children is discovered in the following morning; the adults then know that Sophie Mol is found dead by the river. Baby Kochamma goes to the police and accuses Velutha of attempting to assault Ammu sexually and abducting the children. When the police arrive at the History House and find Velutha sleeping on the veranda, they almost beat him to death while the twins are there the whole time. Later on, Estha is forced to confirm Baby Kochamma's assertion about Velutha; Velutha dies in jail the following night.

After Sophie Mol's funeral, Estha is sent to Calcutta to live with his father and Ammu is asked to stay away from the Ayemenem House and lives alone; she dies a few years later in a hotel room. The story ends with a narrative that goes back to the

106

time when Ammu and Velutha spend nights together—before the tragedy happens.

Translating the Small Things

The God of Small Things deals with the problem of transgressions; it adopts a

minor-narrative and minoritarian perspective following the three features of

Deleuzian/Guattarian minor literature. *TGST* features the deterritorialization of major

language, connects the individual to a political immediacy, and presents a collective

assemblage of enunciation. Roy applies the Malayalam and Hindi, the use of

capitalization, and kids-talk to deterritorialize the major language in *TGST*.

Malayalam is the regional language of Kerala, and it appears for the first time when

Ammu goes to the police station to redress the false accusation against Velutha. When

Ammu asks to see Velutha, the Inspector tells her that: "…the police knew all they

needed to know and that the Kottayam Police didn't take statements from *Veshyas*[49]

or their illegitimate children" (Roy 9). There are several Malayalam and Hindi words

in the book, such as *chhi-chhi poach* for shit-wiper, *mundu* for dhoti, *onner, runder,*

mooner for one, two, three, etc. There are also some Malayalam folk songs in the

book; for example, Ammu listens to a song from a film about two lovers making a

suicide pact when the girl is forced to marry a fisherman:

　　Pandoru mukkuvan muthinu poyi,

　　(Once a fisherman went to sea,)

　　Padinjaran kattathu mungi poyi,

　　(The west wind blew and swallowed his boat,)

---

[49] It means "prostitute."

> *Arayathi pennu pizhachu poyi,*
>
> (His wife on the shore went astray,)
>
> *Kadakamma avaney kondu poyi.*
>
> (So Mother Ocean rose and took him away.) (209)

Malayalam also appears when Velutha leaves Mammachi's house and goes to Comrade Pillai's place:

> *Koo-koo kokum theevandi*
>
> *Kooki paadum theevandi*
>
> *Papakal odum theevandi*
>
> *Thalannu nilkum theevandi* (269)

It is a poem about a train, and it is Velutha's first lesson at school.

Malayalam does not solely appear when describing traditional, old, and lower-class characters in *TGST*. Roy employs Malayalam to minoritize English; she shows how the gathering of different ideas can be traced in deterritorialized English. Her use of Malayalam gives us the Malayalam-tinged English that is appropriate for the minor uses in Kerala; English thus becomes cut off from the masses. Additionally, Roy deterritorializes English through unusual collocations: "noisy television silence," "an unmixable mix," and "beautiful ugly toads"; the juxtaposition of implausible thoughts: "a Joe-shaped Hole in the Universe"; and neologisms: "*nataS ni rieht seye*," "*Whatisit? Whathappened*?" (28, 22, 187, 112, 58, 8). Roy also provides the child's

108

view of language with re-bracketed words like "Prer *NUN* sea ayshum" and "Bar

Nowl."

These unusual linguistic coinages become the refrains running throughout the

narrative, and these indicate the language in *TGST* is "affected with a high coefficient

of deterritorialization" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 16).

TGST is a text with an intention to hint at politics with Roy's deterritorialized

language. The depiction of the Ipe family unravels the reciprocal power dynamics of

social politics. The love relationship between Ammu and Velutha unsettles social

politics; it disrupts social politics with inter-caste and cross-religious mixing. The Ipe

family deals with the transgression by transforming violence into political codes.

Mammachi knows Ammu's affair with Velutha from Vellya Paapen, Velutha's father.

Baby Kochamma goes to the police and makes a false charge about rape and

abduction with Estha and Rahel's words. Velutha also goes to Pillai after being spit on

by Mammachi. However, Pillai tells him that: "It is not in the Party's interests to take

up such matters. Individual's interest is subordinate to the organization's interest.

Violating Party Discipline means violating Party Unity" (Roy 271).

Pillai's response indicates that even if Velutha is a member of the Communist

party, he is still oppressed by the caste-ridden structure in Kerala. By the same token,

Ammu's Syrian Christian family is also governed by the politics of the ancient Hindu

caste system. Roy illustrates the complex network of politics through her depiction of

a caste-bound culture. Moreover, politics of class and gender also intertwine with

each other within the narrative. Chacko separates the twins from Ammu and banishes

her from Ayemenem because her lack of status. These political codes are connected to

the characters immediately.

 TGST provides a political way of looking at the world, and it also carries a collective and revolutionary enunciation. The collective enunciation explores the possibility of accountability; it is the kind of accountability for small and minoritarian things. Roy uses subject-less sentences, and she also breaks down the conventional grammatical order and syntax to create an indeterminate space for collective enunciation. When the policemen cross the river to the History House to find the kids, they are described as:

> There were six of them. Servants of the state.
>
> > **P**oliteness.
> >
> > **O**bedience.
> >
> > **L**oyalty.
> >
> > **I**ntelligence.
> >
> > **C**ourtesy.
> >
> > **E**fficiency.
>
> The Kottayam Police. A cartoonplatoon. New-Age princes in funny pointed helmets. Cardboard lined with cotton. Hairoil stained. Their shabby khaki crowns. (288)

The image of the Kottayam Police is first described as the representative of the state, and it is further ridiculed as "a cartoonplatoon." The two perspectives about the police are constituted through the unidentified speaking subject(s). The transitional position

of the speaker allows Roy to apply her own dialect with the point of underdevelopment.

The discursive condition dismantles the original fixed linguistic unity with new political thinking through appropriation, translation, and rehistoricization. The clipped sentences indicate the transitional and temporary position of a speaker. This position is highlighted when readers are informed that when studying in college, Rahel never returns to Ayemenem: "[n]ot when Mammachi died. Not when Chacko emigrated to Canada" (19). The fragmented sentences also appear when Velutha and Ammu have sex:

> The cost of living climbed to unaffordable heights; though later Baby
>
> Kochamma would say it was a Small Price to Pay.
>
> Was it?
>
> Two lives. Two children's childhoods.
>
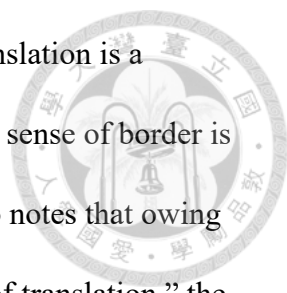> And a history lesson for future offenders. (318)

These sentences take on a collective value; it is not an enunciation that would belong to an individual. It is an address about the concern of the people: "*There isn't a subject; there are only collective assemblages of enunciation*" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 18). The collective multiplicity produces something other than a literature of masters, and it allows the presence of another consciousness and another sensibility. Roy's subject-less and clipped sentences do not refer back to "an enunciating subject who would be its cause, no more than to a subject of the statement (*sujet d'enonce*)

111

who would be its effect" (18).

To work over its complex content and material properly, *TGST* sets up a minor practice of major language with a new intensity. It is a collective machine of expression which is in a relation of multiple deterritorializations with language. Thus, *TGST* could be viewed from the minoritized aspect of translation; it is a polyphonic linguistic practice in the hope of managing the scars of history. These scars could not be located in a literature of masters; they could be better located in minor literature. "What can be said in one language cannot be said in another, and the totality of what can and can't be said varies necessarily with each language and with the connections between these languages" (24). Therefore, it is crucial to locate a liminal space for the acts of transgressions could take place. These transgressions push across the boundary. Roy informs us about the love laws, "the laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much" (31). However, the characters break the love laws in ways that help recognize different borders, and further problematize the cofiguration of the boundary.

Crossing Borders: Transgressions in *TGST*

Borders could be considered as a way to perpetuate and reinforce differences that define the inclusion and exclusion of people. The delimitation of a border strengthens the distinction between "us" and "them." Gloria Anzaldúa describes a border as "a dividing line" that is imagined and drawn out to "define places that are safe and unsafe" (*Borderlands* 25). Notably, the act of bordering could be understood as a translational schema. As Naoki Sakai argues, the comparison of two languages is a process of translation (in this case, the translation proper) that allows the distinction to

112

happen. The distinction of borders is similar to this conception. Translation is a

movement of creating a border: under the schema of translation, the sense of border is

co-terminous with the emergence of modern nationalism. Sakai also notes that owing

to the fact that people "displace translation with the representation of translation," the

displacement "enables the representation of ethnic or national subjects" by erasing the

process of translation and the presence of "the translator who is always in-between"

(Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 15). When the representation of translation

occurs, a border between one language and another is treated as a gap that

distinguishes one group of people from another and separates one language from

another as well. The representation of translation is a homolingual model that focuses

on its communication function; therefore, the idea of border works as a powerful

trope which determines "a particular incident of social and political transaction as

translation" (Sakai and Mezzadra 11).

Territorial boundaries are naturalized through the representation of translation in

the course of maintaining the geopolitical division of the modern world. Translation

serves as a boundary that separates the space; it is a question of law or right to map

out the sovereignty and ownership. In contrast to that, translation activity in minor

literature helps to locate the borderlands where transgressions take place and

dismantle the law and right of sovereignty and ownership. Etymologically, to

transgress means "to step across;" therefore, the transgressing behaviors in *TGST* bear

across the borders and problematize the schema of bordering.

The God of Small Things depicts a society governed by various types of borders:

the caste-bound border, the gendered border, the emotional border, etc. Roy highlights

the paradoxical conception of borders when the transgressions happen in the in-between space(s) between borders. She locates a borderland as a transitional space which allows the transgressions to take place. The transgressions produce a movement that is different from the unidirectional one of the regime of translation, thus the schema fails to construct a relation of equivalence. A borderland is a space between two borders that a blending of two sides makes the third space. As Gloria Anzaldúa notes in her book, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*, borderlands are "physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy" (Anzaldúa "Preface").

A borderland is a place where contradictions meet; it is the extension of the borderline which is invisible to some people. It is the place where those who do not inhabit the center dwell. Anzaldúa's idea of borderland holds similar framework with Sakai's trope of "translation as a filter." They both accentuate the coexistence of a third space within two borders/linguistic entities: a borderland. In *TGST*, Roy tells a story of transgression by disregarding the established rules linguistically, socially, and psychologically.

Crossing the Linguistic Border

At the beginning of *TGST*, Roy depicts her setting with blurring boundaries: "Boundaries blur as tapioca fences take root and bloom. Brick walls turn mossgreen. Pepper vines snake up electric poles. Wild creepers burst through laterite banks and spill across the flooded roads" (1). The scene foreshadows the theme of transgression

114

in the story. Moreover, the twins are described as "a rare breed of Siamese twins, physically separate, but with joint identities" (5). The twins' joint identities seem to tease Baby Kochamma's concept of "Edge, Borders, Boundaries, Brink and Limits." The enforcing divisions are compared to "a team of trolls" and "short creatures" tring to patrol "the Blurry End" (5).

The capital letters in the text break the layout and disrupt the narrative. Words are repeatedly written with capitals to stress their meanings in *TGST*. The common words hold different meanings for the twins because they capitalize them regularly. Readers could sense how the small things or minor ideas are "capitalized" in the twins' mind on the one hand (the Play, the Terror, re-Returned, etc.), and how their capitalization connotes negative meanings to the accepted rules and notions on the other (Border, Man's Needs, Love Laws, etc.). Roy's capitalization allows her readers to see how the twins experience the critical moments in their life.

Similar to the capitalization of proper nouns, the capitalization in *TGST* also designates particular moments in the plot. It is also the way to emphasize the fixed laws governed by the politics of caste even if the twins didn't realize the laws at that moment. On a linguistic level, Roy ridicules the repressive forces of the rules of standard English. When describing how the twins should call Chacko, Roy writes as follows:

Rahel and Estha couldn't call him Chachen because when they did, he called them Chetan and Cheduthi. If they called him Ammaven, he called them Appoi

and Ammai.[50] It they called him Uncle, he called them Aunty, which was

embarrassing in Public. So they call him Chacko. (37)

Chacko's reply might suggest that as half Hindu and children of a divorced woman,

there is no place for the twins to call him uncle or whatsoever. This indeterminate

state shows how the twins experience the ideas of common terms differently than

others on a day-to-day basis. This state grants them the privilege of breaking up the

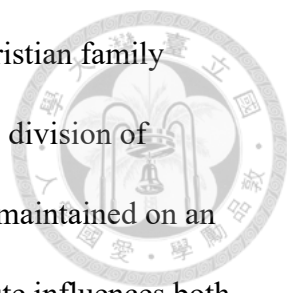linguistic boundaries by playing with words.

Estha and Rahel cannot make sense of word boundaries; they merge words as

they merge their understanding of the world. Estha and Rahel use word merging to

eliminate the space between words: "Orangedrink Lemondrink Man,"

"Finethankyou," "stationsound," "CocaColaFantaicecreamrosemilk" (98, 138, 284).

The merging shows how the words are spoken to them, and they spell them out

phonetically. By smashing words together, Roy makes these small things seem

strange and brings our attention to them. Roy shows how the twins break down the

boundaries of words to elaborate their thinking process. And the linguistic

border-crossing also creates a borderland for the transgressions to happen. For

instance, Velutha calls Ammu Ammukutty, "Little Ammu," although he is younger

than her (167). The linguistic transgression also marks the beginning of a far more

serious transgression which is about to happen between Ammu and Velutha.

Crossing the Social Border

The society in *TGST* is divided by a caste-based border distinguishing people as

---

[50] These are Malayalam terms: chachen (father), chetan (older brother), cheduthi (older brother's wife),
ammayen (uncle), appoi (mother's brother), and ammai (mother's brother's wife).

116

touchables and untouchables. The Ipe family is a "caste" Syrian Christian family despite the fact that the concept of caste comes from Hinduism. The division of touchables and untouchables becomes internal and is practiced and maintained on an everyday basis for ages. Being an internal border, the concept of caste influences both sides and evaluates touchables as superior over untouchables. Unlike political and geographical borders where the rules of one side do not stretch to the other, the politics of caste affect people of both communities in general.

Nonetheless, there are still some transgressions take place around the Ayemenem House. Although Pappachi "would not allow Paravans into the house," Mammachi has Velutha take care of "the plumbing and all the gadgets in the house" (Roy 72). He is also the carpenter of Mammachi's factory despite other touchable workers' disapproval. She pays Velutha less than a touchable carpenter but "more than she would [pay] a Paravan" (74). Velutha is allowed in the space of touchables because his labor is considered as a kind of capital or approved currency that could be circulated on the touchable market.
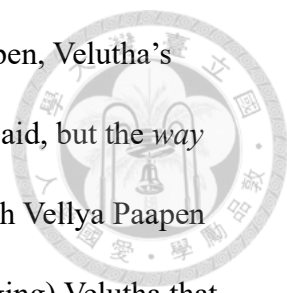
Thus, the "impenetrable Touchable logic" is cast aside for the sake of touchables' convenience (72). The flexibility of the touchable's space exposes that the caste-based border is actually a site of politics. Roy describes a group of untouchables—Velutha's grandfather included—who convert to Christian to "escape the scourge of Untouchability" (71). However, they are made to have "separate churches, with separate services, and separate priests" (71). Their conversion does not help them get rid of the caste system of Hinduism: "After Independence they found they were not entitled to any government benefits like job reservations or bank loans at low interest

117

rates, because officially, on paper, they were Christians, and therefore casteless" (71).

This kind of border-crossing discloses its directionality: it is unidirectional because it takes place on a homogeneous plane. Touchables can stretch the borders and overlap the borders of untouchables. In other words, the "impenetrable Touchable logic" indicates that untouchables can only access touchables' space depending on the whims of touchables; it cannot happen in reverse. Mammachi believes that this is "a big step for a Paravan" when Velutha is allowed "on the factory premises" and "to touch thing that Touchables touched" (74). The logic of this transgression could be comparable to Sakai's concept of homolingual address which people belong to different languages "can still address themselves homolingually" because they belong to the same schema of cofiguration, under one regime (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 4).

Homolingual address presupposes "commonness built around the assumed assurance of immediate and reciprocal apprehension in conversation" (4). The "we" in the address is treated as a homogeneous ensemble; there is no deterritorialization of the cogito. Mammachi's "impenetrable Touchable logic" remains intact because she does not recognize the "we" (she and Velutha) in the address as "a nonaggregate community" and expects for immediate apprehension and uniform response (4).

Even so, an untouchable like Velutha can still manage to cross the border since Mammachi's allowing him into the house and on factory premises reveals the paradox of caste border. Velutha first appears in the narrative when Rahel sees him in a communist march with a red flag (68). The purpose of this march is to demand that "[u]ntouchables no longer be addressed by their caste names" (67). Although Roy

118

gives small details about Velutha's acts of disobedience, Vellya Paapen, Velutha's

father, is concerned about Velutha's insolence: "It was not *what* he said, but the *way*

he said it. Not *what* he did, but the *way* he did it" (Roy 73). Although Vellya Paapen

tries to reinstate the caste border by warning (through a way of nagging) Velutha that

he has qualities that are only acceptable in touchables. For example, Velutha would

offer suggestions "without being asked," and he would also disregard suggestions

"without appearing to rebel" (73). Although rarely gets the chance to speak on a

personal level, Roy depicts Velutha as a transgressor with his behavior. What is more,

Roy ridicules the schema of bordering[51] through revealing how people perceive

transgression with double standards in *TGST*.

There are various double standards in terms of transgression in *TGST*. Both

Ammu and Chacko marry people outside the community: Ammu marries a Hindu

man and Chacko an English woman. The household welcomes Chacko after his

divorce, while Ammu has no claim to the property. Chacko names the factory

Paradise Pickles & Preserves and refers to the products as "*my* Factory, *my*

pineapples, *my* pickles" (56). Not only does Ammu have no claim to the property, but

she is also treated as property herself. Ammu's husband, Baba, agrees that his

manager could sleep with Ammu so that he can keep his job. Ammu becomes a

property that could be passed on to other people without her consent. In a passage,

Chacko informs the twins that Ammu has no "Locusts Stand I"[52] and Baby

Kochamma too believes that a divorced daughter has no position "anywhere at all"

---

[51] Bordering means a process of inscribing a border.
[52] The twins mistake the Latin Legal term locus standi as Locusts Stand I. Locus standi means the right to bring a legal action to court. The twins understand the meaning even if they misspell the term as they hear it. They know that their mother has no legal standing because she is "man-less."

(56, 45). For Baby Kochamma, Ammu's marriage (and her later divorce) transgresses borders on three levels: a divorced daughter, a divorced daughter "from a *love* marriage," and a divorced daughter from "a [*sic*] *intercommunity love* marriage" (45).

Intermarriages are transgressions that are unacceptable in the household of Ayemenem; however, the double standards of Mammachi and Baby Kochamma reveal the schema of bordering as arbitrary and reflexive. The children are also aware of this double standard in relation to other kids. Their mixed identity and Sophie Mol's are treated differently: Estha and Rahel are "Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry" while Sophie Mol is considered as a tennis trophy that Chacko has won (44,165). To the twins, Sophie Mol is treated as the ideal white child in *The Sound of Music*. Her arrival in Ayemenem is welcomed with a tall cake, Mammachi's violin playing, and "a silent blue-apron army" of the factory (164). Sophie Mol is considered as English comparing with the "Half-Hindu" twins. As children of intermarriage, Sophie Mol is "a little angel" while the twins are "littledemons" (170). The opposition is made clear in the welcome party of Sophie Mol:

Littleangels were beach-colored and wore bell-bottoms.

Littledemons were mudbrown in Airport-Fairy frocks with fore-

head bumps that might turn into horns. With Fountains in Love-in-

Tokyos. And backwards-reading habits. (170)

Sophie Mol's appearance is close to the family's Anglophile expectations even if her

hair is just "N…Nalmost blond" and her cheeks are "Nnnn…almost rosy" (166). She is a valuable asset to the family that Mammachi has to read her "like a check" and "check her like a banknote," like a strong currency (166).
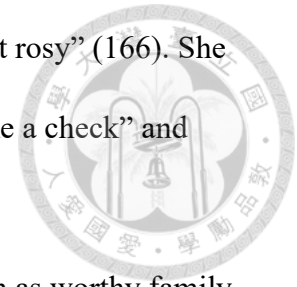
It is evident that Ammu, Estha, and Rahel do not get to be seen as worthy family members by the others. Estha and Rahel imagine themselves as the reverse of the ideal, English, white child. In fact, the twins idealize the image of the white child long before Sophie Mol's arrival. The von Trapp children in *The Sound of Music* represent the legitimate image of children that contests the twins' self-image. The von Trapp children are "clean white children" who are loved anyway (100). For the twins, Sophie Mol later takes up the imaginary position held by the von Trapp children. Sophie Mol represents the things which the twins are not, her presence intensifies what is lacking for them to be the legitimate children. Estha has questions referring to the worth and lovability of Rahel and him:

> Baron von Trapp had some questions of his own.
>
> (a) *Are they clean white children?*
>
>   No. (*But Sophie Mol is.*)
>
> (b) *Do they blow spit bubbles?*
>
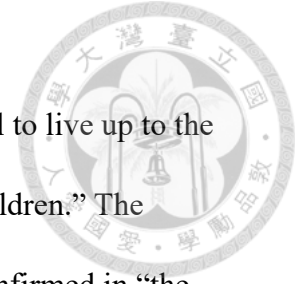>   Yes. (*But Sophie Mol doesn't.*)
>
> (c) *Do they shiver their legs? Like clerks?*
>
>   Yes. (*But Sophie Mol doesn't.*)
>
> (d) *Have they, either or both, even held strangers' soo-soos?*
>
>   N…Nyes. (*But Sophie Mol hasn't.*) (Roy 101)

121

In Estha's imagined response of Baron von Trapp, he and Rahel fail to live up to the

position of the loved children because they are not "clean white children." The

cinematic lovability of the white child is further reproduced and confirmed in "the

Play," *Welcome Home, Our Sophie Mol* (156).

Roy stages the arrival of Sophie Mol as "the Play," and she makes it clear that

the twins have an only small part in it (164). Rahel is eager to tell Mammachi what

happened when they pick up Sophie Mol and Margaret Kochamma from the airport;

however, she soon realizes that she is in "a Play" staged for Sophie Mol. As a result,

she interacts with Velutha "offstage" and refuses to get back to the Play. She tells

Velutha: "*We're* not here, are we? We're not even Playing" (173). They are situated

"on the periphery of the Play," only on stage when called upon (174). The opposition

between Estha and Rahel's marginality and Sophie Mol's centrality exemplifies how

the schema of bordering does not inscribe a border based on a solid difference; it is

more like a feeling or a whim depending on the politics of caste.

Similarly, there is a double standard regarding Chacko's and Ammu's sexualities.

Mammachi is aware that Chacko takes advantage of the women in the factory;

however, she rationalizes Chacko's transgression as "a Man's Needs" (160). The

notion of Man's Needs further gains "implicit sanction in the Ayemenem House"

(160). Chacko's "needs" take place in a liminal space where Mammachi finds them

acceptable. She has "a separate entrance built for Chacko's room" to avoid the objects

of his "Needs" going "traipsing *through* the house" (160-61). She even slips these

women money so she could place her son's sexual transgressions as sexual

transactions.

On the other hand, Ammu's love affair with Velutha breaks the tacit rules that remain unchallenged; the sexual relationship between a touchable woman and an untouchable man makes "the unthinkable thinkable" (242). Mammachi thinks of Ammu's transgression as something "defile[s] generation of breeding" and " [brings] the family to its knees" (244). While Mammachi takes little heed of Chacko's "Man's Needs," she pictures Ammu's affair "in vivid details:"

> a Paravan's coarse black hand on her daughter's breast. His mouth on hers. His black hips jerking between her parted legs. The sound of their breathing. His particular Paravan smell. *Like animals*, Mammachi thought and nearly vomited. *Like a dog with a bitch on heat*. Her tolerance of "Man's Needs," as far as her son was concerned, became the fuel for her unmanageable fury at her daughter. (244)

While Mammachi tolerates Chacko's "Man's Needs," Ammu's sexual relation is animalized. She animalizes Ammu and Velutha's intercourse as a relation between a dog and a bitch. She thinks that they have the animal's needs rather than human's.

This double standard also uncovers the fear of contamination and miscegenation. Roy further reveals the operation of these "complex adjustments" in which the transgressions happen (64). Mammachi finds Chacko's "Man's Needs" acceptable because she adjusts the transgression to a homogeneous cognition. She thinks that she has achieved an agreement with the women by slipping them money. Therefore, it is
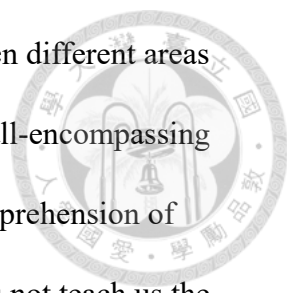
123

not an abominable transgression that crosses the border between touchables and untouchables. Like homolingual address, the transgression is transferred to a homogeneous mode so the regime could be embraced by a putatively unitary community. The women in the factory are left at the mercy of the traditional values of the caste-ridden community in *TGST*.

Nevertheless, Mammachi fails to envisage Ammu and Velutha's relation justly since their sexual transgression cannot be transferred to a homogenous place where she feels privileged to conceptualize the world. As a divorced daughter, Ammu is supposed to be man-less and sex-less. Baby Kochamma resents Ammu for not accepting the fate of "the wretched Man-less woman" (45). Taking Sakai's heterolingual mode of translation as a trope, we could see how Ammu and Velutha's relation breaks the caste border and further locates a place where the regime favoring the touchables' actions no longer holds true. Roy creates a borderland so the unthinkable could be thinkable not only for the transgressors but also for people who are governed by the regime.

If, as Sakai suggests, there is a filter between two borders in the homolingual mode of translation, to inscribe a border means to distinguish heterogeneous areas of a surface, to demarcate "between interior and exterior on the land," and to map out the "sovereignty and ownership" (Sakai, "Translation and the Schematism of Bordering").[53] The process of inscribing a border exposes the pith and core of a

---

[53] See "Translation and the Schematism of Bordering." Paper for the Conference *Gesellschaft Ubersetzen: Ein Komentatorenkonferenz.* University of Konstanz: October 2009. http://www.translating-society.de/conference/papers/2/.

regime; it shows the governing power of the communication between different areas of sovereignty. The regime of translation is expected to possess an all-encompassing power to transform the rules of the source language. And yet, the apprehension of translation through communication "conveys content to us, but does not teach us the grammar of a different language" (Sakai). This model excludes particular qualities (for example, grammatical rules) of the source text from things that can pass through the filter.

Therefore, the materiality of these rules is thought to be untranslatable and is further neglected. Under this frame, transmitting a text into another language is "to erase the particular characteristics of the original language; the filter as translation manifests itself through the erasure of the grammatical traits of a particular language" (Sakai). A filter in the homolingual mode of translation is regarded as a porous obstructing entity that classifies the permeable from the impermeable. And if we look at the caste system from this aspect, we could find Mammachi's double standard understandable. For her, Chacko's transgression is excusable and permeable while Ammu's is unforgivable and impermeable. Sakai's trope of "translation as a filter" exhibits a new force regarding Mammachi's double standard about the sexualities of Chacko and Ammu. She could tolerate Chacko's "Man's needs" because she is able to neglect the particular features of the women in the factory by giving them money and treating them as prostitutes. She even prepares herself for her imagined relation between Chacko and Margaret Kochamma by stripping off her subjectivity and transforms her as a prostitute like the women in the factory.

Roy exploits this loophole by smuggling the erased particular characteristics (for

example, Velutha's untouchable identity) back into the regime. She transmits the untranslatable into the homolingual regime through introducing the transgressions that happen on the borderland. The transmission could be perceived as a heterolingual address that introduces the incomprehensibility into the representation of translation.

Border-crossing is an action which makes the sovereignty on one side become invalid on the other. In the narrative, Ammu and Velutha become attracted to each other when Ammu sees him playing with Rahel "on the periphery of the Play" (174). Additionally, their love scene takes place on the borderland. Roy displays this borderland in the last chapter, "The Cost of Living" (313-321). On the night Sophie Mol arrives, Ammu goes to the Meenachal River to meet Velutha. When she finds out that Velutha isn't there, she buries her head in her arms, "feeling foolish for having been so sure. So *certain*." Velutha also swims upstream in the hope of seeing Ammu while "feeling foolish for having been so sure. So *certain*" (315). The transgression which happens in the river crosses the border topographically as well as metaphorically. The river is a vague and undetermined place where they could "exclude the outside world" (318). It is a place where the two worlds of touchables and untouchables merge without being barred by the barring filter.

Roy connects the image of the river to their intercourse: Ammu "smelled the river on him" and "tasted him, salty in her mouth" while Velutha "drank long and deep from the bowl of her" and "sailed on her water" that is "as wide and deep as a river in spate" (317, 318, 319). Through connecting the two with the image of the river, Roy shows how they share a third space which is "unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries" (Anzaldúa,

126

"(Un)natural Bridges" 1). Furthermore, the sex scene blends Ammu's touchability and

Velutha's untouchability together:

> She could feel him moving deeper and deeper into her. Frantic. Frenzied. Asking
>
> to be let in further. Further. Stopped only by the shape of her. The shape of him.
>
> And when he was refused, when he had touched the deepest of her, with a
>
> sobbing, shuddering sigh, he drowned.[54] (318)

Ammu "lived," "on that boat-shaped piece of earth." Her existence relies on Velutha's

untouchable touch; she "could feel herself through him" even if this co-existence

would lead to the drowning at the cost of living. For Ammu and Velutha, a borderland

is also a dangerous crossroad where they could lose everything they have. Although

the transgression disrupts the regime of the caste system, Ammu and Velutha still lose

their lives in the end.

It is critical to note how Mammachi knows of the things that happen on the

borderland: she knows about it because Vellya Paapen sees the affair on the other side

of the river and comes to inform her. Vellya Paapen is affected by the politics of caste

so deeply that he ironically betrays his son. On the one hand, the revealing of Ammu

and Velutha's affair indicates that the regime could still regain its power through

excluding the transgression and thus reinstate its borderline. On the other, even if they

are more likely to have borderland experiences, not all minority and subaltern people

---

[54] Roy's depiction of Velutha's orgasm as drowning is, intentionally, foreshadows the drowning of
Sophie Mol.

possess the power to create and maintain it.[55] The production of a borderland is a

deterritorializing and minoritizing process. On a borderland, touchability and

untouchability are not variables or relative set of values; the filter between the two

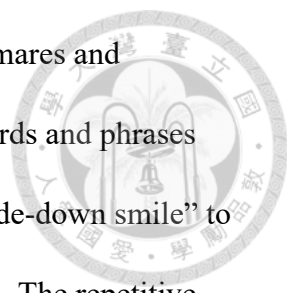sides is dematerialized by transgressions.
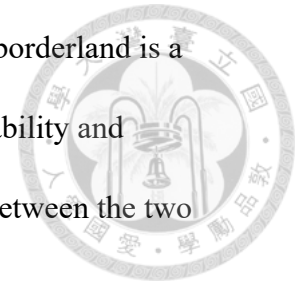
As Ammu and Velutha's transgression is patrolled by the regime of the caste

system, it becomes a trauma-inducing event for Estha and Rahel. In response to the

needs of fleeing away from "the Terror," the twins manage to deal with trauma in

forms of "Quietness and Emptiness" (38, 224). Estha goes silent after the tragedy of

Velutha; his silence is triggered by his inner conflict of answering Inspector Mathew's

question about the abduction and attempted rape with a "Yes" (32, 303). His silence is

like an "uneasy octopus that lived inside him and squirted its inky tranquilizer on his

past" (13). Rahel, like Ammu, "weighed the odds" and drifts into an intercommunity

marriage with an American named Larry McCaslin and moves to Boston (39). Rahel

shows the other side of Estha's quietness; her emptiness is shown through "a hollow"

in her eyes (20).

The twins' quietness and emptiness are the ways they cope with the trauma

induced by the event they witness in the History House. On the night of Velutha's

beating, their "[c]hildhood tiptoed out," and they are haunted by the trauma ever since

(303). As the Greek word for wound, trauma originally refers to a scar on the body.

However, according to Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative,*

and History, trauma can be referred to a scar "inflicted not upon the body but upon

the mind" in a psychological context (3). The emotional scar is not available to

---

[55] For example, Ammu, Velutha, Estha, and Rahel have the ability to transgress borders and create borderlands.

128

consciousness until "it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivors" (4). Roy applies repetition of words and phrases such as "things could change in a day," "viable die-able," and "upside-down smile" to convey the inevitability of the tragic outcome of Ammu and Velutha. The repetitive expressions revealed in the flashbacks and flashforwards prepare the readers for the tragic event, the Terror. Roy exhibits these mental scars and intensifies their effects through repetition. The repetition in the narrative discloses how survivors experience traumas, and how it relates to the survivor's guilt.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Sigmund Freud indicates that the mental wound cannot be recognized by the naked eyes; it is hard to heal as well as to realize. The cause of trauma can be traced back to the "shocking and unexpected occurrence of an accident" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 6). A traumatic event cannot be fully recognized at the time it happens. The incomprehensibility of psychic trauma results from the blankness of its inaccessibility.

Unlike the homolingual representation of translation trying to turn "what I do not comprehend" into "something already comprehended," Roy turns "not comprehensible" into "comprehensible" by her act of translation. Translation adopting the homolingual stance rationalizes the incomprehensibility of foreign language by envisaging a gap between foreign language and native language. For instance, as a native speaker of mandarin, I comprehend my incomprehension of foreign languages such as Finnish and Danish. The translation mode allows me to "turn my incomprehensibility into a comprehension of my incomprehensibility" (Sakai "Translation and the Schematism of Bordering"). A heterolingual mode of translation
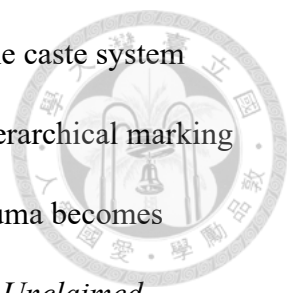
129

helps to deal with this incomprehensibility in terms of its refusal of "the idealistic resolution to the situation of incomprehensibility." In this stance, translation is an attempt to say "let me try to understand you" in a discourse (Sakai).
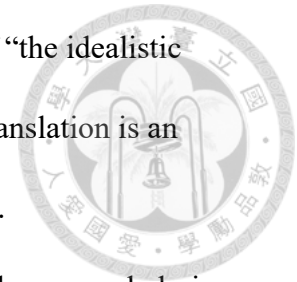
According to Caruth, trauma is "the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena" (*Unclaimed Experience* 91). Trauma is something that cannot be articulated in the representation of translation. It is a wound that "cries out"; it addresses us "in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available" on the spot (4). Trauma could only be unveiled through the effects it brings after the event. In other words, trauma can only be conveyed through its aftereffects.

It is obvious that Estha and Rahel illustrate the emblematic features of trauma victims. Roy meticulously demonstrates the twins' traumatic symptom with repetitions, flashbacks, and flashforwards to uncover the story of trauma. The lasting effects of trauma and enduring legacies of historical events are illustrated in the scene of Velutha's beating:
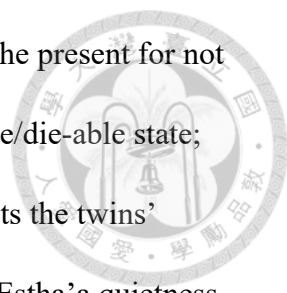
What Esthappen and Rahel witnessed that morning, though they didn't know it then, was a clinical demonstration in controlled conditions (this was not war after all, or genocide) of human nature's pursuit of ascendancy. Structure. Order. Complete monopoly. It was human history, masquerading as God's Purpose, revealing herself to an under-age audience. (Roy 292-93)

130

Velutha is the victim of the caste system. The passage shows how the caste system becomes the regime through addressing homolingually about the hierarchical marking of the structure. And since the twins "didn't know it then," their trauma becomes wounds that cry out and are "bound to a referential return" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 7). Trauma possesses "delayed appearance and its belated address." It "cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language" (4). Ammu and Velutha transgress the Love Laws at the expense of life, and this further induces the twins' quietness and emptiness as the way to cope with their trauma. The narrative of trauma involves a double telling: "the oscillation between a *crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life*" (7). Roy tells the readers how Velutha's tragic death is correlated to the twins' traumatic survival. Because the double telling is "impossible and necessary," Roy confronts trauma through Estha and Rahel's regressive behavior.

Regression is a defense mechanism that does not logically respond to internal or external pressures. Trauma could trigger regression which leads to earlier behavior so the subject could avoid pressures caused by it. The backward movement of regression could alao be considered as a form of transgression. Transgression does not connote progress; it is stepping across "into forbidden territory" (Roy, *TGST* 31). Rahel thinks the three of them, Ammu, Estha, and she are "the worst transgressors," but "[i]t was others too" (31). Therefore, regression can also mean transgressing backward to ease the pain caused by trauma.

The two love scenes in *TGST* break the Love Laws. Unlike the willful transgression of Ammu and Velutha, Estha and Rahel's incestuous union shows their

regressive desire for the sense of security. The twins are trapped in the present for not

being able to work through their trauma. They are trapped in a viable/die-able state;

their quietness and emptiness indicate their death in life. Roy predicts the twins'

transgression when Rahel returns to Ayemenem. She describes that Estha'a quietness

and Rahel's emptiness are two sides of the same coin. The two things "fitted together"

like "familiar lovers' bodies" (21).

Nevertheless, the two love scenes are different from each other: the inter-caste

relationship between Ammu and Velutha and the intra-caste one between Estha and

Rahel. When the twins reunite twenty-three years later after their traumatic separation,

the "nagging sound" starts in Estha's head (283). He finds Rahel "lovely" and has

"[g]rown into their mother's skin" (283). Estha notices that Rahel has Ammu's mouth,

and this triggers his traumatic memory about his separation with Ammu and Rahel on

the Madras Mail to Madras. The nagging sound becomes "[e]choing stationsounds" in

his head (284). When Rahel kisses Estha's hand as Ammu does at the station, they

regress to a wombly state that is safe and away from their trauma. They regress to a

state "before Life began" (310). Through their incestuous union, they find peace and

share the "hideous grief" produced by the relentless return of trauma (311).

In order to break down the twins' temporal entrapment, Roy applies various time

frames to disclose temporal hybridity in her attempt to deal with trauma. The

recurring memories haunt the twins and uncover themselves through flashbacks and

frozen time. The frozen time is a particular symbol of temporal hybridity. The frozen

time is a sign of trauma as well as a defense mechanism to deal with it. Throughout

the story, Rahel's watch always draws the same time: ten to two. It is a toy wristwatch

that she wishes to "change the time whenever she wanted to" (37). The narrative

constructs the sense of stagnant time which either flashes back to 1969 or moves

forward to the present 1993. Rahel's watch is a symbol indicating how the traumatic

events are kept in her life. Twenty-three years later, the watch still tells the same time.

The watch manifests trauma as:

> Something lay buried in the ground. Under grass. Under twenty-three years of
>
> June rain.
>
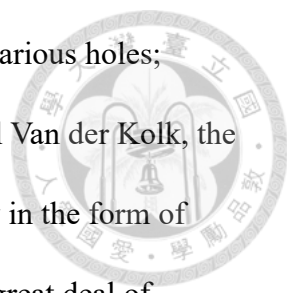> A small forgotten thing.
>
> Nothing that the world would miss.
>
> A child's plastic wristwatch with the time painted on it.
>
> Ten to two, it said. (121)

Rahel's watch discloses how the twins fixate on the recurring memories of Sophie

Mol's drowning, Velutha's death, and the separation from Ammu. They are "called

upon to see and to relive the insistent reality of the past" (Caruth, *Unclaimed*

Experience 152). The twins recapture the traumatic past in frozen time because

trauma "requires integration, both for the sake of testimony and for the sake of cure"

(153). The truth of trauma escapes the realm of consciousness as it occurs. Returning

in the form of flashbacks, the traumatic memories reveal their lack of integration into

full consciousness.

Therefore, in *TGST*, trauma creates *a hole* in consciousness. In the traumatic

narrative, the insistent reality of the tragic past encounters consciousness "through the

133

very denial of active recollection" (152). The story is told through various holes; everything is hinted at but not revealed at once. According to Bessel Van der Kolk, the presence of the holes becomes vivid images that "intrude insistently in the form of flashbacks and nightmares," and cause "traumatized people have a great deal of difficulty relating precisely what has happened" (10). Van der Kolk then brings up the reaction of a Holocaust survivor, Henry Krystal, to confirm the paradoxical and absorbing feature of trauma by noting that there is "no trace of registration of any kind is left in the psyche; instead, a void, a hole, is found" (qtd. in Krystal).

Likewise, the holes in *TGST* reveal the paradoxical telling of trauma: it is closely tied up with the inability to have access to it. Roy uses metaphors of hole to describe the imprint of trauma: "a Joe-shaped Hole in the Universe" (112), "[an] Estha-shaped Hole in the Universe" (149), "house-shaped Hole in the Universe" (179), and "[a] History-shaped Hole in the Universe" (291). The holes are mostly connected to the confrontation with death: the deaths that the twins survive. They serve as the site of trauma that presents "the necessity and impossibility of responding to another's death" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 100).

The twins' trauma has an endless impact on their lives. Roy depicts this impact with the death of Velutha:
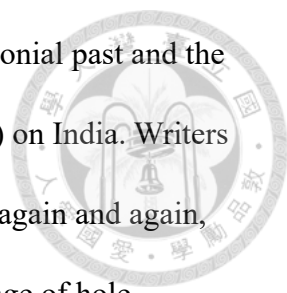
He left behind a Hole in the Universe through which darkness poured like liquid tar. Through which their mother followed without even turning to wave good-bye. She left them behind, spinning in the dark, with no moorings, in a place with no foundation. (Roy 182)
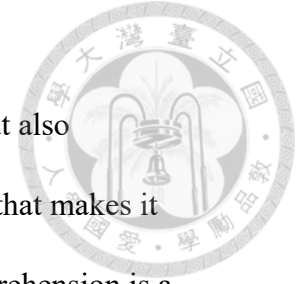
Roy states that trauma has a holing effect that is not only violent but also incomprehensible. Trauma resides "in a place with no foundation" that makes it unavailable to consciousness. Taking as a trope, the denial of comprehension is a denial of the regime of translation; trauma refuses to be comprehended homolingually. By using the image of a hole, Roy shows how the twins perceive the absence of information at the level of consciousness. Estha and Rahel reject their victimhood because they recognize their responsibility as survivors. Their lives are "inextricably linked to the death [they] witness" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 102); their ways of survival (quietness and emptiness) become a mode of response to the incomprehensibility of trauma.

When encountering the unknowns, people tend to push them to the other side of consciousness. However, the unknowns are not the opposite side of consciousness, they reside side-by-side with those already known. The differentiation between the unknowns and those already known thus draws borders to keep these unknowns at bay. Trauma pinpoints a place where "knowing and not knowing intersect" (Caruth 3); it is a wound that cries out a voice that "it cannot fully know but to which it nonetheless bears witness" (9). Caruth uses the parable of the crying wound to convey the truth of trauma: it is a double telling between life and death; knowing and not knowing. The story of trauma can only be heard and told by people who reside in the realm of consciousness—by those who survive.

Roy's use of the holes in the universe too represents the paradoxical feature of trauma. She further extends the incomprehensibility of trauma to the forgotten history
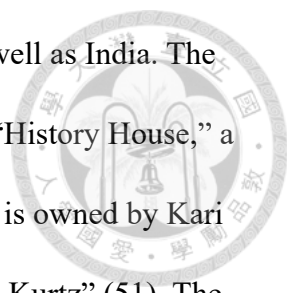
135

of India through "[a] History-shaped Hole in the Universe." The colonial past and the partition have caused a trauma that inflicts a wound (a History-hole) on India. Writers such as Amitav Ghosh and Salman Rushdie have to "speak about it again and again, and yet again" (Mistry 151). Serving as a parable of trauma, the image of hole represents a traumatic return that intends to "awaken the survivor" so that the survivor can recognize the addressing voice of trauma. For the twins, the small things become triggers for their traumatic (re)memories; "what should be irrelevant stimuli may become reminders of the trauma" (Van der Kolk10). The language of trauma (its belatedness and repetitiveness) helps to understand history in the way that is "no longer straightforwardly referential (that is, no longer based on simple models of experience and reference)" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 11).

Anuradha Dingwaney Needham contends that Roy depicts history as "a dominating, oppressive force that saturates virtually all social and cultural space, including familial, intimate, and affective relationships" (372). Needham discusses the way Roy illustrates the history and the traumatic experience of India:

> In as much as *Small Things* mobilizes "History" explicitly as the trope through which the existing repressive social and political arrangements are figured forth, re-envision and re-writing history is part and parcel of transforming these repressive conditions, and is, arguably, what the novel's retrieval of "small things" enacts. (382)

The returning of the small things in the trauma narrative allows others to "retrace the steps" even if "their footprints had been swept away" (Roy 51).

136

The colonial history is like a ghost haunting the Ipe family as well as India. The history of the dispossessed is uncovered through the symbol of the "History House," a place which is located on the "abandoned rubber estate." The house is owned by Kari Saipu, "an Englishman who had 'gone native.' … Ayemenem's own Kurtz" (51). The reference to Kurtz and *Heart of Darkness* implies India's colonial history, and how Chacko gives a lesson of history to the twins by saying that history is like "an old house at night;" he further informs them that they are "a *family* of Anglophiles" (51). Chacko tells the twins that in order to understand the history, one has to go inside the house and listens to the voices that would seem like whispers to the outsiders. The History House materializes India's traumatic history as a hole or as a wound crying for recounting. The image of the History House indicates how India is "locked out" of its own history because the people's minds "have been invaded by a war" that they "have won and lost" (52).

India's history is still haunted by "an old Englishman ghost" after Indian Independence (292). In the History House, the twins witness "History in live performance" when "the Terror" happens (293). Once again, Velutha is called upon to the stage to play his role. Velutha's beating is described as a performance or a "Play" acted out by the police who follow history's order "with economy" and collect its due from those "who broke its laws" (292). Roy also uncovers the encompassing power of the Englishman's ghost:

Poor old Vellya Paapen, had he known then that History would choose him for its deputy, that it would be his tears that set the Terror rolling, perhaps he would

137

not have strutted like a young cockerel in the Ayemenem bazaar, bragging of how he swam the river with his sickle in his mouth (sour, the taste of iron on his tongue). (190)
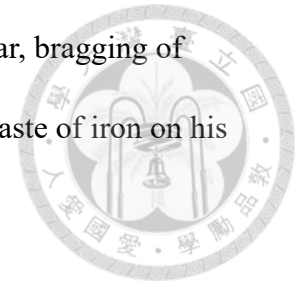
Vellya Paapen also plays a part in "History's Plans," and it is too late to "retrace his steps" (190). His conformity to the economy of history and caste erases not only his footprints but also Velutha's. Roy further discloses India's modern national identity by telling us that "Kari Saipu's house had been renovated and painted" with artificial canals and complex connecting bridges (120). The Terror is "buried in a shallow grave" with the arrival of commerce and tourism (290). The History House has become a five-star hotel, and the Terror remains hidden "under the happy humming of hotel cooks" (290). The ancestral voices in the History House are replaced by "the toy histories" to impress the wealthy tourists.

However, Roy reminds us that there is still "[a] small forgotten thing" that "lay buried in the ground": Rahel's plastic wristwatch "with the time painted on it" (121). Roy tries to decipher the whispers inside the History House and bring to life the voices of small things. She minoritizes the history through her repetitive depiction of the small things. These whispers of the small things converge into a resounding voice that is hard to get past. Roy ends the narrative with the lovemaking of Ammu and Velutha. When Ammu is about to leave, she makes a promise to meet again with Velutha by saying "*Naaley*." The novel ends with a single word: "Tomorrow" (321). Ammu's "tomorrow" suggests that it is possible to comprehend the voices of small things. In her WordsWorth interview, Roy states:
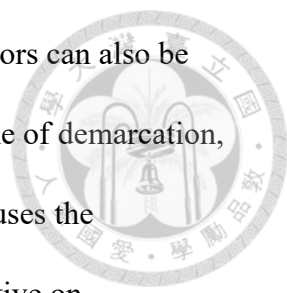
138
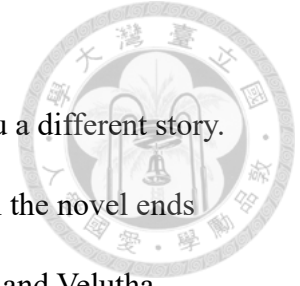
The way the story is told, or the structure of the book, tells you a different story. The structure of the book ambushes the story— by that I mean the novel ends more or less in the middle of the story and it ends with Ammu and Velutha making love and it ends on the word tomorrow. Though you know that what tomorrow brings us terrible it is saying that the fact that this happened at all is wonderful.

Roy tries to undo the power of history through Ammu's one-word response. Instead of fixating on the past rigidly, the promise of a tomorrow in the end implies a possibility of dealing with the unfinished past in its proper context. By avoiding translating the voice of small things homolingually, Roy challenges the idea of boundary and expresses a hope in the future.

The God of Small Things is a work which steps across the border to dismantle the laws of the regime of caste, gender, and history. The dismantled borders highlight the paradox of bordering. Through her depiction of transgressions, Roy creates borderlands whose transitional nature are fluid and ambiguous. Through this act of translation, people need not to know the unfamiliar in a familiar way. To understand the unfamiliar in a familiar way is a homolingual kind of translation that requires bordering; it becomes a "feeling" or favoritism (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 14). The process of bordering neglects the heterogeneity and treats a border as a familiar space of integration.

The paradox could be revealed through Roy's depiction of various transgressions.

139

Since the transgressions take place on the borderland, the transgressors can also be considered as the borderlanders. Instead of viewing a border as a line of demarcation, borderlanders consider it as a way of life. Life on the borderland causes the interdependence of the borderlanders; it possesses a sustained narrative on cross-border transgressions. In *The God of Small Things*, there are still some voices left unexplored (such as Velutha's and Kuttapen's voices). Uncovering memories of the small things will not secure a tomorrow; they need to be transformed into a different mode of address other than traumatic personal pasts. Van der Kolk contends:

> Exploring the trauma for its own sake has no therapeutic benefits unless it becomes attached to other experiences, such as feeling understood, being safe, feeling physically strong and capable, or being able to emphasize with and help fellow sufferers. (19)

In order to further investigate the narrative of borderlanders as well as the possibility of a tomorrow for those who suffer from trauma, I would like to probe into Roy's latest novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Moving from a family trauma to a national one, Roy explores the problem of border crossing with progress in scope as well as in depth. The borderlanders in Roy's texts have their own way of seeing and telling. Through looking into the narrative of borderlanders, I wish to examine the effects of trauma on a broader scale.

The Border As a Wound: The Story of Borderlanders in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*
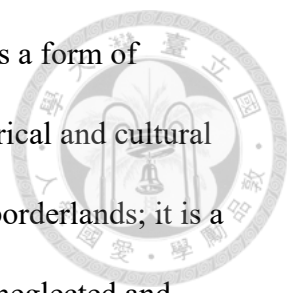
Contemporary conversations often focus on what that bloodshed means for India and Pakistan's relationship to each other, but increasingly as I look at both nations, now so mired in violence towards their own minorities, I wonder what it means for each nation's relationship to its own history, its own nature. There was never a reckoning for the violence of partition; that would have got in the way of the narrative of a glorious independence. Instead it became easier to blame the other side for all the violence, and pretend that at the moment of inception both India and Pakistan didn't wrap mass murder in a flag and hope no one would notice the blood stains.

—Kamila Shamsie, "Partition, 70 years on: Salman Rushdie, Kamila Shamsie and other writers reflect."[56]

In Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*, the border is an "open wound" (2) that serves as a site of traumatic history. She explores borders—both literal and figurative—and brings forth the notion of borderlands, which result from the paradoxical schematism of bordering. The border functions as a figure of separation between here and there, and as a trope for the difference between present and past. It is a separation between us and them, knowns and unknowns, life and death. Borderlands thus underscore the spatial rupture and the temporal belatedness of traumatic experiences of that separation. Borderlands locate an ambiguous place where the unconscious repetition of trauma fade and proposes a possibility for future healing.

---

[56] *The Guardian* published this article on August 5th, 2017 to see how these writers reflect on the Partition of India after all those years.

Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (*MOUH*) is a form of mestiza/hijra writing that relates trauma narratives in different historical and cultural contexts. The book tells the stories of the people who dwell on the borderlands; it is a story of the borderlanders. Their trauma narratives have often been neglected and silenced by cultural and political regimes through discourses. Roy tries to deal with the literal wound (the partition of India) through transforming it into a figural wound (her story of borderlanders).[57] The turn from the literal to the figural is a form of translation which is more profound than a literal representation of the partition of India.

In *TGST*, Roy depicts the negative effects of trauma with literal repetition (with both its form and content). In this way, those who survive are still caught in an unconscious return which leads to regressive behaviors (such as Baby Kochama's "living backward" and the twins' final incest). The unconscious return to the site of trauma makes the survivors become "the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 5). With the intention of responding Ammu's "tomorrow," Roy tries to construct a narrative that tells a story of conscious return through figuration. The conscious return displays the positive effects of a traumatic experience that could result in integration. The figural account of the mental wound could help relate to a collective wound, and it may bring forth the possibility of healing.

The story of the borderlanders in *MOUH* holds the deterritorializing power to heal the collective wound of India. Therefore, I would like to view the narrative turn

---

[57] This turn is similar to the change of perspective from the History House to small things in *TGST*.

from literal to figural as a form of translation that reworks the dominant narrative of the national wound of India.

In her second novel, Roy displays a trauma narrative that features a diverse cast of characters and addresses some of the most violent events in modern India including the ongoing turbulence in Kashmir and the 2002 Godhra train attack. It is Roy's aesthetic choice to tell a story of borderlanders from the multiple minoritarian perspectives. Came out twenty years after her first novel, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* further reflect India's trauma from the perspective of the borderlanders. Roy's diverse cast of borderlanders is composed of upper-caste Hindu, Dalit, Muslim (Sunni, Shia, and Sufi), Syrian Christian and Sikh. The story covers from the south of India to the north, and its cast also includes Kashmiris (both civilians and militants) who are fighting for liberation from India. These characters fall between the borders of caste, religions, and nations. In order to understand Roy's complex narrative in *MOUH*, a brief summary of the Indo-Pakistani conflict will be given as follows.

Historical Background and the Plot of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

Indian Independence in 1947 caused the division of British India into a Hindu-majority India with a large Muslim minority and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The northernmost area of the subcontinent, Kashmir, became the site of fierce battles because both India and Pakistan laid claim to it. As a result of this constant conflict, India controls nearly two-thirds of Kashmir—a state called Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan controls the other third. There are three regions in Jammu
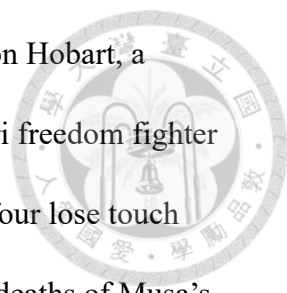
and Kashmir: Jammu, the Kashmir Valley, and Ladakh.[58] Jammu and Kashmir is the

only state in India with a Muslim-majority population; Kashmiris in the state cry for

freedom from India and autonomous rule (Varshney 1003). As the center of conflict

for constant wars and fights, Kashmir becomes a heavily militarized zone. In order to

control the area, the Indian government deploys half a million soldiers there (1012).

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness begins with the story of Aftab, a Hijra

(hermaphrodite) born in Old Delhi, and the narrative slowly expands by including

other characters. Aftab later undergoes gender reassignment surgery and becomes

Anjum. She lives in the Hijra community called Khwabgah (House of Dreams) with

other transgender people for thirty years, during which she raises a girl whom she

finds outside a mosque. When Anjum turns forty-six, she decides to leave Khwabgah

after surviving a massacre in Ahmedabad. She chooses to move into and live in a

graveyard, which she later transforms it into a guesthouse, Jannat (Paradise). She also

opens a funeral services company catering to the marginalized people with a young

Dalit man who has the name of the former president of Iraq, Saddam Hussain. One

day, in an anti-corruption event, Anjum finds a baby on the sidewalk in Delhi. She

takes the baby in, but then a woman named Tilo takes the baby away.

The narrative then changes to the story of Tilo with the description of her

relationships with the three men during her college days. The story flashes back to her

college days, and her narrative is woven together with the stories of the three men

who loved her during these years. One of them is Naga, a successful journalist who

---

[58] Within Jammu and Kashmir, the Kashmir Valley is the most contentious region. Jammu and
Kashmir is a state which contains various cultures. Jammu has numerous shrines which attract
thousands of Hindu pilgrims each year. And Ladakh is famous for its Buddhist culture.

writes about the Kashmiri issues. Another is Biplab Dasgupta/Garson Hobart, a bureaucrat in the Intelligence Bureau. The other is Musa, a Kashmiri freedom fighter who is Tilo's fellow student of architecture and a close friend. The four lose touch with each other after graduation. Tilo and Musa reconnect after the deaths of Musa's wife and daughter (Miss Jebeen the First). Her relation with Musa takes her into the political crisis of Kashmir. During one of her visits to Musa, she is detained by Major Amrik Singh and then released with the help of Dasgupta and Naga. After witnessing the murder of Gulrez, Musa's friend, Tilo marries Naga for security and protection. Fourteen years later, Tilo divorces Naga and lives alone in a rented apartment. She is then invited to live in the guesthouse along with the baby (Miss Jebeen the Second) she takes on the sidewalk in Dehli. The story ends with a depiction of an urbanizing India, which pushes the marginalized people to their happy gathering in the guesthouse within a graveyard.

In spite of the differences in the characters, they still have something in common. They all try to make peace with their inner struggles; they wish to be accepted, to be cared for, and to be healed. Roy tries to explore the possibility of healing through her characters' exploration of their personal traumas. Rather than a static recording of the traumatic events, the personal attributions of traumatic experience could have profound effects that help integrate and share with other experiences. Under the circumstances, borderlands thus become the site of sharing. And by telling a story of the people on the borderland, the trauma narrative could help traumatic experience remain as a contemporary experience. Without being located in an inescapable past, the sharing of various traumatic experiences can lead to a belief that "things would

145

turn out all right in the end" (Roy, *MOUH* 438).

**Translating a National History in Post-Emergency[59] India**

Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is a novel seeks to cogitate India's national history from the patchwork perspective of the marginalized. I would argue that it could be viewed as minor literature because of its content as well as the form. In *MOUH*, Roy develops her former depiction of rural Kerala in *TGST* into a more urban setting of Delhi and Srinagar. *MOUH* is a work that features the three characteristics of minor literature. Roy applies various languages such as Hindi and Urdu in the narrative. In her deterritorialization of the major language—in this case, English—she poses a question as a narrator of various stories in *MOUH*: "Was it possible to live outside language?" (Roy 8). In a similar vein to *TGST*, the linguistic deviations including Roy's use of phrases, the unconventional use of italics and capitals, sentence fragments, single-word sentences, repetition and parallelism, and so on. The story in *MOUH* branches "like a tree" (3); its sprawling form not only deterritorializes the major language, but it also deterritorializes the form of novel writing. In "Conversation with Arundhati Roy," Amitava Kumar asks Roy about her return to novel, and Roy replies:

I'll have to find a language to tell the story I want to tell. By language I don't mean English, Hindi, Urdu, Malayalam, of course. I mean something else. A way of binding together worlds that have been ripped apart.

---

[59] In 1975, the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, declared a state of emergency, and it lasted from 1975-1977. The order gave the Prime Minister the power to rule by decree, allowing elections to be suspended. During which time, the opponents of Indira Gandhi were imprisoned, and the media were censored. It was thought to be the darkest period in India's post-independence history.
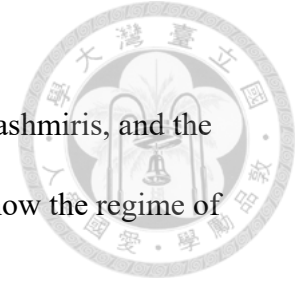
Roy intends to uncover how the lives of Muslims, Hijras, Dalits, Kashmiris, and the dispossessed are tied to the Indian national imagination as well as how the regime of the dominant national narrative represses the marginalized.

One of the deterritorializing examples is Tilo's "Kashmiri-English Alphabet" (208). Her version of English Alphabet exhibits the turbulent politics after the partition: "Azadi," "border cross," "Cross-border," "jihad," "Massacre," "PTSD (Post-Traumatic Distress Disorder)," and so on (208-09). Tilo's satiric language pedagogy of English Alphabet marks the possibility of telling a ripped-apart story outside the major language. Likewise, in one of Tilo's notebooks titled *The Reader's Digest Book of English Grammar and Comprehension for Very Young Children*, Roy points out the fact that as a genre, the received idea of novel cannot suffice to tell the stories of a ripped-apart world. In one of Tilo's reading comprehension exercises, Roy states the impossibility to tell the story she wants in the form of "good literature":

> I would like to write one of those sophisticated stories in which even though nothing much happens there's lots to write about. That can't be done in Kashmir. It's not sophisticated, what happens here. There's too much blood for good literature.

Q1: Why is it not sophisticated?

Q2: What is the acceptable amount of blood for good literature? (283)

The pedagogic undertone of the exercise shows the impracticality of packing the story

into the conventional genre of novel. Like Kafka, Roy seems to reflect on the question of writing for the marginalized: "the impossibility of not writing," the impossibility of writing in the major language, and "the impossibility of writing otherwise" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 16).

Not only does Roy deterritorialize the major language, but she also deterritorializes the novel genre in *MOUH*. It is a denial of "master's literature" (*Kafka* 18). The content of the novel also follows the other two characteristics of minor literature. Roy applies figuration to comment on recent historical events which are linked to politics. Most important parts of the narrative happen in Kashmir, and it is a site full of violence and brutality. She writes about Hindu fundamentalism, the communal riots in Gujarat, Dalit lynchings, the pogrom against Sikhs in 1984, army occupation and jihadi movement in Kashmir, and other resistance movements (such as the anti-corruption event). The multi-focal narrative too serves as a multiple and collective assemblage, and there is no specific "master" of the collective enunciation:

> It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism; and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility *to express another possible community* and *to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility*. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 17; emphasis added)

Through the characteristics of minor literature, one can see how it is possible for Roy "to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility" with her

148

depiction of a care community at the graveyard.

In Tilo's diary, she asks:

How

    to

      tell

        a

shattered

      story?

          By

          slowly

            becoming

everybody.

          No.

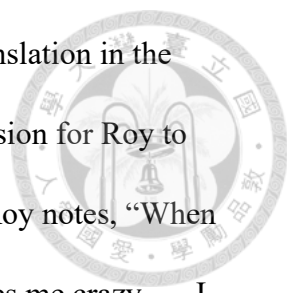   *By slowly becoming everything.* (437)[60]

Tilo's question is tightly linked to what Roy tries to do in *MOUH*; she wants to tell a

shattered story of the dispossessed.

In Roy's description of the guesthouse in the graveyard, Jannat Guest House thus

becomes a care community where the dispossessed could return to the initial moment

of trauma and recognizes their relationality with others. Thus, the three major

---

[60] This follows the original typography in *MOUH*.

storylines are patched together and shared in the graveyard. It is translation in the

minoritized (as well as heterogenized) manner, a machine of expression for Roy to

make sense of this world. In an interview with Decca Aitkenhead, Roy notes, "When

people say this business of 'she's the voice of the voiceless,' it makes me crazy, … I

say, 'There's no voiceless, there's only the deliberately silenced, you know, or the

purposely unheard'" (Aitkenhead 2017). The unheard narratives are interwoven

through the machine of expression that is "capable of disorganizing its own forms,

and of disorganizing its forms of contents" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 28). Roy's

act of translation thus becomes an expression that "break[s] forms, encourage[s]

ruptures, and new sproutings" (28). Therefore, Roy's telling is no longer a literal

repetition of trauma; it is a figural return (to the initial moment of anxiety and trauma)

that could provide integration.

Jean Laplanche's sense of de-translation coincides with the concept of

translation in *MOUH*. For Laplanche, de-translation is a psychological attempt to link

the traumatic effect and anxiety of not knowing through generating a series of

meanings. These meanings, layer upon layer, respond to one another rather than to the

original. Thus, there is no original to uncover for it is unlikely to perceive a mnemic

analog for traumatic events. In an interview, Cathy Caruth asks Laplanche about his

terminology of translation and de-translation in his psychoanalytic works, he states:

Translation means that there is no factual situation that can be translated. If

something is translated, it's already a message. That means you can only

translate what has already been put in communication or made as a

150

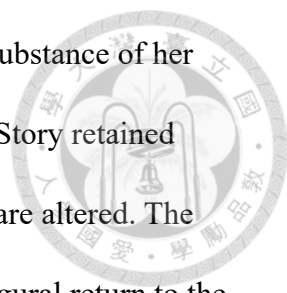communication. (*Listening to Trauma* 40)

Laplanche suggests that a translation presupposes that there is something already put into words before the translation actually takes place. It implies a Sakaian regime of translation which secures the circulation of homolingual address.

On the other hand, Laplanche's idea of de-translation dismantles and unbinds the existing translations. The existing translations—worked through time—become the defenses against the anxiety resulting from not knowing. Homay King states that there are two steps in the process of de-translation: a deconstruction of the old translations and a reconstruction of the new translation. In other words, de-translation consists of a double movement: "first, a deconstruction and unbinding of old analogs, and second, their recombination with new ones that add to the growing collection" (117).

De-translation is a re-inclusion of the discarded and repressed. In *MOUH*, Roy unravels how to face the traumatic events in a positive light. There are three major traumatic incidents depicted in the story: Anjum's Hijra identity, the lynching of Saddam Hussain's father, and Tilo's Kashmiri experience. When Anjum tells Zainab, her daughter found on the steps of the Jama Masjid, a bedtime story adapted from her real life, she "began to rewrite a simpler, happier life for herself," and "the rewriting in turn began to make Anjum a simpler, happier person" (34). Anjum's rewriting of the Flyover Story is one way to de-translate the past trauma and to become a "happier person." Readers are later informed that the actual story happens in 1976 when Sanjay Gandhi[61] and his Youth Congress suppress the people of India.

---

[61] Indira Gandhi's son.

Anjum's revised Flyover Story does not appear to change the substance of her traumatic memory: "Notwithstanding Anjum's editing, the Flyover Story retained some elements of truth" (35). Nevertheless, the effects of the event are altered. The story becomes Zainab's bedtime story that amuses her. Through a figural return to the original trauma, the narrative memory becomes a tool for healing. It is a de-translation that allows revision or replacement so that the victim could cope with the enigmatic signifier resulting from the traumatic encounter.

Similarly, Kulsoom Bi, the Ustad of Anjum's Hijras community, de-translates the official history of the Sound and Light show at the Red Fort. In the "old-government-approved" version, Kulsoom Bi wants other Hijras to pay attention to the "rasping coquettish giggle of a court eunuch." She explains: "This is *us*. That is our ancestry, our history, our story" (51). The chuckle is a sign of reworking of an event. The de-translation of the "old-government-approved" history empowers the Hijras; they are no longer passive and helpless in relation to the message of the other. The "old-government-approved" history is a homolingual mode of translation that either "translates" or "represses" the self-object relations. It is a filling-in process with repetition of the pain and the wounds of the past. However, Kulsoom Bi renews the originary relation to the other through locating the thing that has no possibility of being represented:

What mattered was that it existed. To be present in history, even as nothing more than a chuckle, was a universe away from being absent from it, from being written out of it altogether. A chuckle, after all, could become a foothold in the

152

sheer wall of the future. (52)

Instead of the filled-in transference,[62] the chuckle offers the Hijra community an open

space to lay down their primary (as well as traumatic) relationship with the enigmatic

other in order to reprocess their subjectivity: it is a moment of de-translation of the

original encounter of the enigmatic message as well as a restructure of selfhood. By

reliving the trauma in the transference situation, Anjum and Kulsoom Bi are capable

of reshaping their traumas in a shared transformational mode. Through the process of

transference, a reversal of the original translation is possible. It is a de-translation that

is less repressive but more therapeutic.

Saddam Hussain, a Dalit man whose actual name is Dayachand, copes with his

trauma in a similar way. When Anjum and Saddam Hussain are drinking tea on the

roof of the guesthouse, Anjum begins to tell him the Flyover Story (the edited

version). Anjum's telling of the story is a way to share her traumatic experience with

others. After telling him the edited story, Anjum reveals her desire of being a mother.

Upon hearing this, Saddam replies to her that it is impossible in reality. Opposing

Saddam's sense of reality, Anjum responds, "If you can be Saddam Hussain, I can be

---

[62] Laplanche and Pontalis describe transference as the "process of actualisation of unconscious wishes" when the analysand forms an attachment to the analyst that guarantees their commitment to therapy (455). Laplanche distinguishes two models of transference: filled-in and hollowed-out. As a kind of transference in its classical sense, filled-in transference consists of "the positive reproduction of forms of behavior, relationships and childhood imagos" (*New Foundations* 161). Filled-in transference is a way to make sense of the self by translating the intromission of the enigmatic message. It is a repetition of "the ego's standard self-representations, defensive maneuvers, and self-justificatory narratives" (Fletcher 215). Hollowed-out transference provides a space where "the enigmatic messages of childhood are reactivated, investigated and worked through thanks to the situation itself as it facilitates the return of the enigmatic and secondary revision" (*New Foundations* 161). Traumatic experiences are imbued with encounters of enigmatic signifiers; the encounter of the enigmatic message of the other, which is the cause of the filled-in transference, is the prototypical scene of trauma. Therefore, hollowed-out transference can be considered as a de-translation of the original transference, which is the intromission of the (m)other's enigmatic message. In other words, it is a de-translation of the traumatic event.

153

a mother" (84). To ease tension, Saddam later shares the story "about saffron parakeets and a dead cow" with Anjum (85). He tells Anjum how his father is beaten to death by the caste Hindus and the police because he transports a dead cow and is accused of having killed it. After the incident, Saddam becomes a Muslim convert and waits to kill the policeman who is responsible for his father's death. He chooses to take the name of the former president of Iraq because the final stance of Hussain inspires him.

His sharing with Anjum marks the beginning of the therapeutic process of de-translation. When he retells the story, he knows that Anjum would understand his trauma: "You know better than me what was going on then…what it was like…Yours happened in February, mine in November." (86). By sharing of the traumatic experience with the fellow "falling people" (84), Saddam begins to have a transference situation that is no longer thwarted by his originary encounter of trauma.

When Saddam sees a video about a group of young Dalit men cast dead cows onto the verandah of the District Collector's bungalow, he deletes the video of Saddam Hussain and tells Anjum that he no longer needs to kill the policeman because his people "have risen up" (407). The fact that Saddam's people are fighting channels his transference to another situation. Through the rising of the young Dalit men, Saddam gets to approach to his trauma from a different perspective, a shift of perspective from personal to collective. Moreover, Saddam is able to talk about his trauma at the collective level when he takes the group of "falling people" to the mall and introduces them to his father:

This is where he died. Right here. Where this building now stands. Before it

came up there were villages here, surrounded by wheat fields. There was a police
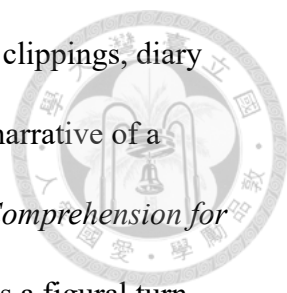
station… a road…
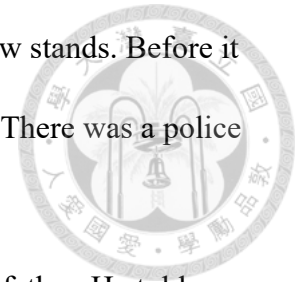
Saddam then told them the story of what happened to his father. He told

them about his vow to kill Sehrawat, the Station House Officer of the Dulina

police station, and why he had given up the idea. They all took turns to pass his

mobile phone around the table and watch the video of the dead cows being flung

into the District Collector's bungalow. (411-12)

Saddam's introduction of the "falling people" to his father is a de-translation of his

trauma; it is a dismantling and unbinding of the existing one. Instead of a repetitive

depiction of his trauma, he returns to the site of trauma along with others' experiences,

in search for the integration of re-translation.

As a matter of fact, Saddam's sharing opens a space for the transference,

allowing the trauma victims to reinvestigate the trauma. On the morning of the second

funeral of Saddam's father, Tilo too decides to bury her mother's ashes in the

graveyard. The two "second funerals" of Saddam's father and Tilo's mother mark the
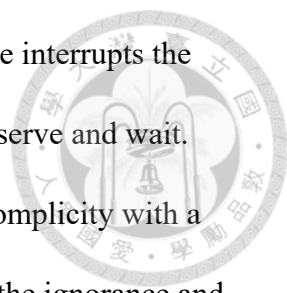
beginning of healing.

Tilo's trauma narrative deals with an even broader scope of the collective wound

of India. Her project cannot be wholly presented in the way Anjum has edited her

traumatic past. Tilo's approach to de-translate the monolithic national narrative of

India is to narrate the nation in its fragments. The gathering of scraps of information

in Tilo's notebooks unpacks multiple viewpoints about Kashmir. Through

documenting her experience in Kashmir with separate stories, press clippings, diary entries, and evaluation reports, Tilo is able to write the fragmented narrative of a nation. In her *The Reader's Digest Book of English Grammar and Comprehension for Very Young Children*, Tilo first documents the events and then makes a figural turn through her questions. In some of her documentation, she attaches questions like "Who is the hero of this story" or "What is the moral of this story?" after the readings when there are no heroes or morals in these stories.
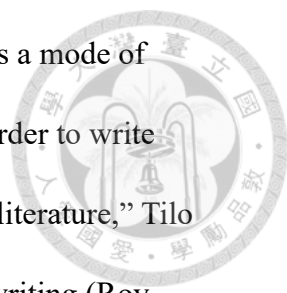
These textbook-like questions uncover the complexity of the unresolved issues of Kashmir. Through the satire of the textbook, Tilo criticizes the educational system as well as the regime of a monolithic national narrative. According to Nalini Iyer, Tilo becomes "a stenographer" (Iyer 171) of these broken narratives in her attempt to become "everybody" and "everything" (Roy, *MOUH* 437). Since there is "too much blood for good literature" (283), the collection of the scraps of the unresolved issues becomes "an archive of recoveries" of a collective wound (270). The dismantling power of the archive of recoveries is shown by Garson Hobart's response to Tilo's notebooks. As a governmental official who works in the Intelligence Bureau, Garson Hobart, whose real name is Biplab Dasgupta, is influenced by Tilo's recoveries of disasters. His perception about the Kashmiri issues alters after he finds out Tilo's notebooks. He reads "every document, every report, every letter, every video, every yellow Post-it and every photograph in every file" in Tilo's room. At first, he wants to place "some logic and order" into the archive's chaos, but then he thinks that would be a kind of transgression (428-29).

As the only character that is allowed a first-person perspective, Garson Hobart

156

(Biplab Dasgupta) becomes the spokesman of the state. His narrative interrupts the unseen narrator of *MOUH* and demonstrates the state's ability to observe and wait. However, Tilo's archive has changed him and makes him face his complicity with a space of reflection: "Every evening as I watch the news I marvel at the ignorance and idiocy on display. And to think that all my life I have been a part of it" (430). The archive de-translates Garson Hobart's state-like opinion and his majoritarian Indian national narrative. He is aware of the possibility of India's self-destruction. When he and Musa meet in Tilo's apartment, they talk about the Kashmiri issues, and Musa says, "You are not destroying us. You are constructing us. It's yourselves that you are destroying" (434). Musa's words imply the correlation between translation and de-translation in the discourse of Partition and post-Emergency. The de-translation suggests that the "unraveling" of the shared narrative of the state "has already begun." It begins to lose its "infrastructure of impunity" (434).

The dismantling narrative in *MOUH* also marks the deconstruction of the conventional literary norms. Tilo's gathering scraps can be considered as an alternative form of writing, a "writing out" or a "writing to the outside" of the things that cannot be accounted for. Garson Hobart's narrative represents the inscriptive writing: the meaningful representation of things; however, Tilo's archive is a collection of a different kind of writing that features the overflow of meaning: an exscriptive writing. Her archive of recoveries is an "exscription" of the "unusable, unexploitable, unintelligible and unfoundable *being* of being-in-the-world" (Nancy, "Exscription" 64). According to Jean-Luc Nancy, the exscriptive writing, instead of inscribing significations, is a writing "to be exposed, to expose oneself to this

157

not-having (to this not-knowing) and thus to 'exscription'" (64). It is a mode of ex-scribing the limit of writing which is traced outside the text. In order to write "those sophisticated stories" which have "too much blood for good literature," Tilo cannot reduce her narrative to the tradition's realism of inscriptive writing (Roy, *MOUH* 283). The monolithic narratives of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs inscribe India's various ethnicities and lived experiences into a reducible representation. It is an inscription that "brings back the redundancy of the Book"[63] and delimits its scope (Nancy, "Exscription" 53). Therefore, the construction of the national narrative becomes a translation that inscribes a regime homogenously. Tilo's exscription, on the other hand, reinscribes the excess of sense that is overlooked during the process of inscription.

In one of her reading comprehension exercises titled "THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNER," Tilo writes about a Hindu, Manohar Mattoo, who stays in the Kashmir Valley when other Hindus have left after the Partition. He "had participated in all the anti-India protests, and had shouted *Azadi*! Louder than everybody else," but he is still considered as the secret agent of the Indian Occupation Forces by his Muslim friends (278). One day an old school friend, an intelligence officer, stops by and tells Mattoo that the state is watching over him because of his "anti-national tendencies." Upon hearing this, he tells his friend that he has given him "the Nobel Prize" (278) for approving that he is not an agent of the state. Ironically, Mattoo is shot a year later by

---

[63] According to Nancy, the question of the Book could be approached with a writing on it: "with added lines to the point of utmost confusion of signs and of writings." That is to say, exscriptive writing is a "deliverance" of the Book of only one author or people. It is "the renewed clamor or murmur of a demand, of a pressing call" (50).

an unknown man for "being a kafir"[64] (279). To highlight the problematic concept of

nationalism, Tilo attaches questions to the reading:
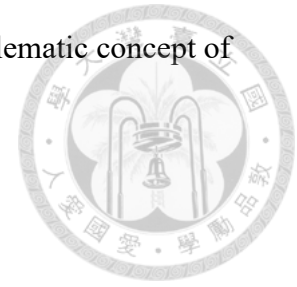
Q 1: Why was Mattoo shot?

(a) Because he was a Hindu

(b) Because he wanted Azadi

(c) Because he won the Nobel Prize

(d) None of the above

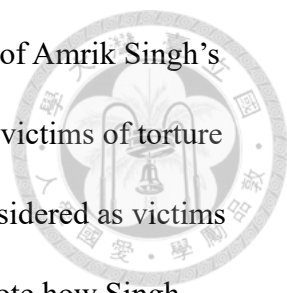(e) All of the above.

Q 2: Who could the unknown gunman have been?

(a) An Islamist militant who thought all kafirs should be killed

(b) An agent of the Occupation who wanted people to think that all Islamist

militants thought that all kafirs should be killed

(c) Neither of the above

(d) Someone who wanted everyone to go crazy trying to figure it out. (279)

The story indicates that the national narratives about the binary of Hindu-Muslim or

Indo-Pakistani intentionally overlook the space of "an indefinite plurality of

singularities" (Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* 35). The questions criticize the fact that

Indian national narrative fails to deal with the gray areas between Hindu/Muslim or

Indo/Pakistani.

Another case of exscriptive writing can be traced from Tilo's archive (along with

---

[64] Kafir means "disbeliever."

Musa's collected documents) is the psychosocial evaluation reports of Amrik Singh's asylum status. In the documents, Singh and his wife claim to be the victims of torture and ethnic violence because they are Sikhs. He and his wife are considered as victims of the Sikh experience of 1984 by the social worker. It is ironic to note how Singh utilizes his knowledge of torture as the way to apply for asylum when in fact he is the one who brutally tortures and murders the human rights lawyer and those who testify against him. Singh's wife, Loveleen Singh née Kaur, also pinpoints the loophole in the monolithic binary narrative.

On the one hand, she helps her husband rewrite the Kashmiri narrative and simplifies it as the Muslims' framing towards her Sikh husband. On the other, she is the victim of domestic violence. She transforms her experience of being abused by her husband into a typical (as well as westernized) narrative of a Sikh victim. In the two cases above, Tilo shows the ambiguity in the identities of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs with lived experiences. She avoids inscribing people into the schema of cofiguration. The exscription uncovers that the fixed narratives of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs are consolidated by the state.

When Tilo moves into Jannat Guest House with Miss Jebeen the Second, she is allowed space to reinscribe her exscription further. A stenographer no more, Tilo becomes "Tilo Madam and sometimes Ustaniji (Teacher, in Urdu)" in the graveyard and teaches "a bit of basic science, English and eccentricity" to the neighboring children (Roy, *MOUH* 397). After becoming the teacher that could share her knowledge with others, "Tilo's mind felt less like one of Musa's recoveries" (397). She is able to converse with others about her traumatic experience in another form. In

160

a similar vein, Musa also passes down his knowledge to others when he takes the orphans to see "the Sound and Light Show at the Red Fort." He tells Tilo:
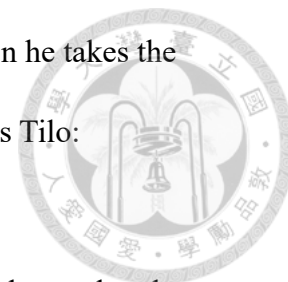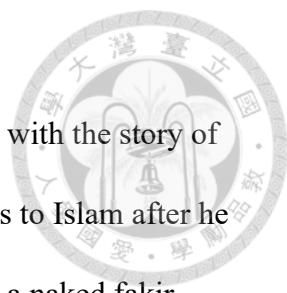
> Sometimes, in these kinds of collaborations, the partners don't know that they are partners. The army thinks it is teaching the children love for their Motherland. And we think we are teaching them to know their Enemy, so that when it is their generation's turn to fight, they won't end up behaving like Hassan Lone. (285)

It is clear that both Kulsoom Bi and Musa de-translate the show and reinscribe meanings with the effects of not just the past, but also the present. The reinscription that comes after the exscription causes a Laplanchian re-translation. There are three levels of translation practice carried out in *MOUH*: the (homolingual) translation of the first encounter of the enigmatic message, the de-translation of that enigmatic message, and the re-translation of it. These three levels also uncover the working of traumatic experience.

On the homolingual plane of translation, the enigmatic message of the other is not fully grasped, part of it is repressed and unclaimed because it seems "untranslatable." Thus trauma is unclaimed and "bound to a referential return" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 7). In the de-translation of trauma, it dismantles and unbinds the existing, first translation of trauma. What is more, this de-translation invites a re-translation of trauma that possesses positive effects for sharing in a care community. The latter two entail a different perspective on translation not only towards the past, but also towards the present and, in the effect of re-translation, a

161

possible future.

The re-translation of the traumatic narratives in *MOUH* echoes with the story of Hazrat Sarmad Shaheed. Sarmad is a Jewish Armenian who converts to Islam after he meets and falls in love with a young Hindu boy. He is considered as a naked fakir (saint) before his public execution. When Sarmad arrives Delhi in the state of nakedness, he befriends with Prince Dara Shikuh. He later starts to have much influence at court. But later Aurangzeb defeats Dara Shikuh and takes the reins. As the supporter of Dara Shikuh, the court scholars accuse Sarmad of being a kafir (disbeliever). During his trial, Aurangzeb asks him to recite the Kalima to show if he is a true Muslim. And since Sarmad has not finished his spiritual search that would allow him to embrace Allah with all his heart, he only recites the first phrase, like he always does, "There is no God. (la ilaha)." Sarmad refuses to recite the rest of the Kalima because it would be a lie if he recites it before he truly understands and accepts it. However, Aurangzeb orders his execution regardless of his explanation.

The fragmented narrative of *MOUH* mirrors Sarmad's story. It is impossible to tell those sophisticated stories in a homolingual way, and Sarmad's spirit enables "those who came to him to take his story and turn it into whatever they needed it to be" (Roy, *MOUH* 10). When Anjum finds out Saddam's hidden past and identity, she asks him to "[r]ecite the Kalima" (85). All Saddam could say is "La ilaha…" and then he stops, just like what Sarmad does. It should be noted that the stories of the people in *MOUH*, for Roy, are not recitable. Therefore, any attempt to forge them into a monolithic narrative would be unfaithful and disdainful of the spirit. Anjum's (edited) Flyover Story, Kulsoom Bi's orientations with the eunuch's giggle in the show, Tilo's

162

archive of recoveries, and others' re-translation of past feature the spirit of the fragmented and wounded narrative of India.
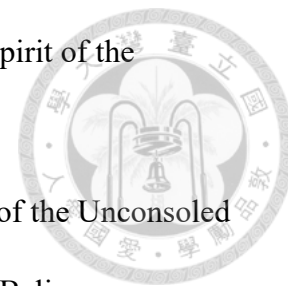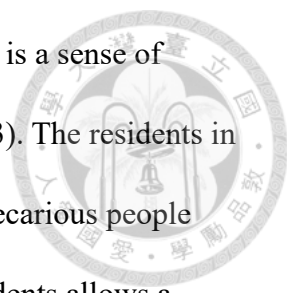
As Roy states, Sarmad is "Hazrat of Utmost Happiness, Saint of the Unconsoled and Solace of the Indeterminate, Blasphemer among Believers and Believers among Blasphemers" (416). At the end of the story, Anjum takes Saddam and Zainab (along with others) to Hazrat Sarmad and asks him to bless the young couple. Anjum returns to the place where her mother asks Sarmad to teach her how to love her daughter. Sarmad's story marks the spirit of the novel. In the alternative narrative space at the graveyard, they are able to answer their own traumas, respond to others', and learn to care for each other. In responding to Sophie Mol's question, Roy titles the first chapter of *MOUH* "Where Do Old Birds Go to die?" (3).[65] At the beginning of the story, the blind imam asks Anjum, "Tell me, you people, when you die, where do they bury you? Who bathes the bodies? Who says the prayers?" (5).

To write the ambient air that has caste, gender, Kashmir, and other things, Roy describes the atmosphere through Anjum's words: "Where do old birds go to die? Do they fall on us like stones from the sky? Do we stumble on their bodies in the streets?" (5). In Roy's novel, Jannat Guest House becomes a place where the "old birds" can die. It is a place of support for people who fall from social and economic networks. In the guesthouse, the living and the dead commune with each other, and a network is established based on mutual care. The guesthouse thus becomes a viable but not permanently sustainable care community for the precarious people.

---

[65] In *TGST*, Sophie Mol is depicted as "the seeker of small wisdoms," and "*Where do old birds go to die?*" is one of the questions that she poses (17).
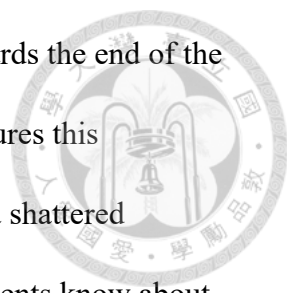
163

According to Isabell Lorey, precarious,[66] in its broadest sense, is a sense of "insecurity and vulnerability, destabilization and endangerment" (33). The residents in the guesthouse follow the features of the precarious; they are the precarious people who have no protection and security. The precariousness of the residents allows a sharing "with other precarious lives" at a collective level (35). In Lorey's example of a group of feminist activists, Precarias a la deriva, she suggests that the precarious state could mark "the starting-point from political alliances against a logic of protection and security" (161). In *MOUH*, various narratives of the precarious are shared in the graveyard. From her own precarized experience, Anjum could share (and trade) her story with Saddam's. The sharing takes place "in their encounters and affections with other precarious they seek to break through the isolation" (Lorey 163). The people in the guesthouse develop a common notion of a "care community, a cuidadanía" which is formed "in encounters with others, in exchanges with them, both multiplicity and the singularities of existence manifest themselves" (165, 164).

The logic of care and security exemplified in the guesthouse is contrary to the governing techniques of the state; it is a place where the precarious people would not be considered as less worthy of protection. The guesthouse is a care community for the borderlanders to share their stories. It is an alternative national space for the borderlanders to discard the hierarchization of the social, political, and economic relations of unevenness. The precarious people are residents on the borderland of caste, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and region.

---

[66] Lorey states, there are three dimensions of the precarious: precariousness, precarity, and precarisation. Precariousness is an existential category related to the vulnerability of human and non-human life. Precarity is the political condition of domination; it is a condition of structural inequality. Precarisation is the process to decide who is considered less worthy of protection.
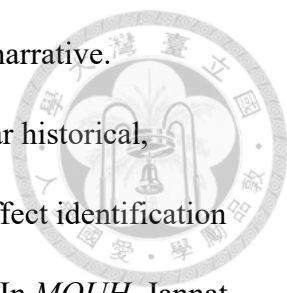
Roy makes it possible to tell a fragmented story of India. Towards the end of the novel, through revealing Miss Jebeen the Second's story, Roy reassures this together-but-not-oneness way of telling a story is sophisticated for a shattered narrative. In a letter which is transferred to the guesthouse, the residents know about the story of Miss Jebeen the Second's mother. She is a Maoist fighting for land rights. She is arrested by six policemen when she is about to return from her "outside work" (422). The policemen rape her and torture her, and she becomes pregnant after the gang rape. She names the baby Udaya (Dawn) and leaves her in Jantar Mantar when she attends the anti-corruption event. What the letter reveals about Miss Jebeen the Second has bonded the residents together:

> Each of the listeners recognized, in their own separate ways, something of themselves and their own stories, their own Indo-Pak, in the story of this unknown, faraway woman who was no longer alive. It made them close ranks around Miss Jebeen the Second like a formation of trees, or adult elephants—an impenetrable fortress in which she, unlike her biological mother, would grow up protected and loved. (426)

In response to Miss Jebeen the First's question, "Can you tell me a *real* story" (316), Roy applies a sprawling form in the narrative of *MOUH*. Through unraveling the stories of these borderlanders, Roy is sure that there would be more stories to come: "Because Miss Jebeen, Miss Udaya Jebeen, was [sic] come" (438). Miss Jebeen the Second symbolizes as the congregation of the stories of the past (as well as of the

165

present), and she is able to carry them into the future with her own narrative.

The emotional and social lives of people take place in particular historical, cultural, and sociopolitical contexts in *MOUH*. These dimensions affect identification and subjectification processes in particular ways on the borderland. In *MOUH*, Jannat Guest House becomes the precarious people's "Home away from Home" (Roy, *TGST* 276). Dwelling on the borderland of Duniya (the World), the precariousness of the borderlanders generates an incentive for the mutual feeling of trust and friendship. The guesthouse is the literal as well as figural borderland in *MOUH*; it is a site where traumatic experiences can be shared and comprehended. Border can be seen as a wound: a literal wound that marks the geographical site of separation between here and there, us and them, and a figural wound of separation between life and death, knowns and unknowns, being and non-being. Borderland is the site where these binaries overlap and intermingle with one another. Inflicted by a cut or an incision, a wound (literal and figural) should be treated with care in order to heal. In the mixture of various narratives of Roy's writing, she depicts a place where both inside and outside, spatial and temporal coexist. The healing of the wound lies in the positive recognition of the wound as a part of the body. As the borderlanders share and reinscribe their narratives on the borderland, they forge a consciousness of together-but-not-oneness, which provides them with a vision for future survival.

In light of Roy's trauma narrative, translation with a heterolingual attitude could produce an Anzaldúan mestiza consciousness in national discourse. Moreover, this branching out of the borderlanders' stories can be shared. If the branching out of the precarious people can form a care community that they can speak to one another,

166

could this sharing be expanded transnationally? Through proposing a comparative

project for Taiwan, the texts in Taiwan might be re-examined in a different light.

There is an impasse in Taiwan study for Taiwan is unluckily marginalized when it

comes to postcolonial studies. What I like to do is to find a way for Taiwanese texts to

be re-included in the discussions of Western discourse and Asian Studies. Bearing this

in mind, I would like to examine this mestiza consciousness further and comparatize

it with Taiwan's works of minor literature in the next chapter.
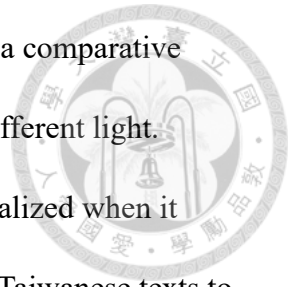
Chapter Three: Minor Literature, Translation/Transnation, and Comparatizing Taiwan

Studying Taiwan is an impossible task. I say "impossible" because Taiwan is always already written out of mainstream Western discourse due to its insignificance. Taiwan, when any attention is given to it at all, is most often reduced to an object of empirical political analysis, and has been systematically dismissed as a worthwhile object of critical analysis in cultural and other humanistic studies with theoretical import. Taiwan is too small, too marginal, too ambiguous, and thus too insignificant. Taiwan does not enjoy the historical accident of having been colonised by a Western power in the nineteenth or twentieth century; instead it was colonised by other Asian powers: Japan (1895–1945) and the exiled Chinese Nationalist government (1945 to the late 1980s) respectively. If it had been colonised by Britain, Taiwan would have been able to share in the fashion of postcolonial theory. If it had been colonised by France, Taiwan would be part of Francophone studies. Colonisation by Japan and another ethnic Chinese regime effectively ghettoised Taiwan within the realm of "Asian studies," where it is further marginalised within so-called Sinology or Chinese Studies.

—Shu-mei Shih, "Globalisation and the (in)significance of Taiwan"

In a 2003 article talking about the academic insignificance of Taiwan, Shu-mei Shih uncovers the predicament of Taiwan study due to its marginality and illegibility. Taiwan, or under the concept of the KMT regime, the ROC (the Republic of China), is a small island without official nation-state status since 1971. Various political

interests and colonial pasts complicate the history and culture of Taiwan.[67] Being

"always already written out of the mainstream Western discourse," Taiwan has been

overlooked by academics in North America as well as in the field of Chinese/East

Asian studies. Shih criticizes the fact that Taiwan is unluckily marginalized because it

has not been colonized by imperial powers like the British Empire or the French

Empire. Taiwan is not included in postcolonial fields of study like Anglophone

studies and Francophone studies despite the fact that it has been colonized serially by

Japan and then by the KMT.

More than a decade has passed since Shih's article came out, but the significance

of Taiwan remains unsung under the shadow of superpowers (for example, China and

the U. S.). In order to overcome the impasse of Taiwan study, Shih and others propose

a comparative project for Taiwan in *Comparatizing Taiwan*. It is a comparative

project that would situate Taiwan "globally, comparatively, and relationally" with

other countries and places (Shih and Liao 1). As a site of crossings of different

margins—sociocultural, historiographical, and geopolitical—Taiwan can be studied

along with broader and more viable discourses. This approach not only situates

Taiwan in a global framework but also provides a model for studying small nations

and islands. According to Shih, comparatizing is "a transitive verb that acts directly

upon the word 'Taiwan,' so that 'Taiwan' itself becomes an open term that acquires

specific meanings in relation to that which it is compared to" (1). It offers a strategic

exercise for Taiwan to be recognized in transnational discourses. Through involving

---

[67] A further context is given in "Taiwan's post-colonial and queer discourses in the 1990s" in *Comparatizing Taiwan*. Prof. Liang-ya Liou from National Taiwan University gives a detailed review and critique about the complex relationship between post-colonial and queer discourses in Taiwan.

heterolingual and homolingual addresses in the discussion, this chapter would like to

connect Taiwan's local narratives with minor literature to seek transnational

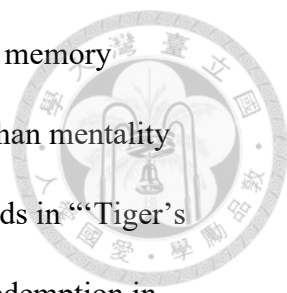recognition and insights that are not readily available within mainstream discourses.
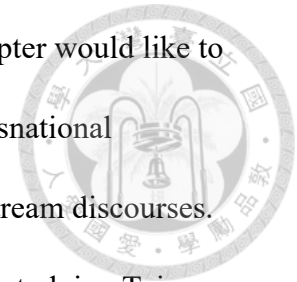
According to Shih, the conceptualization of Sinophone allows studying Taiwan

to be included in some other discourses. It helps Taiwan to have dialogues with other

academic disciplines. For many people, sinophone means Chinese-speaking, but in

fact, it is not necessarily in direct relation to China. Sinophone studies is a study of

Sinitic-language cultures "on the margins of geopolitical nation-states and their

hegemonic productions" ("The Concept of the Sinophone" 710). Sinophone studies is

a multidisciplinary mode of inquiry that investigates Sinitic-language cultures beyond

the borders of PRC (the People's Republic of China). It is also a study of the works of

writers who express themselves in a Sinitic language under the shadow of Sinophone

communities. As Shih states, "Sinophone studies takes as its object of study the

Sinitic-language communities and cultures outside China as well as ethnic minority

communities and cultures within China where Mandarin is adopted or imposed"

("Globalization" 11). Sinophone studies is not China studies; it offers a theoretical

tool and an alternative discourse to analyze Sinitic-language works beyond the

borders of China. To re-examine Taiwan's academic marginal state, we should

explore Taiwan's orphan state under an international discursive system.[68]

The orphan consciousness expressed in Zhuoliu Wu's *Orphan of Asia* has

---

[68] There are a lot of scholars in Taiwan trying to engage Taiwan in a broader discussion of how the
establishment of Taiwanese theories is possible. See 陳, 瑞麟. et al. *知識臺灣: 臺灣理論的可能性
= Knowledge Taiwan.* 初版. 臺北市: 麥田出版, 2016.

become the "concept-metaphor" in Taiwan's cultural and collective memory (Chien-heng Wu 40). Trapped in the parent/child dynamics, the orphan mentality structures the discursive field in Taiwan. As Chien-heng Wu contends in "'Tiger's Leap into the Past': Comparative Temporality and the Politics of Redemption in *Orphan of Asia*," the concept-metaphor of orphan is commonly assumed as "a true representation of the suffering Taiwanese abandoned by their national mother (China) and discriminated against by their colonial father (Japan)" (45). Wu elaborates that this orphan metaphor has become a fantasy structuring the way "the Taiwanese imagine themselves" (43). He proposes that in order to reactivate the fragmented and unacknowledged memory of Taiwan, a reconceptualization of Taiwan as "a locus of enunciation" would "translate a despondent legacy into a living project and afford us an opportunity to begin the beginning again" (49, 43). He does this by revisiting the ending of *Orphan of Asia* and providing "an alternative conceptual genealogy" of Taiming's madness (46).[69]

During his investigation, Wu notices that the local knowledge embodied in the daily practices in the novel is repressed by two systems of knowledge (Chinese traditionalism and Japanese modernity). Furthermore, this Han-centric understanding of Taiwan also cripples the status of indigenous people with this orphan metaphor. As a Tao wirter, Syaman Rapongan displays the Austronesian way of looking at Taiwan (as well as the world) in his works. He situates his texts in a given time and place historically; he commits his texts to the place where Tao people reside (a small island

---

[69] Hu Taiming, the protagonist of *Orphan of Asia*, is born in Taiwan during the period of Japanese rule. Raised in the Chinese tradition by his grandfather, Taiming is forced into the Japanese schooling. He ultimately finds himself trapped with three cultures but belongs to none, ending up going insane. See Wu, Zhuoliu. *Orphan of Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

outside Taiwan). The linguistic registers in Syaman Rapongan's works often epitomize Tao people's implied differences and oceanic worldview. Inspired by this observation, I would like to see Taiwan as a site of knowledge production by examining local knowledge that is different from the landmass-based one.[70] To comparatize Taiwan, I would like to shift the focus on national singularity and national history to a broader oceanic view with Syaman Rapongan's Tao/Yami writing.

Understanding Taiwan in terms of landmasses somehow reduces the study of Taiwan either to "a Greater China studies" or to "a narrow Taiwan-only studies" (Muyard 28). If someone pays attention to the street names in Taipei City, he/she may find that the streets are related to the geography of China. Divided into four quadrants by Zhongxiao and Zhongshan roads, the street names in these four quadrants match their positions on a map of China (see fig. 5). It shows how, in the process of constructing a national mindset, the conceptual framework is influenced and shaped by the mainlander KMT's regime of continental imagination. Although this nationalist ideology has been criticized over time, a new Taiwan-centered nationalism (still in flux and yet to come) might still treat the island as if it were a continent because of the state's definition of nation and nationalism.

---

[70] For example, writers like Zhuoliu Wu and Shih-tao Yeh express the complex relation with the mainland (i.e. China) while Tao people's oceanic imagination offers not only an effective critique of the mainlander KMT, but also an academic proposal to study Taiwan.
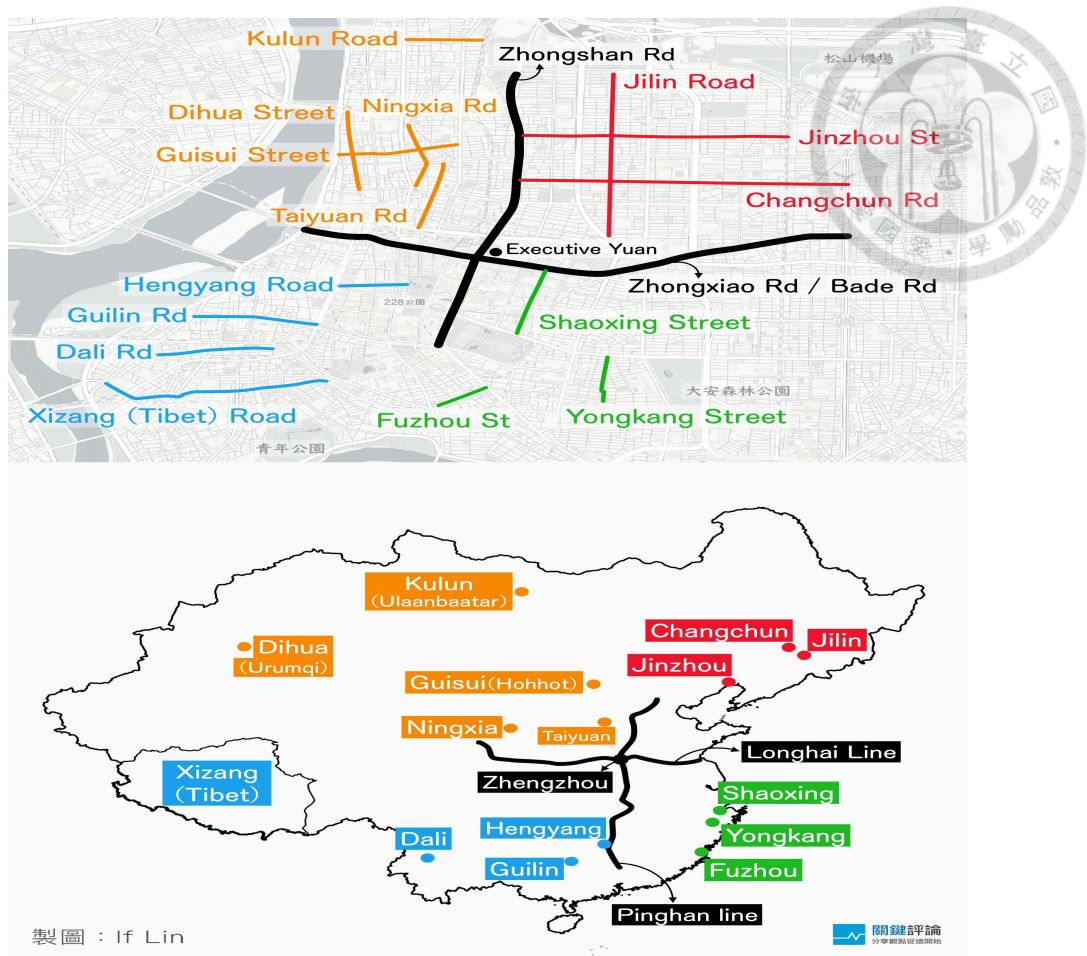
Fig. 5. Comparison Maps of Taipei (above) and China (below).[71]

Contrary to this landmass perspective, a concept called "Oceanic Taiwan" is

brought up in *Comparatizing Taiwan* to outline an oceanic imaginary for Taiwan as

an effective critique of nation and nationalism (2). It is further stated that in cases of

surviving under the shadow of powers, in places such as diverse as Quebec, Ireland,

Palestine, and Georgia, "indigineity is a crucial force of mediation for the relationship

between the old sending country (France and China) and the receiving country

(Canada and Taiwan), constituting the triangular structure of settler colonialism" (3).

A Tao/Yami indigenous oceanic imagination that is open and dialectical with its own

---

71 The comparison map is extracted from the article, "Nationalist Treasure: Taipei's Streets contain a Secret Map of China." See https://international.thenewslens.com/article/85727.

tidalectics[72] is not only a promising academic proposal, but it would also bring along a set of insights into the difference between the settler and the indigenous perspectives. Tidalectics is a dialects of tides and lands that forms a unique oceanic imagination for Tao people to define who they are by connecting themselves with both the land and sea. This unique imagination helps to understand Taiwan from a very different trajectory.

Born in 1957, Syaman Rapongan (whose Chinese name was Nu-lai Shi back then) is among the first Tao people who went to "mainland" Taiwan to study in college.[73] He had various jobs in Taipei including that of a taxi driver after graduation. He also participated in some indigenous liberation movements like the protests against the storage of nuclear waste in Lanyu.

With the intention of re-learning how to be an authentic Tao man, he returned to Lanyu in 1989. Considered as a degenerated[74] Tao in the first few years of his return, Syaman Rapongan went diving and fishing every day and practiced laboring as other Tao people did.

[This is what I am looking for, to build up my social status by labor (traditional

work), to go deep into my culture's civilizing process with labor, to live and

share with my people the food from nature, to abolish my stigma of being

Sinicized, and to allow my repressed pride back to life.] (Syaman Rapongan,

---

[72] Barbadian poet and historian Edward Kamau Brathwaite proposes the idea of tidalectics as a way to challenge the notion of dialectic. Cyclical rather than linear, the concept of tidalectics focuses on a horizontal and back and forth motion without a definitive point of origin or a conclusion. This offers different readings and interpretations for (post)colonial discourses.

[73] He went to Taiwan again in 1999 to pursue a master's degree in Anthropology at National Tsing Hua University.

[74] According to Syaman Rapongan, a mature Tao man lumbers in the mountains and fishes at sea. He is physically fit for manual labor and mentally calm at sea.

174

Cold Sea, Deep Feelings 148)[75]

During these years, Tao people's tales of life at sea became the main part of his

writing. For him, writing the sea is a way to continue the education given to him by

his forefathers. Since then, life at sea and writing about that life have become the

center of his life.[76] As a Tao, Syaman Rapongan is often classified as an indigenous

writer or a Tao writer. However, I would like to point out that, due to Syaman

Rapongan's ethnic status, by referring him as a Tao writer, I do not conceive his

works as mere ethnographic writing binding exclusively to the Tao community. His

writing entails a way to comparatize with a larger community:

[Living at Lanyu, as tradition and modernity coexist at the moment. My people

face the predicament presented by globalization and modernity, just like other

peoples of the world once colonized by Western powers. An uncertain number of

things are growing and vanishing in this transition process. From the perspective

of a writer, these phenomena become my literary field.] (*The Face of the*

Navigator 11-12)[77]

His works are not just indigenous writings or Tao writings; they are also part of

---

[75] 「這就是我所要追求的,用勞動(傳統工作)累積自己的社會地位,用勞動深入探討自己文化的文明過程;與族人共存共享大自然的食物;廢除自己被漢化的污名;讓被壓抑的驕傲再生。」See《冷海情深》[Cold Sea, Deep Feelings],台北:聯合文學,1997。
[76] To see a list of Syaman Rapongan's works, visit http://reading.udn.com/act/syaman/index-en.html The English translation of Syaman Rapongan's texts in the discussion is mine.
[77] 我生活在蘭嶼,在傳統與現代並行的同時,我的民族如同其他世界各地曾經被西方世界殖民的部族一樣,面對全球化、現代化的困擾,轉型中許多數不清的在萌芽,在迅逝等等,從作家的視野來說,這些就是我的文學場域。 See《航海家的臉》[*The Face of the Navigator*],新北市:INK印刻文學,2007。

Taiwan literature and of world literature. They are comparable and produce potential transnational networks within the Pacific discourse.
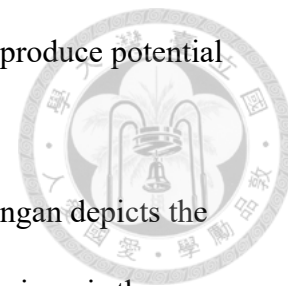
In his 2015 novel, *The Death of Ngalumirem*,[78] Syaman Rapongan depicts the day-to-day life of Tao people with the story of Ngalumirem. Ngalumirem is the descent of a navigator family; he is also an excellent diver who is proud of his family and culture. Other Taos consider him as a nut job/shumagpan a Ta-u or sumagpiyan (Tao)/sen-cin-pin (Chinese:神經病) because he would not get acquainted with the modern life brought by the KMT government. In school, he is called "Mr. Zeroes"[79] by other students and is scolded and beaten by the teachers for his poor performance. Barely able to read and write in Chinese, Ngalumirem leaves for Taiwan to make money after he graduates from elementary school. He works in many places, including places in Taiwan and the Philippines. He returns to his empty "vahay" (house/家屋) in Lanyu in 1989 after the money he makes in the Philippines (along with his other possessions) is stolen.

During this time, he has known a teenage boy named Tagahan, who is also like him, a Mr. Zeroes. Considering Tagahan[80] and he are of the same kind of people, Ngalumirem starts to teach him the way in the sea and shares his family stories with him. Holding grudges against the policies of the KMT government (and the insensitiveness of some Taos), Ngalumirem becomes a sullen ponderer and a gloomy drunkard. In the end, he takes his own life after being sent to a nursing home in Taiwan.

---

[78] 《安洛米恩之死》，新北市：INK 印刻文學，2015。
[79] In Chinese: "零分先生." This means that he gets a lot of zero scores.
[80] The name of Tagahan is not unified in the book. The Romanization of his Tao name differs a little in the text. Sometimes the name is spelled as Tagaha or Tagangan (44, 153).

The Death of Ngalumirem is a tribute to the vanishing of a navigator family. The depiction of the shifts in lifestyle, environmental surroundings, customs of night sailing, and other technical knowledge form a way for Syaman Rapongan to translate the sea.
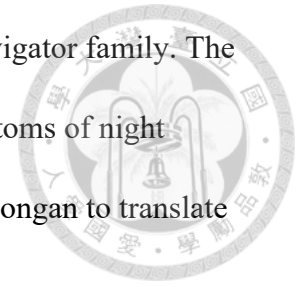
A Minoritized Translator of the Sea

In "What Is a Minor Literature," Deleuze and Guattari inspect the impasse that bars access to writing for Kafka. They contend that the literature for the Jews of Prague is "something impossible" (17). This impossibility is also expressed in Syaman Rapongan's works: the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in the major language (Chinese), and the impossibility of writing otherwise. To conquer this impossibility, Syaman Rapongan utilizes Chinese for his strange and minor use. His Chinese writing is marked with additional words, phrases, and syntax in Tao language. He deterritorializes Chinese with Tao syntax and then reterritorializes it with Tao episteme.

Through Syaman Rapongan's deterritorialization and reterritorialization, the oceanic worldview of Tao people can be translated for readers who are unfamiliar with this view. In the book, Ngalumirem poses a question when he first meets Tagahan, "Tagangan, mu jyangayi do gak-ku?"[81] Tagahan tells Ngalumirem that he doesn't want to go to school because he cannot load those Chinese characters in his head: "Yaji makangai o vatevatek do uwu ko" (裝不下那些漢字，在我的頭。) (13).

Syaman Rapongan's transliteration and Chinese word-by-word translation of Tagahan's reply exemplifies how a minority is being constructed within a major

---

[81] Tagangan/Tagahan, you don't go to school, why? (Why don't you go to school, Tagangan/Tagahan?)
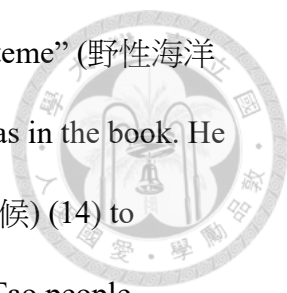
177

language. The syntax influenced by the Tao language is a deterritorialization of Chinese. There are many examples which indicate how Syaman Rapongan minoritizes Chinese:

a. Ngalumirem uses "the body before my soul" (我魂先前的肉體) to refer to his late father. Although this expression is odd in Chinese, it demonstrates the unique parent-child relationship of Tao people (34). Take Syaman Rapongan's name for example, Tao men (women as well) change their names to match the names given to their firstborns. That is, "Syaman Rapongan" means "the father of Rapongan." Therefore, to refer him as Mr. Syaman disregards this convention.

b. When Tagahan and Ngalumirem talk about the "kang-yi" (protest) at the airport, Tagahan tells Ngalumirem that "Yaru kisat do fei-ci-tsang, xi cyaraw"[82] [Many policemen, at the airport, today] (121). According to *Yami Texts with Reference Grammar and Dictionary*, the basic word order in Tao is "a Predicate (new information) followed by a Subject (old information). Predicates can be subclassified as Nominal and Verbal Predicate Clauses" (Rau and Dong 89). The syntactic reversal thus becomes a form of rhetoric inversion, which shapes Syaman Rapongan's poetic writing. Syaman Rapongan highlights the unique syntax of Tao with his deterritorialized Chinese, which makes his writing become a new and heterolingual mode of translation (of Tao worldview).
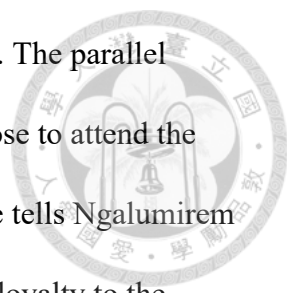
---

[82] 很多警察，在機場，在今天。

178

c. In order to elaborate on the concept of "wild oceanic episteme" (野性海洋知識), Syaman Rapongan uses various Tao terms and ideas in the book. He uses expressions such as "ten steps of time" (十步路的時候) (14) to express Tao people's sense of time. He also depicts how Tao people talk about the weather. Instead of talking about the weather, they talk about "kakawan" [the reef] (100-101).

d. There are also some transliterations from Chinese to Tao because some ideas are lacking in Tao. For instance, Ngalumirem tells Tagahan that he acts like a Wumang (liu-mang, a rascal) because he has to act tough to avoid exploitation. Wumang means hermit crabs in Tao. However, the old generation could not pronounce "liu-mang" properly, so they pronounce it "Wumang" (46-47). This indicates that the Tao language has been influenced by the Han concepts as well.

These examples illustrate how Syaman Rapongan's use of words makes strange the major language. *The Death of Ngalumirem* serves as a translation practice with both its content and form. The features in the book are in accordance with the other two characteristics of minor literature. The work depicts how the individuals in Lanyu are connected to politics. Ngalumirem criticizes that Lanyu, as the nuclear waste dumpsite of Taiwan, is colonized by national policies. He is able to draw an analogy with the Christian mission, claiming that Christianity too is a colonial religion.

In his parallel writing about Tao people's protest against the nuclear waste storage facility, Syaman Rapongan exhibits how politics "absorbs everyone no less

179

than as a matter of life and death" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 17). The parallel

shows some Tao people go to the airport to protest while some choose to attend the

raffle held by the village office. One old lady from the village office tells Ngalumirem

that "those who attend the raffle would be given a chicken for their loyalty to the

party" (參與的每個人也會發放一隻雞，回饋忠於黨的黨員。) (141).[83] Disgusted by

the invitation, Ngalumirem asks the old lady, "Apiyapiya manuk am, apiyapiya o

kuzuki?" [Which is better, chicken or no nukes?] (140). The depiction of the

day-to-day life of Tao people is collective as well as heterogeneous. Syaman

Rapongan deals with the complex collective experiences through being open to the

dialogical relationship mentioned above. This enables him to "express another

possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another

sensibility" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 17).

In other words, by making strange the major language, Syaman Rapongan gets to

convey the oceanic cosmology of the indigenous Tao tribes. The possibility of

infusing another consciousness and sensibility into the conventional landmass

perspective is a translation that serves as a heterolingual mode of address. The

heterolingual mode of address accentuates the disparity between addressing and

communicating. Unlike the homolingual address disregards the distance between the

addressee and the addresser because the translation takes place in a homogeneous

medium, the heterolingual address treats translation as an activity occurring

"whenever the addressee accepts a delivery from the addresser" (Sakai, *Translation*

and Subjectivity 9). The heterolingual address denies an aggregate "we" that assumes

---

[83] The "party" here means the KMT party.

180

communality and does not take comprehension between the addresser and the addressee for granted.

In view of the heterolingual address, Syaman Rapongan's parallel writing of the raffle and the antinuclear movement underscores a nonaggregate Tao community. This nonaggregate depiction allows Tao people to address themselves as a "we" that are "distant from one another" because their togetherness "is not grounded on any common homogeneity" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 7). Syaman Rapongan gives a varied and heterolingual depiction of Tao people: unreflective Tao people who think they should be grateful for national policies (party members of KMT), those who undergo introspection and decide to "return" to tradition (Teacher Chang and Priest Zhou), those who are thoughtful and intellectual enough to recognize the repressive regime (Ngalumirem and his brother), etc.

Syaman Rapongan's heterolingual depiction does not rely on a comparative process between opposing sides; it expresses Brathwaite's tidalectics rather than dialectics. Therefore, Syaman Rapongan's writing too illustrates the tidalectics of insularity instead of the dialectics of landmass. Contrary to the classroom which teaches Sinocentric classes, he gives us a classroom that teaches "wild oceanic episteme" (野性海洋知識) (*The Death of Ngalumirem* 14). For Ngalumirem and Tagahan , their oceanic worldview is cultivated at sea. With this in mind, I would like to further explore this oceanic imagination with Brathwaite's concept of tidalectics.

The Classroom of Tidalectics

Edward Kamau Brathwaite refers to the image of an old woman he sees every day when elaborating the concept of tidalectics in *ConVERSation with Nathaniel*

Mackey:

> She's going on like this every morning, sweeping this sand—of all
> things! —away from… sand from sand, seen? … And I say Now what's she
> doing? What's this labour involve with? Why's she labouring in this way? …
> Because I get the understandin(g) that she somehow believes that if she don't
> [*sic*] do this, the household—that "poverty-stricken" household of which she's
> part—probably head of—would have somehow collapse. (30)

The old lady's image gives him the answer to his question, "What is Caribbean/the
Caribbean? What is this—this archipelago, these beautiful islands—yes—which are
contrasted in their beauty with extreme poverty and a sense—a memory—of
catastrophe…" (29). The answer lies in the movement of the old lady, "it seems as if
her feet, which all along I thought were walking on the sand… were really… walking
on the water… and she was travelling across the middlepass age, constantly coming
from where she had come from—in her case Africa—to this spot in North Coast
Jamaica where she now lives…" (33).

The old lady's ceaseless motions between ocean and land shape Braithwaite's
theory about how the passages between the two places creolize the Caribbean
subjectivity. His concept of tidalectics marks a repetition of the "coming out" (of
Africa) as well as the "arrival" (in the Caribbean). The back and forth movement is
the same as that of the ocean; it is a movement "coming from one
continent/continuum, touching another, and then receding ('reading') from the

182

island(s) into the perhaps creative chaos of the(ir) future… " (34). Tidalectics offers a framework for discussing the complex relationship between the insular and the global.

Inspired by Brathwaite, Elizabeth DeLoughrey describes tidalectics as "a methodological tool" that provides "the framework for exploring the complex and shifting entanglement between sea and land, diaspora and indigeneity, and routes and roots" (2). This oceanic imagination provides an "alter/native historiography" that challenges "linear models of colonial progress." DeLoughrey treats tidalectics (tidal dialectics) as a "geopoetic model of history" that questions "western colonialism and its linear and materialist biases" (2). In her "comparative literature project," DeLoughrey proposes to view tidalectics as "a dynamic and shifting relationship between land and sea that allows island literatures to be engaged in their spatial and historical complexity" (2-3).

In a similar fashion, Syaman Rapongan's writing also highlights the tidalectic relation between sea and land. When Ngalumirem shares his memory of school with Tagahan, he expresses how he suffers from the traditional education system. He senses that the schoolteachers seem to value the Han-centered classes more than Tao people's wisdom of life. Ngalumirem is beaten at school because he cannot write his Chinese name. One day, he finally loses it and throws a rock aiming over the teacher's head. He tells Tagahan that a stream of blood flows out of the teacher's head because he uses his head to seek the throwing rock (他的頭就用力追我的石頭，他的頭就這樣流血了。) (41). Ngalumirem, as the teacher of the oceanic classroom, informs his only student:

183

我們並非是天生的笨，而是我們一出生，我們說的語言是達悟的話，不是華語，有人學得快，有些人學得慢，就像建造拼板船一樣，有的人的船漂亮，有的人的船看來就笨笨的，每個人都有學習的差異性，我想我們兩個是屬於學習華語的障礙者，但不是笨蛋。(41)
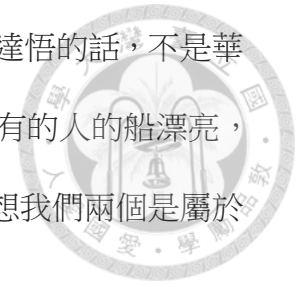
[We are not born stupid. The fact is that we speak Tao the moment we were born; Chinese is not our native language. Some are fast learners (of Chinese); some are slow learners. It is like the construction of dadalas:[84] some people have pretty dadalas, and others' look dumb. There are various levels when it comes to learning styles. Us two belong to the impaired group of Chinese learning, but we are no fools.]

Ngalumirem's reflection on the individual difference in learning embodies the movement of the tides. It is a near cyclical movement that engages the back and forth motion at every moment; however, the movement does not return to the same spot of origin every time.

The tidalectic ideology of Tao people is also shown in the afterword of *The Death of Ngalumirem*. In the afterword, Syaman Rapongan writes about how different tribes in Lanyu speak Chinese and English with varied Tao accents. He explains how these accents become the source of laughter for the Tao students. In one of these examples, some students explain the absence of one classmate: "no don't come, they

---

[84] Dadalas are joint-logged canoes made of 21 to 27 pieces of logs from various types of trees.

say (they say that she won't come)"[85] (234). The syntax of the sentence almost makes one think the opposite and expect that the student would show up. The tidalectic relationship corresponds to Sakai's concept of the heterolingual address; it uncovers how the addressees respond to a speech delivery "with varying degrees of comprehension, including cases of the zero degree at which they would miss its signification completely" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 4).
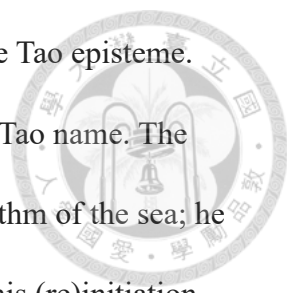
Syaman Rapongan exemplifies the tidalectic encounters with his depiction of the classroom of "wild oceanic episteme" (70). He describes how Teacher Chang (張老師) relearns the knowledge of the weather and wind on the sea, the color of clouds, the waxing and waning of the moon, and the night calendar of Tao people as one of the examples of tidalectics (70-71). Teacher Chang is one of the few Tao men who does not know how to fish and build dadalas. He is also Ngalumirem's cousin and schoolteacher; he goes to college in Taiwan and returns to Lanyu after graduation. Ngalumirem often teases him as a disabled Tao man. Sensing that he is viewed as the inferior common man by Tao standards, he asks Priest Zhou (周牧師) to take him out to sea.

Because of Ngalumirem's constant mockery, Teacher Chang is forced to reconsider the Han-ethnocentric education at school. He thinks that Ngalumirem is "an illiterate on land, but excellent hunter at sea, while an intellectual like him is a coward and a disabled man at sea" (86). (陸地上的文盲卻是海上的優質的獵人，知識分子卻是海上懦夫，海上殘障者。) He is "a teacher of the classroom on land, but a kindergarten student of the classroom at sea" (陸地教室的老師，海上教室的幼稚

---

[85] 『沒有不來，她們說的 （她們說，她不要來）。』

園學生) (95). His first class at sea becomes his (re)initiation into the Tao episteme. During the process, he is asked to pray in Tao so he can reclaim his Tao name. The sound of his "real" name makes him feel connected to the wavy rhythm of the sea; he is aware that his people speak differently at sea than on land. After his (re)initiation and the class of tidalectics, Teacher Chang could ponder over the traditional Tao cosmology as well as the Han-centered education system with alternative thinking. He could teach the students about the pristine legends of Tao people within the classroom on land, after his tidalectic encounter.

The tidalectic thinking underlines an unorthodox relation to "the history of land, nation-building, and the nation-state" (DeLoughrey 5). The tidalectics explores the fluidity of history and thus "offers an alternative to the rigid ethnic genealogies of colonialism and nationalism" (21). The fluid seascapes in *The Death of Ngalumirem* offer alter/native discourses that allow us to problematize the nation-state "which encodes a rigid hierarchy of race, class, gender, religion, and ethnicity for its representative subjects" (DeLoughrey 21).

Ngalumirem poses various questions about nation-state (guo-jia/國家) with his tidalectic viewpoint. He questions the legitimacy of national policies: Lanyu as the state-owned land, the government as a lawful intruder, and Tao people as unlawful protectors (135, 137). On the topic of the nation-state, Ngalumirem is acute to point out the paradox of national policies in Lanyu. He asks the KMT party members why they believe that being the nuclear waste dumpsite is a blessing for Lanyu. He poses a rhetorical question: "If nuclear waste is something good, how come it is transported all the way to Lanyu from Taipei? This alone proves that nuclear waste is not

186

something good" (126). The alter/native discourse conveyed in the tidalectics of

Ngalumirem exercises a disturbing presence that challenges the rigid claim of

nationalism:
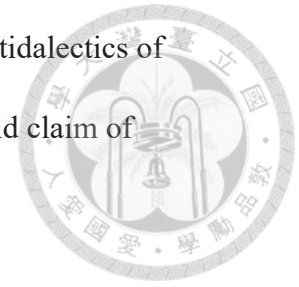
「合法的侵略者，非法的守護者」，怎麼會是如此呢？ 原住者是非法的一方，

他死去的大哥稱之被殖民者；有文字的國家是侵略者，在他們法律稱之統治

者。他想到，原來多數人使用文字，寫著沒有文字的弱勢民族的土地稱之國

有地，法規寫著合法侵略少數民族。原來上下班是有規則的，可以領薪水，

如警察、老師、鄉公所職員、國家的官僚有制度，也可以領薪水，有制度有

薪水，我沒有制度沒有薪水，達悟人沒有典章制度，大家都沒有薪水，達悟

人依賴自然環境的律則過生活，海洋被動的律則沒有文字，哇！原來製造文

字的民族就可以製造典章制度，沒有文字如我們就要遵守他們的遊戲規則。

原來我們原住者被統治的同時，也被宣判為歸順者。(137-138)

["Lawful intruders and unlawful protectors," how does it come to this? The

original residents become the unlawful ones, which are called by his late brother

as the colonized. The state that has words is the intruder, which is called the ruler

by their law. He thinks to himself, the majority using words write down the

names of the lands of the minority who do not employ words as state-owned

lands. It is written in the rules of law that it is legal to invade the minority. Well,

there are rules of clock in/clock out; you could get paid like policemen, teachers,

and clerks of township office. There is institution in national bureaucracy; you

get paid from the institution. I don't have an institution or salary. Tao people do

not have decrees and regulations; everyone has no payment. Tao people live by

the law of nature; there are no words in the wavy rhythm of sea. Wow! The

ethnicity that creates words could produce decrees and regulations. An ethnicity

with no words like us would have to follow their rules. As the original residents,

the minute we are ruled is the minute we are pronounced as submissive subjects.]
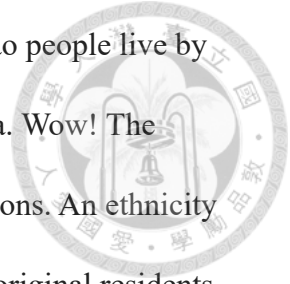
Syaman Rapongan highlights the paradoxical conceptualization between the ruler and

the ruled, the colonizer and the colonized by criticizing the state's institution.

Ngalumirem's reflection brings out the alter/native aspect of tidalectics; it expresses

the peripheral space that Lanyu occupies. And from that space, Syaman Rapongan

breaks up the stable imagination of a nation-state. Tao people's tidalectics not only

"writes back" to the landmasses, but the tidalectics also embodies Tao people's

"pristine"[86] (yuanchu/原初) concept that values their space as original and innovative.

Syaman Rapongan challenges the idea of nationalism through uncovering the

indigenous practices of national belonging that are more layered and inclusive than

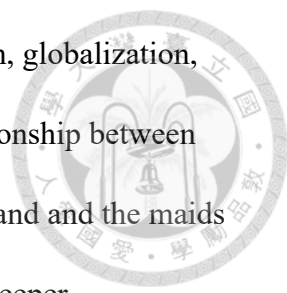the Han-centered one.

Transnation in Minor Literature

Ngalumirem reveals his transoceanic experience in the stories he tells Tagahan.

---

[86] Syaman Rapongan elaborates the idea of pristine-ness in his master's thesis, "The Original Fertile Island—Tao Oceanic Knowledge and Culture" (原初豐腴的島嶼—達悟民族的海洋知識與文化). He introduces that there are three modes of Tao pristine-ness: atngeh (the origin of life that is symbolized with the roots of trees), masawod pongso (the native species that structure the epistemic/semantic surroundings of Tao cosmology), and cinasasawondan ta (the knowledge system of belief based on tales, fishing culture, and religious ceremonies). See〈原初豐腴的島嶼—達悟民族的海洋知識與文化〉。碩士論文，國立清華大學人類學研究所，2003。https://hdl.handle.net/11296/9j28n5

His transoceanic experience is also a transnational exchange network. Tagahan describes Ngalumirem as a "sumagpiyan" (crazy person) who can speak English. Ngalumirem goes to Kaohsiung with his brother's classmate two years after his brother's death. There he learns how to fix the turbines of fishing vessels for several months. He then goes on board maintaining the turbines while catching lobsters and sharks in the Philippines. They also sell lobsters and shark fins to Hong Kong restaurants. After making some money, Ngalumirem settles in Port of Aparri along with two female housekeepers. He returns to Taiwan after a disastrous typhoon hits Port of Aparri.

Ngalumirem's transoceanic experience embodies a transnational concept that is different from the vertical transnationalism that privileges a center/periphery model. This perspective of transnationalism "includes minor culture articulations in a productive relationship with the major (in all its possible shapes, forms, and kinds), as well as minor-to-minor networks that circumvent the major altogether" (Lionnet and Shih 8). Ngalumirem's story uncovers his "micropractices of transnationality" (7). This transnationalism acknowledges the minor status shared by minorities; it is what Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih term as "minor transnationalism." Lionnet and Shih's idea of minor transnationalism refers to the minoritized subjectivities and discourses that create networks within and across national boundaries. Similar to Isabell Lorey's idea of cuidadanía, the two state that minor transnationalism could be "the mode in which the traumas of colonial, imperial, and global hegemonies as well as the affective dimensions of transcolonial solidarities continue to work themselves out and produce new possibilities" (21). The transoceanic view of nationalism, as well

as transnationalism, avoids the binary framework of postcolonialism, globalization, and transnationalism. For instance, one could comparatize the relationship between Ngalumirem and his housekeepers with the relationship of the husband and the maids in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Through this comparison, one could have a deeper understanding of the status of subaltern women without flattening out the distinct process of each subject's process of minoritization. One could also comparatize Antoinette's madness in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Taiming's craziness in *Orphan of Asia*, and Ngalumirem's "sumagpiyan-ness" in *The Death of Ngalumirem* to break down the binary model of "above-and-below, the utopic and dystopic, and the global and the local" (Lionnet and Shih 7).

The transoceanic and the transnational networks of minoritized cultures could be the "creative interventions" (7) within the rigid Anglophone postcolonial discourse. The network can offer the Anglophone postcolonial discourse that privileges a center/periphery model a less rigid understanding of the interplay between different registers. Ngalumirem's transnational movement could serve as a way to study territories-in-motion. He is a nomad at sea, possessing his critical consciousness that "resists settling into socially coded modes of thought and behavior" (Braidotti 5). Here, Rosi Braidotti's idea of "nomadic subject" could be engaged in a dialogue with Sakai's "subject in transit." For Braidotti, a nomadic subject could remain flexible, responsive, and creative under different conditions and surroundings. S/he is a polyglot that "surveys this situation with the greatest critical distance; a person who is in transit between the languages, neither here nor there, is capable of some healthy skepticism about steady identities and mother tongues" (12). Situating between

190

languages marks "an elusive point in the social" as well as constitutes "a vantage point in deconstructing identity" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 13; Braidotti 12). Ngalumirem's critical attitude could be connected to acts of deterritorialization and minoritization of knowledge; it is a nonhierarchical form of knowledge production that disrupts the notion of territory. Ngalumirem's minor transnationalism offers "a viable model for Taiwan to situate herself in an increasingly globalized world without always taking China as its major frame of reference" (Wu 35).

Comparing comparable objects more or less exposits the limitation of imagination owing to Taiwan's discursive context is "entrenched in a national/local mindset" (Shih and Liao 5). Therefore, in view of the minor transnationalism illustrated in the tidalectics of Syaman Rapongan's works, I would like to compare Syaman Rapongan's works with Lee A. Tonouchi's *Da Word* as my creative intervention.

As stated in *Comparatizing Taiwan*, minor transnationalism "would allow the indigenous communities in Taiwan to establish alliances with other Austronesian people across the Pacific" (35). Syaman Rapongan mentions in one of his social media posts that he bought a world map in Cook Islands that centers the Pacific.[87] In contrast to the Eurocentric world map that centers the Atlantic, Syaman Rapongan's map shows a nodal point where people can trace the movement of Austronesians all the way to Hawaii. Therefore, given the creative intervention produced through the networks of minor transnationalism, a seemingly far-fetched comparison (in the world map centering the Atlantic maybe, but not so much in the one that centers the Pacific)

---

[87] Syaman Rapongan. 17 Oct. 2018, www.facebook.com/syaman.rapongan/posts/2155563451134632

of minor literature between Taiwan and Hawaii could help open the possibility of studying Taiwan globally.
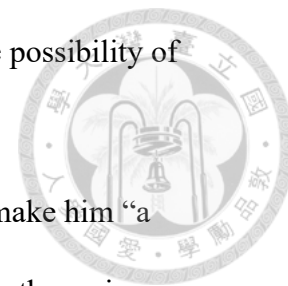
Syaman Rapongan's tidalectic writing and his nomadic body make him "a translator of the emotions of the ocean."[88] His vexed relationship to the major language allows him to maintain a critical distance from the Sinocentric hegemony. In the "mainland" Taiwan, he is denied both material capital and cultural capital; the moment he speaks (Chinese) becomes the moment that he is labeled as a "non-native" speaker. Trying to be an authentic Tao man when caught in between modern Taiwan and conventional Lanyu, Syaman Rapongan's nomadic body[89] exemplifies the paradoxical complexity of subjectivization. According to Syaman Rapongan's lived experience, it is implausible to choose between the search for modernity and the return to tradition. Thus, similar to his tidalectic writing which explores the complex entanglement between sea and land, his nomadic body also experiences the entanglement between modernity and tradition, globality and locality. The nomadic body embodies the subject-in-progress that creatively intervenes and opens an alter/native space for expression.

In *The Death of Ngalumirem*, Syaman Rapongan explores the learning and using of a major language (Chinese) with his parallel writing of Teacher Chang's classroom on land and Ngalumirem's classroom at sea. In a similar vein, a writer who lives in

---

[88] Syaman Rapongan states that he is (by far) the only one who translates the emotions of the ocean in an interview with Zhang Jinzhong (張錦忠). See 〈遠古親戚的親切感－問夏曼‧藍波安〉,《文訊》, 第 391 期 （2018）, 頁 141-142。

[89] Syaman Rapongan. 〈游牧的身體〉,《航海家的臉》（台北 :印刻 ， 2007）, 頁7-12。["Nomadic Body." *The Face of the Navigator*. Taipei: INK, 2007, pp. 7-12.]

Hawaii called Lee A. Tonouchi, also tries to explore the problem of major language (in his case, English) through his depiction of school. Unlike Syaman Rapongan reveals that his writing in Chinese is inevitable and under duress, Lee Tonouchi applies a more drastic approach to the use of English.

Da Minoritizing Powah

Calling himself "da notorious Pidgin Guerrilla," Lee Tonouchi tries to transform the English language as a medium for various gendered, racial, and classed groups. He challenges the imposition of the colonial language and culture with his use of pidgin English. Tonouchi describes how public schools work as a state apparatus aiming to produce subjects that are subjected to a one-way process of power acting. Syaman Rapongan explores the Sinocentric pedagogy with his parallel depictions of the teacher-student relationship between the teachers in school and Ngalumirem/Tagahan. Tonouchi also explores how schools serve as the state agent that legitimizes the idea of a national language. Tonouchi applies a creolized English dialect commonly known as pidgin English in Hawaii almost throughout his collection of short stories, *Da Word*.

Compared with Syaman Rapongan's writing, his work expresses a more drastic and strategic way of deterritorializing the major language. The Hawaiian pidgin English is an English-based creolized language spoken by many Hawaiians in everyday conversation. Although the locals term it as pidgin, Hawaiian pidgin English is more of a creolized language that hybridizes with Hawaiian, Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, Korean, and Pilipino—that is, the assortment of the languages used by those who work on the plantations. Tonouchi's self-proclamation of being a "Pidgin

193

Guerrilla" features his active resistance against the privileged standard English in
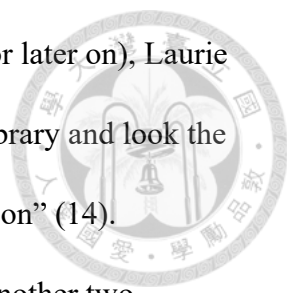Hawaii.
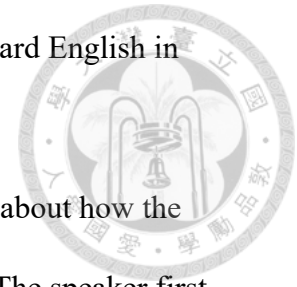
In one of his short stories titled "da word,"[90] Tonouchi writes about how the
teacher picks on the students' essays about their summer vacation. The speaker first
thinks that "da problem wuz dat da essay wuz all 'fiction' ah, cuz Barry, him, he talk
da talk, but he no walk da walk ah, you know da kine. …But wuzn't so much da
content, but da manner in which Barry wen go write 'em" (11). For the teacher and
the model student of the class, Laurie, the problem of their essays is that "*they use too
many colloquialisms*." And while Laurie is sarcastically laughed at for she "talk[s]
sooo gooood," the teacher corrects them with "*Laaurie speaks WELL*" to show his
demand on standard English (11). However, the speaker posits that there is no actual
difference as long as "you got da idea" (11).

The Anglocentric pedagogy illustrated in the story reveals how the teacher is
given the power to determine legitimate and illegitimate speeches and speakers.
Pidgin English is considered as a language used at home and with intimate friends. By
contrast, standard English is perceived as the language used in education and for
upward mobility (to go to mainland colleges, for example). In Hawaii, the use of
pidgin English in formal domains is still stigmatized in some formalized situations
(Murphy 34-35).

Compared with Syaman Rapongan's nomadic status as the translator of the ocean,
Lee Tonouchi puts up a guerrilla-style resistance against standard English to
de-illegitimize pidgin English as a language and literary vehicle. In "da word," when
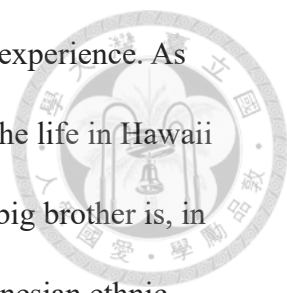
---

[90] The titles of this collection are all lower-cased.

the speaker replies to Laurie's question with "bumbye" (otherwise or later on), Laurie

denies that "bumbye" is a word and bets him (13). They go to the library and look the

word up in "da big American Heritage Dictionary, Unabridged Edition" (14).

However, they cannot find the word even after the speaker checks another two

dictionaries: Webster's Dictionary and Random House pocket-size dictionary. The

speaker cannot figure out why bumbye is not in the dictionaries because "ees pretty

common ah" (15). This incident shows an interesting epistemic discrepancy. A student

from Oregon (Laurie) could indeed be legitimate to say that a commonly used word in

Hawaii is "*not a word*" (13).

Paradoxically, as a transfer student who does not understand or speak pidgin

English, Laurie is ignored by other students of the class. When the speaker tries to

calm her down because she is driven to tears by other boys who tell her that she "no

belong hea," she hums a song from *Westside Story* and questions the speaker that how

come he does not know the musical and its prototype, *Romeo and Juliet*: "*How can

you not know it? It's a classic*" (13). These discrepancies bear some similarities to

Syaman Rapongan's depiction of Teacher Chang, Ngalumirem, and Tagahan. On the

one hand, Laurie and Teacher Chang are teased by the locals for their lack of

indigenous knowledge. On the other, Ngalumirem, Tagahan, and those who speak

pidgin English cannot be considered as legitimate speakers or achieve upward

socioeconomic mobility within the homolingual regimes of nationalism.

Syaman Rapongan and Tonouchi both write about how speaking/writing major

languages become their chances to go to "mainlands" and acquire better opportunities.

Unlike Syaman Rapongan has to write between Tao and Chinese, Tonouchi treats
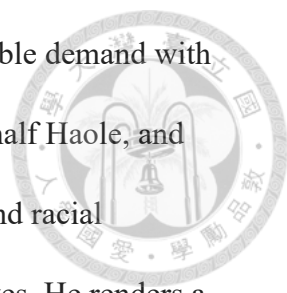
pidgin English as the natural and normal part of his Hawaiian lived experience. As pidgin English is a hybridized language, the heterogeneous idea of the life in Hawaii is rife in *Da Word*. Ngalumirem avoids mentioning the fact that his big brother is, in fact, his half-brother, who is half Tao and half Amis (another Austronesian ethnic group native to Taiwan). Nonetheless, Tonouchi reveals how everyone is mixed in various ways in Hawaii. He writes about a teenage boy, Aaron, visiting his grandmother in "where to put your hands." His grandmother is always giving him the lecture about how he "gotta fine one good kine wife" (27). His grandmother is picky about his future girlfriend/wife:

> My Grandma always sed, "Anykine girl you choose, me no like. Make sure you no marry Pōpolo girl now. Grandpa no like blacks. And no can be Filipino. My friend son from Lanakila go marry Filipino; now they divorce. Only two months you know. And no can be Chinee. Remembah your Uncle Richard, look he marry Chinee and look she take all his money and go leave him fo′ marry Haole man. Japanee maybe, but depen on da family." (28)

The remarks of Aaron's grandmother, regardless of their ethnic stereotypes, exposit a multiethnic composition of Hawaiian society.

Despite his grandmother's insistence on racial purity, Aaron has a crush on a girl named Joy, who is "little bit Japanese, Hawaiian, Filipino, and maybe little bit Haole too" (27). He is not sure what she is, but she "look[s] full on local" (27). For Aaron, many people are "kapakahi" (messed up) like Joy; you cannot tell what they are from

196

their appearances (29). Aaron reflects on his grandmother's impossible demand with his what-if scenarios: "'Oh but Grandma, wot it she half Japanese, half Haole, and half Hawaiian?'" (29). Tonouchi underlines this kind of linguistic and racial hybridization which is prevalent in Hawaii with his question of halves. He renders a self-reflexive as well as heterolingual perspective of Hawaii and pidgin English. As Syaman Rapongan's Tao-ized Chinese becomes his writing medium of preserving and conveying Tao people's "wild oceanic episteme," Tonouchi also aims to display that pidgin English is fit for a literary work featuring the lived experiences of people in Hawaii. For Tonouchi,

English is like a hapa (half or mixed blood); it has more possibilities because "those pure kine, dey die young. But da kine poi dog, dey live long time ah" (31).

Tonouchi challenges the homolingual as well as hegemonic representation of English resulting from colonization and imperialism through being a Pidgin Guerrilla. Tonouchi's linguistic practice discloses the privileging of the standard English in schooling. He contends that speaking pidgin English is not a sign of deficiencies in intelligence. In "da word," the speaker often tricks Laurie with some big words that she cannot understand. For example, he once tells her, "Ho Laurie, why you always gotta look so *pulchritudinous*, ah?" (10; emphasis added). Laurie is annoyed by his remark for not understanding the meaning of pulchritudinous. The speaker humorously concludes that "[s]ome people, cannot take one compliment I tell you boy" (10). Speaking pidgin English does not make him less smart than Laurie; he has an extensive vocabulary of both standard English and pidgin English. Tonouchi posits that speaking pidgin English does not prevent people from accomplishing things that

<div align="center">197</div>

privilege the speakers of standard English.[91]

This contention somehow responds to Ngalumirem's reflection on the Han-centered schooling for Tao people. Both Tonouchi's and Syaman Rapongan's observations disclose the structural forces that institutionalize linguistic hierarchies. The schooling of major languages in both works indicates "a hierarchized universe of deviations from a form of discourse that is recognized as legitimate." While considered as an illegitimate speaker, Tonouchi's usage of pidgin English uncovers "a relativistic universe of differences that are capable of relativizing one another" (Bourdieu 654).

In contrast to Syaman Rapongan's minoritized language, which is deterritorializd through his juxtaposition of Chinese and Tao, Tonouchi adopts a more radical approach to initiate his guerrilla attack on English.

Constantly employs pidgin English throughout *Da Word*, Tonouchi makes standard English visually exotic with italics. In "da word," Laurie's and the teacher's words are italicized. Conventionally, the use of italics in English writing indicates the emphasis of a certain word or phrase or the introduction of a foreign word or phrase. Nevertheless, Tonouchi inverts this convention and exoticizes standard English typographically. The tactic is evident in Laurie's question to the speaker: "'*Why do you talk funny sometimes?*' 'Hah?! You saying I should be one comedian?' '*Not funny, humorous, but funny, strange.*'" (13). Tonouchi does not make strange of the major language by inserting "foreign" words into his writing. That is to say, writing primarily in pidgin English instead of inserting pidgin English into the conventional

---

[91] For example, going to private schools and then going to mainland colleges.

English narrative exposes the hierarchy naturalized in the regime of representation. This does not establish another hierarchy or regime; it is a cognitive reversal that validates pidgin English as the legitimate language of the local life and culture in Hawaii.
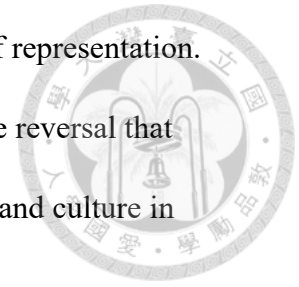
Even though Tonouchi aims to de-illegitimize pidgin English, he still exposes a relativistic universe of its speakers. In "my girlfriend's one star trek geek," a couple, Lena and Randall, have a fight when Lena tells Randall that she wants to go to Massachusetts for the student exchange program. Randall refuses to go with Lena because he thinks that they are "diff'rent from da mainland" and they "get [their] own ways and shit" (83). And when Lena asks him the meaning of being local, Randall replies that "[b]ein' Local, it's one feelin', ba" (83).

Randall's response has something in common with Sakai's schema of bordering. This reveals how Randall internalizes the schema of bordering between "us" and "them." Lena believes that Randall is scared to change because:

He just so used to being part of the majority, he no can handle being one of the minority. Randall says that Local is being accepting, but I still remember how he made fun of the visiting professor he had last semester. "Lena, dis Larsen guy, all he does is talk about himself. So typical haole." "He looked kinda mixed, no?" "I usin' 'haole' fo' mean foreign guy, not necessarily white dude. I dunno. Sometimes I tink mainland people talk mo' than dey know, but Local people know lot mo' than dey reveal." (84)
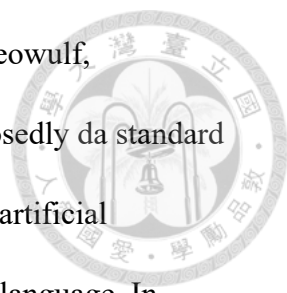
Paradoxically, Randall's remark repeats the logic of homolingual address of major language. For Randall, the cultural difference between Hawaiian people and mainland people is like a "'feeling' that is prior to the explanation of how incommensurability is given rise to and cannot be determined as a represented difference" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 14).

Lena thinks, "I no think Randall can handle being the haole on the mainland" (Tonouchi 85). The displacement between the "us" and "them" status represents the predetermined difference between the two groups. This also reveals that Tonouchi is practical about the actual linguistic situation; the homolingual regime highlights the generality of standard English and transforms the original "*difference in repetition*" into "*species difference*" (Sakai 15).

In fact, although both Lena and Randall are speakers of pidgin English, one could still sense the difference in the ways they express their minds. Lena's pidgin English is more "readable" to the standard English readers. However, it is unclear how and why she adopts this form. It could have been her schooling, ethnicity, or her wish to study on the mainland that shapes her way of speaking, but we cannot tell.

In *Da Word*, there is more than one form of pidgin English, and it is a variant of English through repetition in difference (of histories, races, or classes). Tonouchi too uncovers how repetition in difference is considered as specific and conceptual difference in "pijin wawrz:"

> "Standard english is one oxymoron, english by nature isn't standard. If you
>
> travel to diff'rent parts of da country, eh-rybody's english going be li'lo bit
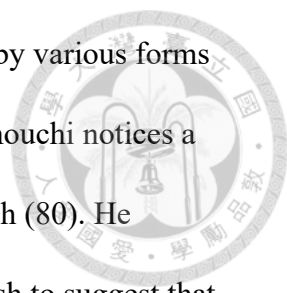
200

diff'rent. And if you compare english thru time, go compare Beowulf,

Shakespeare, and John Grisham III, all da englishes wuz supposedly da standard

of da time, but dey all so diff'rent. Dis standard ting is jus one artificial

construck invented by man. Pidgin acknowledges da reality of language. In

Pidgin we can look beyond correck-incorreck in terms of grammar, spelling,

pronunciation, and focus on da content. Pidgin breaks down da hierarchies, you

take da time to undahstand and get to know wea da person is coming from."

(134-35)

Tonouchi uses Beowulf and Shakespeare as his counterpoints to highlight the

systematic devaluation of pidgin English. The linguistic hierarchy that values standard

English over pidgin English has appropriated the relation of the addresser and the

addressee into a homolingual frame. This relation thus becomes the idealistic

resolution to the encounter of the incomprehensible: the comprehension of one's own

inability to comprehend the other.

Nonetheless, pidgin English exemplifies another manner of interaction that could

turn incomprehensibility into a heterolingual form of comprehensibility. As a

language arises from the contact zones produced through plantations, pidgin English

could provide common terms that allow people to comprehend each other across

varied ethnic groups. In an essay called "Da State of Pidgin Address," Tonouchi states

that his resistance to "da hegemony of english" (79) is not limited to the speakers of

pidgin English. As Tonouchi contends, "we Pidgin peoples is [sic] not alone. All ova

da globe get similar Pidgin kine movements going on" (80).

201

As a matter of fact, looking for common terms that are shared by various forms of minor literature becomes a way to comparatize. For instance, Tonouchi notices a "Speak Good English Movement" that downplays the use of Singlish (80). He compares Singlish and Jamaican patois with Hawaiian pidgin English to suggest that the blending of languages is local as well as global. Syaman Rapongan also depicts this movement of national language in *The Death of Ngalumirem*. He describes how Ngalumirem and Tagahan's sense of inferiority arises from the movement of speaking *guo-yu* (national language/國語).[92] In Ngalumirem's defense, he contends that speaking two languages at the same time would not hinder him from learning Chinese. He argues with an analogy: "It would not be an ocean if there is only one kind of fish. It would be a pool that farms tilapias" (Syaman Rapongan 135).

The movements of national languages thus become verbal-ideological movements that would result in the systematic effacement of non-standard languages. In "Discourse in the Novel," Mikhail Bakhtin observes that there are "centripetal forces" that "*serve to unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world*" (270). National language becomes a unitary language that is mistaken as "something given" but is in fact "posited" (270). The idea of a unitary language centralizes "verbal-ideological thought, creating within a heteroglot national language the firm, stable linguistic nucleus of an officially recognized literary language" (271).

The unitary idea of standard English is "one oxymoron" (Tonouchi, *Da Word* 134). Tonouchi reveals that the unitary language is, like what Bakhtin has argued,

---

[92] *Guo-yu* here refers to Chinese. "Guo" means nation, and "yu" means language; therefore, guo-yu means the language of the nation. According to Wei-jen Hong (洪惟仁), the over fifty years' Speaking Guo-yu Movement (說國語運動) after 1945 has made roughly 90 % of Taiwan people know how to speak Chinese. What's more, Chinese replaces many people's first language during this period.

"only one among other cultures and languages" (370). He minoritizes the verbal-ideological systems of standard language through his use of pidgin English. In order to dismantle the linguistic hierarchy, Tonouchi declares a pidgin war on standard English in "pijin wawrz" (*Da Word* 130).
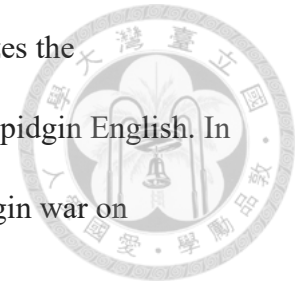
"pijin wawrz" is most critical to the English hegemony in the collection of *Da Word*. Compared with the other stories that are still decipherable, the narrative style in "pijin wawrz" bears even less resemblance to standard English. Tonouchi utilizes the Romanization of pidgin English to exhibit it as a legitimate and valid language in an even more drastic way. "pijin wawrz" challenges the speakers of non-pidgin English to read the text closely.

Set in the future world in 2022, where there is "no Pijin in skul wat-so-evaz" (130). Pidgin English is not allowed "in da klæsrum," "æt hom," or even "awn da plegraun" (130). "Da Pidgin Guerrilla æn hiz armi awv rebolz kawlin demselfs da Pidgin Protectorate," they go to the library to find some lost pidgin archives in the hope of the reclamation of their language by exposing the heterolingual aspect of English (130).

When the fighters finally get into the library, they find Big Ben the computer at the Compu-Capitol is inside the room, waiting to arrest them. Inside the library, the pidgin guerrillas get into a debate with Big Ben about the legitimacy of pidgin English. One of the guerrilla member, Jimmy, asks Big Ben a question about the privileging of standard English: "Ho, Benny, wot's da deals wit standard english? Isn't dis preference on one language jus arbitrary?" (137). To answer Jimmy's question, Big Ben replies that, "[s]tandard English is superior and is vital to

productivity and functionality in the global working system" (137). As Big Ben is the symbol of the institutionalization and legitimation of language, the AI considers standard English more intelligent than pidgin English because "it is written in [its] programming" (138).

Since Big Ben is unable to respond to Jimmy's question dialogically, Jimmy thus challenges it to the "test of wit" (138). Jimmy tests Big Ben with the multiple meanings of "da kine" in one sentence:

> "Kay, pay attention. Eh Ed, your uncle Shawn, of Shawn's Salon, he wuz DA KINE yeah?"
>
> "Yeah so? At least he was proud he was DA KINE."
>
> "So wot Big Benny, you like DA KINE? You like DA KINE!!? We go DA KINE den, you like DA KINE." (138)

Jimmy then presses the question on Big Ben:

> "Kay. Big Benjamin, my question to you is wot is Ed's uncle proud of and wot is you and me going haff to do if we no can see eye to eye?" (138)

Without sufficient information collected from "every database in the world," Big Ben's processor is trapped in an endless loop. The guerrilla fighters are able to escape from the library and go on to spread their revolutionary "Pidgin theories" (138-39).

Unlike the speaker (who has a bet with Laurie) in the first story of *Da Word*, they

outwit Big Ben with words that are not written in any dictionaries. "Da kine"

acknowledges the linguistic reality of pidgin English. It has "infinite possibilities"

(138). Da kine has various meanings and uses in Hawaii; it is an all-purpose word that

could stand for objects, events, and people. It is also a verb, an adjective, and adverb

in the way Hawaiian people speak in their daily lives.

The image of the library also serves as a symbol of the programming of

linguistic hierarchies. In the library, each literature and genre has its own place

according to classification. In "da word," the speaker loses the bet because "bumbye"

is not a word in all three dictionaries. However, the pidgin guerrillas contend that

"[n]ot all knowledge is found in books or based on logic" (139).

The verbal-ideological worlds in *Da Word* and *The Death of Ngalumirem* are

different from homolingual ones. Tonouchi states that standard English does not

acknowledge the reality of language. Syaman Rapongan also contends that there is no

knowledge about fishes or oceans at school. The knowledge based on the landmasses

is distant from his lived experience. Tonouchi and Syaman Rapongan both uncover

how the hegemony of English/Chinese disregards the lived reality of language. By

showing Big Ben's "*experience of understanding the experience of not*

comprehending," the fighters make others become aware of the limitations of its

cognitive capacity (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 6). It is clear that Jimmy's

question about "da kine" is "jus one trick question" (Tonouchi 138-39). However,

even it has "been programmed wit all the wisdom and knowledge accumulated

throughout the ages," Big Ben's worldwide access to the database does not function

as its index of knowledge (138).

Tonouchi's pidgin English and Syaman Rapongan's tidalectics are thus equipped with a centrifugal force that could decenter and deterritorialize the homolingual linguistic hierarchies. The minoritized languages that the two writers apply could be viewed as the Bakhtinian extraliterary heteroglossia. According to Bakhtin, heteroglossia refers to the multiple variations of languages within those languages; it is the various ways people speak to one another. It could also be construed as the coexistence of the varieties within one language.

Heteroglossia, as Bakhtin states, is "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way" (324). Minor literature shares similar points with Bakhtin's idea of heteroglossia in its refracted enunciation of the speaker. The heteroglossic discourse could be viewed as a form of heterolingualism that minoritizes as well as deterritorializes major languages for a more open and flexible purpose. The heteroglossic text allows "a special type of double-voiced discourse":
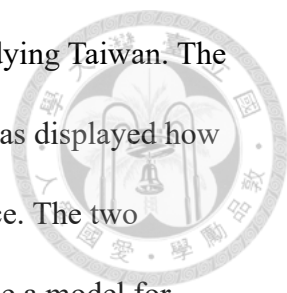
It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourse there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions. And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they—as it were—know about each other (just as two exchanges in a dialogue know of each other); it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other. Double-voiced discourse is always internally dialogized. (324)
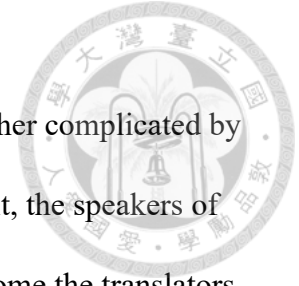
The internal dialogism of Bakhtin's double-voiced discourse is further complicated by the heterolingual application of translation. As the subjects in transit, the speakers of the minoritized lived experience and knowledge of both works become the translators of their heteroglossic texts.

Owing to their "extremely ambiguous and unstable positionality," the subjects in transit are able to have constant interaction between meanings that "have the potential of conditioning others" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 11; Bakhtin 426). Syaman Rapongan and Lee Tonouchi are able to speak in a "forked tongue," they dismantle the framing of the homolingual address with their minoritized languages. In addition, they present the reflective discourse by introducing a dialogical space where "[e]verything means, [and] is understood" (Bakhtin 426). As a result, not comprehending would no longer be an option because of the dialogic space produced through translation.

Through different voices of the characters in *The Death of Ngalumirem*, Syaman Rapongan also reveals his trail of self-reflection as a Tao writer who writes in Chinese. His intention is exposed through the conversation between his characters; these dialogues also produce a dialogic space that allows him to have a conversation with others. This forms not just a double-voiced discourse; it is a multi-voiced discourse of a "nonaggregate community" (Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity* 7). Tonouchi's pidgin guerrillas mention that one way to get rid of the regime of linguistic standardization is to "hook up wit odda rebel forces around da world" (*Da Word* 135). This hooking-up with the world corresponds to Shu-mei Shih's idea to comparatize

207

Taiwan. To comparatize is a way to seek further recognition for studying Taiwan. The comparatizing practice of *The Death of Ngalumirem* and *Da Word* has displayed how it could serve as the entry for Taiwan to get into a transnational space. The two narratives form a dialogically nonaggregate community that could be a model for other minor literature as well as transoceanic literature of islanders. The comparatization also allows an expanded concept of community across the Pacific. The transpacific relation exemplified in the comparative project of *The Death of Ngalumirem* and *Da Word* establishes a way of imagination to join different ideologies (for example, Asians and Westerners) at a deep level. It is interesting to note that Ngalumirem, the crazy person, is one of the few Tao people that can speak English. Moreover, Syaman Rapongan's Romanization of Tao words implies the historicity of the expansionism of European colonialism. These could also be possible dialogic topics for texts that share similar transpacific imagination.

Aside from comparatizing Syaman Rapongan's tidalectics with Tonouchi's pidgin English, a more flexible dialogic possibility could have been explored through the comparatization between *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Death of Ngalumirem*. The dialogic interaction could begin with a text analysis of their relationships with the mainlands (England and Taiwan) and their diverse migration routes. Then, the discussion of the dialogic possibility can move on to the linguistic institutionalization and homogenization of English and Chinese in both texts. Moreover, the mental states of Antoinette and Ngalumirem too could be investigated to see how the addresses could be shaped differently. Comparatively, Antoinette and Ngalumirem both commit suicides on the mainlands. However, is going mad and living with the stigma the

inevitable outcome for them? Through the act of comparatization, a transnational alter/native might appear, helping us look into the speech diversity of both works.

What's more, the dialogic interaction could also happen between Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée* and Lee Tonouchi's *Da Word*. Both are classified as Asian American literature, and they both try to dismantle the linguistic hierarchies with exoticized words, ungrammatical syntaxes, unconventional literary forms, etc. Nonetheless, the two handle the topic quite differently. The internal dialogism exemplified in minor literature avoids repetitive and monologic approach with its heteroglossic engagement; therefore, it "can never be exhausted thematically" (Bakhtin 326). The comparatization of various works—minor literature in specific—could exposit the embedded linguistic heteroglossia that refuses to develop into "a manifest dialogue" of class, gender, race, culture, accent, dialect, and so on. This comparatizing approach that discloses a nonaggregate community is a juxtapositional mode of comparison rather than a decontextualizing one. Susan Stanford Friedman suggests that the comparison conducted with a normative standard of measure is judgmental and evaluative. The decontextualizing comparison "removes what are being compared from their local and geohistorical specificity" (754-55). To avoid the categorical violence such removals could attain, Friedman introduces the juxtapositional mode of comparison. The aim of juxtapositional comparison is to achieve mutual understanding and co-existence:

The dialogic pull of in/commensurability invites a comparative methodology that is juxtapositional, contrapuntal, and reciprocal, thus opening the possibility for a

209

progressive politics of comparison. A juxtapositional model of comparison sets

things being compared side by side, not overlapping them as in a Venn diagram,

not setting up one as the standard of measure for the other, not using one as an

instrument to serve the other. (758)
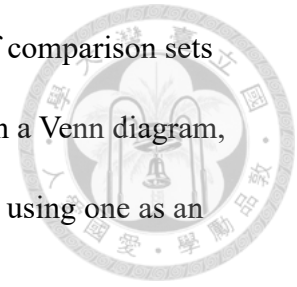
This juxtapositional model of comparison focuses on the dynamics of

in/commensurability. It dismantles the self-other binary, and produces varied insights

resulting from the dialogic interrelation. Friedman further proposes three modes of

juxtapositional comparison to clarify its different focuses: "collision,

defamiliarization, and collage" (758).

Through the aforementioned discussion of Syaman Rapongan and Lee Tonouchi,

one gets to know that the three modes work interactively in practice. Firstly, the

collisional mode of both works "sets in play different voices coming out distinctive

geohistorical and asymmetrical contexts" (759). It allows for a cohabitating space for

voices in Taiwan and Hawaii to have a dialogue without being yet another area studies

of the Pacific. Secondly, not only the comparison defamiliarizes the self-other binary

that "produces systems of epistemological dominance," but it also disrupts the frames

of a nation by exploring the unknowns (759). Thirdly, by putting side by side of the

two works, the politics of dominance and otherness could be read together along with

the contradictions that might be inherent in comparison.

Comparatizing Taiwan is a cognitive practice opening up an internal dialogism

that would not disregard the specificity of Taiwan and of other countries, let alone

their differences. Even if there could be moments that all modes of comparison would

fail, "[t]o achieve, we must first attempt" (Tonouchi, *Da Word* 138).
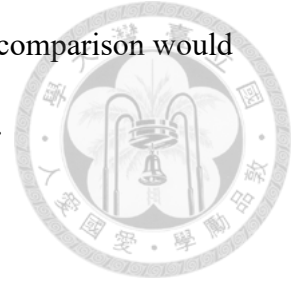
Conclusion

Minor literature re-examines what Toni Morrison calls "the unspeakable things unspoken" in order to expose the ghost in the machine ("Unspeakable Things Unspoken" 136). Through reading minor literature as translation, the "[r]eadily available people/texts of little value," the cannon/canon fodder, could shape alternative choices and structures of literature. The texts discussed in previous chapters seem to possess a view of the non-Englishness/non-Chineseness of alternative thinking models. The deterritorialized and minoritized languages in these works disclose the interlinearity of the languages in minor literature. The interlinear English/Chinese used in these works could still be counted as English/Chinese but not the altogether conventional and familiar ones. The foreignness of the major languages is "designed to acknowledge the derivative nature of what we are reading" (Sturrock 1011). The alienation effect—senses of deterritorialization, deconstruction, and dislocation—of translation in minor literature is evident because the content of translation needs to be understood between the lines.

Translation in minor literature is a process, and it bears a resemblance to Walter Benjamin's interlinear translation. Benjamin contends that "literalness and freedom" could be united in the form of interlinear translation. According to Benjamin, the prototype (or the ideal) of all translation is the interlinear version of "holy scriptures" (165). The interlinearity is exhibited visually on pages because language and revelation become one in interlinear scriptures. The literal translation is caught between the original and the free models. Interlinear translation draws attention to the

in-betweenness of the act of translation; it is a foreignizing process that does not merge the source text and target text. Benjamin's example of interlinear translation takes place between the lines of different language entities; however, the interlinear translation in minor literature could reveal different layers of meanings within the minoritized language.

The minoritized language in minor literature is itself a kind of interlinear language that seeks to disclose what is left unspoken in the original with as many strata of meaning available. The strata of meaning could be examined through minor literature's heterolingual address that "seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural context and linguistic context" (Appiah 817). In addition, at such time as the translator situates himself/herself in a heterolingual mode of translation, an ideological/textual dialogue could be engaged through the translation process. Jean Rhys, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Arundhati Roy, Syaman Rapongan, and Tonouchi find the dialogic ground for the unspeakable things unspoken through their minor uses of major languages. As the subjects/translators in transit, they disclose not only the material content of canon fodder's historical context, but also the truth content of its literary afterlife that is continued by a possible dialogue among the translators, the works, the readers, and other works.

As Walter Benjamin states in "The Task of the Translator," the translation and the original are parts of what he terms as the "pure language" (156). A connection is thus established through the renewed life of language. Benjamin elaborates the fragmentary sense of the pure language through his metaphor of a broken vessel:
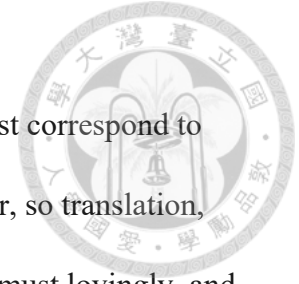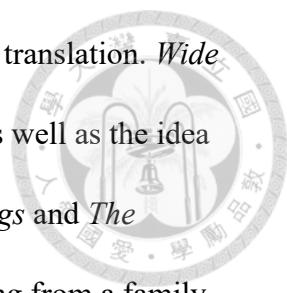
Just as fragments of a vessel, in order to be fitted together, must correspond to

each other in the tiniest detail but need not resemble each other, so translation,

instead of making itself resemble the meaning of the original, must lovingly, and

in detail, fashion in its own language a counterpoint to the original's mode of

intention, in order to make both of them recognizable as fragments of a vessel, as

fragments of a greater language. (161)

According to Benjamin, different languages complement each other in their intentions.

Despite the fact that Benjamin's discussion here is still based on the linguistic level, a

pressing question could still be posed: Are Benjamin's complementary intentions

functional in the translation practice in minor literature?

The notion of the pure language cannot be experienced in a single language; it

reveals the complementary relation from one language to another through an enduring

renewal and creative process. The Benjaminian complementation of "the mode of

intention" of the intended object can be understood as a Sakaian way to say "let me

try to understand you" in a dialogic space (Benjamin 157; Sakai, "Translation and the

Schematism of Bordering"). As a language glued together with fragments, the pure

language is also in accordance with Sakai's heterolingual mode of address. In other

words, we could see Benjamin's pure language as an aggregate language that serves

as the medium in which the translator could employ.

In this thesis, I have explored the dialogic connection in selected texts of minor

literature. During the process of analysis, I have investigated how the writers locate

the unspeakable things unspoken and enact engaged resistance with translation. *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Dictée* dismantle the binary notion of self/other as well as the idea of us/them with their self-reflexive writings. *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* reclaim the unclaimed traumas ranging from a family to a nation. The problematic of bordering is uncovered through the concept of translation in the texts, and they show how a transnational convergence of these minoritized experiences could be shared within a care community. Although Benjamin's notion of the pure language might seem utopic in terms of practice; however, a comparatizing project of Syaman Rapongan's *The Death of Ngalumirem* and Lee Tonouchis's *Da Word* provides a verifiable approach to intertextual comprehension. Comparing with Benjamin's interlinear translation, this intertextual comparison takes a step further for it takes various translations on a transnational scope. During my process of analysis, I have discovered various subject matters that overlap one another in these texts. These overlapping subjects could be explored as a comparative cultural act, event, and process. For example, *Dictée*, *The Death of Ngalumirem*, and *Da Word* all express the anxiety about learning major languages. Through exploring the representations of language learning in the works, one could have a more well-rounded understanding of the multi-faceted nature of power, language, and agency without overlooking the historicities entailed in them.

There is no final product in minor literature's approach to translation because it entails a process of becoming. Moreover, an initial attempt to explore the possible network within various texts of minor literature might be able to (re)open discussions for the canon fodder to reemerge in a literary convention and establish an interlinear

and contemporaneous present for the unspeakable things.

Works Cited

Aitkenhead, Decca. "'Fiction Takes Its Time': Arundhati Roy on Why It Took 20

Years to Write Her Second Novel." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media,

27 May, 2017. www.theguardian.com/ books/2017/may/27/arundhati-roy-fiction

-takes-time-second-novel-ministry-utmost-happiness.

Althusseur, Louis. "On Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. (Notes Towards

an Investigation)." *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left

Books, 1971. 121-73. Print.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*. San Francisco:

Aunt Lute Book Company, 1987. Print.

---. "Preface (Un)natural bridges, (Un)safe spaces." *This Bridge We Call Home:*

Radical Visions for Transformation. Ed. Gloria Anzaldúa and Analouise

Keating. New York: Routledge, 2002. 1-5. Print.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Thick Translation." *Callaloo* 16.4 (1993): 808-19.

JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2932211.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. M. *The Dialogic Imagination Four Essays*. University of Texas

Press Slavic Series; No. 1. Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin:

University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." Trans. Steven Rendall. *TTR:*

traduction, terminologie, redaction 10.2 (1997): 151–65. https://doi.org/

10.7202/037302ar.

Bhabha, Homi. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse."

    October 28 (1984): 125-33. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/778467.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges." *Social Science*

    Information 16.6 (1977): 645–68. Print.

Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects Embodiment and Sexual Difference in*

    Contemporary Feminist Theory. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

    Print.

Brathwaite, Kamau, Nathaniel Mackey, and Chris Funkhouser. *Conversations with*

    Nathaniel Mackey. Staten Island, NY: We Press, 1999. Print.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore,

    MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. Print.

---. *Listening to Trauma: Conversations with Leaders in the Theory and*

    Treatment of Catastrophic Experience. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University

    Press, 2014. Print.

Cha, Theresa Hak Kyung. *Dictée*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

    Print.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana

    Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. Print.

---. "Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible." *A Thousand*

    Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

    Press, 1987. 233-309. Print.

DeLoughrey, Elizabeth M. *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific*

    Island Literatures. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007. Print.

Dingwaney Needham, Anuradha. "'The Small Voice of History' in Arundhati Roy's

    The God of Small Things." *interventions* 7.3 (2005): 369-91. Print.

Erwin, Lee. "'Like in a Looking-Glass': History and Narrative in *Wide Sargasso*

    Sea." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 22.2 (1989): 143–58. *JSTOR*, JSTOR,

    www.jstor.org/stable/1345800.

Foucault, Michel. "Docile Bodies." *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

    New York: Vintage Books, 1995. 135-69. Print.

---. "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (1982): 777-95. Print.

---. "Afterword: The Subject and Power." *Michel Foucault, Beyond Structuralism and*

    Hermeneutics. Ed. Huber L Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. Chicago: University

    of Chicago Press, 1983. 208-28. Print.

Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Why Not Compare?" *PMLA: Publications of the Modern*

    Language Association of America 126.3 (2011): 753-62. Print.

Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*.

    Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. Print.

Gutheinz, Emily. "Review of The God of Small Things." *Wordsworth Interviews*,

    June 15, 1997. http://curiousgeorge.wordsworth.com/www/epresent/royint

Jakobson, Roman. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation." *On Translation*. Ed.

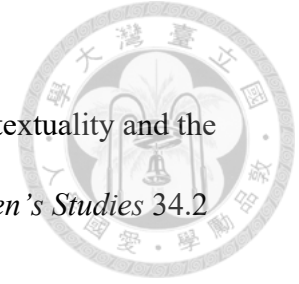   Reuben Brower. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959. 232-39.

    Print.

Joo, Hee-Jung Serenity, and Christina Lux. "Dismantling Bellicose Identities:

    Strategic Language Games in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *DICTEE." Journal of*

    Transnational American Studies 4.1 (2012). Print.

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9c9k0br.

Kimmey, Deborah A. "Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: Metatextuality and the
Politics of Reading in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*." *Women's Studies* 34.2
(2005): 113-31. Print.

Kim, Elaine H. "Preface." *Charlie Chan Is Dead: An Anthology of Contemporary
Asian American Fiction*. By Jessica Tarahata Hagedorn. New York: Penguin
Books, 1993. vii-xiv. Print.

---. "Poised on the In-Between: A Korean American's Reflections on Theresa Hak
Kyung Cha's *Dictée*" *Writing Self, Writing Nation:* A C*ollection of Essays on
Dictée by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha*. Eds. Hyun Yi Kang, Norma Alarcón and
Elaine H. Kim. Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1994. 3-30. Print.

King, Homay. *Lost in Translation: Orientalism, Cinema, and the Enigmatic Signifier*.
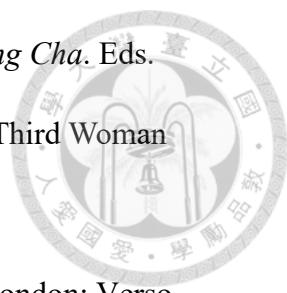Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010. Print.

Kumar, Amitava. "Conversation with Arundhati Roy." *Lunch with a Bigot: The
Writer in the World*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015. Print.

Laplanche, Jean. *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell,
1989. Print.

Lecercle, Jean-Jacques. *Deleuze and Language*. Houndmills, Basingstoke,
Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. Print.

Lionnet, Françoise, and Shu-mei Shih, eds. *Minor Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke
University Press, 2005. Print.

Lowe, Lisa. "Unfaithful to the Original: The Subject of *Dictée*." *Writing Self, Writing*

Nation: A *Collection of Essays on Dictée by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha*. Eds.

Hyun Yi Kang, Norma Alarcón and Elaine H. Kim. Berkeley: Third Woman

Press, 1994. 35-69. Print.

Lorey, Isabell. *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious*. London: Verso,

2015. Print.

Mistry, Rohinton. *Family Matters*. New York: Vintage International, 2003. Print.

Morris, Meaghan. "Foreword." *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural*

Nationalism. By Naoki Sakai. Public Worlds; V.3. Minneapolis: University of

Minnesota Press, 1997. ix-xxii. Print.

Morrison, Kevin A. "Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, D. G. Rossetti, and the 'Art of the

Book': A Note on *Dictée*." *Notes on Contemporary Literature* 34 (2004): 9-10.

Print.

Morrison, Toni. "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in

American Literature." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 28.1 (1989): 1–43. Print.

---. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. New York:

Vintage Books, 1993. Print.

Murphy, Kelly Erin. *Melodies of Hawai'i The Relationship Between Hawai'i*

Creole English and "Olelo Hawai"i Prosody. 2013. Print.

Muyard, Frank. "Comparativism and Taiwan studies: Analyzing Taiwan in/out of

Context, or Taiwan as an East Asian New World Society." *Comparatizing*

Taiwan. Routledge Contemporary China Series; 120. Ed. Shu-mei Shih and

Ping-hui Liao. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015. 13-32. Print.

Nancy, Jean-Luc., Robert D Richardson, and Anne E O'Byrne. *Being Singular*

Plural. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2000. Print.

Nancy, Jean-Luc, and Katherine Lydon. "Exscription." *Yale French Studies* 78 (1990):
47–65. Print. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2930115.

Newman, Judie. *The Ballistic Bard: Postcolonial Fictions*. London: Arnold, 1995.
Print.

Park, Josephine Nock-Hee. "'What of the Partition': *Dictée*'s Boundaries and the
American Epic." *Contemporary Literature* 46.2 (2005): 213-42. Print.

Pontalis, Jean-Bertrand, and Jean Laplanche. *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*.
London: Karnac Books, 1988. Print.

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Ed. Judith L. Raiskin. New York: W. W. Norton &
Company, 1999. Print.

Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1998. Print.

---. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. London: Penguin Books, 2018. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991*. 1st
American ed. London: Granta Books, 1991. Print.

Sakai, Naoki, and Sandro Mezzadra. "Introduction." *Translation: A Transdisciplinary
Journal* 4 (2014): 9-29. Print.

Sakai, Naoki. *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism*.
Public Worlds; V.3. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. Print.

---. "Translation and the Schematism of Bordering." Paper for the Conference
Gesellschaft Ubersetzen: Ein Komentatorenkonferenz. University of Konstanz:
October 2009. http://www.translating-society.de/conference/papers/2/.

Sakai, Naoki, and Solomon, Jon. "Introduction." *Translation, Biopolitics, Colonial Difference*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006. 1-35. Print.

Shih, Shu-mei. "Globalisation and the (in)significance of Taiwan." *Postcolonial Studies* 6.2 (2003): 143-53. Print.

---. "The Concept of the Sinophone." *PMLA*, 126. 3 (2011): 709-18. Print. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41414144.

Shih, Shu-mei, and Ping-hui Liao. "Introduction: Why Taiwan? Why Comparatize?" *Comparatizing Taiwan*. Routledge Contemporary China Series; 120. Ed. Shu-mei Shih and Ping-hui Liao. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015.1-10. Print.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (1985): 243-61. Print.

---. "The Politics of Translation." *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. New York: Routledge, 1993. 179-200. Print.

Stagoll, Cliff. "Becoming." *The Deleuze Dictionary*. Ed. Adrian Parr. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. 21-22. Print.

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. Print.

---. "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures." *American Ethnologist* 16 (1989): 634-60. Print.

Stone-Richards, Michael. "A Commentary on Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's Dictée."

Glossator 1 (2009): 145-210. Print.

http://www.michaelstonerichards.com/downloads/ChaGLOSSATOR.pdf

Sturrock, John. "Writing between the Lines: The Language of Translation." *New Literary History* 21.4 (1990): 993–1013. Print. *JSTOR*, JSTOR. www.jstor.org/stable/469196.

Syaman Rapongan. *An luo mi en zhi si* 安洛米恩之死 [The Death of Ngalumirem]. New Taipei City: Ink, 2015. Print.

---. *Hang hai jia de lian* 航海家的臉 [The Face of the Navigator]. New Taipei City: Ink, 2007. Print.

---. *Leng hai ching shen* 冷海情深 [Cold Sea, Deep Feelings]. Taipei: Lien-he, 1997. Print.

Tonouchi, Lee A. "Da State of Pidgin Address." *College English* 67.1 (2004): 75-82.

---. *Da Word*. Honolulu, HI: Bamboo Ridge Press, 2001. Print.

Van der Kolk, Bessel A, and Alexander C. McFarlane. "The Black Hole of Trauma." *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*. Ed. Bessel A Van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth. New York: Guilford Press, 1996. 3-23.

Varshney, Ashutosh. "India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: Antinomies of Nationalism." *Asian Survey* 31. 11 (1991): 997–1019.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Wong, Shelley Sunn. "Unnaming the Same: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*." *Writing Self, Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictée by Theresa Hak*

Kyung Cha. Eds. Hyun Yi Kang, Norma Alarcón, and Elaine H. Kim. Berkeley:

Third Woman Press, 1994. 103-40. Print.

Wu, Chien-heng. "'Tiger's Leap into the Past': Comparative Temporality and the

Politics of Redemption in *The Orphan of Asia*." *Comparatizing Taiwan*.

Routledge Contemporary China Series; 120. Ed. Shu-mei Shih and Ping-hui

Liao. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015. 33-58. Print.

Yu, Timothy. *Race and the Avant-Garde: Experimental and Asian American Poetry*

Since 1965. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2009. 102-07. Print.

夏曼·藍波安。「原初豐腴的島嶼─達悟民族的海洋知識與文化」。碩士論文，

國立清華大學人類學研究所，2003。