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LA COMMUNE—
TO THE BARRICADES

>> CLINT BURNHAM, STEPHEN COLLIS, MERCEDES ENG, RAY HSU, REG JOHANSON, KIM MINKUS, CECILY NICHOLSON & RITA WONG

1.

I.

In a burst of emotion

Toward the Federations of 1789

As an explosion of a powder magazine in the Luxembourg

When we come to the period of the French Revolution

From the revolution just behind him a sense of solidarity

The years of relaxation under the Directory which followed

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It was the eve of 1848

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On the eve of 1848

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The revolution broke out in France in February, 1848

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Followed by the insurrections in Dresden and Baden

After the abdication of Louis-Philippe

In the meantime, the so-called democrats

After we have read the *Eighteenth Brumaire*

When the general peasant insurrection blazed

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In the days of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*

Put in jail in Colone in February, 1848

Put in jail in November for supporting the appeal signed by Marx

Founded in St. Martins Hall, London, on September 28, 1864

Bakunin sped to Paris at once

They were arrested that night in their beds

Now the classes quickly came to blows

When finally the government of Thiers attempted to take away the guns

Which resulted on March 26 in the election of the Paris Commune

From now on there will be two distinct historical cultures

II.

In the spring of 1871

In June 1848

On September 4 1870

But as was the case in 1830 and 1848

Early on the morning of 18 March

Between 21 May and 28 May

Between March and May 1871

During the Cultural Revolution

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This beginning called 18 March

18 March, now a predicate

Under the sign of an eruption of being

By which '18 March' comes to appear

The site a figure of the instant

Will dictate to them the morning of 19 March

This empirical 18 March

A consequence of 18 March

The enthusiasm of 18 March 1871

When on 10 May the central committee proclaimed

Whose result is that '18 March' gets instituted

To save the revolution of 18 March

In all certainty on 18 March 1871

By October 1917

By the summer of 1967 in China and May 1968 in France

Let's return to 19 March

Three times [1792, 1848, 1870] the French proletariat made the republic for others

On 18 March something more important was destroyed

Whatever therefore its fate at Paris

Beginnings can then be measured by the re-beginnings they authorize

The task is to think its content

2.

Citizens
where and when is your
city? Garbage chute lives
you've been priced
out of the market
Commune
is where we draw a line
against "the plan for
universal cretinization"
(Blanqui) as in
"come on—shit happens
Look at Rwanda
Look at Libya"
(Margaret McNeil)
Commune
where we draw a line
because we want
things to change
not going on guttered
cold and curbed
because many people
have nothing left to lose
and *contre le gouvernement*
we pose *les éléments rouge*

3.

Citizens **Panasonics** end your **swear *and* zen** older lives **first *person* shooter** older priced **the *misprision* is *right*** identity market **out *of* mind** that Commune **c'mon** identity line **in *the* sand** do for **a *man* outstanding *in* his *field*** thankful cretinization" **a *bit* of *bytes* in *the* abyss** identity in **sorry *I'm* drawing *a* blank *here*** anywhere happens **communal *shithouse*** this Rwanda **should *I* bomb *or* shout *I* go *now*** so Libya" **look *at* me *look* at *me*** he McNeil) **Margaret *O'Hara*** why Commune **karma *chameleon*** there line **you *come* and *go*** in want **is *the* post *in* post-punk *the* same *as* the *post* in *post-marxism*** discretion change **Buddhist *hotdog* joke** unexpected guttered **home *made* candles** begun curbed **my *mouth* on the *curb* in *Top* Jewish *Cop* (*1999*)** that people **haven't *read* my *poems* yet** all lose **and *so* they *like* me** that *gouvernement* **bean *counters*** so *rouge* **lipstick *dwellers*** surrounded

4.

when your body is where the shit happens, woman
you might decide to draw a line
right there
on your white body
telling break and enterers: you can't come in to my house

when your body is a conflagration of city garbage
detritused out of citizens' back yards

when your body feels the struggle
of Rwanda, of Libya, of the DTES

that's when you'll be welcome in the Commune

I saw one once
built out of red brick and bone
sheltering a multitude of bodies that struggle
protecting a multitude of bodies that struggle

do not tell me woman, that you also do this work of shelter
when you say shit happens and it doesn't happen to you

5.

1.

where and when
is *a fold,* a go-to place

dissensual samplers
synthesizers in constant

assemblage and collapse –

all the called we

a line of world
les –

unless the stance
as shit that happens

calls for resignation

marches to bang on doors an on
until the written apology

best practices under contract

2.

after 1791 and Haitian upholding
consequences

copper hair plaited filaments

conductors propulsive
motors and our air

collapses the chest hit

Dirt is Good by the Drones

out in the territory

dancing on highways

ghosts of *le plan*
se poursuit sans relâche

slack is in the line imagined

change landed and squeezed

migrate after migrate to Harper's Imagine

3.

where is policy
grown louder
against the wall

urgent litany comes to a rapid shore

reverse musket gestures for change

curbed people bury lost elements

listening june days dear landscape

bringing bread and clean blankets

things talked about stock fuel and gear

our provisional stands
plant harvested seeds

winds make water carry permanent structure

astute tear aerodynamic rolls perpetually

louder against causes of silence or tactical noise

4.

moment demolition collects strangers

public committees in basis of unity

wanted like time before guns rammed

and casualties fell to government

interferes itself proclamations

ongoing new delegates with War

organized rising friends of order

dreams will not return the daughters

the morning wait the drawn out address

decisive in defence of insurgent city

tired majority doors rush fort agape

minority of which we belong converging

batteries fire villages lost circle fade

elsewhere routine closed again the big city

6.

So quzzical you
convoluter this
city no stasis
time takes its
clothes off in
some back alley
between 1871 and
2011—Paris and
Vancouver coiled around
the springs of
we're still getting fucked!
planet off its kilter
and our home in this
biome the
epigenetic influences
of what floats
here by sea or air
news that stays news
vivas for communes
and a red flag
to drape our dreams

7.

reciphering
squatters, uninvited guests
got to learn protocol
tread spectfully
on unceded land
ecological commons
called Turtle Island
before Paris, thousands of
years of coexistence
with salmon, rivers
right here beneath yr feet
old news bears reviving weaving
baskets & trees hold what flags, drops
greater genome cries for
land justice
blood, saltwater, delta -
mountain's grave
makes our home, reciprocate
ocean plankton steady depths
below thin lair
topsoiled

8.

1.

subdivisions of buildings, bamboo, enamel

we permanent units

human functions put forward in laundries and smells the sheets and they dry

the broad division between producers

and consumers feels like a number

razor wire links additional units of consumables

while the laborer and intellectual fight and love on green benches

sharply separated they stroll to the lunch counters eyeing each other

oh noise paper and more noise paper among the masses

the innumerable divisions

and no knowledge of craft

living life as infinitely small

giving places and objects not time

with a jackknife and the nineteenth part of a pin

we are employees in some machine

just skin, bones intestine of a huge machine,

we stacked miniatures

not knowing why and how the machine performs

2.

Canada is already producing

the courtyard garbage

the colonial wasteland

the acceleration of a day

This requirement of lists of productive lists requires body

barricades, markets, calculations, flats
without
the words lever bodies
there would not exist without the pages
nothing to contain secrets without the secrets
we write as rapidly in proportion
can click our fingers for the words to test keyboard
for the magic continues to lie

promises keep typing in the famous fantasy
factories
then the balloon boy bikes by

3.

all the pioneers and the plant's metal spoons

habit of singing seagull sounds

Hyundai, COSTCO, building blue siren

honest desire strains our escalated privileges and the:

problem of storing power

printing without ink

idea at this moment

food as much as possible

cultivation for home use

dandelion

this is the conquest of the genius

stock of knowledge off

kilter

4.

the form of the fact

production, distribution, repair

auction houses, tamed vapor, burnt orange taxis

fixed high speed agriculture

our gardeners are gods of war

metalworkers

instead of one warehouse artist

however continue

as soil is limited

9.

"We built this wall
To keep out all the idiots
Who came and tried
To clean up the streets
And open art galleries"
Because the T-shirts that said
"Die Yuppie Scum"
Didn't scare them off. The t-shirts were popular
With the yuppie scum
Yuppie scum bought them in the new boutiques
Yuppie scum weren't wearing them with irony
Yuppie scum don't see themselves
As yuppie scum—
Yuppie scum put on the t-shirts and said,
Looked in the mirror and said,
Die, yuppie scum.
Yuppie scum didn't say,
That's me, I'm the yuppie scum.
No such thing as interpellation
From below.
So posters went up that detailed
The best way to kill and eat
A variety of dogs popular
With yuppie scum. Yuppie scum dogs
And how to prepare them.
Now that, that
Got to them. Now that, that's
Cruel, that's cruelty to animals,
Now come on now, now
That's going too far, that's crossing
The *line*.

Dear barbarians,
I can see your campfires burning
From the city walls.
How are you? We're all "fine"
Here. We're dead, but
Dominant.
Everyone's excited
About the election. We're dividing up the
Loot. Do you have contraband
In the camp? Are you stealing
From us? We would invite
You in, but you're not democrats.
You're from another world.
Not really a world, a remnant of life
A zone of war, hunger, and delusions.
I can see you on google earth,
Packing your bags to get away from the horror.
Not so fast: there are documents to file
Inspections, questions, detentions, surveillance,
Denials of family reunion.
To be admitted, and perhaps
On some distant day greeted,
You require training in democracy at home,
In the camp. Study your integration manual
In the intervals between bursts of lead,
Landings by humanitarian paratroopers.
You've got a stiff exam ahead of you.

Dear barbarians,
I've been wondering:
What am I being compensated for?
My place in the productive order
The more useless, the more valuable
The more prestigious, the more harmless
The more empty, the more full
The more form, the less content
The content
Undermined by the form
Being in force without significance
Helpful
By my

Helplessness
Dependable, by dependency
Pacified, by salary and benefits
Separated, yet not yet divorced
Poder, not potencia
The good, wrong side
What treaty did I sign
Just by being born?

Dear barbarians,
I've been reading.
I read a lot. I'm an avid reader.
Do you have books
In the camp? Do you have electric light?
For how long each day?
I really care about you.
I hope you like the blankets
And the socks. I hope you are grateful.
It's better than nothing. And I work hard
For what I've got.
Anyway, says here
That the world of the democrats
(that's my world, behind the fence)
Is not the whole world. It says that
Democracy, the emblem and custodian
Of the fences behind which the democrats seek
Their petty pleasures, is just a word
For a conservative oligarchy
Whose bellicose business
Is to guard its own territory
As animals do, under the usurped term *world*.
Well I'll be darned. That's an interesting perspective.
I never thought of it like that. What do you think
Of that, barbarians?

Says here,

> That democratic man lives only for the pure present, transient desire is his only law. Today he regales himself with a four-course dinner and vintage wine, tomorrow he is all about Buddha, ascetic fasting, streams of crystal clear water, and sustainable development. Monday he tries to get back in shape by pedaling for hours on a stationary bicycle. Tuesday he sleeps all day then smokes and gorges again in the evening. Wednesday he declares that he is going to read some philosophy but prefers doing nothing in the end. At Thursday's dinner party he crackles with zeal for politics, fumes indignantly at the next person's opinion, and heatedly denounces the society of consumption and spectacle. That evening he goes to see a Ridley Scott blockbuster about medieval warriors. That night he falls asleep and dreams of liberating oppressed peoples by force of arms. Next morning he goes to work, feeling distinctly seedy, and tries without success to seduce the secretary from the office next door. He's been turning things over and has made up his mind to go into real estate and go for the big money. But now the weekend has arrived, and this economic crisis isn't going away, so next week will be soon enough for all that.

Now, barbarians, I don't agree
With that at all. This guy has got
A problem, barbarians. He's got a bad
Attitude. He doesn't know how lucky
He is, does he, barbarians? You'd kill
To live like this, wouldn't you? I know
I do.

Dear barbarians,
You scare me. You've been
Getting inside the perimeter.
I can see you in the searchlights.
There have been reports
Of RPG rounds fired
Into the settlements near the wire.
We're defending ourselves
Against your aggression, naturally,
And I'm confident
In the peace process
I'm sure
It's just a few troublemakers,
But some of the things you've been saying
Make it hard for me to sympathize.
Take this fellow for example:

> I was my body and nothing else: in hunger, in the blow that I suffered, in the blow that I dealt. My body, debilitated and crusted with filth, was my calamity. My body when it tensed to strike, was my physical and metaphysical dignity. In situations like mine, physical violence is the only means for restoring a disjointed personality. In the punch I was myself—for myself and for my opponent. What I later read in Frantz Fanon's *Les damnes le terre*, in a theoretical analysis of the behaviour of colonized people, I anticipated back then when I gave concrete form to my dignity by punching a human face.

Now that, that's
Just irresponsible.
Now come on now, now
That's going too far, that's crossing
The *line*.

Dear barbarians, you don't feel this way
About me, do you? Do you
Want to punch me in the face?
Let me share with you
Something my teacher taught me:
Violence is never the solution.
Let us meet at the level of the law *laws do not really bind me*
Which represents the interests of its subjects *I can do to you WHATEVER I WANT*
It is serving them, responsible to them *I can treat you as guilty if I decide to do so*
and itself subjected to their control *I can destroy you if I say so*

Dear barbarians,
I don't think I can keep this up,
You can hear this obscene excess
That is the *necessary* constituent
Of our sovereignty inside the fence
And your violence
Responds to this excess of power:
It is its counterpart—it targets this violence and undermines it.
I'm a nervous wreck.
There's a hole
Opening beneath me.
That bottom is coming up
At me.
The social fabric
Is unraveling.
That old rug had so much
Swept under it.
I fear that I may
Cross a line.
I'm afraid
I might go over.
We are starting
To fight amongst ourselves.
New parties,
Parties of no party,
Are forming. People
Are choosing sides.
There is an exodus.
It's as if it were only our collective
Belief that kept the thing in the air,
And we don't believe anymore.
And for the first time
In many years
I had the thought that,
Like you,
I don't want to die.
I don't want to die.
I want to live!

*

10.

A lettuce or a
dog's brain a
drain pipe or a
grey sky a
broken cart wheel
or a bit of
broken fence a
stool or a table
a rat or a
root a lettuce
or a dog's brain

We want things
to change we
want to change
things we want
things their
assemblage and
collapse all the
urban gardens
open the claws
from tub's feet
the gas out of
lamps water out
of rain the
things assemblies
walking streets
with our ghosts
who also happen
to want change
and the very
thingness of difference

Maybe after
the revolution
we can eat
love and think

One lowered his rifle
then they all did

A border guard shrugged
and opened the gate

A line of chanting women
meeting a line of cops in riot gear

The world can turn on a dime
(or whatever the going rate of change is now)

I don't want my kids
to have to build barricades
but they probably will

Reason is no gun
the camera
no red flag
when Anderson Cooper
arrives atop the barricade
the ratings will spike
and sponsors rush into
the market for insurrection

aimed at 18 to 34 year old men
with some college education
who still live at home

They will poke at our brains with their umbrellas awaiting the hard rain
of poverty diversion mind control meaningless entertainments while the
world burns under a carbon sky and we hold our carcinogenic tongues or
drift through streets pop songs have paved

No one wants
to live in chaos
(unless they feed you there
house and listen to you there
—remember
the universe itself
is one vast cosmic explosion
and our city streets
are laid out in the
midst of fire)

We will come back to this
we will come back
our eyes will not close
our minds will not
stop making new worlds
and new ways to remake
this world
dead or alive
defeated or victorious
filmed or forgotten

we will come back
and this time we will not go

a line of chanting women
meets a line of cops in riot gear

one lowered his rifle
then they all did

a border guard shrugged
and opened the gate

11.

The ones who wear their patriarchy on their sleeves now run this country, so they say
But what they don't show is even scarier
Underneath is money exchanging corrupt hands
Underneath are automated phone messages misdirecting voters to the wrong poll
Underneath is oil that they want to steal from the earth
They have no right to that, though they make up lies to justify it.
You can't trust them. I cry and cry because my people have made this serious mistake.
And we will all pay for their mistake.
How do you fight against an opponent you can't trust?
While you yell, they plot. They tell lies. They keep secrets.
They think you're dirt. They don't understand that dirt is good, that we need soil to live.
They're ungrateful to the soil, to that which gives them life.
While you sleep, they make plans for faster jets and bigger jails.
Jails with your name and my name on them, comrade. And the names of our brothers and sisters. They're just waiting for us to pick up a rock, and many of us will feel that we have to, even though we're not good at throwing rocks. I would rather throw a rock than cower in fearful silence. But I would much rather win by not having to throw the rock, if we can.
I tried social media. It didn't work this time. And it makes us easier to track. But I'm not giving up yet.
It is important to yell.
A righteous yell is good for the heart.
But yelling and crying and walls won't get us out of this mess. Indeed the walls can always be turned against us.
And a wall turned on its side is a bridge, Tania tells me
I need to hold onto that bridge, stand on it, walk on it, kneel on it. My family is on the other side, hostages of the petro-state.
An election is never enough, but it can still break your heart
Because it can allow pipelines
Because the power to make decisions, that belongs to us, has been stolen
Again and again
Oil baron theft
I want to shut them out with barricades
But they will always be able to build bigger barricades than me, G20
That ground feels like an ever-losing battle even though it is honorable and necessary to stand on it
We have to stand in many other places all at once too
They play fear against fear, their weapons will always get bigger, any excuse that they can find
We won't win if we fight by their rules, their logic.

And some of us, though angry enough to fight, are actually not good fighters. This hurts me, but I love us nonetheless. And I'm grateful to the ones who *are* good fighters.
How can we redefine the ground on which we stand? That is what we'll need to do. The way they've defined it will always disadvantage us. Plus it sucks.
Maybe we can't define it ourselves,
Maybe the planet has already defined this living ground, and they/we will realize this too late
We are all broken
Some of us might heal, many of us won't
For a long time, I couldn't accept this.
Today, post-election, I think maybe I finally do.
***
It is Gandhi we need to align ourselves with
Gandhi and Gaia and Vandana and Maude *and marbled murrelets and mycorrhizal mats*
Winona and Ward and Jaggi and Arundhati *and phytoplankton and peregrine falcons*
Naomi and Oren and Toghestiy and Jeannette and Lee *and bittermelon and bees*
Percy and Shiv and Jack and Elizabeth *and chrysanthemum greens and canola, now radiated*
Yoko and Yes Men and Chrystos and Dionne *and dolphins and prairie dogs*

There is a time for pies and there is a time for rocks *and beavers and snowy plovers*
There is a time for poems and a time for rifles *and coral reefs and caribou*
There is also a time for the Haudenosaune Wampum Belt
Two rivers running side by side.
(As long as one party doesn't try to dam and mine and kill the other's river)
And a time for spinning wheels
It is Super Barrio, who stopped 10,000 evictions in Mexico, who I look to
It is the Zapatistas, the Mohawks, the KI, the Lhe Lin Liyin
The Mother Earth Water Walkers, the 20-year-olds suddenly in Parliament, the grannies and the grandkids
It is the children I will never see, but who I hope will live and drink clean, wild water

REMNANTS OF EMPIRE: ROY KIYOOKA, OSAKA, 1970

>> GUY BEAUREGARD

The Japan World Exposition: An Intervention

From March 15 to September 13, Osaka hosted the 1970 Japan World Exposition, an event commonly known in English as Expo '70. This event marked the first time a World Exposition was held in Asia. It attracted more than 64 million visitors, establishing a new record for attendance (Findling 380),[1] and it featured the participation of 77 nations (126 were formally invited) as well as four international organizations, 10 provincial and municipal governments, and 32 domestic exhibitors (Manning 340). Yet Expo '70 arrived late. As Martin Manning notes, "[a] fair scheduled for 1912 was canceled after the death of Emperor Meiji, and plans for a 1940 world exposition in Tokyo were well underway when," as Manning euphemistically writes, "war broke out in Europe" (339)—an account that elides the fact that this moment was also indelibly marked by Japan's imperial expansion in Asia and the Pacific. Underlining the organizers' understanding of the belatedness of this event, surviving tickets from the cancelled world exposition in 1940 were honoured in 1970 (Manning 339).

Held in the midst of the Vietnam War, and ten years after the signing of the US-Japan Security Treaty—a treaty that codified the right of the US to use Japanese land and facilities for its network of military bases—Expo '70 was organized around the central theme of "progress and harmony for mankind" (*Japan World Exposition* 12).[2] The organizers acknowledged that "mankind . . . [was] still afflicted with many discords" (12), noting as well the existence of "gross disparities in many parts of the world" (13). Yet the organizers also contended that "[w]ith effective mutual communication and stimulation, the multifarious wisdom of the human races [*sic*] should gain higher levels, and serve mankind in harmoniously developing a better mode of life for all, through understanding and tolerance between the peoples of different traditions"—predicting that, with Expo '70, "we shall see a happy forum of concord among men" (13).

One representative at this event was Roy Kiyooka, a Japanese Canadian painter, sculptor, educator, poet, and photographer. Kiyooka was commissioned by the Canadian government to produce a sculpture entitled *Abu Ben Adam's Vinyl Dream* in the northwest corner of the Canadian pavilion—a site organized around the imperial theme of "Discovery" and dominated by an imposing mirrored structure designed by Arthur Erickson and Geoffrey Massey ("Canadian Pavilion" 190, 191). As Roy Miki notes, while Kiyooka was working on this sculpture on site in Japan, "his attention was drawn to the numerous workmen's gloves discarded and left intact [in the Expo site] wherever they had fallen" ("Afterword" 308). In an interview published in 1971, Kiyooka describes this process: "I had the lovely experience walking the site one day—looking for gloves when from three stories up a grey tattered glove came tumbling down... plop against the side of my face" ("With Roy Kiyooka" 26"; qtd. in Miki, "Afterword" 316). With characteristic acuity, Miki analyzes this moment as a "gesture of finding and being found": a moment that crystallized a significant shift in Kiyooka's artistic practice, marking "the beginning of the period when writing and photography, no longer painting, assume[d] centrality" ("Afterword" 316).

Kiyooka's work at the Expo site in Fall 1969 led to the production of a remarkable poetic and photographic sequence entitled *StoneDGloves* (1970), a text that has gained increasing critical attention.[3] In a postscript to this text, Kiyooka describes his project in this way:

> 40 photo/graphs
> and a brace of small poems:
> from hundreds 'found'
> on-site at Expo '70
> Osaka.
>
> the photos show how
> the gloves fell
> from the hands of work-men.
>
> flying home at 35000 ft
> I imagined a cloud of whitegloves
> falling into the Pacific
>
> °
>
> the litter'd-site sings
> thru in-sight. the poems link glove
> to glove. (n.p.)

As Kiyooka notes, the remarkable linking of found materials led to new "in-sights" about this "litter'd site": providing an opening, for Kiyooka, to read Expo against the grain.

Intriguingly, Expo '70 was not Kiyooka's first: he was teaching at Sir George Williams University, now Concordia University, in Montreal when this city hosted Expo '67—a major moment in the formation of Canadian cultural nationalism that has also been the subject of recent critical reconsideration (see, for example, the essays collected in Kenneally and Sloan) as well as the object of stringent anti-colonial critique. A memorable example of such critique is Armand Ruffo's sharply honed narrative intervention flatly entitled "Celebrating Canada's Centennial," an excerpt from a biography of Norval Morrisseau, an Ojibway artist "commission[ed] to paint a panel for the Indians of Canada Pavilion" to be constructed in Montreal (93). In Ruffo's narrative, the figure of Morrisseau veers between excitement over "the prospect that people from all over the world will see his work, see something of the culture of the Great Ojibway" (94) and despair after Canadian civil servants reject the outline for his work, already sketched on the wall of the pavilion, "and force Morrisseau to modify it"—to which he "responds by getting drunk and letting his assistant, Cree painter Carl Ray, finish the mural" (94). Despite such demoralizing setbacks and other twists and turns, in Ruffo's account,

> The Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 turns out to be one of the most popular of all pavilions despite the tough theme presented inside that moves from celebrating Man the Explorer and Creator to one of exposing Man the Exploiter. While headlines across Canada announce: "Pavilion Rebukes White Man, Indians' Theme Angers Expo Visitors," both national and international guests continue to flock to the controversial site, the showcase of Indian art adorning the exterior of the pavilion pulling them in like [a] wave of mythic proportion. What they witness many will carry with them in their own bundle for the rest of their lives. Their perception of Canada forever changed. (94)

In their sympathetic reading of Ruffo's narrative, David Chariandy and Sophie McCall underline how this text (along with the work of Sharon Proulx-Turner) "critique[s] the appropriation of Aboriginal heritage in the exhibitionary spaces of the nation" and "suggest[s] the potential power of artistic and cultural production to transform both the space and the viewer" (8). The "potential power" noted here by Chariandy and McCall (that is, a process that is in no way definite, with outcomes that are in no way guaranteed) raises the question of what sort of conditions could enable such potential transformations to be realized—and toward what ends?

Kiyooka faced this problem in his accounts of Expo '67, in which he explicitly questions its institutionally mediated representations of Canada. In a letter dated 1 May 1967 collected in *Transcanada Letters* (1975), Kiyooka notes that there were "550.000 Folks at EXPO today!/ Yesssireee" (n.p.). He went on to wryly observe that:

> after this prolonged exposure
> to Canadian—Identities therell be
> no place to hide 'cept in
> under the bed or the annual Fed.[eral] Fiscal
> report . (n.p.)

There's no doubt that Kiyooka was well aware of—and skeptical of—the production and exhibition of this thing called "Canadian—Identities" and, more generally, the ideological work performed by world's fairs and exhibitions.[4] This broad topic has of course received a great deal of critical attention. Robert Rydell and his co-authors, for example, have observed that "[f]rom their inception [in London] in 1851, world's fairs have mirrored the rise of the modern industrial nation-states and reflected their specific national imperial policies" (131-32). This point has been forcefully elaborated by Tony Bennett in his well-known account of the "exhibitionary complex," which he describes as "a power made manifest not in its ability to inflict pain but by its ability to organize and co-ordinate an order of things and to produce a place for the people in relation to that order" (qtd. in Rydell et al. 132). Doing so, in Bennett's account, involves a double movement: "simultaneously ordering objects [and bodies] for public inspection and ordering the public that inspected" (74).

Without discounting the potential value of this line of critique, I believe we also need to take seriously what Rydell and his co-authors call "the complex and often contradictory nature of fairs [and exhibitions]" (7) that can be read as sites of struggle whose meanings or outcomes are not fully determined. In this respect, materials housed in the Kiyooka Fonds at Simon Fraser University provide a vivid account of how Kiyooka took on this challenge while working in Japan. In an unpublished diary packed with cursive upper case writing, Kiyooka comments sharply on his work at the Osaka Expo site, notably in an entry dated 26 September 1969 in which he writes: "COMPOSED LETTER / DRAWINGS TO SEND TO ERICKSON

RE: SCULPTURE. ITS GONNA TAKE TIME—MORE THAN ITS WORTH PERHAPS." Faced with this project's challenges, Kiyooka notes in an entry dated the next day, 27 September 1969, that he "BOUGHT A CAMERA—MUCH TOO GOOD, BUT ENJOYED THE HASSLE OF PURCHASE." In a characteristically self-deprecatory tone, Kiyooka goes on to observe that he "… OUGHTA KICK [HIMSELF] FOR GETING [*sic*] CAMERA. JUST MEANS ANOTHER THING TO GET INTO. AS IF I DIDN'T SPRAWL TOO MUCH ALREADY" ("Unpublished Diary"). In a letter dated 26 October 1969 appearing in *Transcanada Letters*, Kiyooka then describes how this newly acquired camera helped him to widen the range of his critical engagement with the Expo site:

> been going abt taking lots of photos.
> i just keep looking under-foot or
> to left and right, back and front with
> in say a 10 meter circumference:
> [. . .]
> . . . the evidence of whats there
> (underfoot) accumulates. (n.p.)

The text that Kiyooka eventually produced with these photos was not, in fact, displayed at Expo '70, contrary to what critics such as Stephen Morton have recently and erroneously claimed (see Morton 107n3). These photos eventually became part of *StoneDGloves* (see Figure 1), a text that, in Roy Miki's account, "doubl[ed] as a catalogue for [Kiyooka's] first major photo exhibit which opened at the National Gallery of Canada in 1970" ("Afterword" 309), touring across Canada and then exhibited in France and Japan.[5]

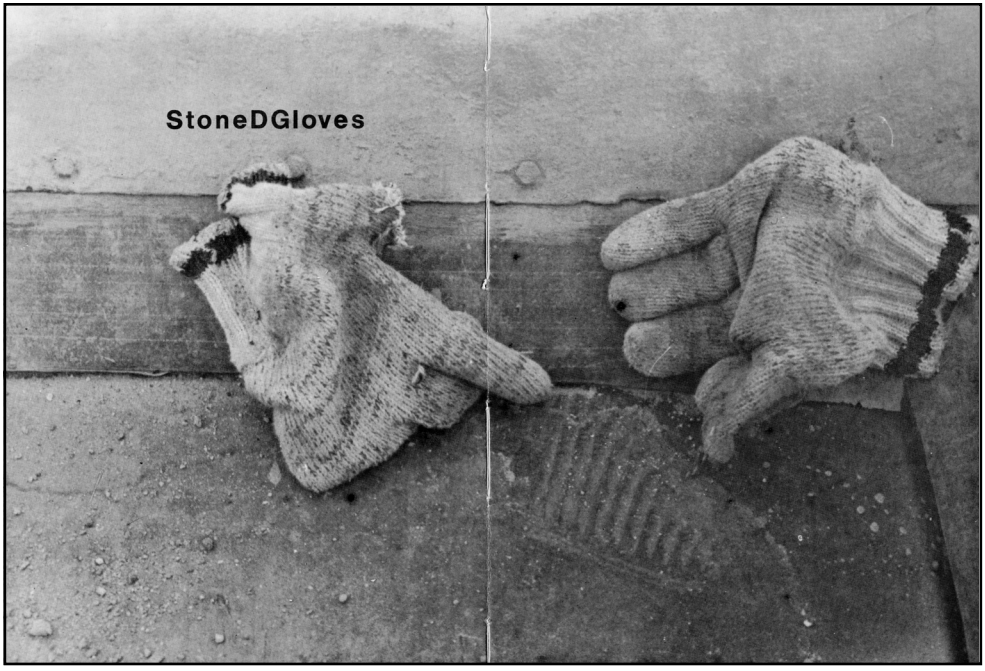

Figure 1: from Roy K. Kiyooka's *StoneDGloves* (reproduced with the kind permission of the Kiyooka Estate)

Any discussion of *StoneDGloves* understood as a text must confront its plurality, with considerable variation between the 1970 edition published by Coach House and the 1997 version that appeared posthumously in *Pacific Windows*.[6] The question of scale is also important to note in order to differentiate the potential effects of this text as it appeared in exhibited form and in book form. Kiyooka discussed this topic in a conversation at the University of Alberta in 1970 where he observed that "some of the photos on the wall are sixty inches by forty inches whereas the book [i.e., the Coach House edition] will be eight by ten inches. Then, because of the difference in size the means of reproduction is different and therefore the value scale e.g [*sic*] tones will be different. I'm interested in scale—what a big thing does experientially and what a small thing also does" ("With Roy Kiyooka" 29-30). Kiyooka's comments concerning the plurality of *StoneDGloves* encourage us to ask what this text does in specific exhibits or in specific readerly interactions with different versions of this text. While keeping this question in mind, I want to focus here on the materiality of the 1970 Coach House edition to ask what this "small thing . . . does," reading this text heuristically to foreground the terms of Kiyooka's critical intervention: an attempt to track, as he writes, "the way they fell/ the way they lay there/ the dust sifting down,/ hiding all the clues..." (n.p.; see Figure 2).

While we could investigate many possible openings in Kiyooka's text, I'd like to draw attention to one of its "small poems" (see Figure 3). Kiyooka writes:

> this is a poem for
> cotton glove. sad old worn-out cotton glove
> is the heart of the poem
>
> if you put your ear to
> his cupt hand you will hear his echo
>
> re-echo thru the poem
>
> :like a naked hand reaching for
> its own shadow (n.p.)

Kiyooka's poem encourages us to attend carefully to this "cotton glove" and, by extension, to the many other gloves represented in this text: to put our ears to them, and to learn to listen for their echoes and re-echoes. Kiyooka's text guides us through this process with patience and humour, but with no illusions about the simplicity of this task. For while "a naked hand" can "[reach] for/ its own shadow," it is an entirely different matter for this shadow to be grasped.[7]

The point I wish to make here is this: insofar as *StoneDGloves* intervenes in our perceptions of the framing of national imperial space at Expo '70, this text could act as a teaching text to help us to reread and reconsider what I call *remnants of empire*. As such, it could be helpful for us to think through the incomplete, uneven, and ongoing process of decolonization. A key text that has brought this topic into sharp focus for me is Vijay Prashad's *The Darker Nations* (2007), an interpretive history that sets out to tell the story of the Third World. Prashad emphasizes that "[t]he Third World was not a place. It was a project" (xv)—a project whose vocabulary and aspirations were conceptualized, pushed forward, undermined internally and externally, and (in Prashad's account) eventually assassinated. Prashad's remarkable narrative unfolds across a series of specific sites: from Paris to Brussels to Bandung and beyond. Osaka in 1970 does not appear in Prashad's account but, following Kiyooka's intervention, we may foreground this site to reread it otherwise: an opportunity to reconsider—and transform—institutionally mediated practices of learning.

In thinking through the work performed by Kiyooka's text, we might object, as Gayatri Spivak

Figure 2:
from Roy K. Kiyooka's *StoneDGloves*
(reproduced with the kind
permission of the Kiyooka Estate)

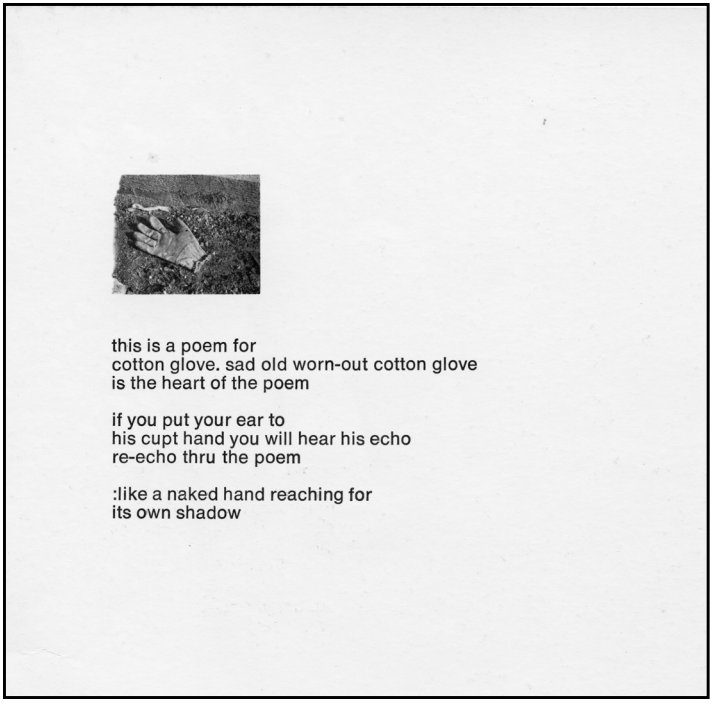

Figure 3:
from Roy K. Kiyooka's *StoneDGloves*
(reproduced with the kind
permission of the Kiyooka Estate)

has noted, that "the literary is not a blueprint to be followed in unmediated social action." But we may also counter, as does Spivak in this case, that "if as teachers of literature we teach reading, literature can be our teacher as well as our object of investigation" (23). If we are persuaded by Spivak's reasoning, we can extend our discussion by noting some key points about Kiyooka's intervention. Despite its impressive originality, Kiyooka's text was not a singular point of opposition produced amidst stifling conservatism at Expo '70; other texts produced at that time were also searching for new forms and idioms to represent "the nation" at that site. One possibility to consider here is a text by Peter Desbarats that was produced for distribution at the Canada Pavilion at Expo '70. This text, baldly entitled *Canada*, includes an insert by the Commissioner General of Canada at this event noting that:

> this book was intended originally as a statistical almanac on canada which would be complementary to the exhibits in the canadian pavilion at the 1970 japan world exposition. by the most extraordinary alchemy it became instead the unfettered attempt of young creative souls to capture, in another medium, the spirit of the pavilion itself. (n.p.)

But while the collage of quotations and photographs assembled here signals an apparently genuine search for a new form that would go beyond a simple compilation of statistics, this text nevertheless remains bound within a Canadian national project (however capacious) that is strikingly dissimilar to the terms of Kiyooka's intervention.

We don't need to characterize Kiyooka's intervention as singular and unique, however, to recognize that *StoneDGloves* pushed well beyond Kiyooka's institutionally validated forms of expertise (as a painter and as a sculptor) into a new hybrid form of representation, in this case, toward a complex interface of photos and text: what Mark Nakada has perceptively identified as a "multiform aesthetic." Roy Miki has described this turn as "a constituting moment of liberation" that, in Miki's account, "opened up RK's inglish to new textual potencies" (Afterword 315). This push toward such an interface, further developed by Kiyooka in other texts,[8] could also "open up" new possibilities to help its readers and viewers critically engage with the very grounds on which Expo '70 was constructed and staged. It's in this spirit that I want to turn now to some institutional arrangements across the Pacific to examine possible openings that they might also provide.

Empire and Overseas Literature: A Project

Over the past five years, scholars in Taiwan (which is where I currently live and work) have organized a series of events and worked collectively on projects concerning the question of *empire*.[9] In doing so, they have engaged with and extended a robust critical discussion that has gained enormous force over the past decade, especially since Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's powerful—and controversial—theorization of the term (2000).[10] We might say, reworking Andreas Huyssen's expression from the 1990s, that we've witnessed "an empire boom of unprecedented proportions"—a "boom" that gained additional urgency following the US military invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003.[11] The discussions that have taken place in Taiwan have opened up valuable institutional space to exchange views, clarify commitments, and map out possible directions for future critical work. But I also believe that we could benefit from a closer examination of these developments to see where they might take us.

One project I've been involved with is called "Empire and Overseas Literature," which I directed at National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan from

2007 to 2009. With funding from Taiwan's National Science Council and additional matching funds, our research team had a budget of NT$9,600,000 (approximately CAN$320,000) to purchase library materials and to execute the project. With these funds, we eventually acquired some 4412 books, documents, and reports as well as the back issues of approximately 18 journals comprising an estimated additional 1200 volumes;[12] our project also used matching funds to acquire DVDs, videos, and other materials that were not eligible to be purchased under National Science Council guidelines.[13] The materials we acquired through this project range across the histories of various empires and decolonization movements; they include texts focusing on the modalities of colonial administration and the complexities of the postcolonial dispensation. We attempted to purchase, among other materials, cultural texts including all available titles published in the Heinemann African Writers Series and the Heinemann Caribbean Writers Series; all regional winners of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize; and the work of other individual authors—including Roy Kiyooka, as well as many others—who would have fallen outside such forms of institutional validation. In short, while working within the constraints of the project, we attempted to gather as wide a range as possible of available postcolonial texts.

I remain enthusiastic about the range of materials that this project has helped to acquire, and I continue to view this project as a terrific opportunity to participate in some on-the-ground institution building with an infusion of funds that is unlikely to be available again any time soon. But I also believe we need to ask ourselves fundamental questions about how, and toward what ends, these materials could be used. These questions are important insofar as they can help us to scrutinize the framing of these materials and their imagined relationship to possible future readers. Here's an anecdote to explain what I mean. In a project meeting I attended involving library staff and research teams directing various library acquisition projects ongoing at that time, the participants discussed how we might effectively promote these new research materials. One professor at this meeting responded by suggesting, apparently without irony, that the library could consider constructing a special room dedicated to showcasing a single rare book so visitors could then come to admire it.[14] Here we need to ask: would it be enough to institutionally frame these newly acquired texts as monuments to be admired? A generous reading of this faculty member's suggestion would view it as part of an open brainstorming session—or as a sincere expression of respect for the materials being acquired. But I wish to note here that providing an adequately critical response to this suggestion may require us to address the genuinely difficult intellectual work that lies ahead: to clarify what is at stake in acquiring, engaging with, and learning from these materials.

At this point, it may be useful to return to Roy Kiyooka's interventionary text and its potential relevance to us now. As I've suggested, *StoneDGloves* scrutinizes the ground on which Expo '70 was to be constructed and staged in order to direct our attention toward the discarded remains left behind by workers on this site. In this respect, it may be tempting to produce a different critical narrative, one that is not invested in constructing institutionally sanctioned monuments but is instead invested, explicitly or otherwise, in presenting Kiyooka as a heroic figure calling into question the organization of national imperial space at Expo '70—and, by extension, helping us call into question other institutional arrangements too, including the constellation of research materials gathered and organized and regulated through the "Empire and Overseas Literature" project. While I certainly don't want to discount the importance of such critical engagement, I want to suggest that

this sort of heroic narrative, however tempting, may possibly forestall the posing of other vital questions. To explain what I mean here, I want to make one last short detour, this time to an essay by Roger Simon that investigates the university as "a place to think?" with emphasis squarely placed on the question mark embedded in this title. In posing this question, Simon sets out to describe and eventually push beyond what he calls "the various heroic enactments" informing different models of pedagogical action in the university centered around (variously, depending on one's commitments) the redemption of individual students, or increased access to the mechanisms of wealth accumulation, or the redemption of a nation (51). Without disavowing what he calls "the promissory character of pedagogy" (51), Simon challenges us to think beyond these "heroic enactments" and instead to consider the university "not as it already appears to be (an existing institution with defined traditions, roles, procedures, and purposes) but as something far more emergent": what he calls "a particular effect of the pedagogical actions of the members of an institution (not yet a university) gathered together to produce various pedagogic scenes, various instantiations of a unique space/time within which thinking is first and foremost a social activity, something that takes place between people through active interchange" (52). In putting forward this challenge, Simon draws upon and extends the work of Bill Readings to underline the important fact that "the question of 'being-together' within the university, 'being-together' within pedagogical relationships, cannot be decided entirely in advance of its enactment" (53).[15]

If we take Simon's point seriously, as I believe we should, the question of how to scrutinize what I've called "remnants of empire" needs to be understood as a pedagogical project without guarantees that nevertheless seeks to ask what forms of "active interchange" or "being-together" (as they take place in universities or in other sites) could enable us to adequately attend to these remnants. Following Kiyooka, we could ask: how could we attend carefully to the echoes and re-echoes of empire that we might learn to hear—and to learn to take seriously those we cannot? As I've tried to suggest, a critical engagement with this question cannot be content with simply admiring texts that have been positioned as institutionally sanctioned monuments. Nor can it be content with simply putting forward the figure of Kiyooka (or any other such figure) as a heroic model of resistance despite the impressive interventionary work performed by *StoneDGloves* and other cultural texts. The modest contention of my paper is that addressing remnants of empire may instead involve a more challenging and unfinished critical task: to read across scattered yet interlinked sites in order to better comprehend the workings of, and to devise a pedagogy adequate to, the workings of empire in Asia and the Pacific, and beyond.[16] Doing so could enable us to scrutinize the adequacy of existing institutional arrangements (always already compromised after empire) without losing sight of the sometimes unexpected openings they may offer for collective critical work.

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Wang, and Rob Wilson have helped to clarify my line of argument; all remaining problems are of course my responsibility. Support for this research was provided by the National Science Council in Taiwan (NSC 97-2628-H-007-013-MY3) and by "Taiwan in Dialogue with the World: The Cultural Mobility and Knowledge Dissemination Project" and is gratefully acknowledged.

Notes

1 Findling's *Historical Dictionary* has compiled statistics of World's Fairs and Expositions from the inaugural Great Exhibition in London in 1851 up until 1988; see Findling 375-81. The attendance record set at Expo '70 stood until Shanghai Expo in 2010, which reportedly drew over 73 million visitors.

2 Manning notes in passing that "leftist demonstrators protested Expo '70 and the U.S.-Japan security treaty" (345), signed on 19 January 1960. Of particular notoriety are the terms of Article VI, which states that "For the purpose of contributing to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East, the United States of America is granted the use by its land, air and naval forces of facilities and areas in Japan." A full text of the Security Treaty in English is available at www.wikisource.org. For a nuanced discussion of political mobilization at the 2005 Aichi Expo held in Japan and its points of relation to Expo '70, see Yoshimi.

3 Roy Miki, an exemplary reader of Kiyooka's work, had commented on this key text in a number of places including Miki Afterword; Miki "Altered States"; Miki "Inter-Face"; and Miki "Unravelling." Other productive readings that have appeared in print include essays by Goellnicht; and McFarlane. For attentive and groundbreaking dissertation research on Kiyooka's text, see also Capperdoni; and Lowry.

4 In a 1970 newspaper article by Joan Lowndes, Kiyooka commented on World Fairs by flatly stating: "I really think they're preposterous things. I've no sympathy for them at all" (11). For additional commentary by Kiyooka immediately following his work in Osaka, see also Townsend.

5 The National Gallery website indicates that Kiyooka's photographs (EX1390) were exhibited from 15 August 1970 to 31 January 1972; see www.gallery.ca. This time range appears to include the dates that these works traveled across Canada. In Scott McFarlane's account, *StoneDGloves* "was circulated throughout Canada by the [National] Gallery's Extension Services" (146n1); the photographs were subsequently exhibited at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris in 1972 and at the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto in 1973. For additional details about each of these specific exhibition venues, see McFarlane 146n1; and "Roy Kiyooka."

6 In his editorial notes, Miki writes that "[Kiyooka] was eager to produce a new edition of this important work. The 'computer version' [reworked by Kiyooka just before his death in 1994] restores . . . omissions [from the Coach House edition] and includes many changes" (312)—including the modification of many poems and the omission of many photos.

7 On this point, we can turn to a powerful and often quoted passage from "Dear Lucy Fumi: c/o Japanese Canadian Redress Secretariat" concerning Kiyooka's experiences in Opal, Alberta in the 1940s following the forced movement of his family out of Calgary in search of employment: "In and through all the ideological strife we avidly attended via the local paper and the radio a small 'i' felt as if a punitive fist kept clenching and unclenching behind my back but each time I turned to catch it flexing it would disappear into the unlit corners of our small log house" (n.p.).

8 Two subsequent texts that show Kiyooka working across the interface of photography and text include *Wheels: A Trip thru Honshu's Backcountry* (a version of which available in *Pacific Windows*) and the 1990 edition of "Pacific Windows" as it appeared in the *Capilano Review* (the 1997 version available in *Pacific Windows* includes text only and no photographs). Both of these remarkable texts are well worth investigating for readers interested in seeing how Kiyooka developed this poetic form.

9 Here I'd note three specific cases: the "Literature After Empire" summer institute organized by Ping-hui Liao at National Tsing Hua University in August 2006, an event that brought together international and local scholars and graduate students from around Taiwan for a series of lectures, seminars, and roundtable discussions; the "Empire and Overseas Literature" library acquisition project initiated in November 2007 at National Tsing Hua University, about which I have more to say below; and a conference organized around the theme "In the Shadows of Empires" organized by scholars in the Institute

of European and American Studies at Academia Sinica in November 2008.

10 Many texts have attempted to recalibrate our understanding of "empire" over the past decade. See, for example, Harvey's theorization of "the new imperialism" (2003); Gregory's reading of "the colonial present" as it is visible in Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq (2004); the outrage expressed in Roy's "ordinary person's guide to empire" (2004); Harootunian's audacious narrative of modernization theory as "the empire's new clothes" (2004); Johnson's ethical mapping of the US military-industrial complex and what he calls "the sorrows of empire" (2004); Stoler's influential foregrounding of "the intimate in colonial studies" (2006); Münkler's magisterial yet disturbing account of "the surprising return of empire in the post-imperial age" (2005; English translation 2007); Streeter et al.'s repositioning of Anna Tsing's notion of *friction* to investigate empires and varying forms of autonomy (2009); Chen's invocation of "Asia as method" to attempt to address the intertwined processes of "decolonization, de-imperialization, and de-cold war" (2010); and Burbank's and Cooper's (2010) overview of "repertoires of imperial power" with a focus on "the different strategies empires chose as they incorporated diverse peoples into the polity while sustaining or making distinctions among them" (2).

11 I've reworked the phrase from Huyssen's astute investigation, in 1995, of what he called "a memory boom of unprecedented proportions" (5).

12 These numbers are accurate as of 14 April 2009. Warm thanks are due to Mei-hsueh Fan at the National Tsing Hua University library for compiling this data and for her many efforts to coordinate the acquisition of these materials.

13 Some of the restrictions governing this library acquisition project include: no acquisition of electronic resources; no acquisition of audio-visual materials; and a "repetition rate" with the holdings of all university libraries in Taiwan that was not to exceed 30%.

14 According to my notes, this suggestion was made at a library acquisition project meeting held at National Tsing Hua University on 18 September 2008.

15 This point was recognized by Kiyooka in the early 1970s when, in the interview published in 1971 mentioned above, he states that "I've never been interested in [universities] excep [*sic*] as occasions for sitting down and rapping with a group of students" ("With Roy Kiyooka" 24)—a statement in which the irregular spelling of *excep* helps to mark a turn to the sorts of pedagogical "occasions" to which Kiyooka was committed. Indeed, Kiyooka's concern with such matters extended throughout his teaching life, as shown in Paul Danyluk's recent discussion of Kiyooka's "academic subjectivities" as these matters are addressed in his *Pacific Rim Letters* (2005) and elsewhere; see Danyluk.

16 I wish to thank Rob Wilson for coining and generously passing along this felicitous phrase.

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from sinuous

>> LYDIA KWA

base n. that on which a thing stands
in chem.. a substance that reacts
with an acid to form a salt,
or dissolves in water forming
hydroxyl ions

Gatecrashers are not welcome
--National Post, July 22,1999

Ship's passengers must be sent home
--The Vancouver Sun, July 23, 1999

Boat people who need a return ride
--The Globe and Mail, July 23,1999

large boats arrive on the shores of a foreign land
mythic echoes of conquest

glaring, flagrant hostility toward
vessels that spill human contents
past boundaries and borders

a spill that challenges presumptions
of place:
it is not your place to speak
out of turn
hard to place that face
do you honestly
mean *mi casa su casa*?

Coming to this far away land, Canada,
My hope is fulfilled.
Why do you treat me like this,
Do you think this is justice?
I wait and wait and
Don't know when you'll release me
Days passed, months passed,
How could I not be sad?
May I ask what the Immigration Board and the Judge
Really want to do with me?

Sung by female Fujian Boat Migrants
incarcerated at Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women

Admiral Cheng He the eunuch
in the 13th Century
arrived on our shores
long before the Europeans

exception to the rule
that male genitals are necessary
for success

(I think about my ancestors
arriving in junks
on the shores of Sumatra and Singapore

The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined.

Edward Said, *Orientalism*

Together for an hour on Saturday mornings in the chilly visiting room of the Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women. Buzzed in by guards, us from the outside, the Fujian women from the locked quarters upstairs.

Her body quaked.

The tremor of her chilled hands as they clutched mine, quiver of her lips as she pleaded for help. Shadow self, Mermaid stripped of sea legs, imprisoned for almost twenty months, all because she was one of 599 who dared to arrive on boats from Fujian province. The day after she's released from prison, the stories flood out from her, accounts of violence she experienced in China.

Reverberations unsettle the air between us.

in over a decade since the arrival of the boats
a handful of migrants obtain
legitimate status
the rest, gone underground
working in restaurants in New York
or back to the Mainland

rising tide of asylum seekers on our planet
flux movement shift
flee torture strife war starvation

aching need for sanctuary strong
yet difficult to obtain

tr.v. **tol·er·at·ed**, **tol·er·at·ing**, **tol·er·ates**
1. To allow without prohibiting or opposing; permit.
2. To recognize and respect (the rights, beliefs, or practices of others).
3. To put up with; endure. See Synonyms at bear[1].
4. *Medicine* To have tolerance for (a substance or pathogen).

tolerate has been sadly cheapened
cliché a sleek poseur
but what if the presence of asylum seekers
becomes medicine for our ailments?

"The visions of men are widened by travel and contacts with citizens of a free country will infuse a spirit of independence and foster yearnings for freedom in the minds of the emasculated subjects of alien rule."-

Gurdit Singh Sandhu

this country I adopted
has bred a dark history of hatred:
Chinese Head Tax in 1885 and 1923 Exclusion Act
racial segregation in schools
Internment of Japanese Canadians
the *Komagata Maru* incident in 1914
detention of Tamil migrants

so much more…

…pseudologia phantastica, that form of hysteria which is characterized by a peculiar talent for believing one's own lies…the essence of hysteria is a systematic dissociation, a loosening of the opposites which normally are held together. It may even go to the length of a splitting of the personality, a condition in which quite literally one hand no longer knows what the other is doing.

--Carl Jung, After the Catastrophe

Theory presented as if a unitary truth. Race represented as myth.

There's a lie that stability means unchanging nature. Archetypes frozen within fixed parameters. What we worship, on the altars of our minds.

Ergreifer—one who seizes

grip of stereotype
archetype of seizure
fugue of the patriarch
patronage of the seized

ODE TO AN OCEANIC TURN
PDA FOR YOUR PDA
PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION
FOR YOUR
PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANT

>> LAIWAN

Instruction: Text a message of love and affection to the oceans, the seas, to tsunamis, to water, to 79% of your body, to an oceanic turn, to change, to revolution, to transformation, to love!
Recommended limit for each message is 60-characters, and dial in again if you wish to send another 60-character line.
The following is the poem that the audience texted in during the installation of PDA For Your PDA: Ode to an Oceanic Turn at Britannia Library Gallery, Vancouver, from April 20 to June 3, 2011

Dear sea, love me,
Shimmer me sweet to the rhythm of your touch
Gentle waves lulling me to sleep
Inside, waves are strong tides release me
Walking here, I read, love yourself
Gentle waves lulls me to sleep…heaven
Hello ocean, Hello sea, LOL, OMG!
. . …. . . …adrift again.. . .. . . .
Tranquil seas, ocean of pain, rivers lead to them
Dear sea, love me
Peace from all of us on ocean's edge. And luv 2!
I kneel to the clouds.
Gave her the bends as she escaped your depths
Can i borrow your phone, my liquid date is waiting
Flooding plains, erasing all logic, weep in letting go possession,
to beautiful possibilities
Let go swimming in clear delight
Oceanic achievements washed away to the sea
Clouds blacken the invisible horizon. Gulls dont care.
Smooth sailing
sea…saw…see…waves
…uncertain patterns form waves in oceans of possibility
Hello
tongue tastes salt in every crevice that is u
bliss would be, to be submerged
I love your lazy ways
Ocean of Love: The Ocean's love is forever. The Ocean's love is blue.
Holding you in it's arms forever. The Ocean's love is true.
Oceans of love: The ocean's love is forever. The ocean's love is blue.
Holding you in it's arms forever. The ocean's love is true.
We are of the ocean. We carry the sea in our bellies
Waves wash over our cells. The ocean is me
Wave upon wave she embraces me bodily
Liquid eyes see inward. My fishy laugh wants more time in your languid depths
Stormy seas send sensual shimmies up my spine
Water's cross currents beckoned, cellular waves will travel. Beached

lovely lines
across
ocean's
waters!
Yahoo SMS: To continue using the Yahoo! Txt Messaging service,
you need to OPT-IN by replying to this or any previous Yahoo! txt message. Visit mobile.yahoo.com
.. . testing tepid water. .. .
wave upon wave she embraces me bodily
lulling into lullaby she pelican dive by-the-by
and then slips into sleep with me beside
thank you for lymph & lusciousness
for awe & adventure
for plankton & playfulness
for forests & fertility
for groundwater & graciousness
for humbleness & happiness
for whales & wonder
for dolphins & destiny
for mother & magic
for rain & rivers
flooding plains so wide we wade in waist deep
a gift to demolish any owning for what a vast wail
a vast whale she is surging through beyond tears
we wait and wade in waste through haste
yet she encouraging deep coral reef these fish
she breathes an oxygened dance of clean clean sea
slowly, slowly she rises, drowning all else
she is we and we is she
we make the ocean beds that we lie in
they are lined with our mistakes: benzene, dioxins, plastics
but i still love them
and hope they will forgive our brothers' industrial mistakes
industrial, in a trial of dust, she floors with floods
leading a trail, a trial of fog, mist taken by error /

June 2011

SPAM MAPS

>> MARK NAKADA

spam maps I

Okinawa - April 1945

before) 350,000 American troops invade Okinawa
their navy bombards the island.
four shell bursts for every three square metres of land.
122,000 civilians (20% pop.) killed. survivors dub this shelling "the typhoon of steel."
all homes and buildings destroyed.
people rendered impoverished, apathetic; for several years the land will lay gutted.

Arline dreaming of a big house in Los Angeles.
her father left her in Kin-Cho when he left for Hawaii.
now gardening for Mr. Baskin and Gordon MacRae in Toluca Lake,
she thinks he could strike it big with some inheritance from his rich clients.
her only comfort is that hope.

cooked gruel of sago palm before daybreak.
Mr. Afuso gave her imo tempura fried in motor-oil, two bites. (the way he looked at her.
G.I.s coming up-island soon, no fires allowed.
hot smoking craters as she emerges from the cave.
neighbourhood landmarks, brick lanes, gardens,
gone.
now navigate by looking to the hills, half-remembered location of the spring
turn left at the rubble hulk of the Yakuba,
past the stench waft of bodyfluids oozing downhill
through cannibal cockroaches
among broken foundations
the Namisato Kuominkan stood here,
maybe.

past a paste of bloody hog carcasses
steaming shattered bones in the shit piles of pig-sties. no smell like it.
not one pig survives. no bird picks over the carrion.
a few beetles in the eye-sockets.
the meat staple of the islands, buta,
all gone.
the relief ship *John Owen*, like Noah's ark
brings the first 550 Portland pigs 3 years later.

private first class Alden Nakama, Arline's cousin

landed three days ago with the 442nd.
for the all Japanese-American unit,
kicking jerry's ass at Monte Milleto and Anzio was one thing.
invading their parents' homeland is another.
a real killer homecoming!
the Okinawan American boys have their own agonies,
their own missions.
Alden gripping the old photo of Arline, age 9
tries again to plant a memory of her face in his mind.
they're strangers, and she'll be 16 now.

the squad marches on high alert, two by two into the wastelands
formerly Kin village. most locals hide in fear, snug in their muddy caves
considering suicide. "marines must spear their mothers with bayonets
before signing up!" or so they've been told.

Alden spots Arline, his family, his blood, without even seeing her face.
hunched over filling a jerry can with mud-water from the spring.
he looks at her back, the way she crouches, the outline of her neck and knows.
he breaks rank, running up the mud bank toward her calling "Tomiko! Tomi-chan!"
her Japanese name.
she knew her cousin might be coming, that he hadn't speared his mother,
that he might come as family first, enemy second.

first contact: averts her eyes as Alden begins touching her emaciated body,
checking for injuries but finding all ribs and bones.
she pulls away as he tries to hold on and collapses screaming, anger panic.
"Iyada! Iyada, mo!"
her brother Shigenobu, a sailor in the Japanese navy killed months before
by Alden's friends. maybe by Alden himself?

he speaks a soft, broken Japanese, trying to calm her.
Arline stands in defiance, no words.
connects both cans of water to the yoke
begins a defiant march up the hill and away.
a moments pause and Alden chases after,
wrestling the yoke away from her as she screams "Mo-ii! Mo-II-YO!"
Alden squats beneath the yoke and will haul it uphill for her.
legs wobbling, he launches up causing the cans to swing
alternating out of balance, stumbling steps, slipping through the mud,
worsening spiraling incredible weight

brings him down face first in the muddy laughter of other young girls
waiting for their water. regular load for Arline, too heavy for a soldier.
Arline prepares to hoist her water and never look back.
Alden watches, semi-prone in the mud
then frantically rustles through his combat pack saying "wait, just wait! I have food."
now kneeling he bows, face close to mud and both hands produce shaking K-rations
outstretched arms offering above his head no looking.
not a pause, but a realization.
he feels it ripped from his fingers.
as he looks up she already has the tin of Spam opened,
scooping with two fingers filling her face, they lock teary eyes as she gorges herself
with worthless pork shoulder.
spiced ham falling from her lips, laughing and crying.
first meat in weeks.
like she never knew before. before Alden came home.

spam maps II

gift of the rescuer:
a"Typhoon of Steel"
rescuer's gift: military rations of bullets and pork
callit "emergency relief supplies"
callit "Lend-Lease Act"

peace offering: spiced ham imperial fuel

from alden to arline
a peace offering
the bait and switch
cursed gift
cost of acceptance

here in the grocery lineup
impossible dreams of
musubi ewa
chanpuru kin-cho
loco moco hilo

spam on the counter
clerk's judging glance the white
reciting recipes trash stigma
friend's gagging throat

separated families
kikokushijyo role reversals *John Owen*'s ark
shinseki ironies landed too late

III


Spam mapS
luncheon meat
fully cooked
"a war-time delicacy" - *Margaret Thatcher*
ready to eat – cold or hot
pork
salt
"I officially forgive you your only sin – sending us so much of it." - *Dwight D. Eisenhower*
water
modified
potato
starch
Sugar
sodium
nitrite
"Without SPAM we wouldn't have been able to feed our army." – *Nikita Khrushchev*
serving
suggestion
product of USA
registered
Trademark
Margaret Thatcher "had some lettuce and tomatoes and peaches, so it was SPAM and salad."
U.S. inspected
Passed by
Department of Agriculture
Dwight D. Eisenhower ate his "…share of SPAM along with millions of other soldiers."
Maps spaM

Hawaii - 1943

Pop's hands shake packing a metal bento box of spam musubi after midnight
his fingers
trembling shadows
on woodslat walls of the converted chickencoop house
in low kerosene light after midnight
Kinye lying still, spies beneath the blanket at Pop tying a scarf over his bald head
fastening dark jika-tabi on his feet, slinging a bundle over his small shoulders

walls disappear as the lamp goes out
the long rusty spring is unhooked from the door so that it closes quietly
Kinye's father is no longer there

maybe tonight Pop will find his other son behind the wire at Hono'uliuli
maybe tonight he'll get caught after curfew
maybe he *will* find his other son
it's been too long since he saw Shigenobu, and maybe Pop wants to get thrown behind the wire
at Hono'uliuli
would Pop tire of waiting for Shigenobu to turn up there as a POW?
maybe tonight he'll come home like always, and Kinye will fall asleep

out of Ewa village dodging exclusion zones, checkpoints, sentries, spotlights, military areas,
Pop homing his way to the wire
at the men's enclosure he pauses to whisper news, passing cigarettes thru the fence
and asks the question
at the women's enclosure he pauses to whisper news, passing musubi thru the fence and asks the question
at the POW yard he stops to whisper news, passing the last of the cigarettes, spam musubi and asks "Have you seen my son? Is Shigenobu here?"
All the detainees remain silent
remain silent so Pop will return

NEW DIRECTIONS IN ASIAN CANADIAN STUDIES

EDITED BY
CHRISTINE KIM AND CHRISTOPHER LEE

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INTRODUCTION: NEW DIRECTIONS IN ASIAN CANADIAN STUDIES

>> CHRISTINE KIM AND CHRISTOPHER LEE

These essays began as part of a pedagogical experiment in Fall 2010. We were both teaching graduate seminars on Asian Canadian Studies in our respective departments and decided to coordinate our classes in order to simulate the dialogues and interactions that have formed Asian Canadian Studies. With a view toward providing first-hand experience in academic research practices, our courses culminated in a research symposium in which our students presented their work. Along the way, we realized that instead of just simulating research, our students were actually engaging deeply with the field and producing original interventions. After the opportunity to publish some of these papers became available, the authors committed to significant revisions and we are grateful to each of them for their commitment to this project. Mindful of the leading role that it has played in developing Asian Canadian Studies over many years, we are especially grateful to *West Coast Line* for making their pages available for this conversation.

In naming this section "New Directions in Asian Canadian Studies," we are implicitly claiming the existence of an academic field, and we recognize that this is in itself a contested point. The appearance of Asian Canadian Studies is a fairly recent phenomenon, the result of years of labor by scholars and critics who were seldom recognized—and often marginalized—for their efforts. Given this background, it is not surprising that institutionalization has been the source of much ambivalence: are the standards of legitimacy that permeate the academy antithetical to the oppositional, democratic, emancipatory, impulses of Asian Canadian culture and activism? Is Asian Canadian Studies a way of furthering these commitments or a form of cooptation?

We pose these questions at a time when significant numbers of students are entering graduate programmes across the country with the explicit interest of working in Asian Canadian Studies. What pedagogical challenges accompany the field's expansion, and how might we resist the temptation to be institutional gatekeepers of knowledge? As our colleague Kirsten McAllister reminds us, students enter into Asian Canadian Studies from many directions, and it is this diversity that keeps the field contentious and exciting. It is in this spirit, then, that we present these essays, with the hope that their directions will result in new conversations and interventions.

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SOUNDING CANADIAN: LANGUAGE AND ASIAN CANADIAN IDENTITY

>> BEN GEHRELS

Xiaoping Li writes that to self-identify as Asian Canadian is to assert one's Canadianness, while at the same time claiming a hybrid "in-betweenness" that can be useful in motivating cultural and political activism (24). Building on Li's point, I want to explore the implications of conceptualizing hybridity as a strategic response to the Asian Canadian subject's position amidst an unarticulated tension between official multiculturalism and bilingualism. Although the state continues to present these policies as complementary, its use of multiculturalism to celebrate and pay lip service to cultural and visible difference is often expressed through state-mandated bilingualism.[1] I contend that instead of interacting seamlessly, these policies push up against each other in ways that leave discursive gaps in the disciplinary framework of the state, gaps that can be useful in opening up new ways of thinking about cultural and political activism. As Asian Canadian Studies continues to develop and establish itself, both academically and creatively, it is crucial that its practitioners recognize, represent, and exploit these inconsistencies in order to take advantage of their hybridity instead of being limited by it.

At stake here is the agency of the Asian Canadian subject in a state whose definition of Canadianness has a decidedly Eurocentric cultural and linguistic bias. Smaro Kamboureli asserts that minority Canadians "continue to be defined in terms of a counternarrative that now changes, now erodes, what Canadian identity is presumed to mean" (84). This counternarrative—along with the narrative dictating what is quintessentially Canadian—is linguistically enforced by the state through bilingualism: to be Canadian is to sound Canadian, and to sound Canadian is to be proficient in English or French. Proficiency in what the system declares "non-official" languages, on the other hand, carries no capital at a policy level, despite the fact that in many Western Canadian cities, Asian languages are far more prevalent than French. Instead, speaking languages other than English and French—such as Japanese and Mandarin—reinforces the Asian Canadian's "status as the 'other' in Canadian society" (Li 24).

As novels like Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* suggest, however, these "non-official" languages are an integral aspect of the cultural differences purportedly upheld and celebrated by official multiculturalism. In Lai's novel, when a Chinese girl named Nu Wa travels to The City of Hope and realizes that her native language no longer has any cultural capital, she consumes a special drink that grants her full proficiency in the local tongue. But as she gains this new language, she loses her faculty for the old; there is no room in her for both. In order to *fully* assume a new cultural identity, Nu Wa must give up her old cultural identity along with her native tongue. Although this acculturation helps her to survive, when she later returns home to China, her inability to speak her native language renders her an unintelligible cultural outsider. She gets stuck between the two cultures, no longer belonging in China because she no longer sounds Chinese, yet still Othered by her visible difference back in The City of Hope. Nu Wa's narrative provides a useful example of how hybrid identity can be both empowering and a structural imposition that places individuals culturally "in limbo" (Li 34).

Salt Fish Girl represents just one example of how artistic output by Asian Canadian writers and artists can function in an activist mode. This world that Lai imagines, in which languages are mutually exclusive and deeply connected to their respective cultures, disrupts the abstract ideal of a state that can channel multiculturalism through the lens of

1 The plural in parentheses here is symptomatic of a general awareness throughout this paper that despite the presence of French in Canadian legislation, it is almost totally absent as a spoken reality in many parts of Western Canada.

only one or two languages while at the same time preserving cultural equality. As Himani Bannerji argues, "ours is not a situation of co-existence of cultural nationalities or tribes within a given geographical space. Speaking here of culture without addressing power relations displaces and trivializes deep contradictions" ("On the Dark Side" 329). When *Salt Fish Girl* is read in a Canadian context, Nu Wa's experiences demonstrate in subversive ways how difficult it can be to maintain a strong grasp on one's cultural identity within a social framework that encodes key aspects of that identity (including language) as "foreign" at a policy level, thereby leaving its adherents vulnerable to frequent racism and exclusion.

The policies that dictate this foreignness, including bilingualism and multiculturalism, function as what Michel Foucault calls "apparatuses of security," legislative mechanisms utilized by the state to ensure its survival and enforce its power over a population ("Governmentality" 103). They ensure that cultural Others comply with the framework of the state through a system of rewards and punishments: when Othered subjects function amicably within the Canadian bilingual framework, the system rewards them by recognizing them as belonging to the nation—at least to some degree.[2] Egyptian Canadian feminist critic Didi Khayatt, for example, writes in her first-hand account of applying for immigrant status in Canada that an immigration officer gave her "ten points for charm" to bump up her score so that she would satisfy the necessary requirements to live permanently in the country (78). "The accredited 'charm,'" Khayatt tells us, "relied on a combination of social relations that are not quantifiable" (78): she was a woman of marrying age from an upper-class family who was both financially secure and proficient in Canada's two official languages. These factors resulted in the officer perceiving her "as a woman with no colour" (78)—which is to say "normal" (white-skinned)—a transition that rendered her visible difference invisible in the eyes of the state, at least for the purpose of border-crossing.

In this encounter, the state's bilingual agenda takes precedence over its secondary desire to distinguish itself internationally as inclusive, tolerant, and multicultural.[3] Although the state is also interested in Khayatt's age, gender, and financial stability, these factors alone would not have been "charming" enough for her to receive the necessary type of recognition. Her linguistic sameness overrides her visible difference; only when she demonstrates linguistic compliance is she allowed to become part of the multicultural mosaic used by the state to promote its rhetoric of diversity, both at home and abroad. Her desirability in the eyes of the state, however, is largely coincidental. As an upper-class Egyptian, educated in both English and French, she happens to satisfy Canada's linguistic immigration requirements; as a young attractive woman, she also happens to fulfil the male immigration officer's (overtly sexualized) conception of what constitutes charm. The arbitrariness of the encounter is chilling. The system perpetuates the linguistic and cultural status quo by dramatically easing the passage of those raised in English-speaking cultures. As Khayatt's account

2 "Belonging," that is, at least in terms of citizenship. From a day-to-day perspective, this narrative of belonging is often not so straightforward or benevolent. Roy Kiyooka, a Japanese Canadian poet and visual artist, for example, relates that for him learning English had less to do with belonging than "with surviving—survival" (*Broken Entries* 2). Without learning to efface his cultural difference through proficiency in English, he implies that he would have died a cultural death in the form of persistent exclusion and discrimination.

3 Eva Mackey argues that "Canada's national mythology" can be distinguished from those of Britain and the United States through "representations of 'tolerance,' inclusion, and 'official multiculturalism,' not through the erasure of cultural difference" (xv).

suggests, linguistic biases at the level of immigration can greatly reduce the country's cultural diversity, a reality that the state continually attempts to debunk through the performance of cultural tokenism in its multicultural propaganda.

In the face of ongoing structural inequalities, it is important to use novels like Lai's and accounts like Khayatt's as lenses through which to reassess how we as scholars, artists, and thinkers within Asian Canadian Studies understand notions of resistance: how can we resist the cultural power imbalances perpetuated by bilingualism and obscured by multiculturalism? What does it mean to "resist" a state? I view attempts to foreground and critique the power dynamics of official multiculturalism as more productive than calls for its dissolution. Foucault argues that regulatory apparatuses always have some measure of resistance built into them.[4] As a result, the state is incredibly difficult to shift, because "when it is a question of altering the system of imprisonment, … resistance is to be found not in the prison as penal sanction, but in the prison with all its determinations, links and extrajudicial results; in a general network of disciplines and surveillances" (*Discipline* 305). Because it is built into the system itself, resistance does not necessarily involve attempting to overthrow the system entirely, but rather strengthening one's position from inside of it through critiquing and disrupting its hegemony.

One way that Asian Canadian activists have facilitated this critique is through "inserting 'race' back into Canadian discourses as a key concept to be used in understanding power and equality in Canada" (Li 30). Although "race" has been thoroughly exposed as a genetic fiction and scholars like Paul Gilroy have advocated that "there is something worthwhile to be gained from a deliberate renunciation of 'race' as the basis for belonging to one another and acting in concert" (13), official multiculturalism continues to preserve racial hierarchies through the rhetoric of "visible minorities." The deliberate reintroduction of "race" into critical and creative conversations has provided Asian Canadian cultural activists with a way to resist such rhetoric. By calling attention to ongoing structural inequalities like those perpetuated and obscured by the tension between state-sanctioned multiculturalism and bilingualism, activists can disrupt the myth that institutional racism is a historical phenomenon with no contemporary relevance.

As Khayatt's experience demonstrates, however, a precondition to resisting this racialization is being racialized in the first place; individuals like her cannot begin to participate in these activist conversations until they have moved beyond that moment of border-crossing and are legally accepted as legitimate citizens of the state. From this perspective, official multiculturalism, despite the oppressive social dynamics it propagates, can also have "unintended consequences," such as serving as a "platform for racial minority voices and a foundation from where activists can work to affect changes" (Li 276). Perhaps the preeminent example of multiculturalism providing such a platform is the Japanese Canadian redress movement, which, despite ongoing debates about the precise nature of its achievements, managed to negotiate a new form of official recognition for its community from the governing power structure.

The utility of "racial" and cultural identity in motivating activism, however, remains limited. Negotiation with and within the state must also strive to exceed these categories, because resistance solely through tidy multicultural avenues risks perpetuating the false impression that Canada is founded on a diverse collection of cultural

4 The Canadian state makes room for lobbyists and petitioners, for example, and allows its citizens to hold peaceful protests and rallies, all the while reserving the right to monopolize the use of legitimate violence in the form of police and military power.

communities that co-exist on an equal democratic plane. Li writes that "to call oneself 'Asian Canadian' is very much a political exercise" (24). As such, it is important to remember that the "in-betweenness" of Asian Canadian subjects should not be restricted to considerations of culture; it can also be useful for describing a hybrid position in which individuals sometimes utilize the difference embedded in the "Asian" designation in "Asian Canadian" and sometimes take advantage of the sameness involved in being "just" Canadian. In the interest of enabling this hybrid position, the flattening effects of official bilingualism can be subversively redeployed through linguistic proficiency in English (or French) to trouble perceptions of visible difference in certain contexts. If the signifier of "Asian Canadian" is to continue functioning as a useful political exercise, it should be kept flexible and be able to incorporate "issues of class, industry, and capital" that cut across cultural boundaries (*The Dark Side* 109). Bannerji asserts that official multiculturalism encourages us "to forget that people do not have a fixed political agency" (6)—that is, that subjects' identities are not restricted to any one social category (race, gender, religion, class), but are in fact made up of a variety of different subject positions. When we become aware of these alternate subject positions, I contend, we allow for the potential of forming cross-cultural alliances on the basis of shared languages that work towards disrupting the state's strategy of celebrating, and thereby enforcing, cultural differences.[5]

5 A women's shelter, for instance, represents a social space where women from different cultural backgrounds can come together on the basis of their shared experiences as women to achieve recognition from the state that is not primarily predicated on cultural affiliations or concerns. This recognition on the basis of gender (to cite just one example) can allow these individuals to gain access to benefits such as broader funding "envelopes" than those set aside for multicultural or non-English/French initiatives (McCall 199).

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HYPHENATED RELIGION IN ASIAN CANADIAN STUDIES

>> CHRISTIAN HENDRIKS

When analysing racial, ethnic, or national identity issues, we often consider how they intersect with other possible identity markers, including gender, economic class, and age. One such category is religious affiliation. In our political climate, religion, race, and politics are sometimes conflated: people identified as "brown" are often labelled "Arab," "Muslim," and by extension "suspected terrorist," as though these are synonymous categories. Further, religious behaviour, if not religious belief, is often subsumed into "culture," and therefore particular controversies—the right to wear a turban, to carry a ceremonial blade, or to practice polygamy—can also be articulated in discourses of multicultural policy, cultural assimilation, and religious freedom. But while the separation of church and state guarantees freedom of religious belief, religious behaviours remain legally governable. Religion can therefore be an important location for either cultural or ethnic activism or oppression. Little work has been done on how religious identity and Asian Canadian identity intersect, but some scholars are beginning to research this area; *Asian Religions in British Columbia* (2010), edited by Larry DeVries, Don Baker, and Dan Overmyer, and written from the perspective of religious studies, is a recent attempt to examine Asian religion in British Columbia. As such it is an important work, but I will argue that it still leaves important gaps which need further research, as its study of corporate worship cannot adequately deal with personal inculturation or syncretism. This text indicates both where some of the conceptual challenges exist in the study of Asian religion in British Columbia and, at the same time, where further theorization could be particularly fruitful.

In an attempt to tackle religion in Asian Canadian Studies, we must first make sense of the terminology. One of the more contested terms is syncretism. Often scholars and practitioners use the word to mean the incorporation of elements from one religion into the framework of another religion, such as the use of polytheistic fertility symbols—eggs, rabbits—in the Christian Easter celebration. Syncretism, however, perhaps more accurately refers to the complete fusion of two separate religious systems. Ideally this second form of syncretism attempts to fully reconcile both belief systems, but authorities in one or both of the original religious traditions often disapprove of the process. A similar but rarer term, inculturation, denotes the articulation and understanding of a particular religious system through a new cultural context, such as the creation of Asian or Asian Canadian forms of Christianity by Asian or Asian Canadian practitioners. *Asian Religions in British Columbia* offers perspective on corporate inculturation—though not named such—in ethnically-identified religious communities, but its definitions and structure exclude syncretism or inculturation on an individual basis.

As part of the Asian Religions and Society Series, *Asian Religions in British Columbia* attempts to fill the gap of knowledge of how Asian religions operate in the province. Among other tasks, it examines the "interplay of religiosity and ethnicity" (Baker and Devries 7) in the region. The separately-authored chapters examine the history, demographics, and current successes and challenges of a broad range of demographics, such as "Zoroastrians in British Columbia," "Vietnamese Buddhist Organizations," and "Christianity as a Chinese Belief." Importantly, the editors acknowledge in the introduction that defining either religion or ethnicity would be a difficult task, and instead prefer self-identification to rigid definitions (9). And while the authors of some chapters do not directly address the particular relationship between Asian Canadian identity and religious community, many do provide information about such a relationship. Paul Crowe in "Chinese Religions" observes that Falun Gong practitioners are politically oriented as a part of their religious practice: Falun Gong has a fraught relationship with

the government of the People's Republic of China, and Crowe writes, "Raising public awareness of their plight and who they really are is part of being a Falun Gong practitioner" (259), showing how "being a Falun Gong practitioner" determines, in part, a publicly political identity. The intersection of religion and ethnic identity is clearer in Li Yu's chapter "Christianity as a Chinese Belief"; Yu observes that there are over one hundred Chinese churches which often "play an important role in strengthening their member's Chinese identity" even while Chinese cultural elements "have to be re-evaluated or reinterpreted so that they will not be incompatible with Christian doctrine" (242). Christianity, then, is used to bolster Chinese or Chinese Canadian identity through worship together as an ethnically-identified congregation, but what it means to be Chinese Canadian is also changed in the process. Yu writes that some "Chinese Christians in North America tend to use their Christian knowledge and ideas to reinterpret Chinese history," to show that ancient Chinese traditions reveal a knowledge of God that can be inferred in Confucian concepts (242-43). Yu does not use the word inculturation, but the process he describes could be defined as such since their Christianity also changes during this process. While the implications of these identifications are not fully theorized, this book nonetheless provides an important starting point for that work.

Asian Religions in British Columbia, however, encounters difficulty defining its subjects, an understandable problem in a project of its scope. The book employs a mixed taxonomy: in some instances, chapters are organized under a religious heading, such as "The Making of Sikh Space: The Role of the Gurdwara" or "Zoroastrians in British Columbia"; other chapters are organized ethnically or nationally, such as "Korean Religiosity in Comparative Perspective" or "Traditional and Changing Japanese Religions"; still others combine the two, as in "Hindu and Other South Asian Religious Groups." This structure cannot adequately reflect how Asian Canadians view themselves. In "Religion, Ethnicity, and the Double Diaspora of Asian Muslims," Derryl N. MacLean discusses the problem of the label "Asian Muslim": "There is no such self-affirming identity," he writes, adding that "a Muslim from North India would probably recognize more cultural continuity with a Muslim from Iran than with one from Indonesia" (65). What MacLean does not discuss, however, is how the terms "Asian Muslim" or "Chinese Christian" fail to indicate whether the people categorized identify as Asian or Asian Canadian; while for the purposes of demographic research that may be unimportant, for the purposes of examining the relationship between ethnic and religious identity, it is critical. The chapter structure tries to define Asian religious practitioners by their demographic categories, but these categories may not usefully reflect how they identify themselves and publicly perform those identities.

Asian Religions in British Columbia also limits its scope when defining religion. In the introduction, Baker and DeVries define religion as "the affirmation of shared beliefs and values through regular group activities such as rituals and through declarations of such beliefs and values" (7). While helpful for identifying particular Asian-identified religious communities, this definition of corporate worship excludes the possibility that Asian Canadians in non-ethnic religious communities could articulate an Asian Canadian identity through their religion. Li Yu notes that "although the Chinese Catholic population is fairly large, there is only one ethnic Chinese [Catholic] parish"; he suggests that "many Chinese Catholics usually attend their local Catholic churches" rather than set up independent ethnic parishes (236). Neither should we assume that all Asian Canadian Protestants attend ethnically-identified churches. Regardless of the ethnic associations of the church,

the religious elements themselves, whether texts, rituals, or doctrines, are freely appropriable and freely interpretable. After all, if we understand religious belief to be a personal matter -- and indeed that is the understanding guaranteed by a constitutional freedom of religion—then any meaning these beliefs hold must be personally interpreted. Asian Canadians who worship in any church can practice an inculturated Christianity or a form of syncretism, smuggling in aspects of another religious tradition, though this might look different than a similar act in an ethnically-identified church. Inculturation or syncretism has the potential to influence an Asian Canadian's identity as effectively as ethnically Chinese church community can, but by addressing only the corporate aspects of religion, *Asian Religions in British Columbia* cannot examine these possibilities.

The absence of personal syncretism in this study becomes more of a concern when we consider that Asian Canadians may be uniquely placed to make use of the blending of religions and cultures. Jane Naomi Iwamura, defining Japanese views of religion, contrasts them with "a western notion of religion as fairly contained systems of belief and practice (e.g., 'Buddhism')" (139), and Huston Smith makes the point in *The World's Religions* that in China many practitioners have been "Confucian in ethics and public life, Taoist in private life and hygiene, and Buddhist at the time of death, with a healthy dash of shamanistic folk religion thrown in along the way" (189). While secularization and religious exclusivity certainly exist in Asian cultures -- Islam is often perceived as an instance of the latter -- there have nonetheless been different attitudes towards religious affiliation than the predominant Western ones. As a result, some Asian Canadians might be more comfortable with syncretism, whether Buddhist-Catholic or Confucian-Protestant, than hyphenated Canadians from more monotheistic cultures. Moreover, the process of inculturation or syncretism is an act of agency on the part of the practitioner, a moment in which the practitioner insists on interpreting religion independently. This, therefore, becomes an act which warrants attention.

Finally, an emphasis on participation in religious communities can occlude some of the more politicized elements of religion and ethnicity: religion sits at an interface between public and private life, and public behaviours are subject to both law and social pressure. In an often-repeated example, wearing a turban can produce problems at border security or in other moments of governmental regulation. For this reason alone, examining the interaction between religious and ethnic identities warrants attention beyond the group activities in religious buildings. Activity in the church, temple, or mosque may produce experiences for self-identification, experiences worth examining both in British Columbia, as *Asian Religions in British Columbia* has begun, and in other regions of Canada. It is in the messy interaction between personal religion and corporate worship, individual belief and public behaviours, that "the interplay of religiosity and ethnicity" has the highest political stakes, and as a result, no element of religious activity—public, private, corporate—can be adequately theorized in the absence of others.

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TO READ ETH(N)ICALLY: FRED WAH'S ALIENETHNIC POETICS AS READING PRACTICE

>> SUNNY CHAN

Asian Canadian poet Fred Wah famously declares that "to write (or live) ethnically is also to write (or live) ethically" (58). Although he speaks to a specific moment of Asian Canadian literature, this oft-quoted dictum has been applied more generally and even taken out of context. As such, it raises the issue of whether all non-ethnic writing is therefore unethical, but it also leaves itself open to another question: is writing the only site of ethics? I argue that reading is an important yet overlooked locus of application for Wah's alienethnic strategies. The alienethnic can and should be used as a framework for politically salient active reading.

The power of alienethnic poetics is predicated on the idea that language itself is political—an assumption that has gelled in Asian Canadian literary studies in general. Wah can only configure his calculated strikes against conventional form as a poetics of opposition if the mechanics of language imply political power. The politicisation of language is an essential nodal point in the Language[1] poetry tradition, a tradition that greatly influenced Wah's practices. During the Vietnam War, the first generation of American Language poets noticed the "manipulation of language by politicians and by the military: the doublespeak in which the 'pacification' of an area meant the slaughter of all its inhabitants" (qtd. in Derksen, *Annihilated* 147). This usage of language by the state led the writers to question the ideological function of language, illuminating the direct link between poetic creation and political phenomena. The language acts performed by the American government are reminiscent of the Canadian government's language choices surrounding the internment of Japanese Canadians in World War II, as detailed by Roy Miki in *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice*, his account of the redress movement. The Canadian government found that constructing euphemisms "helped to translate the inherent racism of its policies for Japanese Canadians into the language of bureaucratic efficiency" (*Redress* 50). By using "evacuation" rather than "forced internment" or "enemy alien" rather than "Japanese Canadian citizen," for example, the government "generated a complex of terms that rendered 'normal'—in the eyes of the Canadian public—its brutal implications" (51). It is not only the content, but the formal, stylistic, metaphorical, *poetic* aspects of language that make it political. Wah's alienethnic poetics engage with this politicisation of language through a distinct sense of aesthetics influenced by the Language and Black Mountain poetry schools.[2]

Black Mountain influences, especially Charles Olson's theories of "projective verse" wherein the "energy" of the poet is "projected" onto the reader, can be detected throughout Wah's poetic practices. Olson once said to a conference audience that "poetics is politics, poets are political leaders today, and the only ones" (qtd. in Foster 71-2). Language poetry is both a development of and a response to the Black Mountain philosophy; Language poets feel that "choices of grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and narrative reflect ideology" and "radically innovative poetic styles can have political meanings" (Bernstein vii). Whereas Black Mountain poets, particularly Olson, focus on the poet, Language poets focus on the mechanics of language itself. Wah's poetics straddle the Black Mountain and Language approaches, for he, like the Language poets, equates the very syntax of proper English with "both the imaginary nation and its ideological assault on the land" (Wah 56). And yet, like Olson, Wah also

1 Some authors choose to simplify the name of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E group to "language," but to avoid confusion with the common noun, I will use the capitalized "Language" to designate the Language school of poetry in my paper.

2 For some texts that touch on Wah's connection to the Black Mountain and Language poets, see Jeff Derksen's "Making Race Opaque," the Biographical Note from *The False Laws of Narrative* (ed. Louis Cabri), and Wah's own *Faking It*, which references the work of Black Mountain legend Charles Olson alone nine separate times.

seeks to translate his own experience of the moral or "ethic" for the reader through poetry (18-19). The poetics of Black Mountain and Language are both committed to language as politics, and similar feelings lead Wah to define his own alienethnic poetics.

Wah's alienethnic poetics have two general and related aims. First, they seek to prioritise and complicate the subjectivity of racialised others, and second, they estrange themselves from or subvert conventionally accepted poetic forms. The second aim is a means to accomplish the first. In Wah's own words, writers who "utilize more formal innovative possibilities" to embody "an approach that might properly be called something like 'alienethnic' poetics," which is "often used for its ethnic imprint and frequently originat[es] from the necessity to complicate difference" (52). The practice of alienethnic poetics recuperates "otherness" from a state of victimization and transforms it into a "position of applied, chosen, desired, and necessary estrangement" (60). For Wah, conventions of aesthetic form come to stand in for the systemic control of bureaucracy, as he feels that both are structures deployed for the assimilation of difference.

But Wah does not merely suggest that an anti-mainstream aesthetic is the best way to achieve alienethnic articulation. Rather, he insists that unconventional form is the *only* way. To Wah, a writer concerned with racialization "must (one might suspect, necessarily) develop instruments of disturbance, dislocation, and displacement" (73). Wah's insistence on aesthetic form as the primary determinant of lyrical ("unethical") versus alyrical ("ethical") writing raises several intriguing questions that are left unanswered in his account.

First, Wah's definition of unconventional form is dependent on a delineation between the "conventional" versus the "experimental," but this delineation is not axiomatic or uniform. Generally, Wah defines the lyric as poetry with conventional aesthetics and the alyric as an experimental form, but his advocacy for the power of unconventional form begins to slip in his own close reading of Evelyn Lau's writings. Although her piece in the anthology *Premonitions* uses the prose poem stanza-graph, a form that "signal[s] an unsettling intent and content," Wah writes that "even within the variety and range of innovative prose style, the lyric subject can only be troubled so much" (116). A gap appears in Wah's straightforward equation of the eth(n)ical to the alyrical, for we (and he) can see that the use of an experimental form does not automatically keep Lau from lyrically expressing a seemingly solid selfhood.

Second, imposing the categories of "conventional" and "experimental" is itself an act with political impact. Michael Greer points out that the characterisation of Language poetry as a suppressed rebellion against popular mainstream poetics ultimately submits to prevailing norms, since "in its role *as other*, [the avant-garde] confirms the existence and location of the dominant and the hegemonic" (337). Part of Wah's poetics of estrangement calls for a deliberate self-othering to reverse the elision or denial of racialisation and to bring agency to outsiders, but the pursuit of estrangement could be read as an unproductive attachment to one's own marginalisation.

A third problem with emphasising writing in the conception of alienethnic poetics is the implied de-emphasis on reading as a site of political intervention. Miki calls unconventional writing a method for "exploring variations in form that undermine aesthetic norms … and for articulating subjectivities that emerge from beleaguered communities—even at the risk of incomprehensibility, unreadability, indifference, or outright rejection" ("Asiancy" 118). Priority is clearly given to the act of writing, since the comprehension of the reader is seen as a possibly necessary sacrifice for the sake of the writer's

political ends. This outlook can be dangerous, as it becomes unclear when unreadability slides from being a *risk* to an *objective* of alyrical writing. The alienethnic's goal of recognising racialised subjectivities surely outweighs its aesthetic aims, for if the primary goal of alienethnic poetics is just to be contrary and unintelligible, then why engage with the rules of English at all? 為何不用中文寫? Why not disrupt all languages and write in a self-created code? Miki additionally states that writers must be able to "develop the conditions in which social justice can be achieved through a language free from the tyranny of hegemonies of all kinds" (123). However, intentionally exclusive writing denies non-writers the chance to also use language for social justice. By not limiting the possibility of intervention to alyrical writers only, reframing alienethnic poetics as a model of reading allows for a wider employment of the alienethnic as a political use of language.

Wah fleetingly touches on the importance of reading when he writes, "ethnic, ethic. A kind of anagogical exegesis of text that is a poetics of reading writing" (57). While he does not further expound on what this "poetics of reading" might entail, his alienethnic poetics can serve as a model for reading. By shifting the focus to reading rather than writing, we can curtail the problems that come with establishing a poetics based only on unconventional form, as well as restore political agency to active reading. Such a turn to active reading has roots in the Language school that influenced Wah, for Language poets saw reading and interpretation as "*activities* or *practices* [requiring] significant labor and investment from readers" that were "*historically* and *politically determined*, part of a larger network of discourses" (Greer 352). The alienethnic reading strategy can be seen as an updated model of this kind of reading.

Without prioritising writing, Wah's definition of alienethnic simply becomes an approach that requires practitioners to "complicate difference," to "deterritorialize," and to regard otherness as an "applied, chosen, desired, and necessary" subject position. These features can be applied as the basis of the alienethnic reading framework I propose. Miki's reading of the Japanese Canadian redress movement in *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* is an example of alienethnic reading in action. He documents the redress movement's determination to not be co-opted into the discourse of official multiculturalism, where the realities of ethnic difference are neutralised by the illusion that everyone is different in the same way and that all differences are regarded equally. Miki stresses how he, as a member of The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC), did not want redress to be "considered only as a multicultural issue" because he did not want "the violation of individual rights" to be glossed over (317). Although the NAJC brief is a non-poetic text, Miki's alienethnic analysis resists the denial of identity and reclaims the estranged Japanese Canadian as a chosen subject position.

While alienethnic reading can be politically potent, it is important to keep its limitations in mind. Political readings are reactions—they are constantly in a position to respond, not to speak first. In focusing on the agency offered by active readings, there is a danger of taking focus away from more concrete forms of agency gained through practical actions, such as campaigning for office. Jeff Derksen, however, argues that a homology between poetic acts and social acts is really "a return to politics from a cultural site—poetry—that had been depoliticized" (*Annihilated* 139-40). Seen this way, alienethnic reading bridges the gap between the social and the poetic by simultaneously re-politicising the poetic *and* re-poeticising the political. An active reading like the alienethnic enables the kind of thinking necessary to conceive of concrete actions that can effect change. Finally, the application of alienethnic readings to non-

artistic texts is a deliberate misreading and takes the works away from their original functions. But the prefix "mis" is misleading, implying a mistake or aberration. A politicised reading is not a misrecognition, but rather, in the terminology of Fred Wah's poetics, an intentional departure into reading ethnically and ethically.

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MEETING THE OTHER: RE-CONCEIVING THE ASIAN CANADIAN AVANT-GARDE THROUGH COLLABORATION

>> LAUREN FOURNIER

So when you stop and you stay long enough to understand or not, to simply behold and bare witness, you agree to a bridge of belonging which we cannot shake or break because it is what makes us reflective: that I can and I must, and no matter the danger, see elements of myself in the person that you are -- is only natural

Kao Kalia Yang, "The Relationship of XCP," 180

a vowel disappears or disappoints, veers & bobs up & down: i i i i i i i

Rita Wong & Larissa Lai, *sybil unrest*, 109

Narrative conventions that privilege cohesion often standardize our understandings of concepts like *I-you, self-Other, normal-monstrous,* and *good-evil* into oppositional binaries, a predicament that North American avant-garde poets since the 1970s have sought to expose. Yet the transition from limiting and self-reifying narrative modes to a more fluid avant-garde language is wrought with discord for the 'non-white' Canadian writer, given the problematic historical association of the avant-garde with 'whiteness' (Derksen 64). How, then, should we conceive of an avant-garde ethnopoetics in the context of contemporary Asian Canadian cultural production? As writers like Larissa Lai, Rita Wong, and Hiromi Goto identify across a variety of subject positionings and orientations—South, East, or Southeast Asian Canadian, lesbian or straight, feminist—it is important to explore the political implications of avant-garde language for Asian Canadian and feminist politics. That Asian Canadian politics is embedded in feminist politics is transparent in the work of these women and in the collaborative projects that they have taken on: collaborative long poems like *sybil unrest* (Wong & Lai, 2009) and *distilled, decanted, and debached* (Goto & Bateman, 2009), and Press Gang, a now-defunct Vancouver-based feminist publisher that supported writers like Lai and Wong, are examples of literary collaborations that are aesthetically experimental and deeply politicized. Larissa Lai's "Goodbye Butterfly, Hello Kitty: an Opiate Opera" also resides in the realm of collaboration, as she creatively appropriates—or "riffs on," as Lai puts it—the work of other Asian Canadian artists/writers like David Khang, Henry Tsang, Fred Wah, David Bateman and Hiromi Goto. I propose pushing Asian Canadian Studies in the direction of performance theory, with faith that such a push will equip scholars with the tools to make sense of the political and social implications of cross-cultural collaborative poetry. Performance studies is more explicitly body-centric, interactive, hyper-textual, and fluid than other scholarly disciplines. Collaborative poetic practices by Asian Canadian writers like Goto, Lai, and Wong are propitious to a performative reading, as their collaborations are very much embodied, dialogic, dynamic, and invite response.

I am primarily concerned with the project of re-structuring the critical reading of the Asian Canadian avant-garde as a performative, ethically implicated, and politically productive space for the "meeting between Self and Other" (Zhou 206) to take place. I am also interested in the literary methods that enable such dialogic and embodied relationships between these subjectivities in language. What might an avant-garde ethnopoetics look like that takes authorship and subject positionings as somatic and yet suspended, unstable, malleable, and multiple? How might the 'I' (or 'i') of the avant-garde re-configure itself if the relationship between 'I'/'you' or 'I'/'Other' is approached more responsively and self-consciously? On the most basic level, a performance theory framework takes what might be understood as 'natural' and reveals its 'unnatural' or performative nature. Asian Canadian identity becomes an embodied performance: it intimates "a composition rather than a biological or biographical fact" (Yu 83), and can be realized through avant-garde modes of expression and dialogue. A cross-cultural collaborative poetics that has as its goal the creation of a "*poethics* of coalition" (Lai, *Cellular,* 65) is the site at which writers work through embodied face-to-face encounters with the possibility of dynamic responses from all involved. A performative understanding of Asian Canadian collaborative poetics is also the site at which a re-conception of the "avant-garde" in relation to Asian Canadian studies as a discipline and stream of literary criticism can transpire.

Jeff Derksen argues that avant-garde poetics "point to the anxieties, gaps, and elisions embedded in a complex and self-conscious national literature"

(64). I propose an extension of this idea to include collaborative poetics, wherein collaboration points to the "anxieties, gaps, and elisions" embedded in our relation to Others. Like avant-garde language, the collaborative method "disrupts the self-enclosure and self-sufficiency of the traditional lyric I" (Zhou 196), reflected both in the form and the content of the poem. This 'I' resists both its own authority or mastery over the 'Other' and the authority of the English language's syntactic closure. At its best, collaborative poetry not only encompasses, but also enables transformation and expression for differentially racialized, gendered, and classed individuals with varying degrees of vulnerability and marginalization. At the very least, collaborative poetry delineates a performative space in which multiple voices are given the opportunity for articulation and expression; a space where Otherness is not defined, but evoked; a space wherein community is encouraged and cultivated across boundaries and borders; a space in which the possibilities for response and interaction thrive. Although Goto and Bateman are positioned differently in terms of ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, their physical coming together over drinks to produce a single poetic text gives the impression that there is a 'cohesive' intent. Delineation based on categories of identification does not seem to be necessary or even desirable in either of the collaborative texts taken up in this paper; nor does it seem desirable in our understanding of Asian Canadian literature in general. If we move away from Asian Canadian writing as a category of identity of the writers, then we can think of Bateman and Goto's text, for example, as Asian Canadian because it engages with certain problematics that are relevant to contemporary Asian Canadian writing; tensions which come out in *distilled, decanted, and debauched*.

Avant-garde poetry is often regarded as highly intellectualized and, ergo, disembodied. When considering the future directions of Asian Canadian studies, especially in the fields of literature, poetics, and the arts, performance theory provides a practical and provocative approach. As a theoretical framework and a methodology, performativity embraces sensory experience, liveness, presence, agency, corporeality, and the acts of writing (whether 'individually' or collaboratively) and reading as embodied practices and live events. By underlining the centrality of the body, performance theory does not simply inject embodiment into avant-garde poetry—it reveals that Asian Canadian avant-garde poetry is always already embodied. What's more, if we are to take a historical materialist approach to Asian Canadian writing, one sees a highly experimental history with radical avant-garde poets like Fred Wah and Roy Kiyooka working alongside the more realist narrative conventions of Joy Kogawa, Wayson Choy, and Evelyn Lau. It is necessary to problematize why experimental Asian Canadian writing is seen as an oxymoron when, historically, it is anything but. Perhaps the relations through which Asian Canadian writing becomes legible are too limited or too limiting: Wah and Kiyooka ultimately become associated with what were seen as non-Asian circles -- in Kiyooka's case, modernist painting and the Regina 5 -- while Kogawa's and Lau's realist conventions in fiction come to define Asian Canadian writing as it often stands in the public psyche. Yet, while contemporary Asian Canadian writers like Lai and Goto experiment with collaborative avant-garde poetry, they also write prolifically in a variety of literary genres, narrative fiction included. This provides yet another example for why collaboration is conducive to opening up space for more ethical, experimental, and dynamic reception of Asian Canadian writing. Hiromi Goto and Larissa Lai, for example, both traverse between the genres of short fiction, the novel, and collaborative long poetry, integrating and synthesizing elements of magic realism, lyricism,

historical fiction, and science fiction; the writers demonstrate that the Asian Canadian positioning, as found in the contemporary moment, is anything but confined.

In the acknowledgments section of *sybil unrest*, Lai and Wong state that the work "began in a *renga* spirit during the 2003 Hong Kong International Literary Festival" (Wong & Lai 127). For those unfamiliar with *renga*, a genre of Japanese collaborative poetry believed to have originated in fifteenth-century Japan, some explanatory work is required. In *renga*, poets take turns alternately adding verses of seventeen syllables (lines of five, seven, and five syllables) and fourteen syllables (lines of seven and seven syllables) until a poem of around one hundred verses is composed. In the sixteenth century, *haikai-renga* became the popular collaborative form; also made up of seventeen- and fourteen-syllable verses, *haikai* infuses elements of humor and parody (Yotsuya). Writers coming to collaboration for the first time are often struck with the realization of "how much more difficult it is to develop someone else's ideas" (Schwartz 76). And yet, how productive it is to be put into this challenging position of collaboration: to be shaken out of the comfortable confines of the writing 'I' or self. Judith Butler's *Precarious Life* (2006) and Emmanuel Levinas' theory of sociality and the face-to-face encounter inform my exploration of the relation between the Self and the Other in and through language. In *Precarious Life,* Butler draws attention to the status of the self as fundamentally relational: our relationships and interactions with others are ties that "constitute what we are, ties or bonds that compose us" (22). For writers, collaboration as a method is germane to such relationality given its necessary suspension from a single thinking, reading, and writing 'self'. Butler outlines passion, grief, and political rage as emotions that "tear us from ourselves, bind us to others, transport us, undo us, implicate us in lives that are not our own" (27). That one's construction of meaning and identity both shapes and is shaped by another's perspective is a reality for avant-garde writers employing collaborative methods. In terms of reception, the dynamic meaning-making interaction between self and other is made more explicit to the reader when s/he is aware of the collaborative work as such. Our identities are composed by our relations to Others, but this is not so clear when writing or reading from the confines of the individual 'I'; it is no more clear when the one reading assumes the text to be written by a singular, monolithic, authorial 'I'. As the kitty character in Lai's "Goodbye Butterfly, Hello Kitty" states, "here's a mirror to cover your other/a new same to name your difference" (Lai, *Hello Kitty* 17). The boundaries dividing the 'self from the 'other' and what is presumably the 'same' from what is 'different' no longer stand so strong: they are, in fact, interdependent and reflected back and forth.

In their book-length collaborative poem *sybil unrest,* Wong and Lai's poetic line, "'i' resurrect 'oui'" (54) can be read as a call for community ('we')—a movement beyond the singular writing 'i'—as well as a call for the inclusion of non-English languages. As multiple voices utter and are heard to a more or less evenly authoritative degree, otherness is not defined but evoked in an open-ended manner. Given its dependence on the cooperation and synthesis of more than one writing voice, collaborative avant-garde poetry is a way to acknowledge our universally human interdependence—the vulnerable and tenuous nature of the authoritative 'I'—and make use of this realization in a creative and productive way. This cooperative mobilization of our interdependence stands in stark contrast to the "violence" that Butler spotlights as an exploitation of humankind's essential relationality (Butler 27). To preserve an essential or stable 'I' in writing would be to "deny the various forms of rupture and subjection that formed the condition of my emergence as an individuated being" (Butler 27), thus denying the

'I''s inextricable dependence on the 'Other'. By employing dialogue (or polylogue) between what begins as 'two' voices —two position(ing)s—as the central discursive strategy, the texts comprise a productive site of meaning creation that are unique from that of simple dialogue in poetic and non-poetic sites.

As Lai observes, shifting and more fluid definitions of "culture" allow for shifting and more fluid definitions of the "writing subject" (Lai, *Cellular* 64). The "writing subject" is no longer synonymous with the "author," as texts become more self-reflexive and ethically complex. The two collaborative book-length poems that are the focus of this paper are cases in point. *distilled, decanted, and debauched (ddd)* alternates between two voices —David Bateman ("D") and Hiromi Goto ("H") —which are denoted at the top of each page by the first letter of each poet's given name and a sequential number. These D's and H's are not only significant for their denoting of speakers: they also establish an even and reciprocal pattern that is followed consistently to the poem's end. Though the D's and H's start with a colonization of their own page, shifting to sharing a single page or, contrarily, taking up three or four pages, the original rhythm is maintained. As framing devices these speaker tags are simply a guide: once the reader begins to proceed in the text—with the themes introduced by one speaker being taken up by/blending into the next—the need for a delineating logic is diminished. Unlike *ddd*, *sybil unrest* provides no speaker tags. Each stanza could have been written by Larissa Lai or Rita Wong, or indeed both -- no framing devices are offered to the reader to help discern between the 'two' voices. This lack of signature is in line with Lai and Wong's mandate—outlined on the book's back cover—to "produce an unstable, flickering sort of subjectivity that throws an enlightenment individual 'i' into question, and hopefully exposes its ideological underpinnings" (Wong & Lai). Notably, both *sybil unrest* and *ddd* provide a kind of 'artist's statement' that one typically expects in conceptual artwork rather than literature; arguably, a genre as unfamiliar as collaborative avant-garde poetry warrants some contextual explanation in order for the 'meaning(s)' to be more thoroughly 'grasped' by the reader. In *ddd* this statement is printed on the first page of the book; it is in this pseudo artist's statement that Bateman and Goto describe their collaboration as "a nostalgic/anti-nostalgic creative autobiographical conversation" that frames their respective lives and family histories within the muddying context of alcohol (Goto & Bateman). In *sybil unrest,* the artist statement (though not labeled as such) is provided on the back cover: unlike *ddd,* Lai and Wong's names do not appear anywhere on this statement.

Even though these writers self-consciously employ collaborative methods that avoid appropriating, defining, or speaking for the Other, there is still the need to be cautious of the material ideological forces at play and to evade the commodifying grips of capitalism and Canadian multiculturalism that put the writer at risk of producing work that the hegemonic culture industry is immune to. Even the Tish writers, who set out with a political push for art to be intimately tied to community and lived experience, saw their mandate "elided as it entered a national frame" (Derksen 66), taking on its (neo)liberal configuration as an autonomous sovereign sphere set apart from the realities of everyday life. Collaborative poetry, like avant-garde poetry in general, frustrates the expectations and desires of what Derksen calls "first-world perception"—a nationalistic perspective that seeks to identify a cohesive Canadian literature and Canadian identity (67). In asserting one's complex, corporeal, and inter-positional subjectivity, the Asian Canadian avant-garde poet refuses to be commodified as an ethnic object of knowledge. Most markedly, *sybil unrest* refuses to submit to the

gazes of either multiculturalism or capitalism; the text goes so far as to appropriate the very forces that might seek to envelop it—capitalism, free trade, war, Protestantism, and so on. Near the beginning of Lai's opera, the butterfly character announces, "i've swallowed a whale; engulfing that which engulfs me" (Lai, *Hello Kitty* 11). Through the language of *sybil unrest,* Lai and Wong metaphorically 'engulf' the forces of capitalism and patriarchy that ordinarily 'engulf' them. For example, Wong and Lai's critique of the I's ideologically sanctioned authority is implicit in the statement, "autocorrect capitalizes the subject" (Wong & Lai 14); the sense of an imposed "normalcy" summoned by the word "autocorrect"—a key switched 'on' by patriarchy and multiculturalism as ideological forces—augments the power of their critique. Interestingly, Wong and Lai not only negate the authority of the "I" by employing the lower-case throughout their text; they also negate the authority of politically powerful structures, like the European Union, denoted by "e.u." (100). For writers like Wong and Lai, and Goto and Bateman, the collaborative "I" becomes a central component of the negated "i". To acknowledge an essential "I", a "tacit ego with acumen from the start," would be to "deny the various forms of rupture and subjection that formed the condition of my emergence as an individuated being" (Butler 27). In her review of the text, Sophie Mayer asserts: "*sybil unrest* argues that consumerism doesn't necessarily kill us. It doesn't have to. It fragments us and puts us back together wrong" (Mayer).

In *sybil unrest*—and in *ddd* to a certain degree—there is often no clear subject controlling or narrating the action on the page. Disorienting subject pronouns like "s/he" (97), "motherfather" (124); the repetitive and ambiguous "piggy" and "ham"; and the ever-shifting "i", "u", "we", and "us" float across pages, refusing to be captured and interpellated by the reader. As Wong and Lai defamiliarize subject pronouns, they also defamiliarize clichéd phrases engraved in the popular imagination. Infused with a sense of humor and play, the writers trouble maxims and tenets of institutions like capitalism —"machines R us" (36) and "sadomarketism" (11); NAFTA—"this little piggy loves the free market economy/in the guise of democracy" (18); patriarchy —"capital beckons sweet as freedom in a tight skirt/ violence loves desire" (44); Christianity—"the lord is my shepherd/i get what i want" (89); the legal system—"innocent until proven filthy" (61); and the groundwork of Western philosophy itself—"i think therefore i ham" (83). Intriguingly, even the 'post colonial' theory that these writers are, we would assume, informed by is parodied: "the subaltern cannot peek" (10). No authoritative voice is safe from the cultural critiques that emerge from Asian Canadian collaboration. Notably, Wong and Lai do not simply write off capitalism and globalization, or attempt to give the impression that they are in some way 'outside' of it. They gesture toward their own—or at least what seem to be common to human beings who inhabit contemporary capitalist conditions—sense of longing and insatiable desire. As the butterfly admits in Lai's opera, "i become what i accuse/through my longing for lemonade and baked alaska" (Lai, *Hello Kitty* 12). The butterfly acknowledges that her desires conflate herself with the other, possibly even with the 'enemy' ("what i *accuse*"); desire is one of many sites of convergence between her and those whom she 'others.'

The collaborative work of these Asian Canadian writers opens up space for avant-garde poetry to be recognized as intimately connected to the social, political, and economic spheres rather than only to the cultural or aesthetic; this resists the longstanding tendency of literary critics to approach the avant-garde as something sovereign, disembodied, and autonomous from everyday material life (Derksen 70). The writer is, of course, socially and materially situated within the very culture she critiques: the poetry should be read both

as "a response to that location and constitutive of new positions within ideology" (Day 50) rather than a simple transcendence of the patriarchal Anglo-centered conditions of production. As these writing bodies meet physically in space to write together, sharing ideas that emerge from one's embodied experiences, possibilities arise in and through the polylogue and collaborative poetry.

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SHIKATA GA NAI: MAPPING JAPANESE CANADIAN MELANCHOLY IN THE FIELD OF NATIONAL AND LITERARY TRAUMA

>> LUCIA LORENZI

In *The Melancholy of Race* (2001), Anne Anlin Cheng poses the following question: "how does an individual go from being a subject of grief to being a subject of grievance? What political and psychical gains and losses transpire in the process?" (3). The burgeoning field of trauma studies, with its emphasis on the articulation and reception of testimony from survivors of racialized violence and oppression, has emphasized the importance of grievance itself, offering testimony, symbolic formal apologies, financial reparations, and pieces of legislation[1] as modalities by which to move from "suffering injury to speaking out against that injury" (Cheng 3).

Yet, as Cheng's argument also indicates, special attention must be paid to the manner in which the grief of racialized subjects is affected by the spatialization of discourse, that is to say, the ideological, political, and sociocultural terrains and borders that define who is able to file a grievance, and how, where, when, and why. This paper aims to briefly sketch the manner in which certain discursive formations of trauma have mapped racialized individuals in Canada—Japanese Canadians in particular—as the subjects of grief, rather than as the subjects of grievance. By examining melancholy as a pivot point around which both Canadian and Japanese Canadian cultural logics operate, I interrogate the passivity of victimization as a mutually intelligible discourse that both permits and condemns racialized violence and oppression in Canada, even as it also offers a national platform for action, reparation, and healing.

While the clinical discourse of trauma has helped to make visible the common experiences of racialized groups by delineating the effects of violence and oppression as a constellation of post-traumatic symptoms, grief and melancholy have often been folded back into racialized subjects as essentialized affective traits, rather than as normal responses to interpersonal trauma.[2] As Cheng elaborates, "trauma, so often associated with discussions of racial denigration, in focusing on a structure of crisis on the part of the victim, misses the violators' own dynamic process at stake in such denigration" (12). The discursive framework of post-traumatic stress, then, too-often functions as a tool of racism, one that has been most prominently implicated in both historical and psychological readings of the Japanese Canadian (and American) cultural philosophy of shikata ga nai ("it can't be helped"). In a somewhat ironic turn, this collective attempt to seemingly avoid the pathologization of affect (such as African American "black rage") nevertheless resulted, as Emily Roxworthy has cogently noted in her analysis of Japanese American affect, in a further venue for racial exclusion and oppression:

1 In the Canadian context specifically, I am referring to examples such as the Japanese Canadian redress movement of the late 1970s and 1980s, which culminated in both Brian Mulroney's 1988 offer of a compensation package for individuals directly affected by internment as well as a formal apology issued in the House of Commons; Stephen Harper's 2006 apology to Chinese Canadians for the head tax, and an issuing of compensation to the remaining head tax survivors (of which there were only 20 in 2006); and the 2005 compensation package offered to Indigenous survivors of the residential school system, which was followed by Stephen Harper's 2008 formal apology in the House of Commons. The Canadian government's ability to both define and delimit suffering, however, is still problematized by racialized victims and their families, as demonstrated by Chinese Canadians' ongoing fight to claim compensation for first-generation victims of the head tax, and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Committee of Canada to investigate and address the legacy of residential school abuse in Indigenous communities.

2 One need only flip to the back of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the handbook of the American Psychiatric Association, to view a list of such "culturally-bound disorders," a conflation of affect and culture (or "race" read as "culture") that refuses to acknowledge that extreme affective responses are indeed cross-culturally similar, but bound more intimately to interpersonal acts of violence than they are to physiological makeup.

> Conservative critics claimed this apparent lack of bitterness as proof that the internment camps were not unjust at all, that even their former inmates tacitly approved the 'military necessity' that stripped them of civil liberties and segregated them from their fellow Americans after the Japanese Empire attacked Pearl Harbour. Liberal scholars have mostly chalked up this stoic silence to a diasporic retention of the Japanese cultural logic of shikata ga nai, or 'it can't be helped'—a fatalistic philosophy that negates the efficacy of resistance or other political action. (1)

Such misreadings of post-internment melancholy resonated equally powerfully in the Japanese Canadian sphere, as Roy Miki notes in *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice*, "linguistic compromises [such as 'shikata ga nai'] both enacted and reinforced the government's own propaganda and formed the limits within which Japanese Canadians' memories would be constructed" (260).

Herein lies the first paradox of trauma: in order to break free of the pathologized stasis of melancholic "resilience," both Japanese American and Japanese Canadian affect had to descend, both performatively and symbolically, into an emotional realm where the extreme passivity of victimization balances precariously with the impetus for action though a kind of strategic essentialism. Such affective and racialized community-formations are not without risk, and indeed, the benefits of uniting under the auspices of trauma divided the various factions of the redress movement. The unsettling benefits of remaining a passive "model minority" lingered in the Japanese Canadian conscious, as Miki elucidates: "Japanese Canadians had managed to carve out—quietly and modestly for the most part—social spaces for themselves [...] Why, then, rock the boat now? Why dreg up the past when Japanese Canadians had assimilated so well?" (*Redress* 260).

But there is something more than the politics of race at the heart of this paradox: central to the descent into trauma as a necessity for reparation is the knowledge that reparation can never be fully accepted, lest acceptance be read as a justification of the original traumatic injury. As Henry Krystal observes, "many survivors would experience [...] self-healing as granting [the perpetrator] a posthumous victory, and they therefore angrily reject it. To them, self-integration appears antithetical to the only justification of their survival—that they are obligated to be angry witnesses against the outrage of [their violation]" (83). To seek redress, to argue that grief and melancholy are not the inherent experiences of a particular racialized group, is also to acknowledge that the collective and multi-generational experiences of internment have created a series of affective experiences unique to this community. To know trauma, as Roy Kiyooka has eloquently stated, it is to realize, that "you are of it, and you are not, [and to] know that very clearly" (71).

What complicates this relationship between trauma and identity, especially in relationship to Japanese Canadian writing, is the fact that Canadian literary discourse, too, has attempted to form community around the shared experience of surviving trauma. As Margaret Atwood infamously argues in *Survival: A Thematic Guide To Canadian Literature* (1972), "Every country or culture has a single unifying and informing symbol at its core [...] which holds the country together and helps the people in it to co-operate for common ends. The central symbol for Canada—and this is based on numerous instance of its occurrence in both English and French Canadian literature—is undoubtedly Survival, la Survivance" (31). Atwood's theoretical framework has elucidated many facets of Canadian literary and cultural affect, and in the present context, her approach effectively amalgamates

affective and experiential tropes into a broad framework that essentially denies and delegitimizes the traumatic experiences of racialized Canadians by romanticizing victimization and survival as necessary—even desirable—components of being and feeling Canadian. This uncomfortable inclusivity, while it permits and encourages the articulation of Japanese Canadian narratives of suffering as part of the Canadian community, tentatively patches over the national fissures and fractures that are historically bound to contemporary "multicultural" Canada.

Atwood's provocative—if problematic—study of Canadian literary and cultural community is certainly not without its critics. Miki has pointed out many of the glaring issues with Atwood's argument, notably the manner in which "the privileging of the author's own subject position as an 'English Canadian' reader, in effect, banished 'racialized' Canadians from public space, a gesture that denied them 'identity' in her text of nationhood ("Asiancy" 129). What I note in my reading of Atwood is precisely the impossibility of creating a homogeneous and inclusive model of national trauma.

Here we encounter the second, and perhaps most difficult paradox of trauma, in which a larger community, such as a nation-state, attempts to re-suture the aporia of suffering upon which the collective is based. The divisive and aporetic phenomenon of Japanese Canadian internment is precisely the inappropriable and impossible location of community: it is, in the Derridean sense, the location where impossibility (of measuring the immediate and ongoing effects and losses of internment, of offering a suitable financial or symbolic reparation for this loss, of forgetting the legacy of racism upon which Canadiana has forged itself) becomes the possibility of ethics. By ethics, I do not mean reactionary responses to trauma, for reactions that attempt to quantify or quality traumatic experience through mutually intelligible languages such as money fail to recognize that certain historical traumas have not been mutually experienced by all Canadians. Yet, in reframing attempts, such as Atwood's, to define the communal limits of Canadian identity, melancholy, loss, and trauma, we do not eliminate the possibility of unity. Rather, we can assert a unified ethical awareness in understanding our inability to chart the terrain of *any* individual or group experience of violence or oppression, such as Japanese Canadian internment. We are, as Judith Butler would say, called not only to bear witness to articulations of others' traumas, but are also "[placed] in the position of having to give an account of ourselves" (10): we are called articulate the trauma of our own fraught positions as those who by virtue of various constellations of temporal, racial, economic, gendered, historical, or national positions, were spared the horrors of internment.

Left with so many affective, communal, and experiential paradoxes, how then can we map Japanese Canadian affect within the field of national and literary trauma? Returning to Cheng's question, "how [can] an individual go from being a subject of grief to being a subject of grievance? What political and psychical gains and losses transpire in the process?" (3). Perhaps the paradox of trauma, as liminal and nonlinear space, as nexus of duality, is the key towards understanding how the process between grief and grievance can be ongoing, selective, and consciously mobilized at various points in time. Both positions can be occupied by Canadians and Japanese Canadians, but we must not read these positions (Atwood, the individuals most prominently involved in redress, etc.) as definitive or stable. Within the field of national and literary trauma, affect is best thought of, perhaps, as Stuart Hall notes, "not [as] an essence but a positioning" (237). By allowing for drift between a series of paradoxical affective positions, including that of traumatized victim and of resilient survivor,

expressions of Japanese Canadian affect can move from a space of rigid tension between communities to a more mobile terrain of tensile strength located at the limits of national identity.

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REFRAMING THE HUMAN: POSTHUMANISM AND ASIAN CANADIAN STUDIES

>> MICHELLE O'BRIEN

In *What is Posthumanism*?, Cary Wolfe discusses posthumanism's opposition towards humanist projects that "reproduce…a kind of normative subjectivity—a specific concept of the human—that grounds discrimination" (xvii). Expanding Wolfe's argument, I want to forge a connection between how we might rethink the rendering of Asian Canadians as Other-than. I am especially interested in how posthumanism may offer a productive way to reframe current discourses that incorporate specific contributions of Asian Canadians into Canada's national identity even as they simultaneously reinscribe Asian Canadians as nonhuman. Specifically, posthumanism's attempts to rework the human/nonhuman divide and trouble the dominant notion of the human also complicate theoretical interventions that simply perpetuate liberal humanist discourses. These humanist discourses actually propagate dehumanization as they proffer a reified notion of the human that defines itself against those who are rendered as nonhuman; in other words, their conceptualization of the human requires that some individuals always remain outside of the dominant notion of the human. Posthumanism may therefore offer us a means of conceiving of the nonhuman that neither relies upon humanist ideals nor disseminates limited concepts of humanity.

There is no shortage of historical anecdotes that illustrate how the discursive conflation of Asians with nonhumans played a key role in upholding the concept of Asians as subhuman.[11] As Erika Lee contends, the ostensible animal-like features of Asian Canadians were emphasized in the anti-Asian rhetoric of the Yellow Peril migratory era of the late 1800s, with descriptions of the "long, talon-like nails" of Chinese immigrants and newspaper illustrations that rendered their eyes as strange and alien (25). Steuter and Willis similarly note that during WWII, Japanese individuals were presented as "vermin, especially rats, bats, and mosquitoes," and these metaphors linger in "contemporary North American media discourse" today (19). Although Lee notes that many of these images originated in the US, they spread to Canada and became ingrained in successive articulations of subhumanizing discourses.[2]

While it is easy enough to think of these depictions as historical relics that preceded Canada's acceptance—and even purported celebration—of multiculturalism and ethnic "difference," these discourses persist today, albeit in different forms. As even a quick reading of the numerous blog posts, forum discussions, and commentaries surrounding *Maclean's* recent "Too Asian?" article also reveals, the pejorative language used to express concerns about the influx of Asians into Canada bears striking similarities to the language formerly used to depict Asian Canadians as vermin, even though they are not described precisely as animals. Compounding this are disparaging comments that frame the intelligence and academic success of Asians as nonhuman: the stereotype of Asians as both preternaturally smart and socially abnormal individuals referenced in the article again affirms Asian Canadians as not only inherently distinct from "Canadians," but also deviating from normative notions of "the human" in general.

These descriptions convey how discourses of species have been used to dehumanize multitudes of Asian immigrants to Canada in order to justify

1 Following the cue of posthumanists like Wolfe, Donna Haraway, and Matthew Calarco, I use nonhuman here to not only differentiate between human animals and nonhuman animals, but to describe those humans who are rendered as nonhuman. Subhuman, however, differs slightly in meaning as it describes those who have been discursively depicted as inherently inferior to the dominant and normative notion of the human.

2 The responses to a controversial 2006 *Maclean's* article about Muslims in Canada, for instance, parallels this specific racist rhetoric as commentators suggested that Muslims be exterminated with DDT (Steuter 19).

systemic racist discourse and praxis: portraying humans as subhuman Others not only sanctions the "psychological acceptability" of committing atrocities against these ostensible nonhumans, but also makes acceptable the exclusion of individuals from dominant humanist narratives of progress, regardless of their actual roles in a nation's history (Steuter and Willis 19). Denise Ferreira da Silva proposes that the state renders the bodies of racialized subaltern subjects as locales where the state "deploys its forces of self-preservation"—its "artificial" authority that is exerted to legitimize state power—in order to reconfigure the "violence that constitutes the unsettled core of law and the rigid armature of the state" ("No-bodies" 224, 216); at the same time, it upholds whiteness as the universal signifier of a "stable and modern consciousness" ("Toward" 438). Drawing upon da Silva's analysis, dehumanization can be read as reinforcing the depiction of the racial as an attribute of "bodies and minds" that "failed to achieve the degree of development proper to modern conditions," while whiteness remains a signifier of the "principles of universal equality and freedom" (436, 423).[3] The work of critics like Renisa Mawani and Lisa Lowe indicates how dehumanization in North American may be used as a tool of state preservation by affirming policies of segregation and notions of racial inferiority, as well as reinforcng the mistreatment of labourers; however, my focus here is on how the selective rendering of racialized individuals as subhuman is used to exclude these individuals from Canada's national narrative.[4] As Eva Mackey notes, Canada depends on "symbolic" images of difference, including events like the recent government-sanctioned "Asian Heritage Awareness Day," yet it seeks to retain a Euro-Canadian narrative of national progress; if the dehumanized racial subject is outside of "modern consciousness" and therefore barred from contributing to this narrative, it then becomes possible to borrow the symbols and images of Asian Canadian culture without considering the ways that Asian Canadian *individuals* have contributed to Canada's history and identity.

While posthumanism offers a rich theoretical methodology for rethinking the dominant and reified paradigm of the human, what may be most immediately useful to current discussions in Asian Canadian studies is its exploration of pervasive and problematic humanist lines of thought that ostensibly rectify the subjectivities of those marked as Other.[5] A posthumanist approach to decentering the human in order to allow for a multiplicity of

3 Although posthumanism shares with critiques like da Silva's a desire to interrogate modern notions of universality, its particular strength is perhaps that it is rooted in a concurrent theorization of the rights of the human alongside those of the animal; by positioning its critique as markedly differently than humanist engagements with human rights, posthumanism avoids rearticulating the fraught site of the human as the sole locus of rights discourses. Instead, the human becomes an inherently "prosthetic" creature that has coevolved with non-human "technicity and materiality" (including language), and its finitude and connection to these non-human materials are also, for posthumanists like Wolfe, what makes the human inherently "impure" and nonhuman ("Posthumanism" xxv).

4 For instance, the use of "racial taxonomies" that Renisa Mawani and Lisa Lowe identify mirrors the discourse of species hierarchy, since Asian bodies in North America were legislated and classified in terms of "breed" and phenotype, and their prospected "domestication" was an integral part of colonial discourses (Mawani 164, Lowe 5).

5 In part, posthuman analyses attempt to interrogate species hierarchies alongside other oppressive discourses, arguing, as Wolfe does, that the "hierarchy, domination, and exploitation between humans and animals are uncannily and systematically reproduced in relations of class, race, and ethnicity among humans themselves," as we see in the way that discourse of species has been used to dehumanize Asian Canadian subjects (xxi). Yet these kinds of posthumanist interventions, while useful for their consideration of how discourses of species and race may be intertwined, are less invested in exploring concrete methods regarding how we might begin to reconfigure the affects of the link between these two discourses.

subject positions must occur alongside an attempt to forgo strands of humanism.[6] This approach thus differs from postcolonial discussions that draw on humanistic principles, including those that are frequently cited in projects that analyze racial Otherness in Canada; for instance, while Edward Said's work remains one of the key critiques on the positioning of the Other, Said focuses on "the agency of human individuality and subjective intuition" and argues that "humanism is the only… resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history" (np). Wolfe is also critical of discussions that aim to open up discursive space for Othered subjects yet inadvertently reinscribe humanist principles, such as Homi Bhabha's discussion of "cultural translation." Wolfe contends that this concept remains mired in humanistic narratives of progress partly because of its focus on "making a name for oneself," as this "name" risks reasserting notions of the dominant and autonomous human ("Animal" Wolfe 189, Bhabha 242). Wolfe's own work foregrounds the immense value of Bhabha's critiques for "helping us complexify" both our understanding of colonialism and how the discourse of species and colonialism "interact in sometimes unexpected ways" (188). However, Wolfe also makes a case for why these critiques must now be pushed further to do justice to the "ethical and theoretical" challenges raised by the nonhuman animal; moreover, we must also consider how we might begin to remediate the position of *any* subhumanized being without turning the attainment of the dominant position of "the human" into the ultimate goal of these critiques (188).

Although Wolfe argues that we must not "reject humanism *tout court*," he proposes that we must rethink the primacy placed on humanistic approaches when analyzing instances of dehumanization, as humanism remains part of a legacy that includes human exceptionalism and a narrative of progress that has, as previously stated, excluded those who have been rendered as Other, including dehumanized racial subjects ("Posthumanism" 166). A *post*humanist ethos therefore illustrates that humanism is certainly not the only form of resistance we can take when considering the inhuman practices committed against Asian Canadians, and we must remain acutely aware of humanism's complicity in excluding racialized subjects as foundational members of the nation even as attempts are made to incorporate the contributions of Asian Canadians into our nation's history. Indeed, precluding the possibility of dehumanization altogether necessitates that we consider how humanistic critical approaches remain invested in extending the dominant concept of the human—one that remains complicit in the process of dehumanization itself—to subhumanized individuals.[7]

One method of beginning to explore this ethos is by examining artistic engagements that expose or resist the humanist desire to selectively incorporate the histories of racial Others into national narratives in order to uphold their legitimacy. For example, Paul Wong's media project *Miss Chinatown* juxtaposes the state-sanctioned image of a Miss Chinese-Vancouver pageant against those rendered as Other-than-human, by including polemical narratives about drug addiction as another instance

6 Importantly, it is not enough to apply this formation of posthumanism to any instance of dehumanization, and critics of posthumanism are right to argue that theoretical interventions must remain acutely aware of specific historical contexts that produce these dehumanizing discourses if we are to explore how posthumanism can be reframed and incorporated into critical race studies.

7 Wolfe argues that it is "not enough to reread and reinterpret…the cross-pollination of speciesist, sexist, and racist discursive structures," as simply reconfiguring these oppressive discourses risks reproducing the work of the hegemonic mechanisms that engender these humanist power dynamics, and that render particular beings as not just nonhuman, but subhuman ("Human" 570).

of exclusion, the historical subhumanization of Indigenous peoples alongside Chinese Canadians, and how the "model minority" stereotype is used to depict Asian Canadians as social Others. Reading Wong's work through a posthumanist frame draws attention to the subversive alignment of exoticized bodies alongside those expelled from Canada's story of nationhood: by making the two sets of images inextricable from one another, Wong's piece troubles the aforementioned selective and contradictory mobilization of dehumanizing discourses. Put differently, it complicates how signs of Asian Canadians' cultural differences (in the form of the pageant participants attired in traditional cheongsams) are often symbolically attached to Canada's national imagery even as numerous Asian Canadian individuals remain excluded from its official history in order to uphold whiteness as the apex of these dominant narratives. Other artists challenge the desire to simply extend this convoluted narrative by redeploying aspects of it in their work while remaining attentive to its exclusion of the Asian Canadian subject. For example, writer Hiromi Goto appropriates and reconfigures this narrative through an ironic use of official bilingualism alongside an exploration of Japanese Canadian corporeality and historical contributions to nationhood. Also, David Khang foregrounds the "collective amnesia" and absences found in this national narrative by engaging with both dominant Anglo-Franco Canadian history and the often tenuous position of the Asian Canadian body.[8] In both of these instances, the human body—as well as the reified concept of the human more generally—is thrown into critical relief, yet the historical reality of specific Asian Canadian bodies still remains palpable; in this sense, they lend themselves to a posthumanist critique as projects that remain attentive to the inconsistency of how the body is rendered, since it is this inconsistency that allows specifically human *and* nonhuman animals to be rendered inferior to normative notions of the human. These are just some of the sites where we might begin to put forth a specifically posthumanist exploration of Asian Canadian projects, in order to locate instances where we can reconfigure or contest the integrity of the dominant narratives that rely upon problematic humanist discourses. While the connection between these two theoretical frames must be drawn out further, posthumanist approaches may not only offer us a new way to think about the discourses that influence and enable the dehumanization of Asian Canadians and the occlusion of their social reality from dominant narratives of progress, but also it may allow us to engage with these issues without rearticulating the various "vectors of power" that depend upon humanist discourses ("Animal" 226).[9]

8 See, for instance, Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* and Khang's *Wrong Places* series.

9 Wolfe, drawing on Judith Butler, finds that while the vectors of racism, ableism, misogyny, and speciesism are not analogical, they remain invested in the same logic of hierarchies of being ("Animal" 226).

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WHERE IS TAIWAN ON THE MAP OF ASIAN CANADIAN STUDIES?

>> SZU SHEN

In early August 2010, I arrived in Vancouver; it was shortly after this time that I began to establish an intellectual engagement with the field of Asian Canadian Studies. Being newly arrived, in both a literal and metaphorical sense, I was amazed at the notable population of Chinese descent in this city and, at the same time, somewhat puzzled at the illegibility of Taiwan in the mapping and making of an analytic category named "Asian Canadian." Driven by such puzzlement, I subsequently sought to investigate the precarious presence of Taiwan in the articulation of Asian Canadian Studies understood as a set of "unfinished projects" (Beauregard 21).

Yet, as Shu-mei Shih has boldly declared, "[s]tudying Taiwan is an *impossible* task" (144). Pointing out Taiwan's difficult position in the system of global knowledge production, Shih writes, "Taiwan does not carry 'value', either symbolic or material, as the significance required for value production is either missing or not recognised" (144). In the process of gathering material during my investigation, I uncannily stumbled on a similar impossibility to study Taiwan. Both the lack of critical engagement with Taiwanese experiences in the discursive formations of Asian Canadian Studies—there is a pronounced tendency in Anglophone writings on Asian Canadians to lump Taiwanese Canadians into the category named *Chinese Canadian*[1]—and the lack of writings in English on and by Taiwanese Canadians led me to reconsider my critical approach. While the presence of Taiwanese immigrants in Canada is indisputable, the "legible" Taiwanese Canadian subject I was so keenly looking for appeared nowhere to be found. If the search for a legible subject is futile, what are the conditions that render Taiwan difficult to read in the "Asia" configured through the discursive, imaginative, and experiential landscapes of Asian Canadian Studies? And what discourses around the referent "Asian Canadian" or "Chinese Canadian" have imprinted themselves on my imagination and perhaps led me to expect a readable and analyzable subject called "Taiwanese Canadian"?

With these questions in mind, I want to take a step back to look at Asian Canadian Studies as it is situated within a Canadian framework in order to examine "the ways that existing Asian Canadian studies projects have worked—and continue to work—within various structures of *multicultural governmentality* in Canada" (Beauregard 13, emphasis in original). One such structure, as Donald Goellnicht notes, is a bilingual framework in which literary production in "multicultural Canada" has to work. Observing that "literature produced in languages other than English or French . . . has gone largely unnoticed by both the dominant culture and the academy," Goellnicht maintains that "[w]hat we speak of as 'Asian Canadian' literature today is written primarily in English" (10). In other words, the privileging of official language(s) serves as a gatekeeping mechanism, apparently managing which textual traces would or could enter and participate in the conversations circulating in an institutional space understood as Asian Canadian Studies and hence be recognized as representing "Asian Canadian subjects." Goellnicht made this observation in 2000; yet, at least in the context of my investigation of Taiwan's position in the field of Asian Canadian Studies, his remarks on the dominant presence of Anglophone literary production in this field still appear to be valid more than a decade later. In addition, a shared political desire to reclaim identity and agency through interventions in the social structures of representation appears to function as another

1 For instance, both Wing Chung Ng and Paul Yee mention Taiwan in their respective discussions of the history of Chinese people in Vancouver. However, the Taiwan or Taiwanese in their narratives is represented as part of a collective called "new Chinese immigrants" (Ng 120); represented as one of the two parties in the battle of "two Chinas" (Yee 134); or indiscriminately woven into generic descriptions of Chinese "leaving home" (Yee 192).

criterion for legible Asian Canadian subjects. Embodying and enunciating such a desire, Xiaoping Li argues that Asian Canadian identity should be understood as a "political category" (26) construed and reproduced through the collective efforts of Asian Canadian cultural activism. Li's activist take on cultural production as an important venue for political struggles and social movements might be a strategic move. However, while attributing specific political interests to Asian Canadian cultural and social formations, Li is, at the same time, separating Asian Canadian cultural activists from the larger communities that also fit into the umbrella called "Asian Canadian" understood in a broadly descriptive sense.

Retrospectively speaking, both the predominant position of Anglophone writing in the discursive formations of Asian Canadian Studies and its entrenched (and perhaps expected) attachments to identity as a political category led, directly or not, to my initial anticipation of a subject called "Taiwanese Canadian" and my subsequent frustration over the unfitness and "(in)significance" of Taiwan. Yet I wish to suggest that this precarious position of Taiwan on the map of Asian Canadian Studies is not entirely a blocking predicament. Instead, it offers a chance to reconsider the inescapable gap between Asian Canadian Studies and its demographic realities; to explore what seem to have been unrecognized points of intersection between Asian Canadian Studies and postcolonial discourses of Taiwan; and to creatively imagine and practice alternative ways to talk about "Asian Canadian" understood "as a socially descriptive term, as an identity (chosen or imposed), and as an intellectual formation" (Lee 3).

In order to investigate this frustrating yet potentially enabling predicament, I would like to turn to a recently published collection *Migrating Birds: Contemporary Chinese-Canadian Women's Writings* (Chinese title: 漂鳥：加拿大華文女作家選集) in the hope that shifting the focus to Sinophone texts could expose and perhaps unsettle some of the accepted reading practices in Asian Canadian Studies. It is interesting to consider how the Chinese subtitle of this collection ("selected writings of Sinophone female writers in Canada") puts emphasis on the language of composition as the common ground among the writers, while the English version lumps these texts into the category of *Chinese-Canadian*, thereby obscuring not only different connotations—nationalist, linguistic, ethnic, and so on—of the single term *Chinese* but also the multiplicity of each writer's relationship to (not) being *Chinese*. Indeed, such a conflating effect is echoed by the ways in which the framing of this collection is invested in an exceptionalist imagination of Sinophone articulation and its linkages to Chineseness. In the prologue of this collection, for instance, Ya Xian (瘂弦) proposes a global integration of Sinophone literature based on a notion of shared (Chinese) culture.[2] Declaring Chinese as *the* language for such a large-scale proposal, Ya Xian argues for the righteousness of Chinese language use (presumably he is referring to Mandarin Chinese) by setting it against, and contrasting it with, the backdrop of the colonial histories of English, Spanish, and French. He writes, "we follow the majestic and benevolent way while the West follows the oppressive and hegemonic; our way is essentially and completely different from theirs" (v-vi).[3] Hastily grouping the three major colonial powers and their languages into an undifferentiated and generalized term "the West" to naturalize and normalize the dominance of Mandarin Chinese, Ya Xian bypasses the complicated trajectories of how this language has come to its present ruling position in Taiwan and elsewhere, and fails to

2 Ya Xian is an established Taiwanese poet who moved to Vancouver after his retirement in 1998.

3 In Mandarin Chinese: 我們是王道，西方是霸道，根本上是兩碼子事 (wo men shi wang dao, xi fang shi ba dao, gen ben shang shi lian ma zi shi).

address the imperial and Han-centric residues in the formation of what is known as *Chinese* and *Chineseness* today. Ya Xian's claim about the division between China and the West as embedded in their inherently incommensurable political cultures—i.e. benevolence vis-à-vis hegemony—uncannily invokes and repeats the political discourse of early Republican China.[4] Rereading the prologue and thinking of the ways in which this collection has been produced and circulated transnationally, I cannot help but ask: under what circumstances might such a discourse be sustained, reproduced, or interrupted? And exactly who is this collection's intended and imagined audience?

A possible answer seems to lie in the collection's epilogue. Directly addressing the audience, the editors write: "We hope . . . you would understand more about the lived experiences of *those who live on the other side of the Pacific*—those who still keep in mind deep feelings for their homeland even if they have already migrated away from it" (Lin and Liu 408; emphasis added). While the singular and plural nouns in Chinese are usually not differentiated, I decided to use the singular form of "homeland" in my English translation above because the term seems to be used in a metaphorical (cultural) rather than a literal (geographical) sense. Earlier in the epilogue, the editors state that "[the writers'] shared cultural inheritance—which is of the same race and the same language[5]—leads to a fruitful blossoming of their literary friendship in Canada" (Lin and Liu 407). The ethnocentric imagination of the universal applicability of a shared culture marked implicitly as Chinese (or a shared cultural homeland that coincides with the imperial perception of China geographically) is invoked yet again, echoing Ya Xian's exceptionalist discourse in the prologue. This point enables us to return to my question regarding the audience. If this collection is, according to its epilogue, intended to speak across the Pacific, how (if at all) does this text intersect with other representational practices of Asian Canadian articulation? I wish to suggest that the ethnocentric discourses deployed in this collection perform a similar yet nonequivalent set of abstracting forces (found in many Anglophone writings about Asian Canadians) that *defer* the enunciation and unfolding of less legible Asian Canadian subjects such as Taiwanese Canadians within the institutional and discursive landscapes of Asian Canadian Studies.

In using the verb *defer*, I am drawing upon the work of Christopher Lee, who has productively reframed "the [institutional] lack of Asian Canadian Studies as a problem of lateness" (1). In the process of my research, it has become clear that the precarious presence of Taiwan on the map of Asian Canadian Studies could also be framed as a question of lateness: the lateness of current discursive Asian Canadian formations to properly address Taiwan in its representational cartography; the lateness of critics writing in Chinese in Canada to move beyond exceptionalist notions of a putatively shared Chinese culture and literature in the diaspora; and the lateness of an intersectional analysis of the ways in which different sets of discourses—minority and postcolonial—could interact in the rendering of comparatively slippery subjects such as Taiwanese Canadians. In light of Fred Wah's perceptive observation that maps "don't have beginnings, just edges" (1), the metaphorical use of a map to describe the formations of Asian Canadian Studies might work in conjunction with Lee's proposition to abandon the "more comfortable language of emergence" (10). In other words, the

4 In 1924, Sun Yat-sen delivered a lecture on "Greater Asianism" ("Da Ya Zhou Zhu Yi") in Kobe, Japan in which he explicitly proposed to extend the benevolent political culture manifested in dynastic China to incorporate greater Asia in contrast to the hegemonic expansion of European imperial powers. See Wang for a thorough discussion of the political ruptures and continuities in such imaginations of China and Asia

5 In Mandarin Chinese: 同種同文 (tong zhong tong wen).

problem of lateness should not be understood as an unfortunate lack. Rather, it is produced by and embedded in the ways in which "Asia" has been conceptualized through different representational practices surrounding subjects that might or might not be considered as enacting and embodying Asian Canadian experiences. If the lateness to recognize Taiwan is a reality that cannot be eschewed, then perhaps this short essay could serve as a nascent point of departure to explore the map of Asian Canadian Studies in a more nuanced way and to creatively and vigilantly inhabit the "frayed and hazy margin[s] of possibility, absence, gap" (Wah 1) of that map.

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"This collaboration came about in the Spring of 2011 when I invited a group of Vancouver poets to collaboratively write and then perform a poem relating to the Paris Commune, as part of the SFU sponsored series, **"La Commune de Vancouver."** The process involved me sending a series of prompts (largely based on dialogue in Peter Watkins' film, "La Commune: Paris 1871") and then the group of us circulating and working on the solicited responses. The poem was performed at VIVO Media Arts on May 20 2011. The process of deciding who was going to read what was very interesting, as our ability to recall who had written what faded into the chorus of voices."—Stephen Collis

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Maraya is a public artwork designed to engage pedestrians along the seawall walkways in Vancouver, Canada and Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The creative team of Henry Tsang, M. Simon Levin, and Glen Lowry, draws on expertise from artists, educators, scientists, theorists, urban planners, architects and you.

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