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Mo Yan in Context

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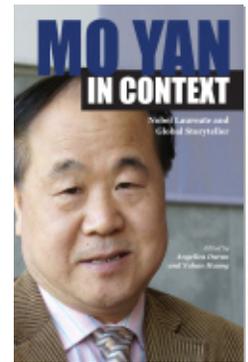
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Representations of "China" and "Japan" in Mo Yan's, Hayashi's, and Naruse's Texts

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Abstract

In "Representations of 'China' and 'Japan' in Mo Yan's, Hayashi's, and Naruse's Texts" Noriko J. Horiguchi discusses the narration of displacements and memory in the context of subjectivity and Japanese imperialism. Horiguchi's analysis of Mo Yan's, Fumiko Hayashi's, and Mikio Naruse's texts is located in the perspective of Japanese imperialism, and Horiguchi demonstrates the paradox of individuals' stories which construct their subjectivity that simultaneously resists and recreates perspectives of empire and its doings. Horiguchi's analysis provides a regional (Asian) contextualization of Mo Yan's, Hayashi's, and Naruse's texts in a perspective that may help to consider literary settings more sensitively and gain particular regional context as well. Moreover, Asians and others around the globe, thus, may gain a deeper appreciation and perhaps better tools for dealing with the continuing battles—verbal and physical—over disputed Asian territories which may otherwise be viewed as negligible.

Mo Yan (1955–) and the Japanese woman author Fumiko Hayashi (1904–1951) may seem to share little in common besides their callings as writers. Their lives and texts, however, intersect in several ways. Both Mo Yan and Hayashi come from lower socioeconomic strata: Mo Yan from a peasant family and Hayashi from a family of peddlers. In addition, their formal education was short or irregular: Mo Yan's formal schooling was interrupted in the fifth grade until the end of his military service, and Hayashi's formal education was often interrupted owing to her parents' transient lifestyle. There are also similarities in their adulthoods: Mo Yan was assigned to a temporary position at a factory and subsequently joined the army, and Hayashi worked in factories and served in the Japanese army as a war reporter in the late 1930s. Further, Mo Yan's and Hayashi's texts are related thematically. Place is a major motif in Mo Yan's works, most of which are set in the Eastern coastal Shandong Prov-

ince. This setting acts as a stable geographical locus within which chaotic personal and national dramas occur and bears the traces of change. In *Red Sorghum*, Mo Yan depicts a family's struggles in three generations, first as distillery owners making sorghum wine and then as resistance fighters during the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45). The narrator starts the novel with a strong attachment to the land: "I had learned to love Northeast Gaomi Township, easily the most beautiful and most repulsive, most unusual and most common, most sacred and most corrupt, most heroic and most bastardly, hardest drinking and hardest loving place in the world" (4). In *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, Mo Yan opens his narrative on the eve of the Sino-Japanese War and begins its chronology around the time of the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), both of which call attention to large-scale episodes related to land as national space. Mo Yan sharpens his focus on the dynamism of place in the final section of *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, when the protagonist, Shangguan Jintong, returns to his hometown of "Dalan, the capital of Northeast Gaomi Township" in the 1980s, after his fifteen-year imprisonment (457): "His eye caught a new line of houses on the northern bank of the river, and by a new concrete bridge not far from the old stone one ... The township government moved its offices and the school away, and the old Sima family compound had been taken over by Big Gold Tooth" (467). He is keenly aware of even minor changes in the landscape of his childhood and young adulthood.

While much is made of Mo Yan's fixation on his fictionalized home-township, commentary on the place's history usually centers, and rightly so, on its status as a cultural center for Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese Buddhism. In China's more recent past and perhaps more at the fore of the contemporary Chinese population's considerations is the role of the Shandong Province as Japanese territory from 1919 to 1921 then 1937 to 1945. That area of Chinese land comprised part of what the Japanese call 外地 (*gaichi*), the outer territories of Japan. Relevant here is that setting ties intimately with another important theme in the works of Mo Yan and Hayashi, namely gender and specifically women's roles. Shelley W. Chan points out that Mo Yan focuses on "minor figures" who wander through at the bottom and periphery of society. These characters appear to challenge political orthodoxy and free themselves from "ideological dogma within a highly politicized grand narrative" (Chan 19). Hayashi's writing has also been read as a personal and apolitical depiction of women at the socioeconomic margin: "Hayashi's fictional world was 'of the people' [民衆的] (*minshūteki*), but not from a sense of ideological commitment or political correctness. Hayashi painted her portraits small: descriptive depictions of everyday life [庶民の生活] (*shomin no seikatsu*)" (Ericson 88).

And yet, both authors wrote political allegory late in their careers. Mo Yan engages in historical dialogues and reconstructs memory in highly imaginative ways. *Red Sorghum* and *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* merge family histories and modern Chinese national history (Chan 19). In *Big Breasts*, nationalism is exemplified in the characters' struggle under the atrocious conditions against Japanese aggression dur-

ing the second Sino-Japanese War. The narrator, Shangguan Jintong, suffers violent death at the hands of the Japanese, and "granddad" and "grandma" engage in a guerilla attack resulting in the annihilation of the Japanese invaders. As David Der-wei Wang explains, "all the morally perfect characteristics of the Chinese nation and tradition" in Mo Yan's texts seem to lie in mothers (492). Although Mo Yan focuses on male characters and male narrators (some chapters in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* being exceptions), mothers and grandmothers are of extreme importance as figures of power. Mo Yan calls attention to his celebration of femininity in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* by dedicating the work to his mother and praising mother figures: "Readers often ask after finishing this book, 'is the mother in the book the author's mother?' I am positive of the answer, 'yes. It is my mum, and I also hope that it is also your mum. The mother in the book has endured unthinkable pains, worked hard in the most difficult times and has managed to live on. She extends her kindness to those who are in need, and cherishes life. These qualities are exactly those of our mothers'" (see Mo Yan in Kong, Shi, Lu 32).

Hayashi and her characters belong to the generation of Mo Yan's grandmother. Like her literary characters, she participated in the discourse that both resisted and reproduced the Japanese empire, and she narrates stories of women who move through, occupy, and re-create political spaces in the context of Japan's imperial competition with the West. The Japanese empire invaded vast regions of Japan's neighboring nations, including China, encompassed them into a modern capitalist system, and transformed the lives and views of the colonized people. This empire building also transformed the lives and views of the Japanese, and Hayashi provides some views from the perspective of a Japanese woman. The realization that a woman can be an aggressor while also being a victim of the same system is driven home in Hayashi's texts: although they live at the economic margin of society and outside the institutionalized womanhood of Japan, they participate in the state's central discourse that contributed to the Japanese empire's colonization of its neighboring nations.

naichi (内地 [homeland]) in Hayashi's *Diary of a Vagabond*

In her 1927 novel 放浪記 (*Diary of a Vagabond*, first serialized from 1928 to 1930 in the journal 女人芸術 [nyonin geijutsu])—translated in part in 1997 by Joan E. Ericson as *Be a Woman: Hayashi Fumiko and Modern Japanese Women's Literature*—Hayashi suggests that her heroine constructs her subjectivity by identifying with the decentralized, unstable, and disjunctive home and native place, rather than the centralized, stable, and united empire of Japan. The heroine of the novel who constantly moves as a loner declares that she has "neither home nor homeland" (*Diary* 251; unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine). Her wandering is predicated on the loss of home and an inability to re-create its sweetness. Against the the Civil Code (promulgated in 1896; effective 1898) that prescribed women's role to the home, a constant state of

movement replaces any fixed space for the heroine. Unable to find residential or financial stability, she floats adrift as a vagabond in the *naichi* of the 1920s.

The heroine seems unfit as a member of the family system 家 (*ie*): she lives outside the institutionalized womanhood of "good wife, wise mother" and has no desire to get married or bear children. She thus stands in sharp contrast to Mo Yan's women figures such as the mother Shanggang Lu in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, who gives birth to eight daughters and one son, and the many women characters in 蛙 (Frog) who are punished for their desire to bear multiple children or capitulate reluctantly to the family planning (计划生育) or One-child policy. Hayashi's heroine deviates from the life course prescribed by Japanese state discourse. The notion that women's role is to nurture Japan's soldiers as children 赤子 (*sekishi*) of the emperor carries insufficient weight for her. She rejects the notion and function of the individual family and the united family nation/empire of Japan that nurtures its subjects. Neither a nurturing mother nor a wife, she has no function as an integral part of Japan.

The heroine who is homeless in her native land and decentered from the nation-state in *naichi* identifies not with the central discourse on Japanese women but with the sexually, economically, ethnically, and racially exploited female body. Throughout the novel, excruciating working conditions in the factory, long working hours, and meager pay threaten the heroine's physical health and livelihood and lead her to question the position and conditions of the lower socioeconomic class. The laboring female body is also sexually commodified for the exchange value of the market economy. Belonging to the class that sells the sexualized bodies of its women for economic gain, the heroine also identifies with the ethnically and racially colonized people of society. Her physical proximity to colonials in the factory dormitory in *naichi* links them in adversity: "It was sad to sleep beside the women from Karafuto and Kanazawa with our three pillows next to each other" (88). With an acute sense of helplessness, the heroine finds no grand narrative of salvation in *naichi*: "There is neither beautiful thought nor good thought ... There is no room to restore my small honor. What a strange and excruciating way of life!" (309, 380).

Entrenched in the state of the marginalized, the heroine directs her anger at the mainstream and wishes for the explosion of a society that confines her body. Although she narrates the destitution of the lower classes and race/ethnicity on the fringes of society, she also aspires to re-create the periphery of Japan, such as Hokkaidō, as a utopia for the socially marginalized and exploited. The heroine also envisions a utopia outside Japan as an unexplored place of salvation for her. Further, she aspires to create home and family in a physically distant space: "When living becomes suffering, I think of home. People often say that they want to die in their home" (285); and "the so-called warm household with family is ten thousand ri [3.9 km] away" (315). This conveys movement within place with the portable diary representing its narrator as a vagabond.

***gaichi* (外地 [outer territory]) in Hayashi's Northern Bank Platoon**

Many of the articulated and unarticulated desires and needs of the heroine moving within *naichi* in *Diary of a Vagabond* assume different physical forms—and correspondingly different fulfillments—in *gaichi* in Hayashi's 1939 北岸部隊 (Northern Bank Platoon). Whereas the heroine in *naichi* in *Diary of a Vagabond* as one of the marginalized in society lives in a state of suffocation and fear, the heroine in *gaichi* in Northern Bank Platoon finds security by becoming a family member of the empire and worthy of dying for it. It is in a distant China as *gaichi* under Japanese occupation in the late 1930s that the sense of family she envisions materializes as the family in Northern Bank Platoon.

Following the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 and after the attack on Bukan (武漢) beginning in 1938, the Ministry of Information formed the "Pen Squadron," which sent writers to the war front with the military's financial support and protection. The first Pen Squadron consisted of twenty-two writers, and Hayashi was one of only two women in it. Some writers wrote about the sacrifices of soldiers at the request of the military, others on assignment were war correspondents, but participation in the Pen Squadron was based on will rather than coercion (see Takahashi 165). As a war correspondent for *The Tokyo Daily News* in 1938, Hayashi was the first Japanese woman to enter Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu Province in eastern China (south of Mo Yan's home province of Shandong) after it fell to Japanese troops. Hayashi's war report Northern Bank Platoon was written as a journal from 19 September to 28 December 1938, and her other report 戦線 (Battlefront) takes the form of correspondence in the same year, depicting life at the battlefield for a week. Both works resemble *Diary of a Vagabond* in combining forms of poetry with prose. In contrast to the *Diary*, however—which denies any grand narrative of good, beauty, or truth in *naichi*—in Northern Bank Platoon Hayashi creates and affirms them in *gaichi*. The heroine celebrates "the beauty and cruelty of this battlefield ... It's cruel, and also sublime and lofty" (294). Whereas the heroine in the *Diary* acts through the multiple identities of the economically, ethnically, and racially marginalized and colonized peoples of the Japanese empire, the heroine in Northern Bank Platoon reconstructs her identity as a pure and patriotic Japanese by recreating the dichotomy of Japan and China as separate entities. Paradoxically, it is only in the Chinese *gaichi* that the narrator of Northern Bank Platoon gains a national identity as Japanese. By marching with the Japanese soldiers on Chinese soil, the heroine identifies herself with them: "I accompanied Yosuko [揚子江] Northern Troop ... The color of my face is soiled black with dust and grime, and I am no different from the soldiers" (300). The narrator further defines herself: "I am a noncombatant and, moreover, a woman. But as a Japanese woman, I want to burn and etch the way of the Japanese soldiers' battle firmly onto my mind's eye ... My eyes are wide open with utter astonishment at the patriotic passion that has filled my body" (234). Further, the heroine feels a deep alliance with the nurses who are equated with sacred

mothers of soldiers on the battlefield. The patriotism that overwhelms her body is also shown in her desire to be part of the family empire: "It seems as though every soldier is always worried about his homeland. Until they achieve heroic and incomparable deaths magnificently, they always think of their homeland. They are good husbands, fathers, and older and younger brothers" (308).

Unlike the men who exploit women's sexualized and commodified bodies in *naichi* in the Diary, the men in *gaichi* in Northern Bank Platoon are conscientious family men who are devoted to their homes and homeland: "Soldiers are all kind and gentle ... pure" (256). This representation is striking, given that the Japanese government was establishing and operating military "comfort" stations (hubs of enslaved prostitutes to serve the military) in occupied territories, including China. Although fear, insecurity, and deprivation are recurrent themes for the heroine in the Diary, the narrator in Northern Bank Platoon marching with soldiers attains confidence, security, and fulfillment by gaining national identity as Japanese. This is achievable specifically in the space of Northeast China as *gaichi*: "I will never forget, for the rest of my life, the feeling of love for the country ... I don't care about my house in Tokyo" (241). Of special note is that her very national identity reduces her affection for *naichi*: "I want to stay behind" (214). The heroine's collaboration in *gaichi* in Northern Bank Platoon signifies her quest to gain power within the empire rather than beyond it. As a result, Hayashi's writing becomes part of the forces of aggression and the atrocities of Japanese imperial expansion.

***naichi* and *gaichi* in Hayashi's novel *Floating Clouds* and Naruse's film adaptation of the novel**

Now I turn to Hayashi's novel 浮雲 (*Floating Clouds*, 1949-1951) and Mikio Naruse's (1905-1969) 1955 adaptation of the novel to film and examine how they re-frame migrant women in the language of space and time and how the literary and visual narratives function as the medium of memory to re-create the Japanese imperial past in the present. Hayashi's *Floating Clouds* received critical acclaim and popular attention, and Naruse's film was praised as "best film" in 1955, the year it was released: "*Floating Clouds* remains Naruse's most well-known film in Japan ... the film that brought Naruse the greatest recognition" (Russell 10). Both the novel and film are notable for depicting the heroine Yukiko's mobility and the malleability of space. Yukiko moves from Shizuoka to Tokyo in prewar *naichi*, she is posted to Dalat, French Indochina, in prewar *gaichi*; returns to Tokyo in the immediate post-war era; travels northwest to Ikaho; and then moves to Yakushima, a semitropical island at the southern end of Japan, where she dies.

As an unmarried woman and typist in Japan in prewar *naichi*, Yukiko struggles economically in the lower and peripheral strata of society. As a migrant, she is antithetical to the domesticated woman who supports the family within her sanctioned space of home. With no stable home or family background, she is no candi-

date for the status of "sacred wife and mother" in either prewar or postwar Japan. Since Yukiko is not respected as a "pure" woman, she is forced repeatedly to serve her brother-in-law Iba sexually in prewar Tokyo. Raped and exploited, she endures bitter and suffocating conditions resonating with women and men characters of Mo Yan's *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*. She is stymied in recapturing or re-creating the warmth of either a home or a homeland either for herself or for future generations. Yukiko is freed, however, from the restrictions she experiences in the homeland of Japan when she earns a position as a typist at the Ministry of Agriculture, which provides her with the opportunity to leave the space of prewar *naichi* and enter *gaichi*, French Indochina, which had fallen under the control of the Japanese empire in 1942. Yukiko's life changes from one of economic and physical repression to one of freedom, comfort, and security when she travels to Dalat, stays in a French-style mansion occupied by Japanese bureaucrats, and enters the open space of woods with her lover Tomioka, a bureaucrat from the Ministry of Agriculture. The sanctioned positions of these characters stand in contrast to the misused state positions in Mo Yan's political critique from the many petty officials in *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* to the overzealous abortion provider Aunt in Frog. It is her body in motion beyond the border of *naichi* but still within the space of the empire of Japan that makes the changes possible.

In Naruse's film adaptation of Hayashi's novel, the French-style mansion and the dining setting and the act of eating are narrated visually as Japan's identification with one of the Western imperial powers, France, and with the colonization of Indochina—colonization in which Yukiko participates and from which she benefits. In the film, the whiteness of the setting of the dining table—white tablecloth, white wine, and Yukiko's white dress—signifies not only the freshness and newness of her experience, but also the Japanese empire's initial identification with Western imperialism, its subsequent displacement of the "white" Western imperial power, and its assertion of control over the darker-skinned native Annamese symbolized by the maid Niu, who serves the food. Another sign of whiteness occurs in a natural rather than artificial setting, in the scene in the woods. Adorned in a "white, thin, silk skirt," according to the screenplay by Yōko Mizuki (81), Yukiko appears in an open wooded space that is filled with bright white light. Tomioka kisses her and leads her into the woods. In the open and expansive space, Yukiko leaps in joy. Some may be reminded of the different color motif in the scene of the compliance of Jiu'er (also known as Grandma and Dai Fenglian) to what is essentially rape in Yimou Zhang's 1987 film version of Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*, where reds and yellows dominate.

In Naruse's film, scenes show how Yukiko tastes her share of the benefits of Japan's colonization of "Asia." Yukiko could not have associated with such bureaucrats in Tokyo, but in Dalat she stays at a mansion as a Japanese colonizer and breaks bread with them. She participates in the state apparatus and its social conventions, which exploit the natural and human resources in *gaichi* and use neighboring Asian

nations, ethnicities, and races as the inferior servants of the Japanese empire. Specifically, it is the language of space and a mobile body which create Yukiko as an agent who acts on the nation-state's imperialist discourse of the Japanese empire. Whereas her body was restricted economically and marginalized in her homeland of Japan, Yukiko is able to experience the luxury of upper-class society in prewar *gaichi*. The unmarried Yukiko's wandering outside domestic space and then moving from Tokyo to the *gaichi* may appear to signal her departure from the center to the periphery, from living inside the system of the nation and its history to existing outside it. Some critics, including Noriko Mizuta, consider Yukiko's experience to be personal, apolitical, and ahistorical. Mizuta contends that Yukiko entertains the possibility of freedom because she is in *gaichi* and thus "outside the institutions of Japan" and "outside Japanese history" (Mizuta 346).

It is true that as a marginalized woman in *naichi*, Yukiko has nothing to do with the Japanese state: she travels to Indochina out of her own wish to leave Japan. Just as she did in Tokyo, Yukiko works in the same low-income service sector in Indochina; however, she does so under military auspices as a typist for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, a government institution at the margin of the Japanese government system in contrast to the Ministry of Education and the Home Ministry, which dominated the state discourse on women. French Indochina was on the geographic periphery of the Japanese empire, but it was the building of an economic base through the exploitation of natural resources and labor that made possible the expansion of Japan and its development abroad. In this sense, the state discourse brought about its subjects' movement toward the periphery. Conversely, people's movement toward the periphery supported the discourse of the state, and this is a necessary component of strengthening the empire. For Yukiko, her movement to Indochina at the periphery of *gaichi* is an act of connecting to the discourse of the state, a national contribution impossible for her to achieve in Tokyo, the center of *naichi*. In other words, by moving to the periphery of Japanese occupied territory, Yukiko participates in the discourse that reconstructs Japan. Her personal experience and interpersonal relationships evolve in a setting created by the discourses of the state and the geopolitical expansion of the empire.

Recreation of prewar *gaichi* in postwar Japan

In postwar Japan, however, Yukiko's position as a migrant and as a person standing outside the institutionalized, family-based womanhood of prewar *naichi* is reestablished. With no stable home, Yukiko roams through the lower city of Tokyo until she finally moves into the dark, confined, shabby storage room of a hardware store. Behind the store stretch the burnt fields, black markets, narrow winding roads, and rundown hotels of postwar Tokyo. These devastated spaces are the backdrop for Yukiko's body and represent the immediate postwar period, when almost 60% of all housing in Tokyo and Osaka was destroyed by air raids. Although she has no

prospect of marrying Tomioka, she continues her uncertain relationship with him, becomes pregnant, has an abortion, and suffers repeated surgeries owing to post-abortion complications (on abortion in Mo Yan's work, see Du). Yukiko's physical condition mirrors the effects of postwar national politics on women's bodies. Her abortion takes place within the particular historical and political context of postwar Japan, which produced an intersection of national and professional interests in legalizing and liberalizing abortion. More specifically, Yukiko's abortion reflects the desire of the Japanese elites and the Allied Powers to secure economic growth and avoid remilitarization of postwar Japan by limiting the seemingly out-of-control population growth caused by the repatriates and the baby boom (see Norgren 36-43).

Yukiko's body is violated and weakened: her approximation of the geographic Japanese center again paralleling her poor treatment at the hands of her brother-in-law Iba earlier in the story. Her experience of physical invasion also overlaps with the history of the U.S. occupation of Japan. Yukiko becomes a prostitute for a U.S. soldier and the exchange value of her body manifests itself in the products from the U.S. that the soldier Joe brings to her room: a transistor radio, chocolates, and Coca-Cola. These U.S. items are distinct and meager in their nature and literary use from those in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*: "American cotton," "a sleek black Chevrolet sedan," an "American Jeep," "American submachine guns," "U.S. warplanes," and such (82, 154, 171, 203). As Yukiko struggles physically and materially, she entertains the memory of war rather than peace, and she feels nostalgia for the lost time and space of Japan's prewar *gaichi*: "Remembering the wash of colors and sights that was French Indochina, Yukiko thought, I want to see that place once more" (*Floating Clouds* 163).

To rebuild a relationship with Tomioka and to recover the health of her body weakened by the abortion and its aftermath, Yukiko must re-create in postwar Japan the sense of physical freedom and empowerment she experienced as a Japanese colonizer in French Indochina. She therefore insists on accompanying Tomioka when she learns that he has been given a position at the Ministry of Agriculture on remote Yakushima, a semitropical island at the southern end of Japan. As if in accord with Yukiko's wish to re-create the old village in Dalat, the village on Yakushima "was exactly like an Annamese hamlet in French Indochina" (283). In the choices she makes at the end of her life as a migrant, Yukiko therefore seeks a final, harmonious resolution of her personal conflicts in nostalgia for the modern Japanese empire and encapsulates the story of the modern empire in her personal story. In *Floating Clouds*, Yukiko's nostalgia for the lost colony of the Japanese empire is accompanied by her sense of remorse and responsibility for the egoistical, aggressive, and destructive policies and actions of the former Japanese colonizers: "Were not the Japanese—who were suddenly rummaging about among the treasures of other people that had taken them centuries to develop—nothing but robbers? . . . The long history of these tea fields that had been carefully managed for so many years made her [Yukiko] feel ashamed of the high-handed tactics that the Japanese had used to take over everything—even these fields—in a short amount of time" (38, 98).

The novel represents both remorse and a sense of responsibility on the part of a sexually violated and socially marginalized woman in *naichi* who benefitted from the Japanese empire's colonization of neighboring Asian nations in *gaichi*. Thus Yukiko not only notices the Japanese exploitation of natural resources and labor in Indochina but also identifies with those who were tried at the Tokyo War Tribunal in 1946. In conversation with Tomioka, Yukiko refers to the "war trial" broadcast on the radio and comments on moral "responsibility" with respect to the Japanese colonization of Indochina: "You and I are involved too, in these trials ... I want to hear the facts about the war" (286). Yukiko recognizes that "the facts" of Japan's colonization policy and actions are owing to not only the male-centered grand narrative created by the bureaucrats, politicians, and military officials but also the collaboration of low-ranking civil servants like Tomioka at the geographical periphery of the empire—and of socially and economically marginalized women such as Yukiko herself. Yet as Mariko Asano Tamanoi points out, "The past to be remembered does not cover only facts; it also covers the images into which those facts have already been transformed. Hence the facts that do not fit in such images may have been forgotten" (20). In the film, there is one brief scene that features a military truck in the woods. The emphasis, however, is on the expansive natural space in which Yukiko walks hand in hand with Tomioka and jumps for joy. These images of nature and of dream-like retreat encourage the audience to remember Indochina as a lush natural world in contrast to the grating facts of Japanese military aggression, economic exploitation, and imperial expansion.

Naruse's film as a medium of memory assists in remembering a past that marginalizes Yukiko. The film is also a strategy that enables the state and people to forget the facts of the expansion and aggression of the Japanese empire. But we must also remember that the power of the Japanese state, which once dominated ordinary Annamese people and in which Japanese women participated, helped Yukiko gain a sense of freedom and power. In the film, both Yukiko and the Japanese empire live, grow, flourish, weaken, and die. As images of Yukiko in Indochina are inserted as flashbacks into her life in postwar Japan, phenomena pass by like "a floating cloud—appearing [and] disappearing" (Hayashi, *Floating Clouds* 303). We who live today, however, continue to narrate the prewar and postwar eras—and re-create the past in memory—by interpreting such narratives. This is often the case with viewing *gaichi* from the important, but limited, native point of view. There is a danger with art whether textual or cinematic to focalize uncritically rather than to acknowledge the breadth that artists like Mo Yan and Hayashi possess and signal in their works.

Narratives about unmarried migrant Japanese women focus on their gender- and class-specific marginalized experience as women characters in *naichi* and gloss over their participation in Japan's colonization of neighboring nations in *gaichi*. As one of the most recognized visual narratives in postwar Japan, Naruse's film frames Yukiko's experience of material comfort, physical freedom, and power as an occupy-

ing colonizer in Indochina in the prewar era as something unreal. This dream-like experience of nonreality is signaled in the film by inserting discontinuous shots of Yukiko and Tomioka in the woods in Dalat into the narrative of their lives in the postwar era. But if Yukiko's experience in Indochina was dream-like, the expansion of the Japanese empire was a nightmarish reality for the Annamese who were invaded and exploited. If *gaichi* in the prewar era continues to be created and interpreted as a temporary and unrealistic dream, the question of how and why the "reality" of those who were colonized came into being may not be tackled.

In conclusion, the texts I analyze here provide a regional (Asian) contextualization of Mo Yan's, Hayashi's, and Naruse's texts in a perspective that may help to consider literary settings more sensitively and gain particular regional context as well. Moreover, Asians and others around the globe, thus, may gain a deeper appreciation and perhaps better tools for dealing with the continuing battles—verbal and physical—over disputed Asian territories which may otherwise be viewed as negligible. In Mo Yan's and Hayashi's texts, and in the latter's adaptation to film by Naruse, we read the re-creation and interpretation of memory. In Hayashi's texts, some of the narrators and characters can be read as disruptive minorities who question the majority and the norm and who live outside the political institutions of Japan. And yet, with the focus on the time and spaces of "Japan" and "China" as sites of historical and political intervention and negotiation, I show the politics of the personal stories of women who moved between *naichi* and *gaichi* in the prewar and postwar eras of the not-so-distant past. Hayashi's literary and Naruse's visual texts reconstruct the memory of the victimization of women in *naichi*, a memory that has turned to nostalgia for the same past that also victimized not only Japanese women but also the colonized nations and ethnicities in Mo Yan's China.

Note

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