DECOLONIZING MOBILITY IN THE POSTWAR TRANSPACIFIC

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation investigates the cultural history of mobility as portrayed in post-World War II literature and philosophy across the Pacific, with a focus on modern Korea. Shaped by and servicing militarization and economic dispossession in the Pacific, mobility categorizes people according to their abilities into distant populations for use and disuse. This dissertation argues that the deployment of a speculative genre of writing in the Pacific offers a tool for understanding mobility’s effects and possibilities. A more collective understanding of mobility, one less centered on individual abilities, emerges from such a focus, to propose decolonial futures against militarization’s rigid categorizations of social life and ability in the Pacific.

The main contribution of this dissertation is decolonial understandings of mobility to the fields of Korean studies, disability studies, and decolonial thought. While mobility has often been understood in the vein of migration and globalization, such an approach tends to naturalize mobility and immobility resulting from the political and material processes of militarization and settler colonialism. This dissertation attends to the understandings of mobility as espoused in conditions of immobilization, which reveals how
visions of decolonization intersect from sites across the Pacific for both migrant and native populations, to overcome the legacies of militarization and settler colonialism without reproducing the stigma of immobility.

Chapter One lays the foundations for a decolonial theory of mobility and offers a theoretical engagement with the critiques of fascism and the philosophy of movement offered by the thinker Takeuchi Yoshimi, in conversation with the works of Frantz Fanon, Ernst Bloch, and Aimé Césaire. Chapter Two examines the archipelagic alliance against colonial fascism in the Pacific in the South Korean author Ch’oe In-Hun’s novel *The Typhoon* (*T’aep’ung*, 1973) which tells a speculative history of the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung and Korea’s reunification. Chapter Three probes the political alliance across (dis)ability, race, and nationality in Anishinaabe thinker Gerald Vizenor’s *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57* (2003) and Korean American poet Cathy Park Hong’s *Dance Revolution: A Poem* (2007). Chapter Four analyzes physical immobility and the absence of affect associated with migrant and indigenous laboring bodies in polluted environments in the South Korean fictions: Kang Yŏngsuk’s *Rina* (*Lina* 2011), Kim Sagwa’s *City of Terror* (*T’erŏŭisi* 2012), and Yun Goŭn’s *Night Travelers* (*Pamŭiyŏhaengjadŭl* 2013).
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract of the Dissertation | ii  
Acknowledgments | iv  

## INTRODUCTION │ Mobility in the Transpacific

0.1 A Transpacific Approach | 1  
0.2 Key Arguments and Methods | 5  
0.3 Debates on Modernity, Coloniality, and Settler Colonialism | 10  
0.4 Thinking Mobility and Disability Across Occupation Lines | 14  
0.5 Chapter Breakdown | 25  
0.6 Conclusion | 30  

## CHAPTER ONE │ Is It Future, or Is It Past? Dialectics as Mobility in

*Takeuchi Yoshimi and Frantz Fanon* | 32  
1.1 Why Takeuchi now? On Asia as Method | 33  
1.2 Dialectical Critique of Fascism: Takeuchi Yoshimi and Ernst Bloch | 35  
1.3 Fascism as Boomerang Effect: Césaire on Enlightenment Humanism’s Coloniality | 44  
1.4 Rethinking Movement with Takeuchi Yoshimi and Frantz Fanon | 47  
1.5 The Decolonial Debate on Fanon’s Dialectics | 55  
1.6 Bandung as Method? | 62  
1.7 Conclusion | 68  

## CHAPTER TWO │ The Transpacific Tempest: Relational Sovereignty and

*Spiritual Sociogenesis in Ch’oe In-Hun’s The Typhoon* | 70
2.1 Introduction to the Historical Context and Ch’oe In-Hun 72
2.2 Speculative Geography as a Tool 75
2.3 Dialectics on the Pacific–Caribbean “Theater” 82
2.4 Colonial Ecology 86
2.5 The Native Woman Question: Triangulation of the Native, the Militarized Arrivant, and the Master 88
2.6 The Disciplinarity of the Colonial Archive 93
2.7 Bringing Invention into Being à la Fanon, Toward Relational Sovereignty 95
2.8 Conclusion 102

CHAPTER THREE │ A Crip Ghost Dance: Survivance and the Poetics of Sabotage in Gerald Vizenor and Cathy Park Hong 105

3.1 Survivance in Gerald Vizenor’s Hiroshima Bugi 108
   3.1.1 Survivance and Perfect Memory 109
   3.1.2 Tactile Ceremonies against Sterilization 116
   3.1.3 Tattoo as Transpacific Writing 119
   3.1.4 Spiritual Motion Beyond Victimhood and “Toxic” Environments 121

3.2 The “Poetics of Sabotage” in Cathy Park Hong’s DDR 125
   3.2.1 Language as Speculative Materializing 126
   3.2.2 Revisiting Kwangju: Towards a Crip “Perfect Memory” 133
   3.2.3 Miming to Maim: On Mines as Plot and Plot as Blueprint 142

3.3 Conclusion 146
CHAPTER FOUR │ Sustainable Destruction and Deadpan Cyborgs:

Debility and Immobility in Speculative Fictions of Disasters

4.1 South Korean Literature in Apocalyptic Times 152

4.2 Disaster, Debility, and the Cyborg Migrant in Rina 157

4.3 Sustainable Destruction, Unsustainable Affect in City of Terror 172

4.4 The Necropolitics of Disaster Tourism in Night Travelers 186

4.5 Conclusion 193

CONCLUSION │ Towards an Ecstatic Present 196

REFERENCES 205
INTRODUCTION
Mobility in the Transpacific

0.1 A Transpacific Approach

This dissertation largely focuses on the literary texts of South Korea but situates their significance in the broader context of the transpacific. In the following chapters, I demonstrate that the impetus for understanding Korea relationally has in fact animated the texts of South Korean authors and that these attempts are likewise echoed and complicated by the literary and philosophical texts situated across the Pacific through shared experiences of militarization.

The material and historical context of these transpacific connections is dense and at times one of contradictions. Today, the Cold War is still palpable in many ways on the Korean peninsula and in the broader Pacific. Korea remains divided by an arbitrary line created under the United States and Soviet dual occupations, and the Korean war has still to end in 2020.\(^1\) Indeed, the threats of a nuclear apocalypse and war periodically play out among the two Koreas and the U.S.\(^2\) Underlying the glaring international headlines about the diplomatic acrobatics between these countries, however, are the surreptitious expansion and installment of military bases on several Pacific islands that already sustain a high concentration of militarization and the resulting ecological devastations (Ossola Dec 27, 2018).

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\(^1\) There is currently a resolution to end the Korean War in the U.S. as we enter the 70\(^{th}\) anniversary of the Korean War, endorsed by representative Ro Khanna.

\(^2\) An example of these circumstances is the crisis surrounding Guam in 2018. In October 2018, North Korea threatened to launch missiles at Guam, a threat that was directed more to the U.S. Government than to the people of Guam. The North Korean state saw Guam as does the U.S. military intelligence, a non-contiguous territory of the United States, both a strategic necessity and now, a liability for the U.S. military hold on the Asia-Pacific.
As pawns of military expansion that undermine the sovereignty of the people of the islands, Pacific islands’ subjugated relationship to the broader politics across the Pacific has rendered them as an essential but overlooked backdrop to territorial claims and threats. Such conditions demonstrate the extent to which militarization and imperialism continue to powerfully and differently affect interlocking populations, lands, and waters as well as the need to examine this dynamic through the lens of relationality among non-contiguous and archipelagic sites under occupation.

The triangulation of conflicting, if not oppositional, interests of East Asian states, Pacific islands, and the “mainland” U.S. in the present is not new, after all. The imperial competition between Japan and the United States during WWII in the Pacific theater rested on the mobilization of colonial populations into their respective war efforts (Fujitani 2011, Ko 2013) and on securing various Pacific islands as strategic outposts. However, this triangulation, more recently fanned by the terms of financial projects such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (2016) and various racial capitalisms carried out by East Asian investors, also erases the long struggles of indigenous peoples of Pacific islands to exercise sovereignty. The erasure of this struggle points to the divisive logic behind militarization of the Pacific, which sets different anticolonial and anti-imperial political struggles against one another. Indeed, migration, when examined for its role within settler colonialism, and with it, the scholarly inquiries on the nature of mobility, have raised questions as to how migration advances the interests of the settler-state. Asian migrants, for example, have played key roles in diffusing the efforts of sovereignty struggles in Hawai‘i, which Dean Itsuji Saranillio (Saranillio 2013, 2018) has poignantly addressed to ask what kind of responsibility and alliances can and should be sought by Asian migrants in such sites.
Networks of antimilitarism and decolonization movements do exist among the occupied territories of the U.S. From Jeju Island to Seongju (where residents have been protesting the U.S. and South Korean plans to install Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) of South Korea, Okinawa of Japan, and Guam, the fates of these occupied sites are as tied up with one another as much as they are simultaneously deemed distant from one another geographically. However, the discontinuous and archipelagic nature of the military network in the Pacific has also meant that the withdrawal of the U.S. military from one site can lead to the intensification of militarization in another. This contracting and expanding dynamic pitches the struggles for demilitarization in these sites against one another, a quite literal manifestation of what the political sociologist Paul Amar has proposed as a metaphorical archipelago between Brazil and Egypt created by the global security industry (Amar 2013).

Addressing this intertwinement of occupation, migration, and political mobilization, this dissertation seeks to contribute to what has cohered as the transpacific inquiry, by investigating speculative refusals of and decolonial responses to occupation’s various conceptions of mobility. Transpacific studies refers to the formation of scholarly attention across Asian/American studies, Pacific studies, and Asian studies. It attends to the space of the Pacific as an object of analysis to better understand militarized modernity (Shigematsu and Camacho 2010, Diaz 2004, Kauanui 2005, Sakai and Yoo 2012, Teaiwa 2005, Saranillio 2013, Diaz and Kauanui 2001). The Pacific becomes a site of major critical inquiry, especially for the kinds of knowledge it produces through the ongoing political

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3 In the case of Okinawa and Guam, the United States plans to transfer 4,000 of 19,000 marines stationed in Okinawa to Guam in 2024–2028 (Kyodo May 14, 2019) while protests over a new military base installation in Okinawa continue (Shorrock Dec 13, 2018).
contestation of military occupations. At the same time, several points of tension have surfaced surrounding the erasure of the Pacific in the larger disciplinary formations. For example, the militaristically sustained economies of East Asian nation-states in the Pacific and the tense triangulation of Asia-Pacific-United States render Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands both vital strategic stations and invisibilized sociopolitical actors in the usage of “Asia-Pacific” as a preferred unit of analysis (Shigematsu and Camacho 2010, Hoskins and Nguyen 2014).

Aimee Bahng and Christine Mok writes in their special issue on the Transpacific in the Journal of Asian American Studies: “Whereas colonial, neocolonial, and neoliberal enterprises rely on imaginaries that configure the Pacific as an emptied expanse primed for military incursion, scientific experimentation, waste dumping, and fantastical projection, this volume advances a decolonial approach to fabulating transpacific futurity” (Mok and Bahng 2017, 5). Building on Bahng’s monograph on speculative fictions and migrant futurity (Bahng 2018), this dissertation addresses the question of transpacific futurity in the decolonial register. Specifically, it asks how one might understand mobility in its decolonial articulations in the transpacific that fabulates such futurity, in conditions of immobilization that accompanies the register of the “mobile” migrant. Recruiting new populations into the embrace of the empire and its subsidiaries, mobilization discourses gesture towards something more than physical relocation—the making of a new subjectivity and a future that such becoming would open. Speculative fictions ahead wrestle with discourses of mobilization at junctures where colonial relations find new grounds, by changing how one understands mobility from such discourses of imperial mobilization.
0.2 Key Arguments and Methods

This dissertation seeks to understand ways of decolonizing knowledge in the persistence of coloniality and militarization in the transpacific. In it, coloniality appears in varying guises as settler colonialism, able-nationalism, fascist-colonial mobilization, and transnational corporate tourist developments. Through analysis of literary and philosophical responses to occupation in the Pacific centering on South Korea, this dissertation argues that speculative fictions redefine mobility against imperialist and corporate mobilizations to lay claim to a decolonial future. By taking a transpacific approach to Korea, I demonstrate that the decolonial future articulated in these fictions makes legible the underexplored affinities between diasporic and indigenous politics and cultures that oftentimes exceed the geographic boundaries of the peninsula. Their shared experiences and themes reveal the multiplicity of military occupation and the simultaneous growth of South Korea as a sub-imperialist force. I demonstrate that speculating otherwise is a key strategy in the critique of conditions of immobility that occupation brings to the dispossessed and disposable populations, a critique that does not reinforce its inner logic of imperialist mobilization. Therefore, speculative thinking, I argue, serves to not only critique existing manifestations of mobility but also espouses alternative articulations of mobility that seek to overcome such conditions.

A theoretical contribution of the dissertation is the distinction between alternative notions of mobility and the mobilizations that enable occupation, the significance of which I contextualize in greater detail in the later section on “Mobility” of this introduction. My analysis shows how, with each mobilization, the literary and philosophical responses to the conditions of life under occupation offer a vision of political movement beyond the state-
level discourses on peace, health, and security. This hinge, where mobilization discourses give way to critical understandings of mobility, is where the “decolonizing” in the title of my dissertation comes into play. Another contribution of the dissertation is the analysis of global coloniality across decolonial thought, transpacific studies, and transnational Korean studies to South-South dialogues, which I elaborate in the “Debates on Modernity, Coloniality, and Settler Colonialism” section of this introduction. My overarching argument, is that speculative fictions provide one set of tools for this decolonizing work and that it requires a specifically transpacific approach to Korean studies, because the content of decolonization, as I show repeatedly in the fictions at the boundaries of Korea, changes significantly when considered from the invisibilized broader Pacific and not (only) for the most visible subjects of the Korean peninsula. Moreover, examining the boundaries of “Korea” enables a better understanding of how modernity “arrives again” for Korea, as Kelly Jeong has examined through class and gender in Korean literary modernity (Jeong 2011), revealing that literary and cultural spaces explore and negotiate contestations over meaning and social belonging.

In choosing speculative fictions, I emphasize the key role of literary texts to imagine otherwise, and not only to represent and criticize an existing social order. Methodologically, this argument appears in the dissertation in the shape of deploying textual analysis and historical treatments of literary texts as objects—both of which methods are more conventional to literary scholarship—up to a point. While not beyond the scope of literary theory, the focal points of much of the analyses in this dissertation are on the nature of decolonial material practices that encompass literature rather than literature’s representation of decolonial material practices. This approach is motivated by
a desire to avoid the entrapments of a representation-oriented approach to texts that fails to attend to the biopolitical questions of our times that drive many of the chosen texts analyzed in this dissertation. Instead, the dissertation engages the analytical frameworks and questions from interdisciplinary constellations—such as transpacific studies, decolonial thought, and transnational Korean studies—to address how and why these texts become useful to understanding decolonial material practices against occupation.

On that note, while Comparative Literature as a field lends itself well to the intermedial and inter-area considerations of “texts” through the issues of World Literature, Distant Reading, and theories of translation (Damrosch and Spivak 2011, Damrosch 2014, Apter 2013, Rafael 2016), the perennial problem of comparativity as a yardstick and the additive approach to conceptualizing the world through the “rest” still characteristic of Comparative Literature replicate, rather than depart from, the networks of power fostered by globalization that the field purports to criticize. Still, as an ever-expanding field, the advantage of Comparative Literature’s methodology also lies in its very self-reflexivity and voracious inclusivity of objects of analysis; to that extent, perhaps this dissertation is as much a piece of Comparative Literature scholarship as any other at the onset of a new decade.

“Speculative” is an expansive term that allows me to include fictions that play with the rules of representing reality but may not necessarily conform to specific rules of the genres of science fiction, dystopian, or utopian fictions. I use speculative to refer to fictions that deliberately use fictionalizing qualities to intervene in an impending future. Aimee Bahng has similarly argued that Asian American speculative fictions on migrants reclaim alternative futurities from a speculative finance, which seeks to grasp and control the global
future (Bahng 2018). Such a speculative form of thinking and writing can be found in other contexts as well, even where speculative fiction is not the keyword in the discussion of the texts. For example, in the context of colonial period Korean literature, Janet Poole showed how visions of the future in colonial Korean literature were unactualized but remained resonant (Poole 2014). As a method of analysis of certain aspects of text/thought rather than a category of literary genre, the “speculative” is deployed in this dissertation to highlight the fact that literary and philosophical texts are actively intervening in and contending with the ongoing and soon-to-be impending futures of economic development and militarization.

Speculative fictions also shed light on the political dimension of embodied experience by probing the possibility rather than the perceived reality of embodiment. I follow Sami Schalk’s observation on the significance of black feminist speculative fictions for an analysis of (dis)ability, race, and gender: “since speculative fiction includes stories in the future, other worlds, altered pasts, and altered periods, this genre can shift, challenge, and play on what readers expect of bodyminds and reveal how such expectations shape definitions of (dis)ability, race, and gender” (Schalk 2018, 18). Taken further, speculative fictions are also useful for thinking about the biopolitical question of how populations are formed in relation to one another and about the changing nature of categorizations themselves. In engaging speculative fictions, I focus on how the speculative events invite different ways of framing and thinking beyond the limits of affective mediatization surrounding “crises.” Especially in the last two chapters of this dissertation, industrial disasters and militarized disablement become representative of a crisis and are countered with tactile and embodied politics born of such “crises.” As Haerin Shin has observed,
there has been a gap between South Korean writers’ more recent response to the call for speculative imagination amidst a relative lack of South Korean science fiction, and South Korea’s emergence as a technologically advanced site in the global imaginary (Shin 2013). Nonetheless, as the new volume on Korean science fiction demonstrates (Park and Park 2019), the scope and topics that have emerged in the longer genealogy of science and speculative fictions in Korean attest to the potentials of these modes of writing and ask how questions of futurity and coloniality continue to be tied up with each other in many of the texts.

I demonstrate that speculative writings about both what could be and what could have been can offer a seemingly implausible yet spirited blueprint towards decolonization, one that imagines social life beyond militarization and its terms of what is possible. The broader argument I make through my analysis of such writings is that we not only gain a greater understanding of Korea through the use of speculative imaginations in these texts, but also, we gain a greater appreciation for how marginalized embodiments most affected by military and economic occupations can take on a central role in articulating the path to a more equal society, one that has overcome colonial legacies and structural inequalities. This is an intervention I make in how we approach literary texts in relation to militarism and representation. The significance of these narratives, I argue, lies in the speculative knowledge they produce towards decolonization, by questioning the logics of occupation often embedded in the very stories one is accustomed to telling.
0.3 Debates on Modernity, Coloniality, and Settler Colonialism

This dissertation engages the transpacific inquiries that are inseparable from questions of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism has become a more visible object of scholarly analysis relatively recently, considering its longer history. Patrick Wolfe’s definition of settler colonialism as a form of colonialism whose aim is to eliminate the native has been important to the analysis of settler colonialism in various global contexts (Wolfe 2006). Lorenzo Veracini has also argued that settler colonialism needs to be distinguished from other forms of colonialism because studies of colonialism and postcolonial theory have insufficiently explained the dynamics and structures of settler colonial societies. What settler colonialism studies as a field has enabled is to put analytical pressure on the dynamics within a settler state that cannot be explained away as features of a postcolonial society. By identifying the biopolitical, legislative, economic, and cultural measures through which a settler colonial state legitimizes its operation on lands and waters gained by elimination of the natives, settler colonialism studies has exposed not past but present stratifications of power in sites such as the U.S., Canada, and Israel. Still, settler colonialism studies have privileged the anglophone examples such as the U.S., Canada, South Africa, and Australia, a tendency indicative of the linguistic divide between English-based scholarship and the “rest” that will need to be overcome. That

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4 Though beyond the scope of this dissertation, engagements with the transpacific have included cultural, social, and economic dimensions of migration between Asia and North and Latin America (Rothwell 2013, Seijas 2014).

5 For Veracini’s argument on the difference in expected roles of the indigenous people in settler colonialism versus other colonialisms, see “Introducing” (Veracini 2011). For Veracini’s argument on the inadequacies of colonial and postcolonial studies approaches to understanding settler colonialism, see Settler Colonialism (Veracini 2010).

6 For example, in the case of the U.S., which had been questionably studied as a “postcolonial” nation-state, an approach that Ella Shohat criticized (Shohat 1992), settler colonialism studies brought to the fore the ongoing nature of U.S. settler colonialism and its ideological investment in seeing the U.S. as a “postcolonial” state.
studies of settler colonialism in East Asia have begun to be carried out by historians and anthropologists (Uchida 2011, Lu 2019) is thus a welcome development in the study of settler colonialism. Yet analyses of indigenous sovereignty, removal of the natives, and settler discourses in epistemic, social, cultural, and political terms of the contemporary moment remain to be seriously engaged in the context of East Asia. One of the key contributions this dissertation seeks to make is to demonstrate that the cultural contexts and political questions of indigenous sovereignty are already here in the speculative fictions on the transpacific about decolonization; learning to feel them, I argue, enables one to trace a map for a decolonial future beyond that outlined by the prism of one’s times.

Scholars of native/indigenous studies across geographies had to break from the disciplinary assumptions of anthropology to vocalize the questions the decolonization of all aspects of life, including knowledge production. Linda Tuhiwai Smith has importantly argued, in the context of the Maori people of New Zealand, that the methods for indigenous people’s sociopolitical work toward sovereignty need to be found beyond disciplinary formations created under settler colonial structures (Smith 2012). Smith’s concern as to what alternative research agendas and forms of knowledge can be produced as part of the political project of indigenous sovereignty is echoed by other scholars (Million 2014, Simpson 2014). The question of decolonizing knowledge formation posed by Smith remains relevant, as the various settler colonial mobilizations of affects and bodies persist.

From the vantage of East Asian studies, the colonial modernity debate and framework from the 1990s remains active in recent scholarship on East Asia. The colonial modernity debate countered several positions in its emergence in the 1990s: i) one that colonialism in Asia was largely benign and beneficial; ii) one that saw colonialism as
“interrupting” the emergence of the unique modernity of the colonized place; iii) one that tended to debate which areas of Asia experienced colonialism proper (for example, the questions of mainland China and Thailand as exceptions); iv) one with a nationalist focus that did not fully engage the global scope of modernity. The colonial modernity framework proposes to focus on the temporality of “modernity” as in some sense always already immersed in the violence of global colonialisms rather than focus on the geographic differences and the presence of formal colonial history. The colonial modernity framework thereby offered an important foundation for scholars of broader Asia and East Asia, especially, to traverse both the transnational and site-specific historiography of modernity. It is distinct from the multiple modernities approach that shares more with position (ii) and tends to modify the experience of modernity in locations other than Europe in a derivative feedback loop. Especially in scholarship on sites with an inter-Asian colonial history such as Korea, colonial modernity became a useful framework to contextualize the violent effects of Korea’s modern history on its culture and politics (Shin and Robinson 1999, Barlow 2012, Barlow 1997, Cho 2012).

This debate echoes the modernity/coloniality framework of decolonial thought, the conceptual frames of which this dissertation uses and to which it contributes the analysis of mobility as a form of coloniality, in addition to transpacific and settler colonialism studies. The modernity/coloniality framework of decolonial thought attends to the need to analyze modernity as fundamentally colonial in structure and content. Still, the key differences between the colonial modernity debate and decolonial thought are that decolonial thought theoretically distinguishes “coloniality” as its object of analysis, as opposed to modernity, and aims for an explicit focus on decolonization as the aim.
Decolonial thought asserts that modernity and coloniality have co-constituted each other from the beginning, with coloniality naming the “darker side of modernity” (Mignolo 2011) that has been covered over by the accomplishments of modernity. This distinction is in part enabled by locating the beginning of European modernity’s emergence in the creation of Latin America and indigeneity in the 15th century. The Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano argues that a new logic of organizing the world, termed “coloniality of power” (Quijano 2007) and the Argentinian feminist philosopher Maria Lugones argues that the “coloniality of gender” (Lugones 2016), emerged through the European colonization of the Americas and shaped every aspect of knowledge formation, power relations, and livelihood, including ontological possibilities through the “coloniality of being” (Maldonado-Torres 2007).

If the ambiguities within the colonial modernity debate in East Asia have opened the debate to the criticism that colonial modernity leaves out aspects of modernity that are not violent (Rogaski 2004). In other words, such a view holds that the colonial modernity debate ought to account for the positive developments achieved in East Asia’s modernity. However, decolonial thought elucidates that the very accomplishments of modernity were enabled by the global systematization of dispossession of land, genocide, and enslavement through “coloniality.” While decolonial thought does not argue for an anti-modern return, it refuses to view modernity as separable from its violent undertakings. What makes decolonial thought’s analytic of “coloniality” useful to the transpacific analysis in this dissertation is the former’s insistence that the coloniality of power continues to operate past

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7 Pushing the frame of reference from the postcolonial theory’s focus on British and French colonialisms of later centuries to the Spanish and Portuguese colonialisms from 15th century also questions the construction of European modernity through the inter-imperial difference between old versus new colonialism (Mignolo 2011, 2005).
the formal end of colonialism. The global scope of this argument also entails the necessity of connecting the centuries of colonialism and enslavement around the globe to one another and to their hold on the present. Finally, decolonization envisions the transformative reordering of the world, that, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith has observed, requires tools and orientations for producing knowledge differently beyond positionalities of immanence and complicity.

0.4 Thinking Mobility and Disability Across Occupation Lines

Mobility, the main theoretical thread throughout this dissertation’s discussions, has been a subject of study in various fields to different ends. While works on mobility are heterogenous in the topics they cover, they cohere around three clusters of understandings: 1) in the most colloquial sense of the term, mobility has been understood as a shorthand for “class mobility,” the permeability of economic classes and a subject or population’s rise through class stratification (Esping-Andersen 1993, O’Brassill-Kulfan 2019); 2) with the intensification of globalization and the emergence of the so-called migration crises, mobility has increasingly been understood as a referent for (often migrant) subjectivities crossing national borders and their movement towards citizenship, human rights, and state protection (Piper 2008, Friedman and Mahdavi 2015, Kim 2011, Ballantyne and Burton 2009); 3) in response to the positivistic understandings of mobility, “mobility justice” discussions have expanded “mobility” to add to the first and second understandings the accounts of social, political, embodied, and affective immobilities that are environmental and infrastructural outcomes (Sheller and Urry 2006, Montegary and White 2015, Sheller 2018); finally, though partially included in the third approach, 4) mobility understood in the context of disability and environmental design led to the discussion of “mobility
disability” as the spatial and environmental barriers to people with impairments, disability, and illnesses, an approach that also understands disability and impairment as describing a broad spectrum of economic and social controls beyond medical diagnosis (Langan 2001, Clarke et al. 2008).

The second cluster of understanding, especially those centering on gendered migration, pushes against the glorification of mobility as an ideal to be achieved. For instance, on the more contemporary transnational migration of Asian women, Youna Kim writes: “the tendency to celebrate transnational mobility is often separated from mundane reality and obscures actual conditions and experiences” and Kim continues: “transnational mobility is endowed with a normative dimension that uncritically valorizes the painful nature of diasporic existence” (Kim 2011, 8-9). Within the longer history of imperialism, the analysis of empires’ global dimension also can uncritically reproduce mobility as “the property of the colonizers, and stasis the preternatural condition of the indigene […] reproducing imperial convictions about self and other,” a situation which results in the impossibility of apprehending “the agency of the indigenous subject” (Ballantyne and Burton 2009, 5-6). In her study on service labor and militarism between empires, Jinkyung Lee offers a succinct note on the theoretical tension between positions that see movement either as a structural symptom or a cause for celebration as subjective freedom, encapsulated by Paul Virilio’s mobilization versus Arjun Appadurai’s mobility: “[Virilio’s notion of mobilization] tends to underscore the governing forces without giving due consideration to the agency of those who are mobilized, while [Appadurai’s notion of transnational mobility] seems reluctant to investigate the new and varied strictures placed on the globalized proletariat” (Lee 2010b, 34). More recently, the sociologist Hae Yeon
Choo has analyzed mobility through migrants in contemporary South Korea, criticizing gendered and racialized dimensions of economic migration that grant mobility “without dignity” to women migrants (Choo 2016). This cluster of scholarship argues that one needs to consider more a given movement’s socio-political significance for the populations that are characterized as mobile.

The approaches to mobility outlined above consider the limit of mobility’s explanatory power when one understands mobility as a solely liberating or oppressive force of globalization, which leaves out accounts of subjective experience of those who “are” mobile or who “acquire” mobility. Thinking through subjective multiplicities in this way reveals the complexity of experience and gives mobility a more recognizably human explanation. At the same time, as the literary texts I examine ahead question, who counts as human and why the category of the human is invoked is itself a reflection of relations of power in a given site. In this regard, Sylvia Wynter had cogently argued that the genealogy of the “human” in modernity is an overrepresentation of the “Man” of European secular humanism and must be questioned accordingly (Wynter 2003); appeals to humanism made on the ground of diversity of subjective experiences need to also account for the construction of such humanity by coloniality so as not to reinstate “Man.” How to understand mobility more critically, beyond the entrapments of humanism and subject-oriented analysis, can be understood as the necessity of the third cluster of approaches to mobility.

The third cluster takes a more systematic, rather than subject-oriented, approach to the question of mobility, summarized as “an investigation into the governing logics and strategies that control the ways in which bodies move both physically and psychically and
that infuses subjects and populations with particular meanings and capacities” (Montegary and White 2015, 5). Moving away from the analysis of mobility that focuses on subject-bound explanations of movement, the question of mobility cast in this way connects “the micro-mobilities of bodies and body parts, the lived experience of affective attachments, the mass movements of entire populations, and the increasing flexibility of political-economic structures” (Montegary and White 2015, 6). The analytic vein of assemblages derived from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s theorization is useful here to understand mobility beyond the conventional subjective and inter-subjective terms, which asks “not necessarily what assemblages are, but rather, what assemblages do…[they] de-privilege the human body as a discrete organic thing” (Puar 2012, 57) and examines “the patterns of relations—not the entities themselves, but the patterns within which they are arranged with each other” (Puar 2012, 61). The “mobility justice” approach sees “bodies as dynamic ecologies, as assemblages…unstable sites of motility, porosity, and leakage” (Montegary and White 2015, 10) in the context of which movement does not equate with greater freedom, and multiple systems of mobility interlock with one another through bodies, objects, and affects.

Mimi Sheller has more recently analyzed the crises of climate, urbanization, and migration through the question of uneven mobility in her comprehensive monograph on the mobility paradigm, Mobility Justice. Because “mobility and immobility are always connected, relational…not as binary opposites but as dynamic constellations of multiple scales,” for Sheller, “mobility justice is not just about transportation within cities…but also about the smaller micro-mobilities at the bodily scale that are inflected by racial and classed processes, gendered practices, and the social shaping of disabilities and sexualities.”
A key characteristic of this approach to mobility is that it makes a material turn, to pursue “a critical approach to infrastructure space and the planetary geographies of uneven mobilities,” one in which a call for mobility justice can encompass multiple social justice movements and theories to challenge “the narratives, representations, and legitimations of speed, acceleration, and the elite right to movement at all costs” (Sheller 2018, 22). The work of critical disability scholars such as Laurence Parent informs Sheller’s articulation of mobility justice, leading her to argue that critical disability studies can show mobilities researchers “how mobility infrastructures are not only ‘splintered’ between favored elite and disfavored non-elite spaces, but also produce deeply ‘differential mobilities’” (Sheller 2018, 82), following Kim Sawchuk’s formulation describing the creation of “hierarchies of corporeal differences…structured into the built environment” (Sawchuk 2014, 413).

However, in spite of the significance of a critical disability studies approach to understanding the environment in Sheller’s analysis of mobility, Sheller’s analysis still leaves unaddressed the political dimension of where and how disability is situated between the global North and the global South and how coloniality and disability work through each other. This question becomes more apparent in Sheller’s argument that mobility justice is achieved by occupying spaces to demand access to mobility (Sheller 2018, 46, 201), which doesn’t resolve whether such acts of re-occupying overturn or are in the service of forms of settler colonialism’s occupation of “open” spaces. The critical indigenous theorist Sandy Grande, for example, demonstrated how the rhetoric of occupying in the Occupy Wall Street movement elided indigenous people in service of a settler colonial understanding of the public space and resources (Grande 2013). In other words, settler colonialism’s
conceptions of public space as an occupiable and accessible space remains an important problem to address in the analysis of reclaiming mobility by and for whom in which terms. While building on Sheller’s and this third cluster’s approach to mobility as systems of inequality manifested at multiple scales, my dissertation seeks to address the re-articulation of decolonial mobility in the context of occupation, in which the difference of capacitation across the occupation line calls for the need to examine disability as an outcome of military and economic occupations, as argued by Nirmala Erevelles (Erevelles 2011).

The fourth cluster’s arguments on the environmental construction of disability have helped to emphasize the social model of disability against the predominant medical model of disability, which is based on medical diagnosis. In her analysis of mobility disability, Celeste Langan extends mobility disability beyond the subjects with disability using wheelchairs to “all those whose mobility is affected by external constraints,” questioning “how the built environment—social practices and material infrastructures—can create mobility disabilities that diminish the difference between the ‘cripple’ and the ambulatory person who may well wish to move” (Langan 2001, 459). Langan questions how the built environment, such as the highway, creates “norms of speed” in modernity that subjects those not of the right speed to mobility disability: “only such a stratified transportation system, ironically, seems to guarantee that mobility will be felt as freedom” (Langan 2001, 463). In addition to Langan’s point that the built environment creates conditions of mobility disability, one might also consider the inherent relationship between movement itself and the environment, in which the environment is the necessary condition for conceptualizing and measuring spatial movement. Speculative fictions of occupation offer rethinking of movement from these measures as known geographies are challenged and altered.
Langan’s question of mobility disability caused by the built environment can be extended to the transpacific’s line of division created under occupation. To that end, Chapter Four uses the figure of the cyborg to examine global division of labor and debility, building on the work of Jasbir Puar on debility, disability, and occupation (Puar 2017). The cyborg, Donna Haraway’s much circulated feminist socialist text “The Cyborg Manifesto” (Haraway 2000) is a useful linchpin to think about the problems of im/mobility, disability, and the perversions of Cold War developmentalism in the transpacific, because it has received critical attention from crip theorists in disability studies. Some disability scholars and activists have reclaimed the pejorative term “crip” to theorize the potentials of and desires for the non-normative bodymind, a term used to overcome the Cartesian dualism of mind versus body (McRuer 2006, Kafer 2013, Ray and Sibara 2017). Pointing to the tendency in Haraway’s text and the reception of the cyborg in feminist literature to equate the figure of the cyborg with people with disability using assistive technology as inherently “cyborg,” crip theorists have criticized the popular and academic fixations on the cyborg’s hyper-abilities gained from her use of mostly expensive and painful technologies, for these fixations overlook the fact that the vast majority of people with disability cannot use such inventions and end up reiterating the societal correctives imposed on people with disability (Kafer 2013, Mitchell and Snyder 2015). Indeed, Kafer points out that the concept of the cyborg—cybernetic organism—was invented in the Cold War space race, with close ties to the medical experimentation on institutionalized patients with cognitive disabilities and illnesses at Rockland (Kafer 2013, 126-7). The proximity of the cyborg to the brutal institutionalization of people with disability illustrates the gap between the high-tech capital and what it is meant to ameliorate: the people with disability, not the environment
designed to exclude them. Thus crip theorists have argued that the valorization of technology without assessing its financial inaccessibility proliferates in the cyborg discourse and reinforces the myth of the select high-functioning super-crip that “redeems” the rest of the disabled population. Consequently, it flattens disability into ontological conditions (status) and erases the politics of disability, which consists of multiple negotiations and desires (process).

However, the critique of inaccessibility at large and the high-tech Cold War dream of the cyborg and its capital, might be closer to each other when considering the question of the global division of labor and the bodily and environmental differences created across lines of occupation. In this sense, both the promise of hyper-abilities and the liberal strain within disability rights’ demand for access structurally leave aside the real and prevalent fate of the unskilled women workers of the global South—one of Haraway’s cyborg figure, for example, is the 1960s South Korean woman factory worker—and the politics that emerges from debilitating labor conditions. The exhaustive labor they perform materializes the global capitalist circuit to which access is demanded. Access perhaps need not be a liberal construct that naturalizes its objects, such as services, spaces, and goods. Creating Collective Access (CCA), for instance, proposes collective access as a way for crip-femme-of-color to organize and provide care for one another: “Collective Access is access that we intentionally create collectively, instead of individually. Most of the time, access is placed on the individual who needs it…Access is a constant process that doesn’t stop” (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018, 47-48). The writer, activist, and performance artist Leah Kashmi Piepzna-Samarasinha describes such an organizational model as challenging persistent assumptions about space, time, and the meaning of access in able-bodied activist care.
networks: “[emergency-response care webs of able-bodied activist communities] have a lot to learn from disability justice models of centering sustainability, slowness, and building for the long haul” (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018, 53). Radical practices of collective access nonetheless require thinking about how access to space, resources, and time is tied up with how neoliberal capitalism and ongoing (settler) colonialism create the very objects of access that are possible (Meekosha 2011) as well as indefinitely delaying access itself.

Approaching disability as a social—how is social life premised on an underlining ableism that absents non-normative bodyminds and desires?—and environmental—how are spaces designed to exclude and dispossess bodies with different capacities?—construct has been a significant intervention of disability studies in relying on medical diagnosis and impairment to define and understand disability (Oliver 1990, Charlton 1998). Through these approaches, disability scholars have challenged the pathologization of populations with disability. Highlighting the co-construction of disability and ableism in the social and environmental design indeed brings out disability politics’ radical potential: going beyond representational inclusion of select disabled bodies towards a questioning of the relation of the body to itself and to its surroundings (Ray and Sibara 2017). Yet, discussions on disability and environment tend to focus on disability’s relation to the environment as a subjective struggle against the ableist spatial constructs (Gleeson 1999), leading to validating opportunities to change one’s environment to accommodate one’s needs (Moss and Dyck 1996) as a form of liberation. However, emphasizing the dynamic of vulnerability and mutuality formed in the space between where one’s skin ends, and the environment begins is limited in what it can offer. Even as posthuman environmental ethics asks that the “polluter pays” (Alaimo 2010, 14), it doesn’t readily offer tools and

The speculative fictions that this dissertation examines present, then, an impasse: environments under economic and military occupations foster disability and illness, in which neither posthuman environmental ethics nor subjective struggle against the disabling environment are in and of themselves liberatory. Rather, the melding of human bodies with the environment should be understood as a process of material disintegration, a process that parallels more visible forms of mobilization for integration into the global economy. This invisibilized disintegration materially provides for the very liberal public space and services to which disability politics may seek access. This raises the question of how the environment enables some bodies while disabling others on the global scale through occupations, and the difficulty of using the language of occupying as a way to reclaim “public” spaces in settler colonial contexts, as I have articulated in relation to Sheller’s arguments. At the same time, such a process of disintegration also demands an analysis of how disability does not necessarily exist as an ontological category of the individual body at odds with the environment. Significantly, Jasbir Puar has contributed an understanding of debility as marking the very boundary of what is and is not cognized as disability in the biopolitics of settler colonial occupation, for which:

Neither accidental nor necessarily cast as unfortunate, debilitation is not a by-product of social injustice and inequity. More trenchantly, it is constitutive of the very mechanisms that enable certain populations to occupy the “make live” vector…and to imagine disability as something that one acquires inevitably rather than something that is unevenly endemic to the quotidian realities of poverty, permanent war, racism, imperialism, and colonialism. Debilitation is required because the debilitation of bodies
is, in part, how these populations come to be populations as such in the first place. (Puar 2017, 69)

Following Puar’s remapping of disability, as a continuum between debilitation as bio/necro-politics, this dissertation shows how the debilitated body’s relation to the environment might be, problematically, one of becoming continuous with the environment through immobilization in these speculative fictions.

The question of how populations come to be through the premise of debilitation of some, presses more firmly in times of disaster and perceived crisis. This is because disasters render exceptional its effects while also amplifying existing structural problems. For example, the understudied intersection of disability and disaster in social science and policy scholarship reveals that the populations with disability are often most severely impacted by disasters (Chakraborty, Grineski, and Collins 2019) and argue that therefore their needs must be reflected in the ensuing reconstruction process to build a more inclusive environment (Priestley and Hemingway 2007). This approach acknowledges the problem that, in cases of post-disaster reconstruction that is disability-inclusive, reconstruction caters more to tourists with disability than the locals with disability. Furthermore, the overlap between disability-integrated disaster recovery programs in the U.S. and the disaster capitalism of the war on terror, arising from disaster-preparedness programs set in place after 9/11, reveals how disasters are the visible instances of debilitation and its role in capitalist expansions and geopolitical violence. The literatures on disability and disaster

8 The disaster-preparedness, disability accommodation, and securitization here coincide with pre-emption, perhaps paired with the logic of letting disasters happen, which I explore in Chapter Four. Explaining why the U.S. response to Hurricane Katrina (2005) better integrated disability concerns than that in tsunami-impacted South Asia (2004), Mark Priestley and Laura Hemingway describe the connection between disability emergency preparedness and national security in the following: “Reactions to the 9-11 attacks on the World Trade Centre provided a further catalyst for preparedness activity, in the establishment of the National Organization on Disability’s Emergency Preparedness Initiative and the National Center on Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities. More recently, in July 2004, the U.S. Government
operate with the assumption that a population already “has” a disability prior to the event of a disaster and needs to be accounted for in the reconstruction phase. However, disaster can include within it the longer disablement resulting from prolonged displacement and labor that renders the body more moldable to an industrially polluted environment. Especially in industrially and militaristically productive sites, disasters are inexpensive to manage because letting industrial and climate “disasters” happen costs less than to fix root problems. Moreover, it is also profitable, generating value and matter different from that gained from normatively healthy bodies. The procedural harvesting of docile bodies proximate to and hyper-permeable to the environment in these instances therefore complicates the questions “how do certain environments cause certain illnesses/disabilities? (causality)” and “how are certain environments inaccessible to certain bodies with illnesses/disabilities? (accessibility)” in these discourses. Disability therefore mediates the very boundary between bodies and environments, rendering spatial access and integration also a co-constitutive imposition of its cost of disintegration, such as immobility, elsewhere.

0.5 Chapter Breakdown

The dissertation is organized as four case studies concerning speculative thinking and mobility. On the logic that threads the sprawling chapters of this dissertation: the first two chapters analyze postwar texts that sought to counter the persistent harms of wartime military mobilization on the colonized body in the Pacific and the Caribbean regions, while the last two chapters extend these concerns to contemporary articulations on decolonizing the body politic of gender, sexuality, race, and disability. The concerns of modernity,
coloniality, and Pan-Asianism that Chapter One explores reappear in Chapter Two in the speculative transpacific imagination inspired by the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia 1955; Chapter Two’s concluding vision of transpacific becoming through an indigenous-*arrivant* coalition in the 1970s finds a stranger articulation of occupation immobility and a disability-centered notion of political mobility in Chapter Three, through the 2000s texts on diaspora and transnational indigenous politics. Finally, the politics of immobility examined in Chapter Three is put to the test in Chapter Four, which examines how the necropolitical calculations take an ever more perverse turn, resulting in the immobilization and debilitation of migrant and native workers in 2000s-2010s South Korean speculative fictions, in which settler colonialism and militarized developments parade as global tourism and NGO aid economy.

Chapter One, “Is It Future, or Is It Past? Dialectics as Mobility in Takeuchi Yoshimi and Frantz Fanon,” lays the foundations for a decolonial theory of mobility that the remaining chapters develop in other directions and contexts. The chapter is a theoretical engagement with the critiques of fascism and the philosophy of movement offered by the thinker Takeuchi Yoshimi, in conversation with the works of Frantz Fanon, Ernst Bloch, and Aimé Césaire. I approach G. W. F. Hegel’s master-slave dialectic as a theory of movement that finds stranger versions of itself in the writings of these thinkers, paying attention to the use of dialectics in their analyses of modernity and decolonization from their respective contexts and sites. Takeuchi Yoshimi, a Marxist sinologist, and Ernst Bloch, the Marxist philosopher of critical utopia, offered internal criticism of the lack of

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9 This dissertation presents the East Asian writers’ names with their surnames first, as is customary in East Asia. I.e., Takeuchi (surname) Yoshimi (first name). All Korean names and words in the dissertation follow the McCune–Reischauer romanization system. I have translated from Korean to English all direct citations of Korean language texts in this dissertation, including primary literary texts and secondary scholarship.
imagination and critical consciousness that contributed to fascist mobilization in Japan and Germany; this chapter puts their theory of movement in conversation with the decolonial engagements with dialectical movement towards decolonization in the works of Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire. From this engagement, I argue that becoming in the resulting theory of mobility is a key dialectical component of decolonization (beyond recognition, explored in greater detail in the chapter), and that decolonial movement needs to be understood as transversal and inwards rather than progressive movement outwards, as is often assumed in the notion of an “actional” subject of decolonization. A version of this chapter has been published in the journal Bandung: The Journal of the Global South, in a special issue I co-edited with Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Mireille Fanon-Mendès-France, and Zandisiwe Radebe.

Chapter Two, “The Transpacific Tempest: Spiritual Sociogenesis and Relational Sovereignty in Ch’oe In-Hun’s The Typhoon,” examines the archipelagic alliance against colonial fascism in the Pacific in Ch’oe In-Hun’s novel The Typhoon (South Korea 1973) which tells a speculative history of the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung and Korea’s reunification. Building on the notion of becoming as decolonial mobility developed in Chapter One, this chapter argues that transpacific becoming in The Typhoon revolves around two elements: “spiritual sociogenesis,” which I use to describe the process of creating new “descriptive statements” of the human (Wynter 2001) by inscribing spiritual significance in sociogenic codes of occupation; and “relational sovereignty,” which I use to emphasize the necessity of understanding sovereignty as dependent on the decolonization and sovereignty of all indigenous populations in occupied lands and waters, an expanded vision of the Bandung conference. This chapter engages the literary debate on
William Shakespeare’s original play *The Tempest* and its colonial hermeneutics of indigeneity, colonization, and discovery. It also reads Ch’oe’s novel alongside another notable adaptation, Aimé Césaire’s *A Tempest* to reiterate my argument in Chapter One on decolonial dialectics as not linear progressive but transversal and zigzag. The chapter contributes a transpacific reading of an important literary figure in modern Korean literature as well as the role of speculative thinking in turning colonial-fascist mobilization into a movement towards decolonization. A version of this chapter has been published in the journal *Cultural Dynamics* in the special issue “Militarizing the Global South” edited by Renée Michelle Ragin and Giulia Ricco.

Chapter Three, “A Crip Ghost Dance: Survivance and Poetics of Sabotage in Gerald Vizenor and Cathy Park Hong,” examines the political alliance across (dis)ability, race, and nationality in Anishinaabe thinker Gerald Vizenor’s *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57* and Korean American poet Cathy Park Hong’s *Dance Revolution: A Poem*. Tied together by their respective themes of decolonial dance, these two fictions traverse sites across the Pacific such as Hiroshima, the White Earth reservation, Kwangju, and a speculative Desert settler tourist compound. I argue that these fictions criticize the position of victimhood that national memorialization forces on populations disabled by military and settler occupations. However, instead of seeking to represent more accurately through visual documentation, these fictions deploy survivance and a poetics of sabotage as a way of mobilizing with disability against settler colonialism and imperial militarisms, explored in tactile, spiritual, and poetic creations. The chapter bridges the oppositional nature of diasporic and native positionalities in transpacific studies by probing how conditions of immobilization shape and transform the shared speculative futures on sites of occupation.
Chapter Four, “Sustainable Destruction and Deadpan Cyborgs: Debility and Immobility in Speculative Fictions of Disasters,” analyzes physical immobility and the absence of affect associated with migrant and indigenous laboring bodies in polluted environments. Bringing the dynamic of the diasporic and native populations under occupation from across the Pacific to the boundaries of “Korea,” this chapter addresses how questions of gendered migrant labor, debility, and necropolitics saturate South Korea’s domestic and transnational status as a sub-empire in the speculative fictions of the period 2000s-10s: Kang Yŏngsuk’s *Rina* (*Lina* 2011), Kim Sagwa’s *City of Terror* (*T’erŏŭisi* 2012), and Yun Goŏn’s *Night Travelers* (*Pamŭiyŏhaengjadŭl* 2013). It engages materialist concerns in feminist, queer, and disability scholarship on disasters, environmental pollution, and “the cyborg,” to contribute an understanding of immobility at the interstices of South Korea’s sub-imperialism, one that doesn’t neatly fall into a posthuman ethics nor a subject-based politics of social and political recognition. The chapter argues that these scenes of speculative ruins created by East Asian neoliberal capitalism and settler colonialism need to be approached as problems of debilitation and occupation, in which mobilization takes place sub-individually (dividually) through the dissolution of the migrant and native bodies as environmental resources to be redistributed. The politics of immobility, therefore, appears in silent refusals to pass as “human” and in what I describe as a deadpan aesthetics: a deliberate absenting of affects in aid and service economy that commodifies all that one can give and generate, even in rehabilitation. That these fictions’ grim speculations have coincided with the global rise of South Korean economic and cultural powers, I argue, demonstrates the need to decolonize mobility amidst the transnational commodification of occupation labor and resources.
Finally, in “Conclusion,” I reiterate the intersecting arguments of each chapter on mobility and speculative thought and reflect on the significance of rethinking im/mobility in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and quarantine practices.

0.6 Conclusion

This dissertation at large examines how speculative fictions wrestle with discourses of mobilization at junctures where colonial relations find new grounds. Recruiting new populations into the embrace of the empire and its subsidiaries, mobilization discourses gesture towards something more than physical relocation—the making of a new subjectivity and a future that such becoming would open. I find alternatives to such forms of mobilization in speculative fictions and argue that they de-emphasize individual capacities in favor of communal relationality, conversant with the discussions on embodiment and knowledge in decolonial thought, disability studies, and native studies. Such liberatory possibilities emerging from immobilization and forced migration attend to the contexts of indigenous people surviving settler colonialism and of the people disabled and debilitated by the violence of state and capitalist developments.

Situating Korea within the larger Pacific has been instrumental in my project to shed light on the underprivileged sites that highlight the fleeting encounters and collision of interests that take place through migration and militarism. The transpacific framework is particularly important for how the Pacific Islands take on a renewed significance as producers of knowledge amidst the political strife often administered by surrounding continents and their concerns over territorial claims and security. This dissertation contributes to the efforts in Korean studies to understand the colonial legacies in postwar Korea, legacies that I show to be provocatively contested by speculative modes of thinking.
and writing. These dimensions of contemporary Korea, I argue, only become legible when Korea is examined beyond the peninsula, and by decentering its most visible social actors. As South Korea enters the new decade with continued public debate on militarism and social exclusion, so too will Korean studies find in postwar and contemporary speculative fictions warnings and hopes for what is to come.
CHAPTER ONE

Is It Future, or Is It Past?

Dialectics as Mobility in Takeuchi Yoshimi and Frantz Fanon

Real venturing beyond knows and activates the tendency which is inherent in history and which proceeds dialectically. Primarily, everybody lives in the future, because they strive, past things only come later, and as yet genuine present is almost never there at all.

– Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*

In the end, it was never explained what “overcoming modernity” was... It is as elusive as a ghost, yet it disturbs the living.

– Takeuchi Yoshimi, “Overcoming Modernity”

This chapter examines the theorizations of movement within the decolonial and antifascist writings of thinkers that are not often considered together because of the geographic distance between them: Takeuchi Yoshimi and Frantz Fanon, in conversation with Ernst Bloch and Aimé Césaire. Approached as thinkers of futurity and the movements that would bring us there, they together offer useful theoretical tools to distinguish a dialectical movement from the non-dialectical ones in this dissertation’s foray into the critique of colonial forms of mobility and the alternatives to such. Importantly, this chapter pays attention to the geopolitically grounded nature of dialectics in these thinkers’ articulations of a future beyond modernity.

Writing on Pan-Asianism, the Algerian revolution, the Négritude movement, and critical utopias, these thinkers use dialectics to criticize the undialectical nature of political mobilizations they witnessed in their respective contexts spanning the twentieth century. Although they wrote of what were ostensibly the political “failures” of their times, their critiques were motivated by a speculative approach in order to activate a future that has not been entirely foreclosed. A “truly dialectical” movement, as I demonstrate, is found not in the

10 For the development of this chapter, I thank the space of the decoloniality workshop organized by Rafael Vizcaino and its attendants who braved a snowstorm to share their thoughts for their invaluable feedback on an early version of this chapter.
linear progressive tides of political mobilizations but in transversal, zigzag movements. To distinguish the latter amidst the predominance of the former requires speculative modes of thinking and writing that searched for the future in the present, and vice versa. This chapter provides a philosophical ground for understanding mobility as a dialectical movement among critics of colonial fascism. Then the remaining chapters flesh out the content of this formal argument through literary analysis of the points of tension found in the transpacific. As the groundwork for what is ahead, this chapter enquires into a decolonial theory of mobility and the rich thinking on decolonial movement that sprung from the questions of dialectics.

1.1 Why Takeuchi now? On Asia as Method

A cultural studies scholar and translator of Stuart Hall, Kuan-Hsing Chen, formulates an approach called “Asia as Method” in his monograph of the same title. Inspired by Mizoguchi Yūzō’s essay “China as Method” (1980), Chen’s 2010 formulation is an invocation to scholars situated in Asia to seek out inter-Asian dialogue in lieu of relying on Eurocentric knowledge production and networks as one’s primary interlocutor and mediator. While “the main object of dialogue of Asia as method is local…it is also transborder, regional, and even intercontinental” (Chen 2010, 255). Most importantly, Chen understands Asia as Method to be a practice geared towards the self-transformation of “Asia”:

Its core theoretical and political agenda is to transform our subjectivities. Through imaginings of a new Asia and a new third world, diverse frames of reference cross our horizon, multiply our perspectives, and enrich our subjectivity. It is here that decolonization, deimperialization, and de-cold war—as one and the same movement—can begin to locate concrete methods for self-transformation. Asia as method is not a slogan but a practice. (Chen 2010, 255)

For Chen, as for decolonial thinkers like Walter Mignolo, decolonization is not simply “a struggle for national independence but a struggle against any form of colonization,” a task
that continues to remain a major one in the waves of neocolonialism, neoimperialism and globalization which Chen sees as “structural continuations and extensions of colonialism” (Chen 2010, 112).

One important task of decolonization today for Chen is to similarly “delink”—as Mignolo would say, though Chen does not refer to Mignolo’s concept of delinking explicitly—from dominant knowledge productions. Indeed, Chen observes that the East Asia-situated academics’ inability to properly engage with the interventions of Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Ashis Nandy is a symptom of “the neocolonial structure” that forces these intellectuals to “identify with the intellectual formulations coming from the imperial centers” (Chen 2010, 67). Asia as method encompasses then the decolonization of not only the state but also epistemic structures. In this sense, Chen situates his project as an alternative to both the impasse of postcolonial critique and to globalization studies, which he finds uncritical in its “shorter memories” (Chen 2010, 2). In Chen’s view, postcolonial critique has remained within the limits of colonial history despite its obsessive critique of the West, in Chen’s view, while globalization studies without deimperialization uncritically promotes the “reproduction of imperial conquest” (Chen 2010, 2). Chen argues that the turn toward Asia should multiply the objects of identification for critical studies of colonialism and globalization.

In outlining Asia as Method, Chen finds his formulation to be more indebted to Mizoguchi Yūzō than to Takeuchi Yoshimi, although Takeuchi originated the concept of “Asia as Method” in 1960. Mizoguchi’s version adapted Takeuchi’s lecture with critical updates for the 1980s Japanese audience as “China as Method.” Chen’s preference for Mizoguchi appears to be in part because of the bombastic nature of Takeuchi’s argument,
which concludes that “Japan is nothing.”  

Returning to Takeuchi Yoshimi’s rather enigmatic and flamboyant lecture, however, reveals important theoretical ponderings on movement and dialectics that are pertinent to this dissertation’s discussions of decolonial mobility. Tracing Chen’s invocation of “Asia as Method” back to Takeuchi’s original postwar reflection, I illustrate ahead the relevance of Takeuchi’s thoughts on fascist mobilization and modernity, with other interlocutors of dialectics in sites outside of “Asia,” to ultimately reframe “Asia as Method” to “Bandung as Method” at the end of the chapter.

1.2 Dialectical Critique of Fascism: Takeuchi Yoshimi and Ernst Bloch

From the standpoint of reason, it is self-evident that imperialism cannot be overturned by imperialism

– Takeuchi Yoshimi, “Overcoming Modernity”

One of the leading intellectuals of the postwar period in Japan, Takeuchi Yoshimi dedicated much effort to identifying the nature of modernity vis-à-vis the project of Pan-Asianism. In his trajectory as a Marxist sinologist, Takeuchi spent several years in China in his early twenties. After proclaiming his support for the Greater East Asian War, he was drafted and stationed in China in 1943 until the war’s end in 1945. He felt conflicted between his sympathies for Chinese people and culture and his role within the imperial army. Using China as a parallel, Takeuchi’s postwar writings focus on the relationship between Japanese philosophy and imperial politics. Through Takeuchi’s analysis, one can glimpse the role of the mobilized imperial subjectivity in Japan’s modernity and what he

11 Although this dissertation does not engage Mizoguchi’s work, Kuan-Hsing Chen describes Mizoguchi’s criticism of Takeuchi in the following way: Takeuchi’s work argued against Tsuda Sōkichi’s Eurocentric modernism which saw China as lacking in comparison to Europe. However, Mizoguchi claims that, in the process of making a case on how China presents a model of resistance against Europe in contrast to Japan, Takeuchi reverses the narrative only to maintain the epistemological structure of Tsuda Sōkichi in making Europe the central referent (Chen 2010, 247).
believes to be a properly dialectical course to resolve the problems that modernity posed for Japan.

Takeuchi argued that it was imperative for postwar Japanese people to critically engage with the aporia of modernity and Japan’s wartime aggressions in postwar Japan. One such aporia of Japanese wartime colonial fascism was the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. A part of Japan’s imperial project of “uniting” East Asians under the auspices of warding off Western imperialism, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was used to justify the Japanese occupation of other Asian regions and recruitment of soldiers, laborers, and “comfort women” (the sexual enslavement of colonized women to service soldiers) from the colonies in the 1930s to mid-1940s. Takeuchi believed that the wartime mobilization of the metropolitan and colonial population under the auspices of the Sphere accentuated the problem of modernity in Japan rather than “overcoming” it as promised by the Sphere and various intellectuals. This failure led Takeuchi to examine the nature of modernity in Japan through Japan’s relation to not only the West but also to China. As I show ahead, Takeuchi, by “detouring” through China, subverts the logic of imperial Pan-Asianism embedded in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: the logic that Japan ought to lead the rest of Asia, as the most modern state, in order to prevent Western imposition of a more violent modernity on the rest of Asia. Without properly understanding the logical conundrum that the Sphere posed, Takeuchi argued that the postwar intellectuals risked repeating the past based on a continued misunderstanding of what modernity is for Japan.

A diffuse body of thought, Pan-Asianism is traced to China’s defeat in the Opium War and the sense of crisis and solidarity it created among Asian states (Saaler and
Koschmann 2007, 5). Although its earlier variants often had revolutionary discourse that was subjected to state censorship in the early twentieth century, during Japan’s growth as an empire in its successive wars, the Japanese state adopted Pan-Asianism and stripped it of its more subversive content relating to internationalist revolution. Tarnished by this history, for a long time after Japan’s defeat in 1945, Pan-Asianism was “largely ignored by researchers—not to mention politicians and diplomats” (Saaler and Koschmann 2007, 10). It is in this context that Takeuchi argues that the imperial brand of Pan-Asianism presumes that Japan is indeed the most modern of Asian states. Problematically, this presumption leaves intact the question of what modernity really is for Asia. Takeuchi believed that the problem of fascism in Japan arose from this question, symptomatic of Japan’s haphazard attempts at resolving the “problems” of modernity without questioning what modernity truly is for the “East.”

Takeuchi’s understanding of modernity deploys dialectics to map the different positions of the West and China in relation to Japan. On the one hand, as imperial Pan-Asianism averred, modernity was the West’s domination of the East resulting in a struggle between the West and the rest. On the other hand, modernity looked altogether different when viewed through the response of China to modernity. Takeuchi used the master–slave dialectics to analyze the contrasting situations of Japan and China and criticized Japan’s facile submission to the West. The dialectics he offers is in part a reference to the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel and in part a reference to the celebrated Chinese writer Lu Xun’s master–slave parable. Takeuchi disagreed with the predominant view that China was underdeveloped in comparison to Japan, instead arguing that China in fact accomplished what Japan could not in pursuing modernity.
Essential to Takeuchi’s reevaluation of the dialectics of modernity is that the dialectical movement cannot be collapsed into a teleological progress of humanism. He argued that, without a negation of modernity through resistance, which might be falsely construed as stasis by “progressives,” there can be no substantial transformation. The master-slave dialectic, which I examine in greater detail in the later sections of this chapter, became an important framework for Takeuchi’s understanding of geopolitics: “Takeuchi saw the outbreak of the Greater East Asian war as developing logically from the master-slave dynamic that had informed East-West relations from the beginning of the modern era” and Japan “simply [accepted] those terms, desiring nothing more than to occupy the position of superiority otherwise reserved for the West” (Calichman 2005, xi). Takeuchi sought, through his altered dialectics, an opening to relationality between the terms of a dialectic, an opening that is also a transformation beyond recognition from another self-consciousness in Hegelian terms (Calichman 2005, 27). The way he gets to this point is through criticism of his contemporaries and Japan’s imperial past, all the while refusing to throw out the baby (Pan-Asianism’s possibilities) with the bath water (imperialist ideologies).

Defeated in World War II and having lost most of its colonies, postwar Japan reconstructed its economy under the military guidance of the U.S., as a relative economic beneficiary, a perpetrator of the aggressions of WWII, and itself a victim of nuclear detonations by the U.S. all at once (Orr 2001). This reconstruction entailed many things both militarily and culturally, key components being the construction of a national identity of peace, and the inclusion of critical amendments in the constitution to eliminate a standing
army, to be replaced with one deployed only for “self-defense.”\(^{12}\) In this context, Takeuchi observed in “Overcoming Modernity” (1957) that one of the key philosophical and political slogans of wartime, “overcoming modernity,” has been “so vilified in the postwar as a symbol of war and fascist ideology that any reference to it must seemingly include the adjective ‘notorious’” (Takeuchi 2005, 104). A symposium of the same title, “Overcoming Modernity,” adjourned in 1941 in Japan, and its proceedings were published in 1942. The expression “overcoming modernity” in the aftermath became both a slogan of this period and also a reference to the contents of this symposium.\(^{13}\) However, although it was a “popular” catchphrase of wartime cultural politics, “a rereading of the symposium now reveals it to be oddly empty of intellectual content, such that one wonders how it could have caused such havoc” (Takeuchi 2005, 104). In fact, it wasn’t even “popular” in the sense that “the people created it” but rather, it was “created by the intelligentsia purely for their own use or consumption” and “the people consumed” the empty slogans (Takeuchi 2005, 103). Still, Takeuchi argues that the exploitation of “overcoming modernity” needs to be separated from the ideas themselves, which have “relative independence...from the systems or institutions that exploit them” (Takeuchi 2005, 110).

If these invocations seem provocative enough, Takeuchi’s conclusion after examining the symposium is simply ironic: “In my view, the real legacy of the “Overcoming Modernity” symposium was not its status as war and fascist ideology. Rather it lies in the fact that the

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\(^{12}\) There has been an ongoing question of the parameters of this self-defense unit. The far-right government of Japan has pushed to remove the postwar amendment on military restriction (Kajimoto and Sieg September 10, 2018), and in 2018, Japan activated its marines for the first time since WWII (Kubo and Kelly April 7, 2018). Chapter Three of the dissertation discusses the problems of this Japan’s self-construction as a nation of peace through transpacific fictions.

\(^{13}\) See Harry Harootunian’s seminal *Overcome by Modernity* for an extensive analysis of this genealogy that sought to address the challenges of modernity. Harootunian argues that many of these intellectuals end up being “overcome by” modernity themselves due to the nature of modernity’s fragmentation and inner contradictions. While this understanding of modernity differs from the one I deploy in this chapter, Harootunian’s analysis reflects on the philosophical response to modernity in interwar Japan (Harootunian 2000).
symposium failed to achieve even this, and that its attempt at intellectual formation resulted in intellectual loss” (Takeuchi 2005, 113). This “loss,” indeed, refers to the fact that people’s understandings of the modernity that needed to be “overcome” differed, but these differences were not clarified. The resulting ambiguity of “overcoming modernity” as a symbol covered over the failure of the symposium to achieve its goal. Problematically, “after the symposium...there were absolutely no attempts at intellectual formation until the defeat. The symposium was without substance, but this...was instrumental in spreading the traces of thought and burying the accompanying sense of emptiness” (Takeuchi 2005, 117). It is this sense of emptiness created by the conditions of modernity and war that Takeuchi calls on leftist intellectuals of postwar Japan to face head on, by addressing Japan’s fascism during the Pacific War (WWII) and identifying within it both its resistance and submission. Moving in the direction of the “soft” utopian Pan-Asianism was one way for Takeuchi to imagine how this vacuum could be grasped again, this time with a motion that could properly flesh out the dialectical relations of modernity and imperialism.

Takeuchi was not alone in criticizing fascist mobilization through a utopian angle in a former axis country. Decades before Takeuchi, the German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch offered in Heritage of Our Times (1935) a class analysis of the rise of fascism in 1930s Germany. Ambiguously belonging to the Frankfurt school of critical theory and left to “[languish] in undeserved obscurity” (Geoghegan 1996, 105), Ernst Bloch was distinct for the utopian dimension in his thought. Considering Bloch and Takeuchi together demonstrates that revisiting fascist mobilization and developing a dialectic different from it is necessary to the projects of the left in sites touched by fascism, and, more extensively, in the global project of decolonization as I engage Fanon and Césaire with Takeuchi in the sections ahead. Bloch’s

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14 I thank Drucilla Cornell and the reading group organized by Rafael Vizcaino for making this engagement of Bloch possible.
view of the left intelligentsia here contributes a larger interrogation of critical theory that cannot offer a project for the future and the proletariat public. In “Saxons without Forests” (1929), Bloch observes how structural adjustments in times of economic devastation are replaced with mythical contents to make enduring them easier: “But many are bettering themselves now, with blond hair, inwardly too. The little man likes to feel noble, that makes up for the lack of something to spread on his bread” (Bloch 1991, 44). The ideological dimension of racial discourse is rooted in economic problems arising from capitalism yet it draws from “older ideologies...a piece of mythical enchantment by the soil” (Bloch 1991, 49) to appease the peasants and proletariat alike. In “Rough Night in Town and Country (1929),” Bloch asserts that, in place of a true “motion” out of capitalist modes of production, fascism takes hold and grabs “falsely” the desires of the masses:

The German fascio is the grim answer of the centre, the precise answer of big business to a crisis which cuts to the quick. The revisionist swindle of the social democrats and its upper house—the democracy of illusions of a people’s state—no longer cut any ice with the masses. So capital, under extreme threat, resorts to a new deception, a mythical one, and gives rewards to all ‘non-contemporaneous’ stocks...all the contradictions of individual and collective...of being a cog, being a hero and state dictatorship at one and the same time. Precisely these ancient forms distinguish the proletariat and proletarianized elements superbly...This is a strange, a disastrous circle: precisely the capitalist factory dams up ‘soul,’ and it seeks to flow away, indeed to explode against dreariness and dehumanization; but precisely, vulgar Marxism, which employees first encounter and which is actually not that rare, cordons off their ‘soul’ for them again, even theoretically, and thus drives them back to a reactionary ‘idealism.’ (Bloch 1991, 52-53)

It was not the proletariat’s lack of class consciousness, Bloch observes, but the “non-contemporaneous” desires of the unconscious as a force that needed to be reckoned with and fostered towards revolution. The success of fascist mobilization, even for its contradictory messaging and lack of any real economic solutions to the proletariat, lies in the way it tapped into these non-contemporaneities, and also the failure of the left to sufficiently attend to the problem of political mobility and the spiritual needs that underlie the utopian dimension of everyday life that “lives in the future.” In a striking analysis that is still relevant today, Bloch and Takeuchi overlap in their critique of the left intelligentsia for effectively enabling fascism
to take hold of the proletariat’s need for meaning created by capitalism and neglected by leftist classism and idealism. Fascism’s appropriation of the pastoral and mythical imagery of the blood-and-soil politically and affectively mobilized the German proletariat’s wish to live in a future beyond capitalism, a future found in the past. The left’s failure to offer any rivaling anti-capitalist mythical image and a utopian political project that could speak to the proletariat also coincided with its failure to demonstrate the emptiness of the fascist promise to end the proletariat’s exploitation.

Rather than something simplistic or false to be dismissed, fascism for Bloch was thus “a complex, contradictory phenomenon, in which there was light and shade, hope and despair” (Geoghegan 1996, 105). Because “fascism, unlike vulgar Marxism, understood the potency and ubiquity of dreaming, and moved with adroitness in this terrain” (Geoghegan 1996, 105), Bloch’s suggested solution was that Marxism carry out a “multi-layered dialectic” that could better take hold of the non-contemporaneous contradictions of “future-in-the-past,” the move of fascism to animate the romantic dreams of a pastoral and “pagan” past to distract the proletariat from problems originating from capitalist modes of production. Rather than combatting the utopian dimensions of fascism with an anti-utopian, positivist realism, Bloch argued that “utopian yearnings were to be found across social classes and in diverse cultural forms” and thus “a new ‘totality’ has to be created which can release all the trapped potential of past and present moments” (Geoghegan 1996, 123). For this, Bloch argues that “a multi-temporal and multi-spatial dialectic, the polyrhythmics and the counterpoint of such a dialectic are thus precisely the instrument of the mastered final stage of totality (cited in Geoghegan, 123)” (Bloch 1991, 115). Bloch’s critique of fascism thus leads to this different, revolutionary form of dialectics, one that
can attend to the utopian needs of the proletariat to leave behind a capitalist system, a point at which Takeuchi also coincides with Bloch, albeit through the Japanese context.

One important use of Bloch’s critical utopia is found in José Esteban Muñoz’s *Cruising Utopia* (2009), which develops Bloch’s temporality into queer visions of utopia as a mode of critique of the present. If Muñoz’s primary intervention is in the pragmatic, anti-relational, and anti-futural strands of queer studies, to argue for a queer utopianism that “highlights renewed investment in social theory (one that calls on not only relationality but also futurity)” (Muñoz 2009, 10), Muñoz’s theorization of queerness’s ecstatic temporality is useful here in thinking about the unique way in which the thinkers examined in this chapter refuse to equate dialectic with the linear movement of progress. By phenomenologically questioning a heterosexual temporality, such ecstatic temporality brings into view “another understanding of what matters,” at times a dialectic that manifests as a temporality of waiting that results from being “cast out of straight time’s rhythm” (Muñoz 2009, 182). Such polyrhythmic ecstasy suggested by Muñoz is an ex-stasis, according to Mel Chen, a lively and ephemeral stasis that has within it elements of the future. It might include intimacy formed from waiting for a state of being, such as pain and paralysis, to pass, for example (Chen 2012, 203). Far from a detachment from the present, such ex-stasis, cast through queer and disability hermeneutics, combines all three temporal tenses as one stands outside of oneself. Following Muñoz and Chen leads us to understand stasis in more expansive terms and better apprehend that “everyone lives in the future,” as Bloch wrote, even and especially when utopia appears “temporally stalled, forsaken” (Muñoz 2009, 98).
As thinkers of critical utopia in the axis countries of WWII, both Takeuchi and Bloch raised questions on the role of the political left in the operation of fascism. Based on a longer history of imperial difference among competing empires (Mignolo 2011) and a direct product of WWII, the liberal capitalist paradigm tends to exceptionalize fascism and authoritarianism as belonging in an illiberal “elsewhere.” Perhaps without such an alibi and observing from within the contexts of axis countries, Bloch and Takeuchi identify fascism’s emergence in the poverty of utopian thought and critical reflections on mobilization, in a time of economic devastation and imperialist violence.

1.3 Fascism as Boomerang Effect: Césaire on Enlightenment Humanism’s Coloniality

Although Bloch and Takeuchi offer important correctives to understanding fascism and dialectical movement out of capitalism, their insights remain an immanent critique of Marxism. Put differently, they do not provide a critique toward decolonization and what dialectics and utopian projects entail when approached through this imperative. Takeuchi’s theorization of global imperialism and his reflections on Japanese imperialism do touch on the matter, when he claims that “Japan’s “Asian leadership” had to be based on [the principle of Asian decolonization]…but because Japan had itself abandoned this principle, it had no real basis of solidarity with Asia” (Takeuchi 2005, 125). Still, Takeuchi’s dialectic falls short of a more systematic analysis of colonialism. Necessary to this discussion is the Martinican thinker Aimé Césaire’s well known analysis of “the boomerang effect” in

15 The legacy of this binary logic of liberal allied countries versus the fascist axis countries can be found in its more contemporary expansions inspired by the language of axis itself: the U.S.-declared “axis of evil” and the expanded “beyond the axis of evil” situated in the global South (Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Cuba, Libya, Syria).
Discourse on Colonialism (1950). Engaging Césaire here situates Bloch’s and Takeuchi’s critique of the left and of fascism’s emergence in the broader concern of coloniality, though I pursue Césaire’s own master-slave dialectic in greater detail in Chapter Two in the context of the coloniality of The Tempest. Césaire wrote that fascism must be understood as an extension of colonialism and not the other way around. The “boomerang effect,” coined by Césaire, thus describes fascism’s application of biopolitical technologies perfected through colonial experimentation back onto the empire’s metropolitan populations (Césaire 2000, 36). Césaire’s argument that colonialism “dehumanizes” the imperial culture also applies to the liberal humanism inherited from the Enlightenment. Because of this, liberal humanism cannot offer full-fledged visions of freedom to its own populations, let alone to the global colonized populations.

Rather than seeing fascism as an opposition to or as a contradiction within Euro-U.S. Liberal humanism, Césaire saw fascism as rooted in liberal humanism’s deep investment in the colonialist enterprise. If Bloch and Takeuchi understood fascism through the failures of the left to address the struggles of the metropole’s populations, Césaire can be understood here as taking a step further to assert that the humanism proffered by liberalism is a “pseudo-humanism.” This is because a systematic management of the colonized and enslaved populations elsewhere materially sustains the narrow vision of human freedom espoused by such a humanism. Thus, liberalism’s failure to foresee and contest the emergence of fascism in the mid-twentieth century is inevitable, in Césaire’s

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16 Additional to the discussion here, Césaire and Takeuchi both share the concept of decadence appearing as progress (Césaire 2000, 31, Takeuchi 2005, 63).
17 More recently, Achille Mbembe has been recognized for emphasizing this view of fascism and colonialism in “Necropolitics.” Mbembe traces this analysis to Hannah Arendt’s The Origins of Totalitarianism (1951) rather than, or to the exclusion of, Aimé Césaire’s contemporaneous work Discourse on Colonialism (1950) (Mbembé 2003).
view, but for a reason more explicitly stated through the vector of coloniality. Liberalism shares with fascism the deeply entrenched affective and material efforts to keep the colonial hierarchy intact. Put more bluntly, fascism is liberalism by other means, a sentiment that Bloch also described when he wrote:

Capitalism had no other choice than that which it has excellently made with fascism up till now; yet it would certainly prefer old liberalism to romantic ‘anti-capitalism’ (without which business could admittedly no longer be done in Germany). The blood myth, and intoxication as a whole, is not the most desirable servant of capitalist reason. (Bloch 1991, 55)

While for capitalism, liberalism is preferable to a posture of anti-capitalism conveyed by the blood myth, the fascist imaginary takes the place of, not against, liberalism, to preserve capitalism.

If liberalism and fascism constitute a spectrum of political mobilization serving capitalism, then decolonization needs to be approached as a trajectory and modality of movement that exceeds the underlying mobility of the colonized populations towards liberalism and fascism. The questions that Bloch, Takeuchi, and Césaire raise do not pertain only to the metropolitan population and its indoctrination into a continuum between liberalism and fascism. In addition to the political and economic policies and governance, the persistence of the geopolitics of the colonial era lies in the mobility of the formerly colonized populations towards imperialist projects. In this sense, focusing on the binary division of the world in Cold War times covers over the important question of how the colonies were, prior to the emergence of the Cold War structure, subjected to the mobilizing efforts of the World War II liberal-fascist continuum. Implicit in the question

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18 For an analysis of liberalism in relation to settler colonialism, see Elizabeth Povinelli’s corpus (Povinelli 2002, 2011). For analysis of liberalism and fascism in relation to (de)coloniality, see Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s Against War, especially Chapter 1 (Maldonado-Torres 2008).
of decolonizing the mind of the colonized (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o 1986) is that of the nature of the colonized’s mobilization towards imperial war efforts, its afterlife, and the underlying utopian longing for a future beyond the one offered.

1.4 Rethinking Movement with Takeuchi Yoshimi and Frantz Fanon

In the section “Humanism and Despair” of “What is Modernity? (The Case of Japan and China)” (1948), Takeuchi offers a provocative treatment of the dialectics of modernity to evoke the path of liberation. Takeuchi turns to the renowned Chinese writer Lu Xun’s parable “The Wise Man, the Fool, and the Slave,” in which a slave insults the fool who advises him to revolt against his master, but takes the advice of the wise man who tells him to simply fix the master’s broken house. This parable, in Takeuchi’s view, suggest the direction that Japan must seek in order to address the problem of modernity. Takeuchi saw in Lu Xun the significance of China as a locus of enunciation, and he interpreted Lu Xun’s parable as a critique of enlightenment’s humanism; the slave cannot break out of enslavement. Imbued with a didactic notion of progress, enlightenment’s humanism, in his view, presupposes movement flows from ignorance to knowledge. Against humanism’s wish for immediate emancipation through action, Takeuchi argues that emancipation cannot occur immediately.

The point of the parable, he concludes, is that the slave must reject the liberatory path out of enslavement that enlightenment humanism outlines. The notion of progress in humanism takes the existing social conditions as capable of providing for present and future conditions of liberation. It measures progress through the movement from point A to point B, all mapped within a known terrain, rather than recognizing that the terrain itself limits what could be. In their attempt to be progressive, Japanese left intellectuals end up
committing “decadence through being progressive,” in their quick and easy wish to make progress without a transformative self-reflection. However, Takeuchi writes: “Resistance means that [social conditions for liberation] are not given, and so one rejects the fantasy that they could be” (Takeuchi 2005, 72). Without cognizing the limits of enlightenment humanism, Japan cast Lu Xun in its own shadow as a modernist, “distort[ing Lu Xun] (like everything else) into a thinker of progress, a superior enlightenment figure who desperately chased after Europe in trying to improve backwardness” (Takeuchi 2005, 74). Takeuchi posits that the Japanese intellectuals’ reading of Lu Xun vainly seeks progress and salvation in modernity. Instead, one must question what liberation means in enslavement, for without questioning that, the slave seeks subjective liberation by becoming the master who “is a true slave when he thinks that he is not a slave. And he reveals the full extent of his slavishness when he becomes a master, for at that time he subjectively views himself as no longer a slave” (Takeuchi 2005, 72). Liberation must be arrived at dialectically, for without it, the structure remains in place even as circumstantial freedom from enslavement takes place.

At this juncture I will begin to consider Frantz Fanon’s discussion of the master–slave dialectics alongside Takeuchi’s. In Black Skin, White Masks, Fanon discusses the Négritude movement as part of the unfolding Black consciousness. Though he agrees with Jean Paul Sartre’s conclusion that the Négritude movement is a stage within the dialectics, Fanon objects to Sartre’s didacticism, emphasizing that dialectics in Hegel is unpredictable, following an uncharted path (Fanon 2008, 113). Both Takeuchi and Fanon viewed reaction as insufficient to overcoming colonial conditions, though it is still necessary. Applying this insight historically, Takeuchi declares that Japan has lacked this dimension of reaction as
resistance that China displayed in relation to Western imperialism. “The Orient,” in his view, must negate the West through resistance in order to qualify as the negating term of the West in the dialectic of modernity. Because Japan insufficiently negated the West as opposed to China, Takeuchi concludes that Japan amounts to “nothing.” This was a provocative conclusion in light of Japan’s longer imperialist debate: on the one hand was the idea of “leaving behind” the underdeveloped China and Korea to join the West in the infamous *Datsuaron* (Leaving Asia 1885) proposed by Fukuzawa Yukichi, which that led to ideas of demonstrating Japan’s military prowess in Asia to the West; on the other hand, was the idea that Japan is more than “the Orient” but should lead the rest of Asia towards independence from Western powers through the *Daitōakyōeihen* (the aforementioned Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere 1930–45). Asserting that Japan is “nothing,” Takeuchi urged Japanese intellectuals to return to a theoretical query foreclosed by Japan’s imperialist appropriation of Pan-Asianism: a return to the question of modernity and to the Marxist critique of capitalism.

The dialectics of Takeuchi and Fanon suggest the concept of despair as an alternative to enlightenment humanism. Understanding modernity as coloniality leads their dialectics to take a turn different from that in Hegel’s master-slave dialectics, in which the slave, not the master, can actualize themselves. Before proceeding, I offer this review of Hegel’s fabled master-slave dialectics (or “Lordship and Bondage”) in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* for ease of understanding: two self-consciousnesses meet, first as equals who seek “recognition” from each other. What is known as the “Struggle for Life and Death” ensues to earn this recognition, and the self-consciousness that is more fearful of death enters into the position of the “slave” in relation to the other self-consciousness,
who becomes the “master.” However, the master runs into the paradoxical position of
continuing to seek recognition from the slave, who after the struggle for life and death,
does not sufficiently function as a source of recognition. The master-slave dialectics thus
ends by following the self-consciousness of the slave instead of the master; it is the slave
who gains the truer actualization of self-consciousness, by turning away from the master
to work on an object. The labor of the slave allows the slave to reach a self-actualization
that is not accessible to the master. Of course, the section is misleading in the sense that in
Hegel’s text, it involves two self-consciousness’ path to a more fulfilled self-
consciousness, and not “masters” and “slaves” in the historical sense of the terms
(Ciccariello-Maher 2017).

Unlike in Hegel’s dialectics in which the slave emerges self-actualized through
labor on an object, in Takeuchi’s and Fanon’s dialectics, the slave has no object through
which they can be self-actualized. In coloniality, the slave is trapped in the dynamic of
seeking recognition and contesting the master. Fanon has identified such an entrapment as
that which makes the colonial world a Manichean world with binary values. Given the
slave’s entrapment in this relation to the master, Takeuchi argues that it is only in utter
“despair” that the slave might find a real path out of enslavement to transform their reality:

This is the state in which one must follow a path even though there is no path to follow,
or rather, one must follow a path precisely because there is no path to follow. Such a
slave rejects being himself while he rejects being anything else...Despair emerges in
the resistance of following a path when there is no path, while resistance emerges as
the activation of despair. As a state this can be seen as despair, whereas as a movement
it is resistance. There is here no room for humanism to enter [original italics]. (Takeuchi
2005, 71)

In Takeuchi’s formulation, the slave must come to terms with the fact that they are in an
unprecedented predicament of colonization, enslavement, and displacement out of which
there is yet no “known” path. Takeuchi criticizes liberal humanism for creating the illusion of a known course of action towards liberation. Rather, the slave must realize through “despair” that they must endeavor to take a path that does not yet exist. However, despair is also a state, a moment in an enduring movement that he calls “resistance.”

Mediation is central to a true dialectical movement for Takeuchi because movement is activated by the state of despair and requires the mobilized self to not abandon itself, or externalization, in order to change but to engage in mediation to truly transform self. Takeuchi gives an example of *tenkō* to criticize externalization, a superficial movement perceived as progress that in fact lacks dialectical elements. *Tenkō* (轉向 “change of direction,” also *chŏnhyang* in Korean) names the political recantation practices through which many progressive and socialist intellectuals publicly confessed a change of political view. A studied topic especially in colonial Korean culture but also in the postwar political calibrations in Korea, recantation signifies the volatile changes of tide in political regimes and the censorships that shaped the public intellectual consensus of given contexts.\(^\text{19}\) It was at times depicted as a disciplinary turn away from political “economy,” a code word for the historical materialism of socialist intellectuals, to the “philosophy” of the Kyoto School’s overcoming of modernity.\(^\text{20}\) Recantation was a practice through which state projects mobilized intellectuals who had previously dissented, to state ideologies such as anti-communism, colonial developmentalism, imperial Pan-Asianism, and the divinity of

\(^{19}\) For detailed studies on recantation and its shaping of literature, see for example the studies by Chŏng Ch'ang-sŏk and Kim In-Ok (Kim 2002, Chŏng 2015).

\(^{20}\) Striking examples of this “disciplinary turn” as a way to address problems of modernity can be found in the short story “Management (*Kyŏngyŏng*)” by Kim Namch'ŏn. Written and set in the time of the Pacific War and Japan’s colonization of Korea, this 1940 short story features a recanting intellectual who disavows “economy (kyŏngje)” as a field of inquiry to pursue “philosophy (ch'ŏrhak),” choosing to read Hegel and Heidegger instead of Marx and Engels. This reflection on the question of which discipline can best capture the problem of one’s time also reappears in Ch’oe In-Hun’s *The Typhoon* in the 1970s, which I examine in Chapter Two.
the Japanese emperor. As Japan approached the Pacific War, coercive and voluntary recantations took place and individuals confessed that they now subscribed to imperial ideologies. It often involved explanations of how one came to change one’s views and publicly endorse imperialist expansions in the Pacific and war efforts (Bowen-Struyk and Field 2016, Shim 2014).

Takeuchi describes tentō as an outcome of an honor-student culture that assimilates docile intellectuals to serve state projects: “In the superior culture of Japan, one either falls into decadences as an honor student or falls into defeat by rejecting decadence. Tentō invariably takes place when honor students act conscientiously” (Takeuchi 2005, 74). Here, Takeuchi wryly argues that the recantation among progressive intellectuals is not a betrayal of their progressive beliefs, but a practice based on the binary logic of the honor-student culture itself. In it, one is either intellectually decadent—superficially accepting change in the political currents—or defeated. His analysis suggests that recantation practices capitalize on the narrative force of movement between political positions. To return to Lu Xun’s parable, because the slave is reluctant to enter the state of despair, they follow whatever political position becomes efficacious, be it “civil rights” or “evolutionary theory” (Takeuchi 2005, 75), whichever path that is laid out before them.

Contrary to tentō, Takeuchi saw “conversion” as achieving a profound change of self and belief leading to revolutions. He writes:

Conversion may resemble tentō on the outside, but its direction is the reverse. If tentō is a movement toward the outside, conversion is a movement toward the inside. Conversion takes place by preserving the self, whereas tentō occurs by abandoning the self. Conversion is mediated by resistance, whereas tentō is unmediated. (Takeuchi 2005, 75)\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{21}\) On cultural and political distinctions between tentō and conversion, Steven Heine observes that “However, the broad definition of tentō and the way it is distinguished from conversion is not made entirely clear in the Calichman glossary, which defines it more narrowly as "(ideological conversion), the forced recantation of
The self here is the self in coloniality that, confronting one’s enslaved position, cannot be easily abandoned by appropriating fashionable positions (“outward” movements). Entering the state of despair irreconcilably alters all constructions of the self as both slave or master towards an unknown path. Negation in dialectics is significant to counteracting imperial mobilizations such as recantation because negation as resistance mediates the self and ensures that the self is not entirely abandoned. Such mediation is what enables the self to extend the state of despair into a movement of revolution. Rather than seeing despair as the absence of political action, Takeuchi identifies the potential of movement in despair itself. By differentiating the two kinds of movements of the self—recantation as external movement and conversion as internal movement—Takeuchi here envisions a dialectical movement beyond the fascist logic of mobilization. This theorization can be understood as a part of his larger proposal to search for Asia as a “method” through the failures of imperial Pan-Asianism. Takeuchi’s assessment of imperial ideologies gestures towards a need to retrieve the project of Pan-Asianism from its use as a justification of imperial expansions. From despair, Takeuchi suggests that the slave find another path, of remaking knowledge and action. He hoped for an inter-Asian project of overcoming modernity yet again, differently and dialectically by pursuing a path other than the known one of postwar humanism.

political beliefs on the part of Marxist and left-wing writers in the 1930s” (Calichman 2005, 175). The more wide-ranging attack on those who recant not only from a particular ideology because they are all-too-willing to change their view but because they really have no view to hold onto seems to represent the heart of Takeuchi’s critique of Japan and the Japanese in facing the forces of modernization/Westernization past, present, and future” (Heine 2007, 193) This will be an inquiry reserved for expansions of this manuscript in the future.
In Fanon’s theorization of movement too, one can see how despair leads the racialized black to an alternative to colonial mobility. Comparable to Takeuchi’s inter-Asian approach, Fanon points to a horizontality of the movement that despair instantiates. In Fanon’s master–slave dialectics, which I examine in greater detail in the next section with other readings of Fanon’s dialectics, the black subject’s despair comes from the realization of the unaccomplished task of liberation, and more important, from the realization that they neglected the shared subjugation of other black subjects. Nelson Maldonado-Torres argues that Fanon’s dialectics in the Chapter Five of Black Skin, White Masks shows that the colonized black subject’s “negro cry” takes place when the colonized’s vertical relationship to the colonizer based on recognition is interrupted by the horizontal relationship among the colonized. The verticality of despair transforms into the (im)possibility of horizontal love, leading to a determination to act (Maldonado-Torres 2008, 122-59).

This transformation of despair into love intervenes in the structure of colonial mobility. The mobilization of colonial populations seeks to reroute the direction of movement in the master-slave dialectics: it replaces the horizontal relations among the colonized with the vertical recognition gained from the colonizer. Mobilization thus is a crucial component of Fanon’s analysis of how the cry becomes love. The colonized needs to address the ways in which mobilization of the colonized sustains the subjugation of horizontal others within the modern-colonial system of violence; colonial mobility, in the sense of gaining recognition from the existing colonial authorities through demonstration of “usefulness,” draws from the material and environmental subjugation of the “useless” others to immobility. My argument here is that a theory of colonial mobility is central to
Fanon’s thinking. By rewriting the master-slave dialectics into the vertical recognition loop between the Black and the French metropole, Fanon reveals how colonial mobility manages horizontal relations, well into the postwar era struggles to decolonize. Observing the need to rethink the master-slave dialectics in its directionality and content, Takeuchi and Fanon refuse to equate dialectics within a linear progress between the master and slave, but an internal and horizontal turn to transform structures that gives value to mobility in the first place.

1.5 The Decolonial Debate on Fanon’s Dialectics

In this section, I will contextualize the contributions of Fanon and Takeuchi I discussed in the previous section, by outlining some of the stakes in the debate on dialectics in the literature on political theory and decolonization. I turn here to the varied analyses of dialectics and Fanon, Hegel, and Marx in the works of George Ciccariello-Maher, Glen Coulthard, and Kara Keeling. Writing respectively, from political theory, First Nations studies, cinema studies, and Black queer studies, these critics outline some of the significant reasons to understand dialectics as both aligned and dis-aligned with the process of decolonization. These discussions serve to contextualize this chapter’s argument on the decolonial uses of dialectics in the works of Takeuchi and Fanon and to follow Bloch’s lead in speculative thinking, as one that is not (only) relevant but critical to projects of decolonization.

In *Decolonizing Dialectics*, George Ciccariello-Maher characterizes the historical tension between dialectics and decolonization as deriving from the “Eurocentrism and the linear, progressive, determinist, and teleological elements” in Hegel and Marx and their inheritors (Ciccariello-Maher 2017, 2). However, understanding dialectics as “the dynamic
movement of conflictive oppositions,” Ciccariello-Maher argues for the importance of dialectics amidst the “political logics of the present [that] remain curiously trained on unity,” often washing over the contestations of difference within oppositional movements with blasé invocations of inclusion (Ciccariello-Maher 2017, 2-3). Instead, the “spirit of combat” (Ciccariello-Maher 2017, 7) in dialectics better answers the call for negotiating these dynamics than does “unrelated multiplicity” encased in the smooth surfaces of multiculturalism and its inclusion of difference. In the latter, there is no unified ground of totality nor “the ties that bind opposing elements by necessity to one another” that are essential to dialectics (Ciccariello-Maher 2017, 9). He therefore argues for the necessity of dialectics to a decolonial project to avoid recreating a false unity.

However, a necessary radicalization must take place to deploy the dialectical tradition to such ends, and this is where Ciccariello-Maher turns to Frantz Fanon for his use of dialectics against the conservative and Eurocentric takes on Hegel and Marx.22 Ultimately, he argues that this “radicalized dialectical approach…with its combative oppositions and refusal to see divisions subsumed into the whole, is arguably more faithful to the dialectical spirit than even some who gave the approach its name” (Ciccariello-Maher 2017, 13). I share this argument but with a difference: “action” as Ciccariello-Maher defines it, against a metaphorical immobility of the undialectical, need not be cast in such terms. The previous section followed Takeuchi and Fanon in their rewriting of the master-slave dialectics as alternative movement. In the next section, I examine Takeuchi’s

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22 The “conservative” Hegelians, Ciccariello-Maher observes, believe that “the dialectic (and there it is almost always the) is something that happens to us and acts upon us, in which we are enmeshed whether we know it or not, unconsciously doing the grand work of history” (Ciccariello-Maher 2017, 14). By contrast, the radicalized dialectics that Ciccariello-Maher finds in Georges Sorel, Frantz Fanon, and Enrique Dussel located dialectics in the combative praxis of the enslaved and colonized as they face oppression.
dialectics in greater detail, but for now, this will also become clearer as we consider Ciccariello-Maher’s Fanon alongside Glen Coulthard’s and Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s respective Fanons.

Ciccariello-Maher argues that Fanon’s dialectics begins with the observation that the subject racialized as Black is denied reciprocity to engage the world and the other, the very point of departure in Hegelian dialectics of the master and slave is thus denied the Black. Without reciprocity, there is also no space for a combative relation between two consciousnesses, each seeking recognition from the other, which is a key component of the unfolding of the master-slave dialectics in Hegel’s text. This is because the white colonizing gaze on the racialized subject only sees cliché images of Blackness. The necessary struggle that exists in Hegel’s dialectics is thus premised on an equality between the two consciousnesses, an equality that does not exist for the racialized subject of colonialism in Fanon’s dialectics. In the lack of reciprocity and equality to offset a dialectical movement, Fanon declares that Black subjects live in the realm below the ontological realities, the sub-ontological “zone of non-being.” In this zone, dialectics cannot launch itself as Hegel outlines it until the racialized subject identifies the master and externalizes the unsaid violence of colonialism into an object to be worked on, as does the slave in Hegel’s dialectics. Ciccariello-Maher argues that by identifying this sub-ontological realm, Fanon restructures dialectics towards decolonization by positing “the need for predialectical struggle, for a counterontological violence that creates the basis for truly dialectical opposition,” which renders an “untidy dialectic” contra the smoothness of Hegel’s (Ciccariello-Maher 2017, 70-71).
What is interesting in Ciccariello-Maher’s reading of Fanon is that while he observes that Fanon’s dialectics “opens outward onto an unpredictable future” one that, in Fanon’s words at the end of *Black Skin, White Masks*, “show[s] solidarity with humanity provided I can go one step further” (Fanon 2008, 204), Ciccariello-Maher’s reading of Fanon’s dialectics focuses more on the sequence of dialectical confrontation (can the dialectics take place without the requisite predialectical struggle against colonized realities?) rather than the directionality of the dialectical movement (with whom is the dialectical struggle staged?). This latter question in fact is more strongly raised in both Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s and Glen Coulthard’s readings of Fanon.

Coulthard identifies the two poles of the recognition debate in political theory, represented by Charles Taylor’s defense of liberalism, which states the need to expand existing recognition frameworks to include the subaltern and by Nancy Fraser’s view that the recognition framework reduces economic problems of the redistribution of wealth and resources into the problem of culture and representation. Rejecting both poles for their limited explanatory power on the significance of self-affirmation and the role of culture in this affirmation, Coulthard instead follows Fanon’s dialectics, especially in the way that Fanon deals with the problem of recognition, for the question of recognition and sovereignty for First Nations. For aboriginal people, Coulthard argues that what is imperative is not gaining recognition from settler states but the self-affirmation of a community. Therefore, Coulthard reads Fanon’s criticism of Sartre’s “betrayal” of the

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23 Charles Taylor’s “The Politics of Recognition” and Nancy Fraser’s and Axel Honneth’s *Redistribution or Recognition?*, both texts by important figures in the field of political theory, are the texts that Coulthard criticizes (Taylor 1994, Fraser and Honneth 2003). See also Fraser’s earlier argument in “From Redistribution to Recognition?” (Fraser 1995). According to Coulthard, this recognition/redistribution debate was already anticipated by Fanon half a century earlier (Coulthard 2014, 35).
Négritude movement as does Ciccariello-Maher, noting that “in contexts where recognition is conferred without struggle or conflict, this fundamental self-transformation…cannot occur, thus foreclosing the realization of freedom” (Coulthard 2014, 39) which is the aim of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Coulthard observes, moreover:

> the logic informing [the normative dimension of Taylor’s project] – where “recognition” is conceived as something that is ultimately “granted” or “accorded” a subaltern group or entity by a dominant group or entity—prefigures its failure to significantly modify, let alone transcend, the breadth of power at play in colonial relationships. (Coulthard 2014, 30)

The deficiency of this logic leads to the “explicit nonrecognition of the equal status of the colonized population, or with the strategic “domestication” of the terms of recognition” (Coulthard 2014, 40).

At the same time, Coulthard also understands such moments as offering an important message on the recognition paradigm for First Nations people to be gleaned from Fanon: that “Fanon’s call in *Black Skin, White Masks*…[is] a simultaneous turn inward and away from the master…instead reflect[ing] a profound understanding of the complexity involved in contests over recognition in colonial and racialized environments” (Coulthard 2014, 44). Fanon’s dialectics, following Coulthard and Maldonado-Torres, discussed in the previous section, points to not only the necessary combative nature of (settler) colonial relations, as Ciccariello-Maher has rightly argued, but also to the active creation of communities that takes place across the colonized populations in which “microdialectical” oppositions still exist. Rather than the vertical direction of dialectical encounter between the master and slave, dialectics here gestures towards something more in the indeterminate horizontal directionality among slaves that is not necessarily one of the liberal unity that Ciccariello-Maher criticizes nor of the combative violence of predialectics.
Here, returning to the embodied dimension of Fanon’s dialectics illuminates the generative aspect of dialectics as ultimately a movement consisting of questions. On this front, Kara Keeling offers an innovative reading of Fanon through the lens of cinema studies and black queer optics that highlights the temporality of movement in Fanon’s dialectic. Keeling argues that “Fanon’s injunction to introduce invention into existence…is a call for a theory of real movement,” challenging the extant understandings of representation in current theories of visual culture (Keeling 2007, 67). On the final prayer with which Fanon ends BSWM, Keeling separates this voice as “the cinematic Fanon” from the “Hegelian Fanon”:

The final prayer…is an entreaty for a cinematic perception attuned to the appearance of alternatives hidden in the Open. It is a call for a motor tendency on a sensitive nerve of a slave that does not continue a present movement, but instead creates a different future movement: “O my body, make me always a man who questions!” (Keeling 2007, 67)

It is unclear which aspect of Hegelianism Keeling refers to when she contrasts the cinematic Fanon with the Hegelian Fanon, since Fanon argues with Hegel but also makes Hegelian dialectics his own and uses it to argue against Sartre’s dismissal of the Négritude movement. However, the ambiguity of the Hegelian Fanon notwithstanding, the cinematic Fanon that Keeling reads in BSWM is one that creates new “real” movement by freeing the racialized black body from the historically sedimented images of enslavement that make up the “common sense” fostered by the visual culture of white supremacy. As we have seen in Coulthard’s “internally” directed dialectical movement conjured by Fanon, here too in Keeling’s cinematic Fanon is an inward movement à la Takeuchi that rebukes various time-images of the black and their animation into political mobilization of recognition and capture.
However, to understand this injunction for a “real” movement also needs to be paired with the symbolically charged embodied dialectics that appears after Fanon’s earlier “negro cry” in *BSWM*. The transformation of cry into love ends suddenly in a conversation between a de-mobilized white soldier and a black man from the colony discussing their respective “wounds.” This dialogue highlights how Fanon’s phenomenological concerns are centered on the materiality of colonial im/mobilization. The white veteran, disabled from his military mobilization during the Pacific War, advises the able-bodied black man to accept his subjection as did the veteran: “Get used to your color the way I got used to my stump. We are both casualties” (Fanon 2008, 119). This statement acknowledges that the imperial war produced both racialization and disablement, and problematically, the continuum between them as victims. The resignation over shared immobilization activates injury, which focuses on the lost status rather than on the colonization and enslavement behind uneven im/mobility. The equivocation of physical impairment and racialization ultimately overlooks the massive geopolitical production of disablement in the Third World and privileges the Western veteran as the most visible disabled subject produced by war (Erevelles 2011) and recognizable as a “victim.” I revisit this problem in Chapters Three and Four, in the context of disability in postcolonial national memorialization narratives of Japan and South Korea.

The environmental damage and ongoing disablement and illness resulting from military occupation and nuclear testing in the Pacific left by this very war blurs the distinctions between racialized occupation, environmental pollution, and disablement. Rather than viewing disability and race against each other, I understand Fanon here to be analyzing what accepting the veteran’s victimhood in this context signifies in the search
for a decolonial dialectic: leaving intact the structure of mobilization premised on the costs of immobilization to gain the recognition of the state as a disabled victim of war, rather than building a politics of embodiment that differently casts a dialectic against coloniality. Fanon called to create a different kind of movement, as Kara Keeling observed (Keeling 2007) and Takeuchi’s critical revision of Pan-Asianism did.

1.6 Bandung as Method?

If Takeuchi suggestively asked to find “Asia” as a method, and Mizoguchi Yūzō and Kuan-Hsing Chen responded to this call, situating this call in the global debate on coloniality and dialectics with decolonial thought, First Nations studies, and Africana thought further reveal both the limit and potential of “Asia” as a method. Subsuming this call for Asia as a method for a dialectics, what we might consider instead is Bandung as a method for a decolonial dialectics. Just as Takeuchi, Bloch, and Fanon have all sought to find a new model of movement in their critique of imperial Pan-Asianism, fascism’s myth and failures of the left, and the master-slave dialectics, what we find in Bandung is an incomplete and also a failed historical event that retains within itself a potential for a utopian Third World project that was unrealized. For a more fleshed out investigation of where revisiting Bandung may lead, continue onto Chapter Two for my analysis of Ch’oe In-Hun’s rewriting of Bandung in a speculative register. In the context of this chapter, Bandung can be understood as one of the “futures” in which the global South continues to live because of the resonance of its call for a transversal movement out of modernity-coloniality.

The Afro-Asian conference in Bandung of 1955 was a momentous venue for Pan-Asian, Pan-Arab, and Pan-African alliances to explore possibilities of a new order in the
non-Western world. Significantly, it precipitated a range of important transnational movements.\textsuperscript{24} Its participants held varied if not contradictory positions, owing to the multiplicity of colonial histories and continued diplomatic ties to former empires (Burton 2012). Nonetheless, in the footsteps of prior revolutionary efforts towards decolonization, it vindicated the necessity of transnational projects, tactics, and debates among the formerly colonized. It spoke to the growing need to circumvent the Western powers’ political and military interventionism and economic and epistemic patronage in the beginning stages of the Cold War.

Emerging from this series of movements around the Bandung conference was the project of the Third World. The term has changed a great deal since 1955, eventually being used to describe the problem of economic underdevelopment. Detached from the political project of non-alignment and anti-imperialism, this shift occurred under the acceleration of (neo)colonial capitalist expansions. From what Samir Amin has called the first to second “Bandung regimes” (Amin 1994), the new generation of leadership in the participating countries phased out the conference’s critique of imperialism and sought instead to boost domestic economies using the language of development.\textsuperscript{25} While historians have importantly argued for the need to analyze the discordances within the conference as the seed for these later manifestations (Lee 2010a), this argument is also followed by a disciplinary rejection of “theoretical” approaches to the Bandung conference found in

\textsuperscript{24} To name just a few, these include: the 1945 5th Pan-African congress in Manchester, the 1955 Afro-Asian people’s solidarity movement, the 1958 first Asian-African Conference on Women in Colombo, and the 1961 Non-Aligned Movement at Belgrade. I thank my Fanon rencontres co-panelist, general consul Jesús Alberto García, for his discussion of the principles that emerged from Manchester to shape the later movements.

\textsuperscript{25} I thank Paul Amar for his critical engagement with me on Bandung politics in the development of this chapter’s earlier argument at the Duke colloquium on Epistemologies of Militarization in 2018.
international relations, literary studies, postcolonial studies, and decolonial thought. Whether the continued interest in the Bandung conference romanticizes and thereby misunderstands its historiography is a question that commands scholarly attention, pointing to the ongoing need to analyze the complex legacies of Bandung.

Still, the symbolic process through which the Bandung conference gains its meaning requires analysis beyond its immediate historiography. Just as “the ‘Overcoming Modernity’ symposium ended as an event…yet it remains as an idea” (Takeuchi 2005, 105), one can say that the Bandung conference also was an event but remained an idea. The conference never ceased to be controversial in its significance during the Cold War and produced multiple ways of looking at what it started and left behind. An examination of the polarizing and changing hermeneutics around the conference from the mid-1950s onwards, in fact, reveals little about the conference itself. Rather, what appears to be at stake is the historicity of Bandung, historicity here understood as the significance of Bandung to different historical moments as an epistemic and political challenge to coloniality. In its immediate aftermath, some observers in the West interpreted the conference from the perspective of recruiting the formerly colonized countries into the folds of anti-communism (Fitzgerald 1955, 118-9). Other commentators saw the need to critically reassess the present through the conference’s initial outlook. For the thirty-year retrospective on the Bandung conference in 1985, one Indian critic observed: “The Bandung spirit has gone sour precisely because over the years ‘imperialism’ has become

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26 Regardless of how one defines “theoretical” approaches, it is crucial that the hermeneutics around the conference and its legacies remain far from conclusive among the historians. The historians of the Cold War and the Bandung conference who aim to understand Bandung’s complexities do not necessarily agree on why they deem the conference important. For example, contributors within the same anthology on Bandung history hold different views on the meaning of Bandung for the present (Lee 2010a).
respectable…there are hardly any statesmen left in Africa and Asia who would recognize that the epoch of imperialism is not over yet” (Deshpande 1985, 777). This observation indexes the failures of the Third World states to uphold the decolonial orientations of their predecessors and subjects, such as Suharto’s developmentalism contra Sukarno’s anti-imperialism in Indonesia. The shift among the Bandung states reflects the intensification of the Cold War through these generations.

Needed is an understanding of not only Bandung as a historical event, then, but also the significance of its spirit. Aspects of its failure perhaps prompt us to find a mode of engaging it in line with Frantz Fanon’s description of “real love”: a love that “requires the mobilization of psychological agencies liberated from unconscious tensions…Today we believe in the possibility of love, and that is the reason why we are endeavoring to trace its imperfections and perversions” (Fanon 2008, 24). Bandung’s call towards decolonization of the world order and “the mobilization of psychological agencies” of the Third World is a call that no ensuing successes and failures can fully capture. The horizon of decolonial love suggested by Fanon here is to nonetheless endeavor towards such possibilities of a different kind of movement and to work through its “imperfections and perversions.”

The spirit of Bandung continues to challenge coloniality in its form as (neo)liberal capitalism. It uncovered the profound unwillingness of the “First” and “Second” worlds to deliver the praxis of global redistribution of resources and wealth, which spawned the conceptualization of the “Third World” and the nonalignment movement. It named and challenged colonial mobility amidst the endeavors of the colonized world to become decolonized. Surely, the spirit of Bandung emerged amidst the historical specificity of the Cold War competition between the capitalist bloc and the socialist bloc over global
hegemony. However, its lasting significance past the demise of the Soviet Union lies in its larger critique of modernity/coloniality. As one among many endeavors to actualize decolonization in the “age of (formal) decolonization,” the spirit of Bandung’s refusal to align with Cold War formations is also a refusal to continue to be available for mobilization in the terms of coloniality and the seeking of new modes and grounds for mobilizing, a process that requires a decolonial dialectics. As a movement that critically questions mobility as alignment with Cold War geopolitics, the nonalignment movement and the Third World paradigm identify and challenge a colonial mobility that continues to operate amidst the endeavors of the colonized world to become independent.

Amid Cold War geopolitical escalation in the age of “decolonization,” Frantz Fanon similarly conceptualized praxis as necessarily relational between seemingly distant sites. Also embedded in this notion of praxis was a caution against collapsing into nationalist developmentalism. Some critics have analyzed Fanon’s relationship to Algeria as shaped by his disappointment in Martinique (Bhabha 2004, Memmi 1973). Homi Bhabha, for instance, describes Fanon’s work in Algeria as a “turn from a political commitment into a more inward identification, a consummate self-fashioning of himself as an Algerian,” a “radical indigenization of identity [that] could be seen as his avoidance or enhancement of his own natal and psychic reality—a compensatory family romance that would disavow his Martinican origins” (2004, xxxii). However, what Bhabha calls the “radical indigenization of identity,” viewed here through a biographical, subjective lens, exceeds the realm of subjective identification. Instead, Fanon’s political commitments should be understood as a praxis that is profoundly relational in and through decoloniality.
If his work in Algeria is a “self-fashioning,” it is a fashioning that undoes the tightly bounded “self” that is a product of a colonially divided geography.

Fanon describes praxis as the struggle that “explo[des] the former colonial reality…uncovers unknown facets, brings to light new meanings and underlines contradictions which were camouflaged by this reality”: that it is “national, revolutionary, and collective” (Fanon 2004, 96). Indeed, praxis also consists of “the people whose struggles enact this new reality, the people who live it, march on, freed from colonialism and forewarned against any attempt at mystification or glorification of the nation” (Fanon 2004, 96). Such an understanding of praxis reflects Fanon’s criticism in the *Wretched of the Earth* of the view that decolonization takes the establishment of the nation as an end to itself. For Fanon, the role of the nation is defined by praxis and therefore, relational. He is critical of the classed nationalization of bourgeois culture that may render national sovereignty narrowly essentialist. At the same time, Fanon’s critique of the nation emphasizes first and foremost the function of the nation within the larger imperative of global decolonization. A nation that does not enact a new, redistributive reality and that does not disturb coloniality in its *global*, and not only local scale, ends up mystifying and glorifying itself. Thus, for Fanon, praxis cannot be isolated regionally and nationally: it is enacted through the connections among the network of disparate colonized realities. Fanon’s work in Algeria reflects this understanding of praxis as relational: that there cannot be true decolonization of Martinique without that of Algeria.

Multiple nodes of events can incite such dialectics. For example, Fanon finds an infectious network of global decolonial imaginaries and epistemic ripples in Vietnam in *The Wretched of the Earth*: “The great victory of the Vietnamese people at Dien Bien Phu
is no longer strictly speaking a Vietnamese victory. From July 1954 onward the colonial peoples have been asking themselves: ‘What must we do to achieve a Dien Bien Phu? How should we go about it?’ A Dien Bien Phu was now within reach of every colonized subject’ (Fanon 2004, 31). Beyond the singular and regional scope of an event—Dien Bien Phu as a “Vietnamese victory”—an event can also function as praxis by opening epistemological and material structures of inquiry and affect (Phạm 2016). The spirit of Bandung signals not only to the Bandung conference but also, then, to the precedent and antecedent efforts that pried each time an epistemic opening in the horizon of decolonization. This process also comes with the caution from Takeuchi and Bloch, that the events of the past need to be examined carefully and dialectically, so as not to mistake the “futures-in-the-past” as the content of the present in the making.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the way dialectics is rearticulated by Takeuchi Yoshimi, Frantz Fanon, and Ernst Bloch to illuminate the continuity between liberalism and fascism and to locate a real dialectical movement towards decolonization. From Takeuchi’s invocation of Asia as Method in his call for a new Pan-Asianism to Bandung as a method, to following Fanon’s understanding of praxis as necessarily relational and international, the unit of a decolonial dialectics is scalar but tied together in the search of the decolonial “not-yet-here.” It is imperative, to see that Fanon and Takeuchi imagined alternative ways of political mobilization beyond the terms of colonial mobility, which casts colonial populations as available for imperial and fascist political projects, as we have seen in the contexts of Japan, Germany, and French colonies of the twentieth century through which these thinkers lived. Dialectics becomes newly charged, in their provocations, with the
necessity to follow through even the perversions and failures of movement and to find transversal relations and ecstatic temporalities contained in them.

In this sense, though Bandung itself was a failure, the spirit of Bandung names the horizon of possibilities that the conference enabled as a lingering idea. In the next chapter, I examine Ch’oe In-Hun’s *The Typhoon as a speculative fiction on Bandung that reframes the spirit of Bandung for the transpacific*. By revisiting colonial-fascist mobilization under Pan-Asianism and rewriting Asia Pacific history through it, Ch’oe’s novel offers a fleshly and speculative example of a Takeuchi’s recantation turned into transpacific becoming.
CHAPTER TWO

The Transpacific Tempest: Relational Sovereignty and Spiritual Sociogenesis

in Ch’oe In-Hun’s *The Typhoon*

This chapter examines the power of relations to reconfigure knowledge dialectically under military occupation. Situating Ch’oe In-Hun’s South Korean alternative history novel *The Typhoon* (1973) within a transpacific and Pacific-Caribbean framework, I show how Bandung as Method that I invoke in Chapter One is fleshed out in the novel through speculative tools. A relational vision of decolonization redefines mobility in this example in the transpacific, a vision informed by the relation between the colonized who are mobilized against each other as natives, and *arrivants*, people who are displaced through violence to a settler colonial context. The transversal movement of decolonial mobility reconfigures the environment, knowledge, and political mobilization in the novel, suggesting that doing Pan-Asianism “better,” as Ch’oe and Takeuchi both envision. The speculative search for transpacific becoming brings the novel beyond the confines of Asia as a peninsula to the militarized Pacific archipelago.

As I analyze Ch’oe’s novel, I also theorize two concepts—relational sovereignty and spiritual sociogenesis—in conversation with the works of the Caribbean thinkers Sylvia Wynter, Frantz Fanon, and Édouard Glissant. In this chapter, relational sovereignty describes the vision of sovereignty achieved through the very relationality of encounters on militarized islands; and spiritual sociogenesis describes the process through which the existing socio-geny/genetic is mutated to bring environmental and spiritual transformations. A key example of spiritual sociogenesis that I examine is the typhoon’s significance as an ecological and spiritual force that overthrows the discourse of the divine wind (*kamikaze*)
of Japanese imperialism within the novel. Yet, beyond the historical case of Japanese imperialism, spiritual sociogenesis can also be understood as intervening in the larger necropolitics of imperialist militarization that demands the colonized to demonstrate their humanity through death. I argue that it does so by reanimating the relations among various inhabitants of the lands and waters on which indigenous sovereignty struggles are based. Distinctly archipelagic, relational sovereignty and spiritual sociogenesis challenge continentalist interests of securitizing islands. Such interests have served the larger U.S.-centered international relations frameworks on Korea (Heo and Roehrig 2018, Snyder 2018) and erased the decolonial connections between Korea and the militarily occupied Pacific islands. This chapter aims to restore these connections to the way one understands the vision of reunification and decolonization in Korea.

Another context I consider is the literary network surrounding *The Tempest*. Ch’oe’s novel *The Typhoon* speculatively revisits the Japanese imperialism of the 1940s during the Pacific War in order to cast a new light on the novel’s then present (1970s) Cold War regimes. By looking at it alongside Aimé Césaire’s 1969 adaptation *Une Tempête*, or *A Tempest*, which approaches the shared original text of *The Tempest* from the view of the colony, I analyze Ch’oe’s novel’s entrance into the intertextual and transoceanic circulation of William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (1610–1611) . Drawing from the novel’s nonlinear temporal relation to its time and speculative relation to the colonized geography, I argue that past imaginations of decolonial futures uncover the invisibilized continuities between the pre- and post-Cold War era. Moreover, traversing the Caribbean, East Asia, and the Pacific, this chapter reflects on how past modes of relating, yet unrealized, are also urgently relevant and can illuminate present struggles in the militarily occupied Pacific.
2.1 Introduction to the Historical Context and Ch’oe In-Hun

Ch’oe In-Hun (1934-2018) is a landmark writer in postwar South Korean literature, known for using experimental and dream-like qualities in his writings to express political dissent. Ch’oe often carried this out by adapting myths and works of the global literary canon to shed light on the political concerns of his times and the philosophical questions on identity and social relations. As we saw in Chapter One, myths are critical to the utopian dimension of everyday life for Ernst Bloch. The dream-like, mythical, and adaptive aspect of Ch’oe’s literary writings resonates with Bloch’s observations about finding the “not-yet-here” in such forms; moreover, as we shall see, Ch’oe reworks the problem of recantation and dialectics that we explored in Chapter One, into what I ultimately argue is a transpacific becoming.

Ch’oe was originally born in the North Korean city Hoeryŏng. He eventually settled in the South, living the life of a refugee of sorts, a member of a population referred to as silhyangmin (失郷民) in Korean. The term refers generally to people who cannot return to their home countries, and in this context, it specifically underlines the fact that many Koreans lost their homes because of the national division of Korea, the Korean War (1950-53), and the travel ban that separated countless families. It wouldn’t be an overstatement to say that Ch’oe felt the condition of national division acutely, as it was a theme he treated painstakingly in his best known novel, The Square (1960 kwangjang), a novel that portrays someone who finds both North and South Korea to be caught up in one-sided ideologies lacking either the space for individuality or the space for public engagement. The novel ends with the protagonist’s suicide. This tragic narrative was also shared by writers like Yi Tae-Jun, who explored shared fates of subjects navigating national division in his short
stories in the 1940s and 50s. The fate of the subjects of national and ideological division that Ch’oe portrays in this earlier novel is significantly different from the one in his later novel, *The Typhoon*, which does not end in a suicide but in something altogether different. This chapter focuses on the later novel precisely because of the speculative potential of this altered fate and addresses what we might glean from Ch’oe’s reworking of his own earlier narrative. The second-to-last of Ch’oe’s novels, *The Typhoon* is a lesser known novel, published in 1973. If his early work, *The Square* was published on the heels of the April 19, 1960 popular uprising that ended the authoritarian rule of the First Republic in South Korea, *The Typhoon* was published at a time of intensified censorship and the rise of the Yusin phase of Park Chung Hee’s administration. Though written in grim times, *The Typhoon* ends on a hopeful note and does not explicitly appear to comment on the oppression under Park’s government. However, I argue that a closer look at his re-signification of mobility reveals a multilayered and speculative response to the problem of the mobilization of his time that he witnessed and the need to find a new dialectics.

Indeed, *The Typhoon* was published amidst a cultural and economic mobilizations that overlapped with military mobilization. Park Chung Hee first took power in 1961 with a military coup d’état, and his authoritarian rule took on a more intensified control of all aspects of South Korean society in 1972, which began what is referred to as the Yusin era, taking the after ishin of the “Meiji restoration” (Ryu 2016, 2). The Yusin era sought to mobilize South Korean society towards greater economic productivity, for which culture was intended to be a secondary order of business, meant to support, but not supplant,

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27 Yi’s short stories, such as “The Dust (mŏnji)” and “Before and After Liberation (haebangjŏnhu)” explore these themes. Yi Tae-Jun eventually moved to North Korea, where he is thought to have died in one of the purges of intellectuals. See Janet Poole’s thought-provoking analysis of what it meant for intellectuals to live through this period, including Yi Tae-Jun (Poole 2014).
ideologies of mobilizing for production. The systematic approach Park took to mobilize South Korea drew its designs from the colonial and fascist mobilization during Japan’s mobilization for the Pacific War. Most importantly, the time of The Typhoon’s publication overlaps with the deployment of South Korean troops to Vietnam. As an ally and junior partner of the U.S., South Korea under the Park administration deployed more than 300,000 troops in the span of nine years practically as mercenaries (Lee 2011). Ch’oe was not mobilized during the Vietnam War but visited Korean soldiers stationed there. Having had experience as a soldier himself during the Korean War, this experience likely shaped the preliminary synopsis of The Typhoon’s speculative plot (Park 2018, 173).

In some sense, Ch’oe’s The Typhoon is something of an oddity in its experimental alternative history, seemingly far from the everyday struggles of South Koreans, even as it ultimately coincided with the view of the time that literature must be a guide and support for the political articulation of resistance (Ryu 2016, 16-23). Dissident writers and student activists, such as Kim Chiha and Yi Ch’ŏl, were arrested and imprisoned, and, as Youngju Ryu observed in her analysis of the literary group Chasil, literature came to be considered the conscience of the people (Ryu 2016, 14-17). The preoccupation of the literary milieu of this period was to produce literature that described the strife of workers and the common people, often leaning towards literary realism to do so; As I will demonstrate, Ch’oe’s novel, in its own speculative way, offered criticism of the 70s state mobilization, not by focusing on South Korean political present but by rearticulating mobility in a transnational frame that exceeded that of Korea and directed his attention towards the transpacific.
2.2 Speculative Geography as a Tool

Caliban directs one of his memorable curses at Prospero and Miranda in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* when he says: “a southwest wind blow on ye and blister you all o’er” (Shakespeare 1987, 1.2:320-325). Here, as well as in other differently adapted *Tempest* texts, the wind takes on a symbolic meaning as both a curse and a salvation, which brings bodies into an intensified space of confrontation on a colonized island. It warns of an impending disaster for which the colonial enterprise is little prepared. As an environmental force uncontrollable by humans, its chaotic energy overturns the hierarchy that has maintained the island’s exploitative economy. The wind and the storm underline the environmental and material reorganization that decolonization requires, including the significance of the sub- and non-human enactments in this process.

The wind’s potential to mobilize and renew, however, does not exclusively point to a decolonial future, as we shall see more closely in *The Typhoon*, for the ideological force of *kamikaze* in Japan’s fascist mobilization lay precisely in the power of the wind as a symbol to mobilize and renew. The term *kamikaze* (神風 "divine wind") originates from the typhoon that overturned Kublai Khan’s winning position in the Mongolian invasion of Japan in 1274. The Japanese state appropriated the term near the end of WWII in 1944-45, to refer to the air suicide attack units of the Imperial Japanese Navy and Army. The appropriation was a part of Japan’s wartime politics, which mobilized the colonized and metropolitan movable bodies and resources according to necropolitical calculations. The wind in this case does not clearly point to a non-human agency that brings the colonial

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28 I will hereto forth refer to WWII as the Pacific War to focus on the distinct nature of Japan’s side of the war in the Pacific.
order to an end, but rather to the volatility of bodies that are subjected to wartime mobilization fueled by the discourse of the divine.  

29 By thematizing the wind as central to the decolonial imaginary in Ch’oe’s novel, I demonstrate that decolonization transforms colonially constructed mobility into a mobility that centers on relationality. Relationality, as espoused by Édouard Glissant, points to the challenges to totalities that seek to make new worlds. The novel’s protagonist claims at the end, “by all means, there is a way to survive a typhoon” (Ch’oe 2009b, 498), but such a survival is not a predictable reiteration of colonial ontologies. That the wind can be both a seemingly immaterial presence and a monumental storm that alters the environment underlines the unforeseeable path of movement to which the novel points.

The last full-length novel of the South Korean writer Ch’oe In-Hun, The Typhoon demonstrates how central epistemologies are to decolonization. Namely, this point is shown through the transformation of the colonized populations that have been recruited to maintain the imperial militarization of islands.  

30 The novel portrays first the military mobilization of its protagonist, as a colonized soldier of the imperial army, and second, his demobilization, as a member of the indigenous independence struggle made up of the fictional islands’ people. Through this change, the novel explores the ideological and affective dimensions of decolonization by returning to a moment during the Pacific War (1941–1945), addressing what Glissant has termed relationality—which describes the “knowledge in motion of beings that risk the world” (Glissant 1997, 187)—and what Lisa

29 The trope of the wind and the subjectivities of those who worked for the Japanese air force during the Pacific War can be traced in popular imagination. For example, the most recent animated film from Miyazaki Hayao, “The Wind Rises” (2013), chronicles a Japanese engineer’s reluctant endeavors to design fighter airplanes (Miyazaki 2013).

30 All citations from the novel in this chapter are my own translations from Korean.
Lowe has called the “intimacy” among the colonized subjects of different continents (Lowe 2015). A series of material transformations take place around the novel’s protagonist, Otomenaku, while he serves in the imperial army stationed on a Pacific island. Through its portrayal of these transformations, the novel proposes the making of a new kind of movement that challenges and overcomes the logic of imperial mobilization.

Such a plot is inspired by the historical setting of the expansion of Japanese imperialism in the Pacific during WWII. The Japanese empire had colonized Okinawa, Ainu lands, the Sakhalin islands, the Korean peninsula, Manchuria, and Taiwan from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. Japan emerged as a major empire in the Asia-Pacific from winning wars against Russia and China, gaining former German colonies in the Pacific after WWI, and occupying the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) and the Philippines during WWII before its defeat in 1945. Japan’s wartime campaign amplified existing ideological debates on Pan-Asianism against Western imperialism, campaigns that were used to justify Japanese occupation in the region, as I had discussed in Chapter One. Colonized subjects were recruited and coerced to participate in Japan’s war efforts as “comfort” women, soldiers, and manual laborers and stationed in different locations within the empire.

A significant aspect of the novel’s decolonial gesture derives from its use of speculative features to critically map the military and political mobilization while highlighting struggles for indigenous sovereignty. The speculative here functions as a tool for navigating the colonial triangulations and divisions of the human and nonhuman inhabitants of militarized geographies. It enables a material and affective envisioning that is otherwise than the colonial organization of space. The novel’s setting provides several
examples of the speculative features of the novel. It begins in 1941 during the Pacific War with its protagonist, Otomenaku, a member of the elite from a fictitious country, Aeroku (an anagram—a word created by rearranging the letters of another word—of Korea). Aeroku is a colony of its neighboring East Asian country, Napayu (anagram of Japan), and Otomenaku arrives as a lieutenant of the Napayu military at a Pacific island called Aisenodin (anagram of Indonesia). Aisenodin was previously a colony of the European country Nibrita (anagram of Britain) for over a century but has now become Napayu’s colony and a territorial pawn between Nibrita and Napayu during the Pacific War.

Otomenaku at first views the island from the standpoint of a benevolent colonizer-liberator because he is loyal to several Pan-Asian narratives that were deployed to mobilize the colony toward imperial war efforts. As an assimilated elite from the colony, Otomenaku has participated in several imperial Pan-Asian views: that Napayu is liberating the rest of Asia from Western rule; that there exists a racial homogeneity between Napayu and Aeroku; and that the colonized subjects must collaborate in the total war efforts of Napayu that are fought in the name of the divine emperor of Napayu. These views have philosophically, politically, and spiritually justified Napayu’s occupation of other Asian regions. But a series of revelations and events on the island challenge these narratives of imperial wartime mobilization, mainly, Otomenaku’s transformative relationship to two Aisenodinians: the imprisoned Aisenodin resistance leader Karunosu whom Otomenaku oversees as a prisoner of war, and an Aisenodin woman named Amanda who assists Karunosu. In the novel’s climax, Otomenaku abandons the Napayu army and joins the century-long independence struggles of the Aisenodin people. When Napayu loses the war (as did Japan), Aisenodin battles colonial interests and gains independence, after which it forms and leads an
international alliance of “small and weak” states against imperialism. The novel fast-
forwards thirty years, from the war’s resolution in 1945 to a 1975 “present,” when
Otomenaku is portrayed as having remained in Aisenodin as a political figure who has
contributed to different decolonization projects around the world, including the
reunification of Aeroku.

The novel probes the entwinements of colonial mapping and the Cold War
cartographic views at the time of its publication in the 1970s, through its speculative use
of a fictionalized Pacific archipelago. The fictional people, places, and events of the novel
appear familiar enough that the readers can find historical parallels, but the novel tasks
them with hermeneutic work to be able to identify such parallels. Rather than presenting a
knowing return to a historical moment that can be easily grasped with ready-at-hand Cold
War interpretative frameworks of the 1970s, the novel prompts its readers to question
official information given about the fictional world. For example, The Typhoon begins by
reminding the readers of the history of the colonial cartographic gaze at the Pacific rather
than identifying its exact setting:

It is understood that the geographic situation of this region has been made known by
Europeans’ voyages in modernity. As the Europeans went further and further east, to
the Europeans, the countless scattered islands large and small that they sailed by to seek
exotic goods were objects of pillage, yet to those who already lived there, the islands
are merely a region in which they have lived since older times. Who the barbarian is,
is determined by who wins in the encounter. The people that came in boats won, and
those who already lived there consecutively lost. Therefore, this region experienced the
fate of being called, in the style of “X dominion” or “Y dominion,” by the name of the
colonizer’s motherland laid on top of their distinctive names. (Ch’oe 2009b, 7)

Such an introduction of the setting interrogates the process of colonial naming and mapping
written over indigenous relations to place and sense of history. Instead of unquestioningly
using exonyms conferred on colonized places or factually rehashing the history of colonial
occupation, the novel evinces the colonial encounter as a structure that has dictated how a place is to be felt and thought within the terms of the colonial dominations. Subsequently introduced names of people and places in the novel are anagrams of known names. The novel’s such scrambling of recognizable names effectively unsettles attempts to know and map the fictional world according to the colonial legacies in the Cold-War-mapped world of the 1970s.

The question that the novel raises through its problematization of naming and mapping a place, though, is not so much that colonial occupation has once happened and must be duly reckoned with in a “post”colonial Cold War world order. Rather, it questions the naturalization of the colonial organization of space through militarization and the ease with which one accepts a knowledge, contributing to the militaristic control that such a knowledge maintains. The novel reminds its South Korean readers in the 1970s that they continue to live the realities of colonial epistemologies encased within a Cold War order.\(^{31}\) Just as one cannot “know” the fictional Pacific island of Aisenodin in the 1940s using colonial exonyms imposed on indigenous names, the South Korean readers of the novel in the 1970s (and onwards) too should question the colonial epistemologies of what South-Korean thinker Paek Nak-Chung has termed the “division system” in Korea under the Cold War that has shaped how one views contemporary East Asian and Pacific history (Paek 2011). The question that emerges from the novel’s use of anagrams is how one can “know” a place without an awareness of the historical significance of one’s position within such a knowledge system itself. This question is closely tied to the central conundrum of the novel:

\(^{31}\) A similar gesture of excavating colonial structures of knowledge beneath Cold War binaries can be found in Ch’oe’s other writings. See, for example, Ch’oe’s short story installments “Chongdokusori” (Ch’oe 2009a).
how can one grasp the historicity of one’s present, and what can one do in the face of its revelation?

The novel explores the conundrum of historicity through the speculative register, placing its readers in the questioning position of its protagonist, who constantly resituates himself both spatially and historically in a world that has been rendered unknowable. As Otomenaku struggles to identify his role and place through the terms of his colonial, military education, the ground shifts under his feet, leaving him to seek epistemologies and historicities different from the one in which he was trained. Wishing to understand the “opacity” of the Aisenodin political prisoner Karunosu, Otomenaku gradually turns away from his colonial education to risk the world as he knows it. The Martinican thinker and writer Édouard Glissant (1997) described opacity as “that which cannot be reduced” (Glissant 1997, 191) and has also argued that “land must not be turned into territory” (Glissant 1997, 151). Thinking with Glissant here enables an analysis that the irreducibility of Karunosu’s relational thinking and doing is a combination of indigenous knowledges and centuries of tactics on the ground to bring about decolonization. The “opacity” of such knowledge, seen from Otomenaku’s position, derives from the irreducibility of land into possessable colonial territories. Because Karunosu’s knowledge strives to relate to the land and place of Aisenodin, it appears opaque and unknowable to the colonial knowledge system, the point of departure for which is the possessibility of bodies, lands, and waters. The Typhoon thus suggests that the colonized’s shuttling between imperial projects and decolonization is a site of designing and practicing new modes of becoming and relating. The speculative here enables one to see beyond the given and known terms of colonially mapped geographies.
2.3 Dialectics on the Pacific–Caribbean “theater”

Aside from the historical context behind the novel’s speculative geography, another noteworthy context is The Typhoon’s place within the expansive literary network surrounding Shakespeare’s The Tempest. It inserts into such a literary network the questions of military occupation and indigeneity in the Pacific. Ch’oe’s novel is indeed a loose adaptation of Shakespeare’s play The Tempest (Bae 2012, Hughes 2012) which portrays a turning away from the Cold War dualism between the United States and the Soviet Union toward nonalignment. That Ch’oe’s novel and the Korean translation of Shakespeare’s The Tempest share the title T’aep’ung (the Korean word for typhoon) makes this connection even more explicit.

My argument here, against the disciplinary impulse of a more conventional Comparative Literature, is that Ch’oe’s novel should be read less as an homage to than as a challenge to Shakespeare’s The Tempest. Here I will briefly indulge in an etymological comparison between the words “tempest” and “typhoon” in order to drive this point home and to sketch out, on the basis of the etymological difference, a philosophical, political, and cultural paradigm that emerged from the circulation of Shakespeare’s Tempest. The word “typhoon” has a broad Asian etymological root, appearing as 大風 (“big wind”) in Sino-character-based languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Japanese and tufan (“violent storm,” originating from the verb to turn round and to roar furiously) in Arabic, Farsi, and Hindi. What concerns my reading of Ch’oe’s novel alongside Shakespeare’s

32 For analyses of temporality and utopia in The Typhoon, see the works of Park In-Sung and Kahn Afzal Ahmad (Park 2016, Khan 2017). For an analysis of the novel and the neutralism movement, see the work of Kwŏn Bodŭrae (Kwŏn 2012). For a postcolonial analysis of the novel and Ch’oe’s other works, see the works of Koo Jae Jin and Song Hyojŏng (Koo 2004, Song 2006).
play is that the root for typhoon is shared by these languages because people who use the word live in or adjacent to the Pacific: typhoon is a type of tropical storm that is site-specific to the Asia Pacific. In that light, the title of the Korean text T’aep’ung more than simply transliterates the word “tempest” into its readily available Korean equivalent, “typhoon.” The choice of “typhoon” as a title is reasserted throughout Ch’oe’s novel, emphasizing the transpacific as a significant locus of enunciation.

The place is much more present in the postcolonial responses to The Tempest. In contrast to “typhoon,” “tempest” does not entail regional specificity and is traced back to its European etymology meaning seasons, more a temporality than a spatiality. Although spatiality and temporality cannot be easily disentangled, if at all, space was significant in colonial mobilization in so far as space was subjected, as a backdrop, to the teleological temporality of the empire. Shakespeare’s The Tempest is symptomatic of such subjection of space to temporality, wherein the island is symbolic precisely as a transitory space for Prospero and company before they return to Milan. Shakespeare’s The Tempest is said to have been inspired by a Bermuda shipwreck incident (Kermode 1985, 26), which would make the Caribbean the play’s symbolic inspiration. Yet, within the play itself, the specificity of the island’s location is not significant, other than that it is an exotic island somewhere between Milan and Tunis. Speaking of this telling absence of the place-ness of the colonial island in Shakespeare’s play, the Martinican poet and thinker Aimé Césaire adapted Shakespeare’s The Tempest for the Black Theater by setting it in Haiti. Césaire’s 1969 adaptation Une Tempête highlights the significance of the Euro-U.S. colonial relation to the Caribbean islands in constructing and canonizing The Tempest narrative.
If the slave is actualized through labor in Hegel’s dialectics and Caliban gains freedom from Prospero’s departure in Shakespeare’s place, Césaire offers a different ending to these master-slave dialectics. One of the interventions that Césaire makes through *Une Tempête* is that the colonial relation between Prospero and Caliban is foundational to Prospero’s existence and the civilizationist work for which he stands. Rather than leave the island, as does Shakespeare’s Prospero at the play’s end, Prospero in Césaire’s rendition refuses to depart with the others returning to Europe: Prospero declares to Caliban, “I’ve tried to save you, above all from yourself […] I shall not let my work perish! (Shouting) I shall protect civilization!” (Césaire 2002, 65). Although Prospero mockingly declares “Caliban […] a dialectician!” (Césaire 2002, 61) for firmly opposing Prospero’s plans, Prospero’s decision to stay on the island indeed confirms Caliban’s reasoning that Prospero needs the island and Caliban’s servitude to dialectically assert himself as the master: explaining why Prospero cannot will himself to leave, Caliban says, “that’s why you’ll stay, just like those guys who founded the colonies and who now can’t live anywhere else. You’re just an old addict, that’s what you are!” (Césaire 2002, 62). Caliban, on the other hand, does not need Prospero in the way that Prospero needs Caliban. He tells Prospero that he was hoping to “get back my island and regain my freedom […] I’d get rid of you” (Césaire 2002, 60). That in Césaire’s text Prospero refuses to leave the island and subsequently realizes that he cannot leave the colony, diagnoses Prospero’s dependency on Caliban’s colonial existence as the cause for the continuation of the colonial “struggle of life and death.” Césaire’s *Une Tempête* suggests that the dialectical relation between the master and slave cannot reach a resolution, as in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, or reach the
next stage, as in Hegel’s master–slave dialectics, so long as the master—Prospero—seeks meaning in relation to the colony.

Robin D. G. Kelley has observed that Caliban’s final speech in Une Tempête “could have come straight from Césaire’s mouth, or the mouths of the radical black intelligentsia produced by colonial education” (Kelley 2002, xv) when Caliban proclaims to Prospero: “you lied to me so much, about the world, about myself, that you ended up by imposing on me an image of myself […] But now I know you, you old cancer, And I also know myself!” (Césaire 2002, 62). Knowing oneself in the colonial world involves knowing that the existing image of oneself is falsely cast. Yet Césaire’s Caliban, and perhaps the colonially educated radical Black intelligentsia, are still left with the conundrum of how this self-knowledge can lead to making the “old world […] crumble[e] down” with one’s “bare fists” (Césaire 2002, 62), if Prospero and Caliban are left in a stalemate at the end of the play.

As we shall see shortly, Ch’oe’s inquiry on the tempest as a dialectic takes the final conundrum of Césaire’s play as, in fact, its point of departure. In it, a colonially educated and militarily mobilized “Caliban” like Otomenaku deploys self-knowledge to recast a new image for himself that could make the old world crumble down. Ch’oe’s text suggests that this self-knowledge involves reattuning one’s relation to others and the environment that are habituated by colonial militarization. If Césaire’s play is part of the larger exploration of colonial dialectics toward freedom between the colonial master and the Black enslaved, Ch’oe’s novel comments on the genealogy of imperial mobilization under Japanese colonialism and the dialectics that derives from its war efforts. The Typhoon adds to the contributions of Césaire’s text an examination of the militarized labor of the colonized under colonial fascism and the necessity of material, affective, and spiritual
transformations to overcome the colonial dialectics. Also significant is, as we shall see in the discussion ahead on triangulated relations, if Césaire’s text portrays the tension between the two colonized—good Caliban and bad Ariel—without a resolution and renders Caliban’s struggle as a solitary one, Ch’oe’s text instead focuses on how differently colonized populations might seek self-determination together.

2.4 Colonial Ecology

Prospero: Hear me well:

I am not in any ordinary sense a master, as this savage thinks, but rather the conductor of a boundless score: this isle, summoning voices, I alone, and mingling them at my pleasure, arranging out of confusion one intelligible line. Without me, who would be able to draw music from all that? This isle is mute without me. My duty, thus, is here, and here I shall stay. [italicization is added for emphasis]

-Aimé Césaire, Une Tempête

When read alongside each other, Ch’oe’s The Typhoon and Césaire’s Une Tempête bring the Caribbean and the Pacific together as archipelagoes of colonial militarization. Archipelagoes offer a distinct epistemological orientation but are overlooked as sites of modernity/coloniality (Roberts and Stephens 2017). As places of lasting colonial occupation and high frequency of environmental disasters, the Asian Pacific and the Caribbean are systematically exploited through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), military base installments, military testing, and foreign financial interventions. Natural and ecological devastations, then, are not only a product of militarization but also further occasions for reinforcing colonial relations between the islands and imperial interests, as observed in the “disaster militarism” that intensifies militarization in the form of disaster relief (Fukushima et al. March 14, 2014). The contemporary unfolding of events in Haiti and Puerto Rico attests to how imperialist interventions, economies of colonial debt,
climate change, and humanitarian aid intersect to exploit new opportunities on these islands (Bonilla 2017, Klein 2018, Lalo June 15, 2018).

Ch’oe’s *The Typhoon*, then, simultaneously points to the transformative opening up of the colonized mode of existence while also calling our attention to the fact that the typhoon also names a colonially and militarily constructed climate of occupation in the Asian Pacific. Metaphorically, the typhoon names the tumultuous history of colonial rule and violent migration and displacement that took place, as well as the overturning of this history into a more inhabitable future. Materially, it names the environmental devastation caused by militarization and extractive developments that make the islands and the ocean more susceptible to damage when there are natural disasters. In Ch’oe’s *The Typhoon*, Aisenodin is described as devastated by uneven developments of land under a century of Nibrita’s colonial rule, subjecting Aisenodin to frequent flooding. Capitalist industrialization, military base installations, and disrupted indigenous economies are closely correlated to the uneven exposure of the Pacific and Caribbean islands to environmental hazard.

Otomenaku’s turn away from colonial geography and imperial military mobilization results from the understanding that the island not a possession of the colonizers or the mobilized colonized soldiers but is, following the Aisenodinian view, a place inhabited by various nonhuman entities. Its human inhabitants are only a part of the spiritual ecology of the islands, and yet the extractive mode of existence enforced by colonial occupations maintains Prospero’s humanos-centric claim that the “isle is mute
While the islands of Ch’oe’s novel are not enchanted in the same way as Shakespeare’s or Césaire’s, the fateful typhoon that overturns the century-long political struggle and leads the Aisenodin resistance toward independence is as much a nonhuman spiritual and ecological event in the colonial landscape as it is a psychological and political one. The spiritual and ecological dimension of the novel, most significantly, is bolstered by the novel’s larger intervention in the imperial divinity discourse of Japanese wartime mobilization. In lieu of the divine emperor and imperially enforced animism that demands death from the colonized and extraction from the environment, the novel finds its spiritual foundation in the power of its nonhuman agents to destroy colonial constructs as well as to generate new modes of inhabiting.

2.5 The Native Woman Question: Triangulation of the Native, the Militarized Arrivant, and the Master

A key aspect in which Ch’oe differs from Césaire is found in their treatment of the native figure. If Ariel’s relationship to Caliban was an oppositional one between a “mulatto” slave and a Black slave in Césaire’s *Une Tempête*, the triangulation of Caliban, Ariel, and Prospero has been deployed in the greater circulation of *The Tempest* to explore multiple dimensions of colonial occupation. In fact, the reception of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in Latin America and the Caribbean reveals genealogies that differently reclaim Ariel and Caliban. For example, the identification with Caliban in Roberto Fernández Retamar’s Caribbean formation challenged the disavowals of the racialized slave in José Enrique

33 See the works of Nishitani Osamu (2006) and Sylvia Wynter (2001) for the discussion on the colonial division of the human into the colonizing humanitas and the colonized *Anthropos* (Nishitani 2006, Wynter 2001).
Rodó’s continentalist identification with Ariel.\textsuperscript{34} The Chickasaw decolonial scholar Jodi Byrd discusses how studies on different colonial histories took on adaptations of \textit{The Tempest}, such as the overlooked colonial setting of the play and reified the colonial racialization of its characters (Byrd 2011). Byrd observes that as different postcolonial subjects reclaimed Caliban as both Native and slave, Ariel was dismissed as a docile slave. However, because Ariel was on the island before Caliban’s mother Sycorax arrived and confined Ariel to a tree, Byrd suggests instead that Ariel can be read as an immobilized native in the colonial triad—native, \textit{arrivant}, colonizer—of the plantation economy of the Caribbean (Byrd 2011, 59). In the postcolonial receptions of the text, \textit{The Tempest} continues to erase the colonized Native, as settler colonial ideologies often do, even as it focused on the dialectical contest between the colonial master and the displaced colonized.

In Ch’oe In-Hun’s \textit{The Typhoon}, the figures of Ariel and Prospero merge into one, giving way to the imprisoned native as the sorcerer of anticolonial struggle that enchants Caliban, the agonizing colonized soldier. By taking this intertextual risk, \textit{The Typhoon} focuses on the relationship between the colonized-mobilized and the imprisoned native, suggesting that the way out of colonial occupation takes place in the clashing space of multiple colonial experiences, or what Byrd has described as a site of cacophony (Byrd 2011, 55). Otomenaku’s disenchantment with colonial ideologies arises from questioning the construction of mobility and immobility by military occupation, to question the “goods” resulting from his mobility as consisting in the “harms” of Karunosu’s imprisonment.

\textsuperscript{34} I thank the feedback on Latin American and Caribbean receptions of \textit{The Tempest} from my co-panelists and the audience at the ACLA “Epistemologies of Militarization in the Global South” panel for this clarification, in particular, Rafael Vizcaíno and Joshua Lund. For discussions of global adaptations of \textit{The Tempest}, see the works of Rob Nixon (1987) and the edited anthology \textit{“The Tempest” and Its Travels} (Hulme and Sherman 2000). For a philosophical treatment of Caliban, see Paget Henry’s (2000) \textit{Caliban’s Reason}. 
Occupation places the militarily mobilized subject from another colony in oppositional relationship to the physically, yet not politically, immobilized natives of the island, an oppositional relationship that creates and sustains the control of different occupied territories.

The colonized soldier then can be considered an *arrivant*, a term coined by the Barbadian poet and scholar Kamau Brathwaite and used by Jodi Byrd to distinguish those people forced into settler positions through imperial and colonial displacements from those who were not (Byrd 2011, xix). In *The Typhoon*, the colonized soldier-arrivant must learn from the immobilized native his own position as an expendable colonized subject complicit with the colonial occupation of another place. Otomenaku’s mobility as a colonized military service laborer and Karunosu’s immobility as a political prisoner reflect the regime of control that necessitates their oppositional access to mobility. Thus, the colonial master that Caliban-Otomenaku needs to combat is already within him as imperial ideologies rather than as an externalized figure of Prospero. The shift of the narrative focus onto the relationship between Caliban and Ariel/Prospero is Ch’oe’s answer to the question that Césaire has raised through his play, of how to make the colonial world crumble down. *The Typhoon* offers an understanding of the triangulated colonial construction of im/mobility and how a new kind of movement can nonetheless be invented from such conditions of immobilization.

A figure who had been made a lacuna in the colonial triangulation here is that of the native woman. Sylvia Wynter has observed that the European colonizer, Miranda, is the only available sign of colonial gendering, and that the absence of the native and Black

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35 For an analysis of soldiers as service laborers, see Jinkyung Lee’s *Service Economies* (2010).
women in The Tempest narratives reveals the silencing of a necessary “‘demonic model’ outside the ‘consolidated field’ of our present mode of being/feeling/knowing” (Wynter 1990, 364). Wynter’s reading of Miranda demonstrates Maria Lugones’s argument on the fundamental ways in which the modern/colonial gender system permeates all aspects of knowledge and labor (Lugones 2016). Although Ch’oe does not create a demonic heroine as a center of The Tempest narrative, its native woman character, Amanda, is Ch’oe’s spin on The Tempest’s Miranda and fulfills a pivotal function in The Typhoon.

Otomenaku-Caliban’s desire for Amanda/Miranda—the only anagram name in The Typhoon based on a character name from The Tempest—is one of the central dimensions of Otomenaku’s education in decolonial love. As a cunning double agent, Amanda uses the flattening image of the highly eroticized and docile native domestic aid toward the project of insurgency throughout her affair with Otomenaku. Otomenaku realizes toward the end of the novel that Karunosu and Amanda are in fact lovers who have been covertly working together to lead the resistance cell, and that Amanda comes from a family with a long history of involvement in Aisenodin resistance. This realization forces him to accept that his racializing and gendering view of Amanda had been a colonial fantasy that had to be shattered. This narrative intervention prevents the transference of colonial constructions of the native woman to the decolonial struggle in the form of a heteronormative script of revolution and romance. Among Ch’oe’s many recasting of the characters of The Tempest, perhaps his anagram-ic recasting of Miranda, the sorcerer-master’s daughter, into Amanda, the native woman independence fighter, is the most meaningful and intimate incision that The Typhoon makes on The Tempest.

36 Although Sycorax could be another example, she is not present in the play the way Miranda is as both the object/subject of desire, which is the focus of Wynter’s argument.
In an important reading of *The Typhoon* as a 1970s South Korea science fiction, Sunyoung Park notes that the novel is innovative for its “transcendence of 1970s nationalist politics” but also criticizes the racializing and gendering tropes in the novel and its generalized geographic lumping together of Pacific islands. In fact, Park argues, the novel appears to draw the tropes of *Nanyang* literature and its orientalist depictions of exotic islands (Park 2018, 173). Per Park’s argument, the novel’s racializing and gendering language would irk most readers today every time Amanda appears in Otomenaku’s eyes as a tropical goddess with coconut breasts. However, I also see that it is possible to read these descriptions as precisely luring the readers in to take on the views of a colonized soldier who has internalized colonial and orientalist views of the islands, only to subvert these views one by one. Just as we are made to distance ourselves from Otomenaku’s passionate, then dissipating commitments to the ideologies of Japanese imperialism, I believe a more open-ended reading of the novel is possible here, in that the readers are also encouraged to participate in, then distance ourselves from Otomenaku’s impressions of Aisenodin throughout, leading to his conversion. The narrative is speculative in more than one sense, in that it not only alters historical events but also offers Otomenaku’s realizations of his own limits phenomenologically and dialectically. Rather than taking Otomenaku’s impressions at a face value, the readers are ambivalently folded into this world and must determine when to identify and disidentify with the ideologies to which Otomenaku subscribes. Otomenaku is rudely awakened from his sexual fantasies of Amanda. Considered within the broader adaptation of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and its postcolonial receptions examined in previous sections, *The Typhoon* is self-aware as to how colonial tropes of tropical islands surface in the original Shakespearean play; reading
the novel dialectically, as a move towards conversion and away from recantation in Takeuchi’s sense, and towards disidentification and away from identification, reveals that the critical distance that *The Typhoon* creates from Otomenaku’s changing views should also be understood as a speculative technique of the novel in addition to how it changes known histories.  

2.6 The Disciplinarity of the Colonial Archive

Alongside his relation to Amanda, Otomenaku undergoes a transformation through an alternative education in the colonial archive. In narratives about occupation and settler colonialism, the colonial archive can function as a mundane but searing reminder of the continuing control of the occupied population. For example, in *The Wild Sheep Chase* by Murakami Haruki (2015), a 1982 Japanese novel featuring Ainu displacement and wartime mobilization in Hokkaido, the settler colonial archive appears as a place that induces sleep and boredom. In *The Typhoon*, the colonial archive is a place that keeps one up at night catching up on the history one is prevented from learning. Otomenaku discovers a secret room full of colonial archival documents in the government building where he stays and oversees Karunosu’s imprisonment. The problem of not knowing one’s history is at first posed as a surface-level switching of academic disciplines. Therefore, Otomenaku laments that studying Napayu literature at the university has made him ignorant of world history, which he believes he would have learned had he chosen to study political science. He criticizes the disciplinarity of his literary knowledge, remarking, “Such a poor imagination. But on metafictional level, this is ironic given that the monologue takes place within a

37 By disidentification, I am invoking here José Esteban Muñoz’s description of the deliberate, ironic, and performative use of identities most “toxic” to oneself and “dis-”identifying with what one is presenting. See *Disidentifications* (Muñoz 1999).
literary text. That literary imagination which is dim on this bloody kernel of life” (Ch’oe 2009b, 126). Ironically, it is also the literary imagination that Ch’oe In-Hun uses in his writings to explore said “bloody kernel of life” and new modes of thinking and becoming.

Rather than a dismissal of literature and literary scholarship tout court, Ch’oe appears to be offering a critique of the aestheticization of politics under fascism and liberal capitalism, which artistic and academic productions have carried out uncritically (Benjamin 1979, 2010). In fact, Ch’oe values the speculative function of literary texts as a way of imagining a different world, and the breaking point of language at scenes of violence for their capacity to offer critical knowledge. Once Otomenaku embarks on a study of his own at the colonial archive, he realizes that it is not the superiority and inferiority of disciplines that barred him from understanding colonial history:

Now, Otomenaku no longer regretted that he did not study political science at university. Of course, nothing could be done about having been unable to learn what he should have, but belated as it is, Otomenaku is now studying immensely. Every night, he despaired. Line by line, the documents indicated that Otomenaku’s life until now has been in error. Aisenodin people’s faces that appeared so vulnerable were only one facet. The other facet raged, wailed, regretted, and sobbed. On this other side was the face of Nibrita that seared out the Aisenodin people to accuse, conciliate, degrade, and discipline. The documents were a trail of bloody footsteps left by something called politics. No political science textbook could teach a person with such thorough evidence and life-sized specimens as these. (Ch’oe 2009b, 149-50)

Otomenaku realizes that, rather than the problem of a single discipline, it is the compartmentalization of knowledge under the colonial production of knowledge that cannot and will not sufficiently capture the meticulous brutality of colonial rule. Knowledge is produced under colonial rule with “bloody footsteps,” and it would be naïve to seek this knowledge in political science textbooks offered by colonial education. Just as Caliban denounces Prospero’s books on magic, Otomenaku denounces what he took to be knowledge from scholarly disciplines dedicated to maintaining colonial rule. He realizes
that the colonial disciplining function of the aesthetic—the poetry of empires—is what recruited him into the colonial military and gave him a false image of himself. Upon realizing this, he seeks knowledge beyond colonial disciplinarity.

### 2.7 Bringing Invention into Being à la Fanon, Toward Relational Sovereignty

In his search, Otomenaku arrives at an alternative epistemology in the militarized conditions of the islands, which takes the shape of an orientation rather than a single discipline. In the process, *The Typhoon* rewrites the imperial *kamikaze* script into a symbolic rebirth, which makes possible a sociopolitical orientation toward indigenous sovereignty and decolonization. One climactic scene in the novel envisions political conversion as an affective opening. In a cave, Otomenaku contemplates suicide as the only logical end to his position. As an imperially mobilized subject from the colony facing the defeat of the empire and the rise of the insurgent indigenous movement on the island, he believes he should face death, as does the empire. To Otomenaku’s position, Karunosu suggests an alternative:

Karunosu’s surprising solution to a question no one seemed capable of solving. [Karunosu:] Do you not wish to become an Aisenodinian? [Otomenaku:] But I am an Aeroku-ian… [Karunosu:] You, too, can become Aisenodinian. You could even become Nibritanian, too. You can throw away a name that has run its relations (因緣 *inyŏn*). A person may be born once corporally, but as a person, as a social subject (社會的主體 *sahoejŏkchuch’e*), you can be reborn many times. Soon, you can participate in projects that you can carry out for the Aisenodin people [brackets have been added for clarity]. (Ch’oe 2009b, 492)

*Inyŏn*, the Sino-Korean word for “relations” that Karunosu uses, refers to relations between people, relations to things and concepts, and the history or causation behind an event. The word combines the Sino-characters 因 (read: in), which means to cause or to rely on, and
緣 (read: yŏn), which is a relation or a connection. By deploying the term *inyŏn*, Karunosu ironically shows that the invisible relation that connects one to the world can run its course if the unfolding trajectory of one’s becoming is confined by one’s place of birth or the singular corporeal body with which one is born. On who can claim to be an Aisenodinian, Amanda tells Otomenaku that many have migrated to the island but have since then reattuned their mode of living to respect the Aisenodin knowledge of living on the island. Anyone can become Aisenodinian, she asserts, only if they are affectively, socially, and politically committed to keep open the relationality that the island materializes. This has meant that many of its *arrivant* populations have fought in the Aisenodin battle for sovereignty against the two colonial occupations. The novel does not surmise that such “becoming indigenous” is an individualist transgression complicit in settler colonial practices of cultural appropriation and self-fashioning that undercut indigenous people’s resistance at large. Evident in Otomenaku’s continued struggle to forge a new path after the critical scene of symbolic rebirth, the novel questions any political and epistemic position as the conclusive truth of decolonization’s path.

Karunosu subverts here two key beliefs about subjectivity and political belonging inherent in the imperial *kamikaze* script that Otomenaku maintained, despite his disavowal of the imperial war efforts. First, Karunosu urges Otomenaku to reject the necropolitical logic of *kamikaze* that has asked of its colonized subjects to attain imperial humanity through death. Karunosu points out that Otomenaku’s attempt to commit suicide after realizing his conflicting position as a colonized subject who has failed to know himself, is tantamount to another form of colonial mobilization unto death. Why, Karunosu asks, does Otomenaku continue to commit himself to death even after *kamikaze* has been emptied of
its symbolic significance? Karunosu reasons that such renunciation through suicide hides Otomenaku’s continuing need for imperial recognition of his humanity.

The second belief that Karunosu subverts is innate and essential personhood. Karunosu shows personhood to be socially negotiated and constructed under colonial militarization, as Frantz Fanon and Sylvia Wynter have analyzed in the framework of the sociogenic and sociogenetic. Fanon uses the term sociogenic in his 1952 text *Black Skin, White Masks* to describe the social and colonial construction of Blackness that cannot be understood in individual (ontogenic) and evolutionary (phylogenetic) terms only (Fanon 2008). As Wynter argues, Fanon’s sociogenic approach put forward “a new theoretical object of knowledge, which enabled the calling in question of our present culture’s purely biological definition of what it is to be, and therefore what it is like to be human” (Wynter 2001, 2). Wynter deploys the term “sociogenetic” to highlight the fact that sociogeny exists in the biologically, genetically driven definition of the human that needs to be questioned and remade. To overcome the sociogenic/genetic determination of the colonized, Black, and native inhumanity, Wynter follows Fanon to argue that we must strive to “introduc[e] invention into existence” (Fanon 2008, 229, Wynter 2001, 33): to invent new modes of being human. I call this process of questioning existing sociogenetic codes and generating—genesis—new ones “spiritual sociogenesis” in order to highlight the spiritual dimension that grounds the social, and very much material, rebirth found in the novel.38

The scholarship on Wynter and Fanon uses the sociogeny of existing conditions of oppression in modernity coloniality interchangeably with sociogenesis; however, I wish to highlight here that sociogenesis has within it also the possibility for alternative realities and

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38 For Wynter’s provocation on the limits of Western thought in thinking about symbolic birth, see “‘Genital Mutilation’ or ‘Symbolic Birth?’” (1997).
a future wherein new modes of being human sprout from existing ones. I therefore use the
casion of the novel’s speculative proposal to consider sociogenesis in this futural
projection, to ask how sociogenic/genetic codes can be changed and generate new codes
and material realities. The efficacy of the sociogenetic, to my thinking here, on bringing
invention into being, is that the new social code in *The Typhoon* makes use of an existing
sociogenetic code of *kamikaze*. The novel criticizes *kamikaze*’s necropolitics and
structurally resignifies it into a process of rebirth after a certain kind of death. Spiritual
sociogenesis thus highlights the possibility of sociogenetic codes to generate that which
transcends its own imagined materiality.  

To live in a colonial world that denies one’s humanity, then, also necessitates a
reorientation toward a different political belonging enabling rebirth. For that, however, *The
Typhoon* makes a case against ethnic belonging as the only source of political belonging.
It contradicts Otomenaku’s initial belief that he must aspire to be a leader of the Aeroku
people because he was born in Aeroku, rather than take part in the immediate Aisenodin
resistance. The novel’s vision that the reunification of Aeroku-Korea is not premised on
nationalism based on ethnic unity but on the success of Aisenodin sovereignty offers a
potent counternarrative to the emphasis on *minjok* (ethnos) as the basis for the reunification
of Korea. This is also a commentary on the evocation of ethnic unity, a key component of
Park Jung Hee’s mobilization campaign in the 70s (Ryu 2018). Endorsements for Korean
reunification premised on ethnic homogeneity can elide the questions of exclusionary
belonging already existing in the present in South Korea for racialized subjects, including
displaced ethnic Koreans, from China, North Korea, Japan, South Asia, and Southeast Asia,

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39 I thank Rafael Vizcaíno for pushing me to more sharply articulate how I am developing the sociogenetic
from Wynter’s oeuvre.
which I examine in Chapter Four. Instead, the novel resignifies Otomenaku’s colonial mobilization to the war’s frontier through relational becoming, as an opening to transnational decolonial efforts and not (only) subjectivities of displacement.

It is therefore meaningful that Otomenaku acquires his new name, “Banya Kim.” This invented persona allows him to aid Aeroku’s reunification through the collective support from nonaligned countries. Different in Korean spelling but similar in pronunciation, the name Ba-nya (바냐) resembles the concept of Ban-ya (반야 般若).

Otomenaku’s new name signifies, in Dae-Sŏn-Gul-Gyo (Korean name for Mahāyāna Buddhism), the wisdom gained from realizing the truth of all beings. It is a Sino-linguistic transcription of the Sanskrit word prajñā (प्रज्ञा) and describes the process of the heart to overcome false categories and reach a deeper insight. The novel overlays the name’s significance as an important Buddhist symbolism with another meaning internal to the world of Otomenaku: his new name is also derived from the Aisenodin expression of love from the novel, “Banyawanga.” Meaning “forever,” the expression signifies in the novel a faith in a future even when it seems impossible.

Otomenaku’s symbolic rebirth as Banya Kim, therefore, rewrites the script of not only The Tempest narratives but also the other well-known typhoon, the kamikaze, through this inwardly turned dialectic. By situating The Tempest narratives in the Pacific history of the kamikaze and its necropolitical drive, The Typhoon tracks the divine wind of imperial wartime mobilization and criticizes the narrow category of the human—the humanitas—it promotes. Otomenaku-qua-Banya Kim notes at the end of the novel that there are “ways of surviving typhoons” (Ch’oe 2009b, 498), responding to the concerns from his multiracial and multicultural kin by choice about another approaching typhoons. One can understand
Otomenaku/Banya Kim’s statement, considering the novel’s trajectory, as an observation that surviving despair in the face of necropolitical humanity necessitates bringing invention into being, vis-a-vis Fanon and Wynter, by opening oneself up to the relations in the making and reorienting toward a better genre of being.

The fictional character Karunosu, of course, is inspired by the real-life Indonesian revolutionary Sukarno (1901–1970) who hosted the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung. Karunosu’s advice to Otomenaku in The Typhoon to adopt a new name can be understood as a revolutionary use of indigenous epistemology. In the Javanese custom of naming, children are given temporary names until they survive significant childhood illness, after which they are given another name. This is a single name, distinguished neither as the first name nor the surname. In fact, the name Sukarno has so confounded Western journalists that they gave him a made-up “first name” of Akmed when reporting. Following the Javanese custom, he was born with the name Kusno Sosrodihardjo and attained the name Sukarno after surviving childhood illness. While the Javanese naming practice is perhaps a communal solution to the high mortality rate of newborns, it also suggests an understanding of social becoming as a transformative embodiment based on, and enabled by, the porosity of the bodily self that is accentuated through illness.

In mourning the loss of the imperial body of the emperor he was promised in kamikaze, Otomenaku gains a new body as Banya Kim. The spiritual sociogenesis found in The Typhoon’s rewriting of kamikaze is a process of spiritual transformation in which illness might be understood as the necessary ceremonial occasion that allows reattunement of one’s senses, priorities, and ways one relates to others and the world around one. A similar understanding of illness can be found in the concept of “신병 (神病 shinbyŏng, or
‘god/spirit illness’) in Korean shamanism, where illness is seen as possession by a spirit-ancestor. These understandings significantly differ from the restorative trajectory of an ill body approximating normative health, as in Western medical sciences. The opening up of the bounded self through illness results in a permanently transformed embodiment that is more an opening of a new horizon than a seeking of a different discipline or tradition of knowledge. Otomenaku gestures toward this new understanding of knowledge when he observes toward the end of The Typhoon that:

Science, in fact should be a spirit (神 chŏngshin) that considers all worldly conditions, but through wrong customs, it has been emphasized as a study of departments (학 kwaŭihak), in other words, detailed knowledge of parts. This has led to the tendency to refer to the most comprehensive perceptions not as science but as art, but in fact, this is science. Karunosu was a person who perfected religion, science, and democracy. (Ch'oe 2009b, 484)

The novel suggests that decolonial knowledge production needs to reflect this spiritual becoming rather than reify disciplinary knowledge. Otomenaku calls Karunosu’s decolonial orientation “science” and not only “art,” questioning the authority endowed through the modern colonial definition of science. Redefining science as spiritual sociogenesis and not (only) a product of a Western knowledge system, the novel gives new life to knowledge production and its possibility to remake the world. This gesture, replicated on the material level, is part and parcel of overcoming the colonial compartmentalization of militarized geography.

If we retrieve the significance of Banya in Buddhism, we might see an intentional echoing here, of applying Banya to the nature of knowledge to see beyond the “false categories” or compartmentalized knowledge created to serve colonization. The novel thus offers a newly signified mobility from the raw materials of oppression and mobilization, a
commentary on the context in which culture is subjected to economic development and authoritarianism in the 1970s South Korea. While Ch’oe’s move can be seen as a fantastical diversion from the brutal realities of authoritarianism in South Korea, the novel thereby overcomes the compartmentalization of the Pacific and connects to the greater imperative to decolonize through transnational alliances. This renewed mobility points beyond imperial death, towards relational becoming.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how affective, spiritual, and environmental transformations are imagined as changing the course of military mobilization of colonized subjects in the Pacific. The 1970s South Korean novel, resonant with The Tempest narrative and its adaptation in the Caribbean, critically reprises the imperial mobilization and immobilization persistent throughout the Cold War and the present. Although Ch’oe In-Hun passed away on 23 July 2018 without seeing the results of the ongoing developments between the two Koreas, his work continues to provoke through its imagination of decolonial futures and its incisions into the colonial present.

In connection to my discussions in Chapter One, Ch’oe deepens Takeuchi’s notion of “conversion” through this unending becoming, also recasting the spirit of Bandung in the transpacific beyond what Takeuchi’s Pan-Asianism imagines, to consider it in the terms of native sovereignty struggles. Returning to Japan’s late colonial period of the 1940s and reversing the directionality of recantation, The Typhoon’s revolutionary mobilization as conversion turns away from military occupation and imperial recantation towards indigenous sovereignty. Contrary to imperial Pan-Asianism’s militarization of the Pacific or the U.S. Obama-era policy of “Pivot” to Asia, this reorientation towards indigenous
sovereignty enables a different form of movement against the rhetoric of war (Chow 2006, Maldonado-Torres 2008, Massumi 2015). In re-imagining the history of the Koreas and the Bandung conference, Ch’oe expands the spirit of Bandung by revisiting colonial-fascist mobilization during the Pacific war in the 1940s.

In Indonesia’s own history, Sukarno’s direction undermined the projects of other indigenous groups that were non-Javanese within Indonesia (i.e. the Aceh movement). While self-determination was one of the main frameworks of the Bandung Conference, nationalist developmentalism informed by Cold War binary politics rendered indigeneity largely absent in the ensuing “Bandung Regimes.” Such limits notwithstanding, Ch’oe’s novel in this sense offers a critical reflection on the nature of mobilization and indigenous politics at the crossings of empire that made the otherwise imagination of Bandung conference possible. Significantly, political and spiritual vigilance against self and others who can always be mobilized towards imperial ends is ongoing rather than a fait accompli. The spirit of Bandung, then, describes this transformation, prescribing critical vigilance that accompanies a transformative movement through negation.

The spirit of Bandung and indigenous sovereignty politics thus become vital guideposts for navigating Cold War militarism and (neo)colonial histories. That the conference took place in Indonesia, the world’s largest archipelagic state (Roberts and Stephens 2017, 7) demands a re-centering of the indigenous sovereignty politics of the Pacific toward the politics of Bandung. It challenges the development-focused nation-state projects to which many of the Bandung nations succumbed over time, intensified by new generation of leaders uninterested in critiques of imperialism, something against which Fanon famously forewarned (Fanon 2004).
As interlocking militarization has turned people into displaced migrants and refugees (Espiritu 2014), the task of undoing the work of militarization remains. The extent of militarization of archipelagoes and the difficulty of confronting militarization’s linked layers are evident in the endeavors of Pacific islands to remove military bases. What is imaginable for Korean reunification is circumscribed by the fleeting moments of hopeful and disappointing peace talks for Korea. However, it remains necessary to seek beyond the terms of the peninsula and its strategic archipelagos, for a relational sovereignty that is irreducible to the logic of territories and occupation.
CHAPTER THREE

A Crip Ghost Dance: Survivance and the Poetics of Sabotage

in Gerald Vizenor and Cathy Park Hong

My life ended before the bomb. My life started with the occupation. My father sent me away. My father was an army sergeant. My mother was a cripple. My mother was a bugi dancer. My only friends are lepers. My only friends are orphans.

—Gerald Vizenor, Hiroshima Bugi

Enact the role of seers, dancing a toll, a toll, misleading travelers to stumble into mines from last era’s war

—Cathy Park Hong, Dance Dance Revolution

This chapter approaches the “speculative” through two millenarian dances performed by people as they faced a new century and its uncertainties. In the late 19th Century, the Paiute prophet Wodziwob had visions that the dead would return, white settlers would suddenly disappear due to earthquakes, and natives would be able to enjoy the earth and its goods. To usher in this reality sooner, Wodziwob, Tavibo, and his son Wovoka disseminated the “Ghost Dance” among several Native American communities, from Nevada to the Missouri River to the Canadian border. About a century later, in 1998, near the end of Japan’s bubble economy, a popular Japanese arcade game, DDR, short for “Dance Dance Revolution,” also the title of the poem examined in this chapter, was invented. Consisting of a player stepping promptly within the small station marked with six arrows and a center square, the fun and the difficulty of the game lay in the creative contortions one must make to meet all the dizzying steps. The limitation of having to stay on the small square requires elaborate bodily adjustments from the players and quickness to respond to the anticipated moves.

This chapter brings together the odd game of dancing in place and the millenarian dance of natives to consider the making of decolonial mobility. In place of the screen-
prompted footsteps of DDR, the kinds of “dances” in this chapter are performed in imaginary desert minefields; the locked down streets of Kwangju, South Korea; the commemorative park built on the ruins of atomic bombing in Hiroshima, Japan; and the White Earth reservation—sites connected by the militarization of the Pacific and marked by the lasting reverberations of imperialism’s violence. Still, DDR is an apt metaphor for the kinds of necessary creativity daily performed by people living under occupation, a metaphor that the Korean American poet Cathy Park Hong runs far with in her speculative poem, a metaphor matched by the “dances” in Gerald Vizenor’s “kabuki” novel, such as the Ghost Dance and “Boogi Woogi.” What is depicted in these works hardly resemble the familiar notion of dance, performed in disabling conditions. Yet, the works also refuse to equate political mobility with normative physical and social mobility, asking instead what creative forms of mobility arise from the material and physical restrictions faced by the occupied. Embodied but not necessarily acrobatic or capacitated, these works gesture towards the decolonial possibilities born of immobilization and the summoning of a different future, all performed in one’s place.

In the fictions of Gerald Vizenor and Cathy Park Hong, Hiroshima Bugi and Dance Dance Revolution, this chapter finds the creation of new movements against the immobilizing forces of militarization and settler colonialism. These new movements are noteworthy for the centrality of disabled embodiments and immobilization in formulating

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40 The three real sites—Kwangju, Hiroshima, and White Earth Reservation—also rate high in environmental damage and post-traumatic stress disorder, a form of disability, as a result of their respective histories of state violence.

41 In “Moving Materiality: People, Tools, and This Thing Called Disability,” Danielle Peers and Lindsay Eales describe their dance performance piece involving wheelchair use to reflect on the variety of ways of moving and the social, physical, and political mobilities that are negotiated by subjects with disability. This reflection sheds light on the connection between dance and the navigation of obstacles that variously disabled people face in systems and environments constructed without their needs in mind (Peers and Eales 2017).
such, conditions that are often posited as the antithesis of mobility, progress, and futurity in the very language and image one uses to describe the latter. Narrative treatments of disabled embodiments and immobilization in occupation and war tend to marginalize them from the viewpoint of an able-bodied temporality and end with resignation or the recognition that disablement is an outcome of the uncontrollable forces of geopolitics.\(^2\) However, Vizenor and Hong begin with, rather than end with, the recognition that disablement and immobilization are outcomes of military occupation across the Pacific. In seeing their fictions as taking a crip approach to settler colonial occupation, crip describing the potential and desire of nonnormative bodyminds as elaborated in the Introduction of the dissertation, then can begin to pursue a question more important and interesting than that of political mobilization premised on restoration of individual capacities: how might liberatory politics shaped by disabling embodiments recalibrate the conception of mobility needed to overcome the very structures of occupation?

In what follows, I examine how the material conditions of occupation give way to epistemologies and practices towards a speculative future. I argue that “survivance” and the “poetics of sabotage”—two key concepts from the fictions—interweave linguistic and material concerns under occupation to offer mobility as a kind of dancing in place that summons a future beyond occupation. Moreover, relevant to the discussion of settler colonialism’s political division of the occupied in my dissertation at large, these fictions each recode the positionalities of the diaspora and the indigenous, from one of ambivalent

\(^2\) A paradigmatic example of such narrative treatment can be found in films dealing with veteran masculinity. For example, postwar films such as *The Men* (1950) featuring Marlon Brando as a paraplegic veteran, follow the arc of rejection to recognition of disablement as an outcome of war (Zinnemann 1950). One can observe in such instances when and where disabled embodiment becomes symbolically charged why it becomes necessary to read them as tragic.
opposition under settler colonialism into that of coalition and indecent crossings of species boundaries. Tactile experiences, spiritual significations, trickster moves, and intentional linguistic opacity name some of the components of such crossings wherein “new ceremonies” are found, in Sylvia Wynter’s words (Wynter 1984). These daily acts of creativity, understood here as a crip dance, hail realities beyond the one dictated under occupation’s strict regime of movement.

3.1 Survivance in Gerald Vizenor’s Hiroshima Bugi

This section turns to the Anishinaabe thinker and writer Gerald Vizenor’s concept of survivance. I analyze his “nuclear kabuki novel” Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57 (2003) as an example of decolonizing mobility in the transpacific, broaching the questions of indigeneity and disability under military occupation. Set between Japan and the White Earth Reservation surrounded by Minnesota, U.S., the novel offers an example of mobility that seeks to overcome the confines of imperialist control of the body, settler colonial occupation, and racialized anthropocentrism. Its version of the Ghost Dance—“the Ghost Parade”—demonstrates how the memory of war and occupation constantly undergoes construction and reinforcement, neither set in stone nor entirely past. Those deemed immobile and static in this construction, however, find inventive ways of challenging notions of stasis and immobility through tactile, spiritual, and trickster engagements with their surroundings and imperialist ideologies. They put into question the monopolizing frame that defines immobility as devoid of political action and stasis as devoid of change, instead calling on survivance to reveal native, diasporic, and crip conceptions of movement that exist within the imposition of immobility in the transpacific. “Crip” describes the methodologies and experiences encapsulated by disability movements and scholarship.
Both a verb and adjective, it has made important interventions in studies of politics and embodiment. In this chapter, I argue that the dance against settler colonialism explores where crip meets the politics and spirituality of ushering in life beyond occupation.

3.1.1 Survivance and Perfect Memory

*Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57* tells the stories of a war orphan Ronin Browne (also known as Mifune) and a series of episodes set in Japan through which Ronin protests the notion of peace maintained by the diplomacy between the postwar U.S. and Japan. Ronin is the son of Nightbreaker, an Anishinaabe soldier of the U.S. army during its occupation of postwar Japan, and a Japanese boogie woogie dancer who gives Ronin away to an orphanage for mixed-race, “hafu” children. As unwelcome reminders of the U.S. postwar occupation of Japan, the children were deemed “the untouchables of war and peace” (Vizenor 2003, 22) by both the U.S. and Japan. The novel recounts that most multi-racial Japanese children were barred entry to the U.S. because of the U.S. immigration law’s exclusion of Japanese people at the time and they simultaneously faced the burden of assimilating in Japan as racialized war orphans. Ronin, however, bypasses this fate of many war orphans thanks to his father’s Native American community, who adopt him. Although Nightbreaker dies from cancer caused by radiation exposure before learning of Ronin’s existence, the White Earth Reservation of Minnesota “petitioned federal officials to set aside immigration laws and allow a native child to return to his family” and this “special

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43 Robert McRuer’s *Crip Theory* explores ways in which disability and sexuality co-define each other in ways that “crip’s” distinction from disabled subjectivity doesn’t dematerialize embodiment the way “queer” does (McRuer 2006). Alison Kafer’s approach in *Feminist, Queer, Crip* engages crip through the question of temporality in the debates in queer studies and ways in which queer temporality is exceed by disability debates (Kafer 2013). See Sami Schalk’s rumination on the interstices of queer, crip, and race in “Coming to Claim Crip” (Schalk 2013)
legislation…without a specific family” was permitted only because the Congress “wanted easy access to natural resources of the reservation” (24), a process that reveals the careful negotiation performed by the native community to enable Ronin’s return. Indeed, the formal organization of the novel reinforces the White Earth Reservation’s and the Native American veterans’ embrace of Ronin. The novel is pieced together through the story-ing practice of the elder survivors of war at the Hotel Manidoo Inn in Nogales, Arizona. Gathered to both heal and learn, they recount their stories and build the novel, based on notes about Ronin’s experience they received. Through this story-ing practice, Ronin and friends become warriors/samurai against the settler colonialism and imperialism of both the U.S. and Japan. Curiously, the novel focuses not on Ronin’s experience on the reservation so much as on how he enacts Anishinaabe practices in the margins of postwar Japan under U.S. occupation.

In this reconstruction, the members of the native veteran community offer annotations on the mix of Japanese cultural and historical references and Ainu (the indigenous people in northern areas of Japan and the Sakhalin islands) references. Their diligent annotation draws a connection between settler colonialism against indigenous people in both the U.S. and Japan. Alternating between an episode of Ronin’s adventures and an explanation of references in the preceding narrative, the novel is organized to reflect the multiple layers of voices, languages, and cultures that give meaning to the story of “survivance,” as active resistance to settler colonialism. Such a process of piecing back together a memory of Ronin’s endeavors allows the veterans to be present as more than survivors of settler colonialism and multiple wars of the U.S. It allows them an opportunity to connect with the native diaspora produced by war and displacement, such as Ronin. The
repetition of motifs and key expressions also bring new meanings and irony, reflecting the significance of oral traditions in storytelling. Native American “rhetorical sovereignty,” a term coined by Scott Richard Lyons to refer to the co-constitution of political sovereignty and rhetoric for Native American politics (Lyons 2000), here serves a crucial role in taking a step further to cross the boundaries of species, race, and international law, prompting one to think about how occupation shapes but does not overdetermine the modes of “presence” that the targets of occupation live out.\footnote{Rhetorical sovereignty encompasses what distinguishes Native American sovereignty and the significance of rhetoric to exercise that sovereignty. Lisa King, King Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson write: “With the coinage of ‘rhetorical sovereignty,’ Scott Richard Lyons (2000) has provided scholars and teachers of American Indian rhetorics with a powerful frame through which to read those rhetorical practices and a challenge...Political sovereignty is, in many respects, what sets indigenous nation-peoples apart from being only another ‘minority’ in the United States or anywhere on their homelands (Grande 2008)...sovereignty has become a touchstone for any discussion of indigenous rhetors’, rhetoricians’, communities,’ and peoples’ inherent ‘right and ability...to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit...to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse’ (Lyons 2000, 449-50) [items appear as cited in the original]” (King, Gubele, and Anderson 2015, 8)} The novel pays special attention to the presence of disability as an outcome of occupation and to the fleshly, embodied potential of native spiritual practices, as examined ahead in greater detail through the example of tattoos. This connection between disability and embodied native practices offers a meaningful way to think about the bridge between military occupation, disability, and spirituality. I argue that such a move to locate spiritual politics in the disabled body and the practice of retelling across the radiation survivors (hibakusha), bi-racial war orphans, feral mixed breed ‘mongrels’ (dogs), a veteran amputee, and a ‘leper’ (a pejorative term for people with Hansen’s disease) suggest how survivance offers a way to decolonize mobility in the transpacific. Narratives and rhetoric here function as a Ghost Dance that reconstitutes the material reality of occupation into political and spiritual enactments of the occupied.
Embodiment becomes the compass for a decolonial future rather than a marker of a victimized past through the hermeneutic possibilities opened by communal story-ting.

A key concept in Vizenor’s novel and his other writings, survivance is distinct from survival in the way it redefines temporality and challenges the assumptions of victimhood attached to survival. Proposed by Gerald Vizenor as a Native American practice and analytic, survivance is “an active resistance and repudiation of dominance, obtrusive themes of tragedy, nihilism, and victimry…a practice, not an ideology, dissimulation, or a theory” (Vizenor 2008, 11). As Lisa King, Rose Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson clarify, “survivance is survival and resistance together: surviving the documented, centuries-long genocide of American Indian peoples and resisting still the narratives and policies that seek to marginalize—yes, still now—assimilate indigenous peoples” (King, Gubele, and Anderson 2015, 7). Vizenor describes survivance as the culmination of heard stories in Native communities that reject the romantic-tragic hero role given to Native Americans as “antiselves” in settler cultures:

Nicknames, dreams, and shamanic visions are tribal stories that are heard and remembered as survivance…these stories are not the same as translation and representational autobiographies…the awareness of coincidence in stories is much more sophisticated in tribal memories than in the tragic flaws of a consumer culture, and even wiser are the tribal memories that endured the colonial discoveries of antiselves and the cruelties of a chemical civilization. [For example,] Wovoka, the inspiration of the Ghost Dance religion, received many letters from tribal people who had heard about his vision…their memories and survivance were heard and read in more than one language (bracket added for clarity). (Vizenor 1994, 104-5)

Importantly, survivance uses native epistemologies to overcome past and ongoing settler colonial violence.45 It weaves presence—the endurance of Native Americans past ongoing

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45 Although Jacques Derrida had coined and used the term “survivance,” which Vizenor engages, for the purposes of this discussion I will focus on the specific significance of survivance in Native American theory and its relevance for thinking about the transpacific in my dissertation. Vizenor explains his expansive use of “survivance” thus:
genocide—with absence—referring to both the active erasure of Native Americans and their replacement with romantic “antiselves” as well as the ancestors who are absented in the denial of Native beliefs. This allows a comprehensive view of native realities beyond the narrowly defined one of representation and documentation. Such a distinction is exemplified in Vizenor’s description of the presence of the “fourth person” as a temporality of survivance that “intimate(s) a third person other than the apparent referent…the storied presence of a fourth person” who is repudiated as a legal witness because they are no longer alive (Vizenor 2008, 2). Rather than a haunting, this presence/absence points to an enriched reality that is arrived at through communal and oral storying practices, emphasizing that no individual trauma or efforts can come to define a singular memory. Because survivance relies on such roles of the dead within story-ing itself, survivance exceeds survival’s focus on those who are alive. Survivance also thereby exceeds the documentation and representation of the survivors that fall into an “enterprise of resistance.”

Similarly, the practice of “story-ing” does not identify one as a victim to be commemorated and mourned; instead it brings ironic depth to the memory of a struggle that is ongoing in narrative reconstruction. Survivance, understood through Hiroshima Bugi, as we shall see, situates

“[in Archive Fever] Derrida observes that the ‘afterlife [survivance] no longer means death and the return of the specter, but the surviving of an excess of life which resists annihilation.’ Derrida would surely have embraced a more expansive sense of the word survivance, as he had done with the différance. Peggy Kamuf points out in A Derrida Reader that the suffix ance…‘can point to an operation that is not that of a subject or an object,’ a ‘certain nontransitivity.’ Survivance, in this sense, could be the fourth person or voice in native stories [italics are original]” (Vizenor 2008, 21).

Vizenor distinguishes tribal testimonies from the documentation and representation in settler colonial contexts that flatten the ironic depth of survivance: “Native American Indian imagination and the pleasures of language games are disheartened in the manifest manners of documentation and the imposition of cultural representation; tribal testimonies are unheard, and tricksters, the wild ironies of survivance, transformation, natural reason, and liberation in stories, are marooned as obscure moral simulations in translations” (Vizenor 1994, 76). This distinction between testimony and documentation can also be understood alongside the problem of representation explored in the context of the Kwangju uprising in the next section with Cathy Park Hong’s poem. Vizenor likewise criticizes the commercialization of resistance when he writes, “resistance is a simulation that supersedes the real in performance, but the tribal real is not an enterprise of resistance” (Vizenor 1994, 154).
one in communal efforts towards the achievement of a “perfect memory” as a foundation and aim of politics.

Trickster narratives also bring to story-ing practices a deliberate lightness in order to avoid a tragic mood of victimhood. Vizenor describes trickster narratives as “suspensive…contradictions not representations of culture” (Vizenor 1994, 170). The suspense/suspension here comes from facing the contradictions and fears of imperial cultures with imagination in order to liberate narratives from hierarchies. Humor and irony are especially important to the critical distinction that *Hiroshima Bugi* creates between survivance and various forms of memorialization, such as visual documentations of disfigurement and narratives of survival. Irony brings the readers’ attention to the contradictions of imperial cultural tropes, and humor mocks the affective registers of propriety and tragedy that the imperialist culture uses towards those it marginalizes and whose meaning making it surveils. For example, irony and humor are particularly effective in scenes of police interrogation and at sites of national memorialization. Ronin’s statements are often taken as “jokes,” and through his “teases,” he interjects what he understands to be Native truths into his interrogators’ pre-made narratives of public safety and policing in postwar Japan. The trickster provokes, rather than accepts, through teases and detach truth values from the affective registers of sincerity and earnestness promoted by settler-imperial cultures. For example, at the Peace Memorial Museum memorializing the atomic bombing, Ronin “shouted sections of some letters and by the wild tone of my voice turned the fake sincerity into irony. An eager crowd gathered…misconstrued my

47 I am paraphrasing here the following quote from Vizenor for facility in reading: “the shadows, and presence of tribal traditions, have no hierarchies in libraries, because interpretations are signatures of imagination and the liberation of narratives. These are not the binaries of savagism and civilization; rather, the paradoxes of narrative fear, the suspension of domination, and survivance hermeneutics” (Vizenor 1994, 170).
irony, because they applauded my performance” (Vizenor 2003, 82). Ronin’s provocations often disrupt the dyadic positions of the victim and aggressor, as well as the memorialization practices that use images of violence as a shorthand for the nation-state’s sincerity in pursuing peace. A key example of the latter in the novel is the facile use of the images of hibakushas’ disfigurement in the Peace Museum in Hiroshima, presented as Japan’s commitment to not repeat the atrocities of World War II as a victim nation. Ronin claims that the column of peace letters at the Peace Memorial Museum “worst of the occasional politics of peace and victimry. The museum elevates the peace letters, the government solicits a free ride on the passive road to peace” (Vizenor 2003, 81). The contradiction of Japan’s imperial culture that the trickster narrative unravels is that overcoming imperialist aggression lies outside the realm of documentative testimonials of the space of the museum and the postwar culture of peace.

Indeed, the key distinction between imperial victimhood and survivance is that imperial victimhood puts wounds of the occupation and the nuclear bomb on display as a cautionary tale, all the while those embodying such wounds live just outside of the museum in the peace park as loiterers without property, regularly subjected to policing measures. The temporal logic, of a past atrocity to be avoided, deployed by the Peace Museum resembles the settler colonial temporality that sees Natives as relics of the past. The simulaic display of native culture acquires cultural significance in lieu of those surviving the settler state as “post-Indian” in Vizenor’s term. The display of hibakusha and “human damage” in the Peace Memorial Museum evokes both the desirous consumption of violence and solemn horror. The visual documentation here produces a tragic mood while justifying the narrow notion of peace as that between state level actors enforced through
imperialist negotiations in the Pacific. By contesting Japan’s imperialist culture and criticizing a passive notion of peace promoted after WWII, *Hiroshima Bugi* avoids the reification of non-Western contexts within the binary of the U.S. versus Japan that might view the Japanese state as an ultimate victim of war. Rather, by emphasizing Japanese settler colonialism of the Ainus and its biopolitics that excludes the “damned,” the novel finds alternative modes of movement among the variously excluded and the indigenous people living under settler colonialism.

**3.1.2 Tactile Ceremonies against Sterilization**

In *Hiroshima Bugi*, tactile qualities of the occupation gain significance in relation to disabled and ill embodiments.48 Narrowing the distance between the one who gazes and the one who is gazed at, the act of touching allows those at the peace park to confirm the possibilities of their skin to be more than testimonial scars of the nuclear war.49 The skin is indeed of particular importance to characters with Hansen’s disease (pejoratively known as leprosy) and amputation in the novel. Oshima, a central character, is named after the island to which he was isolated and institutionalized for sixty years as part of the Japanese government’s segregationist policy towards people with Hansen’s disease. As a gesture of

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48 Linda Lizut Helstern has similarly observed, “In *Hiroshima Bugi* the interplay of race, disability, and gender across cultures reveals the very mechanisms of dominance, making processes intellectually comprehensible that are in fact external to the individual” and that “Perfect Memory focuses relentlessly and unsentimentally on the body, and more specifically upon the body as social construction” (Helstern 2008, 165). I would add, by way of emphasis, however, that this social construction of the body in *Hiroshima Bugi* is also the materiality of the body in occupation; a closer look at scenes of disabled embodiments reveals the imbrication of materiality and social construction of the body. In fact, although Helstern argues that “stasis is death” and “to live is to move” in Vizenor’s works (171), the binaries of life/death and movement/stasis are questioned as material and social constructions rather than endorsed as truths in such scenes of disabled embodiments in *Hiroshima Bugi*.

49 On the acts of staring/gazing and being stared/gazed at, one might think of the various ways in which disability, racialization, and gendering have shaped the dynamic as explored by Rosemarie Garland Thompson, Laura Mulvey, and Frantz Fanon, among others (Mulvey 2009, Garland-Thomson 2009, Fanon 2008).
forgiveness of the government that has alienated them for their illness, the island’s people cultivate a chrysanthemum, also the imperial seal of Japan, that wins a national prize. Yet, upon the discovery of its cultivators, the government sterilizes the flowers, which ends up killing the flowers and ultimately the island’s community that cultivated them. Oshima relays, “My friends died too, outcasts, suicide by desolation, when we learned that the chrysanthemums had been sterilized because we were lepers. Those beautiful blooms died because of our terrible devoted touch of leprosy” (Vizenor 2003, 5). Living on with this history, Oshima finds in the company of Ronin and the mongrels at the peace park an opportunity to inhabit “public” spaces he had been denied, where his very presence was coded as a threat to “public health.” The novel proceeds to offer scenes of tactile ceremonies that honor Oshima’s artistry and present the skin as a contact space for playful expression and connection rather than a threshold of contagion.

In these scenes, tactile acceptance is juxtaposed with the reluctance of various authorities and police investigators to come into physical contact with people suspected of having illness or disability. The dynamic of detection here relies on visible cues indicative of unhealth, and the use of gloves as a hygiene and police measure allows the inspectors to avoid touching the suspected person. Ronin’s kin’s “trickster tease,” however, juxtaposes such accepted visible semiotics of physical intimacy and health, especially the assumption that those who are “healthy” would not touch those who are not. For example, playing with these assumptions enable them to confuse the police and an interrogative hotel manager and cleverly defuse the suspicion that Oshima is a “leper.” Miko, a Japanese shaman, holds Oshima’s bare hands while others wear gloves, only to reveal upon police pressure that those with gloves in fact do not have Hansen’s disease. Ronin’s kin indeed play with the
norms of gaping consumption of the display of bodily difference exemplified by the Peace Museum and the police, that is accompanied by tactile aversion and selective hygiene enforcements. Such a scene taunts the contradictions of postwar Japan’s biopolitical surveillance of illness and disability, which seeks to identify and isolate populations with illness and disability while also deploying them as visual representations of unhealth to advance Japan’s national claim to victimhood.

Away from the museum’s lip service paid to peace, the novel finds tactile ceremonies outside. If the scenes of subverting suspicion critique the state’s biopolitics and surveillance practices, in another, Oshima’s participation in a public bath affirms his belonging through the act of sharing water as a therapeutic practice. Public baths in Japan and Korea prohibit people with “abnormal” skin conditions (judged by the visible detection of skin disease or tattoo) from entering as part of public hygiene campaigns and the association of tattoo with criminality. Oshima’s experience with tattooed Ronin and Kitsutsuki, an amputee with a wooden leg who lost his family to the atomic bomb—presents an alternative scene of pleasure and acceptance that challenges the museum’s logic of gaping at wounds. The trickster discourse indeed presents Kitsutsuki as owning many limbs rather than lacking one, limbs which have been confiscated and stored by the police around the peace park. Kitsutsuki’s wooden limbs are elaborately carved to remember the forgotten “nuclear deads” (56), supporting him in his movement around the city of Hiroshima. Kitsutsuki’s “ghost” limbs and their sensations are acknowledged as tactile experiences alongside those of the bath and tattoo on the flesh, celebrated in the Ghost Parade each morning as his wooden legs function as a “gate for the phantoms of the city” (Vizenor 2003, 57).
Moreover, such practices on the skin address the trauma of isolation and institutionalization for those who call the Peace Park their home. In this sense, tattooing in the novel materially embodies survivance. Through Ainu tattoos made with invisible ink, Ronin’s body tells the stories of his mother, his history as a product of the U.S. occupation of Japan, and Anishinaabe trickster stories. As the tattoo only appears when he is immersed in hot water, seeing, touching, and hearing the stories behind the tattoo are premised on entering the space of the bath that is intimate but also semi-public. Entering the bath moves away from the stigma of contagion and occupation-caused disability to not only touching but also immersing oneself in water with others. Through the medium of the water and steam, the skin here becomes an invitation to remember differently together and honor the dead. Inspired by Ronin’s tattoo of symbols of his mother and the first flower grown in Hiroshima after the bombing, Miko receives an invisible tattoo that depicts Oshima’s hands holding up the prize Chrysanthemum. Her tattoo honors the life-producing work of the people with Hansen’s disease rather than memorializing their experience as a visual metaphor for national trauma. The tattoo’s vanishing quality as the skin cools adds to the symbolic resilience of the tattoo as “perfect memory.” The tattoo is then also the concurrent refusal to serve as a documentation of state victimhood, viewed from a safe distance.

3.1.3 Tattoo as Transpacific Writing

Language and translation are fundamental components of the imperialist culture in that colonized people’s linguistic capacities are deployed to serve the greater war game between settler colonial nations.\(^{50}\) Indeed, Ronin’s travel between the White Earth

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\(^{50}\) I continue to explore this dynamic in the next section’s analysis on *DDR*. 
Reservation and Japan and his visit to the Ainu people ironically reenacts Ranald MacDonald’s travel to Japan, the first translator of English in Japan who took an interest in Ainu culture because of his Native American ancestry. Nightbreaker, Ronin’s father, also comes to Japan as a Native American translator, as part of the U.S. army during WWII. *Hiroshima Bugi* thus points to the symbolic position of a translator that Native Americans have served, especially in wartimes, as coders (Vizenor 2017, 11) in the figures of MacDonald and Nightbreaker. Yet unlike them, Ronin is a rogue translator, deliberately creating mistranslation and nonsense by mixing English and Japanese to impede rather than facilitate translations. His mistranslations and nonsense responses reveal uncomfortable truths of imperialist violence and the simulated nature of narratives about native people and survivors of war.

In this context, the tattoo practices of the Ainus and Anishinaabes are also writings that intervene in the use of language and translation for imperialism. The Ainu understanding of tattoo as a “spiritual writing” and a spiritual contract also questions the boundaries of language and representation that are policed in settler colonialism. Historically, settler colonialism against the Ainu people was carried out through various cultural erasures, including the prohibition of distinct Ainu tattoo rituals. Ronin’s tattoos are both political and spiritual acts within the transpacific indigenous politics of sovereignty against these measures. Not only does Ronin refuse to serve in the preassigned role of a native informant-translator in the postwar U.S. occupation of Japan, but also, he

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51 Ann-Elise Lewallen has analyzed the rise of blood rhetoric in settler colonial eugenics later adopted by Ainu people to reinforce cultural authenticity and lineage (Lewallen 2016). Along with the analyses of how blood and DNA have served to curtail rather than enable greater practice of political and cultural sovereignty for native communities of North America (TallBear 2013, Kauanui 2008), Lewallen argues that even the choice of which tradition to revive likewise relies on the visual vibrancy of the tradition, making practices such as *upsorkut*, a textile cord worn by women, a less likely choice than tattoo.
creates and shares tactile and visual narratives of survivance through the material medium that is most contested for those excluded from the postwar Japanese national politics in the novel: the skin. Through tattoos, language is freed from a singular weaponization under imperialism and vacuous representation of a liberal notion of peace and victimhood. For this reason, tattooing as an act of survivance is practiced in Native American youth movements against settler colonialism in and out of Standing Rock (Pember 2018). As an inter-Indigenous linguistic practice in *Hiroshima Bugi* and beyond, tattoos render the materiality of language in Ainu and Anishinaabe survivance through the medium of the skin into perfect memory.

### 3.1.4 Spiritual Motion Beyond Victimhood and “Toxic” Environments

Most evident in Ronin’s father Nightbreaker’s death from “radiation disease,” *Hiroshima Bugi* connects the harms of nuclear weapon uses in Hiroshima and Nevada through the life trajectory of Nightbreaker: “Hiroshima he might have survived, had he not been ordered a few years later to witness nuclear tests at Yucca Flat in Nevada” (Vizenor 2003, 18). The annotated Manidoo Envoy borrows from Reason Warehime’s report on Nagasaki and the Nevada Test Site to explain that many men lost their hair and teeth from their involvement (Vizenor 2003, 20).

Through Nightbreaker’s travels and death, *Hiroshima Bugi* marks the environmental devastation, trauma, and debilitation shared across the ocean between the Native American reservations and Hiroshima. Native communities seeking redress from the U.S. government continue to document and study

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52 Reason Wareheim worked at the Nevada Test Site in 1953. He later participated as a witness to the 1987 lawsuit by veterans against the Veterans Administration that demanded the veterans’ “right to have lawyers, not social workers, represent their radiation exposure claims” (AP News “Decorated Ex-Marine with Cancer Testifies Against VA”).
the disproportionate harms on Native Americans from nuclear testing. The Western Shoshone tribes, whose land in Nevada has been confiscated by the U.S. government for nuclear testing, “are the most bombed nation on the earth: 814 nuclear tests have been done on their land since 1951. Substantial radioactive fallout has contributed to a high concentration of cancer and leukemia on the reservation” (Cultural Survival 1993). Militarization and settler colonialism here intersect to produce deadly environments for native people.

Speculative fictions offer a unique opportunity to address such environmental effects of settler colonialism. “One of the most striking aspects of Indigenous speculative fictions,” David Higgins argues, “is a consistent refusal to sanctify victimry” and that authors such as “Vizenor, Glancy, and Silko demonstrate that Indigenous science fictions—through their very unrecognizability within the framework of traditional sf tropes—expose the imperialist attitudes that structure the paradigms of many traditional sf narratives” (Higgins 2016, 53-4). Approaching Leslie Marmon Silko’s well-known novel Ceremony (1970) as unconventional science fiction challenging the “post-WWII apocalyptic SF,” David Higgins and Patrick Sharp have explored how the nuclear testing in the Southwest has affected the lives of Native Americans who were simultaneously seeking to heal from their wartime traumas as U.S. soldiers of WWII (Sharp 2014, Higgins 2016).

Hiroshima Bugi likewise functions as speculative fiction about the environmental and embodied effects of occupation, where the apocalypse has already become a reality for its protagonists and the aim of speculative storying is to heal and live with the disability gained from the environment. Against casting the prospect of reproducing disability as an
outcome of nuclear radiation as a linear timeline of doom deployed in reparation claim, *Hiroshima Bugi* suggests ways of living with disability accompanied by a vision of healing that seeks material and communal ways of overcoming *an imperialist future*, including a passive notion of peace in the present that contributes to imperialism’s continuation. While reparation may not be flatly rejected, it is outside the central concerns of the questions raised in *Hiroshima Bugi*. Survivance exceeds reparation, against the curative logic (Kim 2017a) and tragic mood that cannot contend with the contradictions of occupation’s disablement and the politics that emerge from it. The object of contestation here is not the “toxicity” of bodies that will reproduce its conditions, an approach that victimizes at the same time as it incriminates and seeks to contain those most proximate to a “ground/patient zero” through outbreak narratives (Wald 2008). Rather, these speculative fictions contest imperialist ideologies’ singular claim to futurity. They show that the environment does not overdetermine the possibility of political and communal project and refuses to turn the experiences of native veterans and atomic bomb survivors into a geopolitical pornotrope. *Hiroshima Bugi* wagers precisely on recognizing that the politics of disablement is an outcome of militarization, to open the speculative possibilities for materialist and anti-imperialist futurities.

Such politics is carried out by probing the tenuous division between private and public, toxic and healthy, sacred and profane, and pure-domesticated and mixed-feral through Ronin’s kin in Hiroshima’s peace park. Brought together to the park by their disposability to nation-states, the “lusty” shaman, “mongrels,” “leper,” veteran amputee, deaf monk, and “mixed-race” orphan—Ronin—perform a daily “Ghost Parade.” Although they embody the material wounds of militarization and the disabling environment created
by occupation, they transcend a visual-representational capture by implicating their material lives with spiritual significance, which also overturns the discrete categorization of agency and animacy. For example, the shared language of “*inu circus patois* (dog circus patois)” between Sakasu, the deaf monk, and the mongrels leads to the creation of “a new consciousness of politics” and the mongrels, or “*kami inu* (spirit dog) become monks” (Vizenor 2003, 100). Subverting the purity of lineage, anthropocentric ability, and the divinity of the Japanese emperor, the mongrels and the deaf monk redefine where and how spirit can be located: the inter-species patois and barking in the peace park. Left to proliferate in the peace park, the “feral” mongrels become spiritual collaborators with Ronin’s Ghost Parade. The variously disposable people and non-human animals of the park are purportedly scarred and left “behind” by national reconstruction efforts in postwar Japan and the U.S. Yet, they imbue various spiritual practices with disability and lust, presenting the spiritual in the profane and material. The crossing of the species boundary here also signifies for the diaspora a different aim in seeking to belong, one that contests rather than appeals to the biopolitical logics between nation-states.

The novel offers the politics of immobility beyond occupation and victimhood, towards spiritual motion: on Ronin’s departure as a crane at the end of the novel, the Manidoo Envoy relates: “the last stories of his death, however, were resisted by almost everyone on the reservation...the crane feather was one of his ancestral totems, the signature of his conversion, spiritual motion, and sovereignty of magical flight, but never his death” (Vizenor 2003, 208). Within the biopolitics of occupation and immobilization are such possibility and daily enactments of spiritual motion that seek sovereignty not only in political organizing and survival but also in the flight beyond/in death and survivance.
This is not to say that the latter can succeed without the former. Settler colonialism studies and native studies have shown that such a position rehashes the trope of a “mythical Indian” while condoning ongoing biopolitical processes of elimination and/or debilitation of natives under settler colonialism. Rather, what one might gain from the novel’s politics of immobility is that spiritual motion offers a conception of movement beyond the terms and calculus of biopolitics as much as it is materially shaped by it; without reconceptualizing movement itself, the politics of the immobilized get caught in the trappings of a binary contestation between im/mobility that, in its limits as negation, advances colonality.

3.2 The “Poetics of Sabotage” in Cathy Park Hong’s DDR

Cathy Park Hong’s Dance Revolution: Poems (2007) chronicles the brewing of an uprising in a desert city of an unnamed country. It tells the story of a migrant Korean worker “Sujin,” also known as the “guide,” which is accompanied by the annotations of a Korean-Sierra Leonian historian who interviews Sujin on a tour. Sujin is a “double migrant” (Hong 2007, 26), having moved from Korea to the U.S. and now to the Desert. As do the other migrant workers in the city, Sujin greets international tourists on hotel grounds made in imitation of famous global cities. The Desert resembles Las Vegas in much of its setting, from referencing cosmopolitan destinations to the contrast between extravagant urban development and the surrounding desert. Still, the Desert city remains unidentified, a familiarly dystopian desert settlement of the near future.

This section argues that DDR explores language’s potential to materialize a reality beyond occupation by attending to the politics in and through disabled embodiments resulting from militarization. DDR is noteworthy for two of its elements: first, it retells the Kwangju uprising of 1980 in South Korea, in a new context of a diasporic and native
revolution. It thereby critically appraises a disability-centered legacy from popular uprising untold and unimagined in the process of national memorialization. Second, DDR not only re-centers disabled and ill embodiments in social movements of the past but also connects them to a present/future in which disablement has become a common outcome of settler colonial occupation in the Desert. These gestures of the text can be understood alongside survivance, which I explored in the earlier section through Vizenor’s novel. Survivance in DDR questions the memorializing narratives of social movements; moreover, Kwangju’s speculative legacy of a new mobility finds its place beyond South Korea in the Desert, where sabotage against settler colonialism espouses this new mobility as a dancing in place and a transversal coalition between the Desert natives and migrants. Through what I refer to as the “poetics of sabotage,” the effects of a militarized economy on the occupied land and bodies also enable a blueprint to overcome settler colonialism, one that dictates the necessity of thinking of mobility as altering the pace and direction of communal becoming beyond survival and not as individual capacities to move through a linear space and time.

3.2.1 Language as Speculative Materializing

DDR follows in the footsteps of Asian American literary works that experiment with language to explore displacement and belonging, and the Anglophone modernist poetic tradition. DDR’s linguistic experiments portray the multiple layers of cultural crossings made daily by its characters. Much of the poem is written in a “desert creole” that mixes words and grammatical structures of the various migrant workers who live and work in the desert city, to the extent that one’s “accents betray who they talked to that day
rather than their cultural roots” (Hong 2007, 19).53 Literary scholars have understood this mixture of language as a disavowal of racialized identity and cultural essentialism, characteristic of the tendency of “second generation” Asian-American poets (born after the 1960s), a generation to which Hong belongs (Chang 2004).54 Hong’s work has been read as challenging fixed expectations of an “Asian American” voice by experimenting with poetic language and subject matter (Lim 2017, Williams 2016). However, these readings of Hong’s language use tend to leave unaddressed the geopolitical significance of what it means to have to speak in mixed-tongues to survive, perhaps indicative of the disconnect that continues to exist between the diasporic and native scholarship, between Korean studies and Korean American studies, and Asian American studies and Native American studies.55 Such readings tend to reify the mixture of language as a positive reflection of U.S. multiculturalism and its freedom from cultural essentialisms, which is a national identity that ironically resembles the commodified cosmopolitanism of the Desert parsed apart by DDR.

53 Sujin claims that in her Desert creole, she mixes Korean, Finnish, Latin, and Spanish (Hong 2007, 25).
54 Victoria Chang characterizes the first generation as poets in the 1980s writing on topics of ethnicity and belonging, contrasted by the second generation of poets born after 1960s who moved away from the earlier generation by deploying more experiments with varied topics and carrying out linguistic experiments (Chang 2004, xx-xxiv).
55 For example, Tae Yun Lim reads the linguistic hybridity of Hong in cultural terms that reify the “flow” of globalization as generally a positive phenomenon for its anti-essentialism, a reading which misses the violence of its constitution that Hong’s text considers. Lim writes, “No one culture or language now can be truly insulated from another. “The Desert” in Hong’s DDR is a microcosm showing how our fast-changing multicultural and multilingual society creates a culturally and racially different (Asian American) subject that has lost its cultural or national originality. And that is not necessarily a bad thing…Under the conditions of this transnational or cultural mobility the main character, the Guide, and her use of hybridized English in DDR, for instance, gradually deterritorializes [hybrid English infused with foreign elements] original meanings and becomes gestures devoid of a cultural or historical origin” (Lim 2017, 84-5); Ruth Williams makes a similar argument when she writes: “Hybridity, and the preservation of it, becomes a positive organizing principle in the Desert’s diasporic space” (Williams 2016, 659), although Williams also acknowledges the centrality of violence to DDR in the scene of translation. My reading of the poem departs from Williams’s in that attention to DDR’s criticism of settler colonialism would put into question the view that “The Guide…is truly at home in the Desert, a place whose population consists mostly of those who hail from other homes” (Williams 2016, 648).
While the innovative and often comical use of language in the text may have liberating effects, as in the broader tradition of experimenting with language in avant-garde poetry, the apparent hybridity of the desert creole needs to be understood within a global context in which it is a product of the linguistic hierarchy of a military occupation regime that rewards and coerces translation between the languages of the occupied and the occupier. In such a context, it is not the hybrid speech acts but the silence between them that the “poetics of sabotage” seeks. DDR addresses the weaponization of language under U.S. imperialism and anticommunism in South Korea in a segment entitled “The Importance of Being English”: Sujin remembers a “pep gem” (pep talk) from her father, who was embroiled in a misunderstanding with American soldiers stationed in South Korea and was accused of being a “Commie spy,” all because of his inability to speak English well. His solemn advice that Sujin “learn them all [languages]” and her subsequent mastery of the desert creole illustrates the necessity of having to know all languages in order to “chisel, con, plead, seduce, beg for your life” in the Desert (Hong 2007, 46).

For Sujjin, the hierarchy of languages under the translation regime of the U.S. military occupation in South Korea is continued in the tourist encounters between the Desert’s own transnational workers and customers. Just as the Desert’s cosmopolitan tourism upholds rather than discards familiar global references such as Paris and St.

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56 On the reception of avant-garde poetry in Asian American literature, see Joseph Jonghyun Jeon’s discussion in *Racial Things, Racial Forms*. Jeon recognizes the suspicion that avant-garde poetry politics and the legacy of Orientalism do not align with the Asian American movements of the 60s and the 70s. However, the Asian American poetic genealogy would do better by attending to the dialectical relationship between avant-garde and realist modes in Jeon’s view (Jeon 2012, xxvi-xxvii).

57 Irony and wit are important elements of Hong’s and Vizenor’s texts. The joke here is that this segment’s title, “the importance of being English,” refers to Oscar Wilde’s satirical play *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Replacing earnestness with the “English” language, Hong points to the difficult position that Koreans inhabit when earnestness simply would not translate itself in the U.S. military occupation of South Korea.
Petersburg, the Desert’s mixed language use echoes the hierarchy within the service industry that, through the use of multiple words and grammatical structures, is organized to accommodate the cosmopolitan tourists and erases the violence that brought the workers together in the first place and who must quickly learn one another’s language. That the Desert inhabitants seek to achieve through the uprising “a silence to crave, not dis babel, a sly unrest” (Hong 2007, 118), in Sujin’s words, is quite symbolic: silence is a luxury for the service laborers of Babel. The linguistic hybridity of such a “Babel” thus initially appears as the fruit of multiculturalism, but at closer glance, it relies on the violent necessity of migrant and native workers to translate and perform service labor to facilitate the acceleration of capitalist developments in the “new” territory. Because the nature of the Desert’s service labor industry demands constant and updated communication, as much as the readers are made to revel in the poem’s linguistic wit, one is at the same time made complicit in the Desert’s commodification of language games. Reading DDR is also to be serviced by the Desert’s tourism.

Yet, Sujin also entices the readers into something more actional than readerly complicity. Her narration is also a seduction, inviting the readers-tourists to taste, touch, and marvel at the artificial objects of the Desert. That Sujin’s desert creole serves highly commercializing ends during the tour of the hotel grounds becomes an opportunity in the poem to critically experiment with language’s relation to the changing materiality of the Desert. A fountain within the compound, for example, is presented by Sujin as a wonder, and its qualities are listed in a suspicious advertisement jingle that exaggerates the supposed benefits of a mundane tourist aesthetic object: “Ahoy! Whitening wadder fountain….Frum purim H2O wit fluoride y sulfate y tu typical humectant lika xylitol which
supa-boosta fluoride’s cavity fightim powa” (Hong 2007, 30). Yet, the commercialization of all objects through language has the effect of also blurring what is ostensibly “real” from what is being sold through Sujin’s words. The question of what is “real” in the poem thereby takes on deliberately crafted speculative qualities, as the tourists-readers determine the veracity of Sujin’s descriptions and her reliability as a tour guide and informant, and significantly, the veracity of just what lies “outside” the grounds of the tourist compound. Ironically, this blurring of the real and the speculative is where the poem’s linguistic experimentation gains greater coherence as a “poetics of sabotage.”

Sabotage in its early use referred to the expression of dissent by stomping one’s sabots (wooden shoes) on machinery. It came to describe various acts to impede and slow down work, such as worker’s destruction of property and clandestine use of resources. Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra and Sophie Halart describe sabotage in art:

Sabotage became associated with gestures seeking to interrupt flows of production via either active participation or concerted inaction, often under conditions of anonymity…In the artistic field, sabotage strategies…often [take] the form of an attack against the very materiality of the image, situating sabotage within a history of iconoclasm…destruction in art is closely intertwined with processes of construction.” (Halart and Polgovsky Ezcurra 2016, 2-3)

Sabotage in the context of the Desert targets the pace of production and the Babel-ian task of translating and speaking required in service labor. The commodification of language is so perfunctory in the Desert that language fails to capture the realities of the Desert’s service workers. Yet it also becomes the very tool of sabotage against the readers-tourists, rendering the poem as a whole a performative piece delineating the uprising’s unfolding.

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58 Sujin likewise mocks the readers-tourists as fools who choose to vacation in ruins and emphasizes that all that is being sold is her words: “I guided misbegodder fool who vacation/ en woebegone ruins. Tu, I mean, you tryim./ To flower-arrange words so sand-piss/ ash sounds like Melodious plot off beechen green, try, nary!” (Hong 2007, 33).
In that light, a key function of Sujin’s commodified language is that it not only heightens her unreliability as a narrator and guide but also renders opaque her political view of the Desert uprising. Sujin confesses that her revolutionary politics at the time of the Kwangju uprising contrasts with her current position as a migrant tour guide living on settled land, serving even as a snitch on the Desert revolutionaries. Expressing both skepticism and anticipation towards the uprising, Sujin presents herself as a harmless has-been revolutionary from another country. The poem, however, insinuates that her duality is credible only if one thinks of the uprising in the binaries of activity versus inactivity, of past versus present. Celebratory narratives of struggle bolster such binaries in a linear fashion, which are then solidified in the process of memorialization. The indeterminacy of Sujin’s politics is part and parcel of the poem’s challenge to memorialized narratives of struggle, and not only to essentialist identities. By preserving doubts in the readers that, in spite of her renunciation, Sujin may lead one at any moment to death, as do the insurgent Desert natives, the poem in fact complicates the relationship between revolutionary acts and revolutionary subjectivities, or at the least, one’s ability to decipher this relationship accurately as an outsider. Here, language becomes the primary medium through which the Desert’s exploitative realities as a settler colonial capitalist complex can be rematerialized. Language does not oppose or falsify a material reality but is recognized as material (Chen 2012) and, furthermore, as materializing.59

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59 Mel Chen objects to the tendency in new materialism to see language as immaterial and argues for the materiality of language: “in spite of, or because of, the so-called linguistic turn...and the influence of poststructuralist thought, language in theory has in many ways steadily become bleached of its quality to be anything but referential, or structural, or performative” (Chen 2012, 53).
Sujin’s opacity plays on the double entendre of “앞잡이 (apchabi),” a Korean word for the “person guiding in the front,” with the derogatory connotation of an informant or an Uncle Tom. Though *apchabi* signals that Sujin is an informant who tells on other desert inhabitants participating in the insurgency, in a true tongue-in-cheek fashion, Sujin reveals herself in the end as a different kind of *apchabi*: she has led the readers-tourists not only through the history of the Desert and her life but also to a mine field, as many other “rogue” native guides have done. The direction of the betrayal implied by *apchabi* thus comically turns on itself, from Sujin’s betrayal of Desert insurgents to her betrayal of “us” as she draws the readers-tourists into a mine field.

She reminds us that though she had not been a successful protester on the ground due to her appearance, she participated in the Kwangju uprising as the voice in the radio broadcast guiding the protesters. In the guise of an accommodating tour guide of the Desert, Sujin claims to: “…Summon mine last sieved blood/ invocation det roused thousands not fluke/ o me guided flute which led you/ to dis mine pocked river, sum me might/ so I’s be righted…” (Hong 2007, 119). She sheds her ambiguity and affirms that her role as the voice of Kwangju was “not fluke” and can be “summoned” again now as a “flute.” The rhyme pair “fluke” and “flute” here emphasizes that Sujin’s insurgency is successful because of, not in spite of, how easy it is for her to be dismissed as participating in an uprising. Though she claims earlier on the page that “I’s sum o all I’s rued, sum o me accents [I am sum of all I ruined, sum of my accents],” she later claims that the “sum me

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60 A common insult in Korean nationalisms, *apchabi* often referred to individuals who sought collaboration with the colonizers in modern Korea. While the term more generally refers to someone who leads a despicable group, Hong’s text deploys the sense of the word as it is used to describe Korean collaborators with Japan/U.S. under occupation.
Another rhyme pair in this stanza, “Summon mine” and “sum me might,” reiterates that Sujin’s ability to summon the “mines” of the Desert as a rogue guide is also her “might.” This word play, the slip between “mine” and “might,” reveals that the Desert uprising need not rely on anything other than the extant weaponized landscape of the Desert from the previous wars that had killed or disabled the natives.

As I have argued in Chapter Two, speculative fictions’ use of the environment offers inventive ways of thinking about the effects of settler colonialism and military occupation on native lands and waters. Pushed to the Desert’s mine-scape by removal and development, the natives and migrant service workers turn their knowledge of the militarized environment with which they had to live, against the Desert’s tourist industry and its cosmopolitan clientele. In the process, rogue tour guides such as Sujin not only seduce with words to sell but also summon, through their words, the material environment scarred by militarization to rise for the occasion of an undetectable uprising. Sujin’s words and the silence within—the “Caesuras slicing mine dialect” (Hong 2007, 119)—thus transform the violence of the Desert (“mines”) into a “might” of the service workers and displaced natives. From a mere surveyor of the land and targets to be removed from the territory, the migrant workers and native insurgents thus enact sabotage as guides, bringing the readers beyond the scope of what is safely mapped.

3.2.2 Revisiting Kwangju: Towards a Crip “Perfect Memory”

*DDR* draws a connection between the state violence in Kwangju, South Korea in 1980 and the settler colonialism and migrant labor in the speculative “Desert” of 2016,
which resembles the U.S. Southwest. Through this connection and Sujin’s life trajectory, the Kwangju uprising takes on a critical role in the poem for native and diasporic political struggles. The poem’s reappraisal of Kwangju makes interventions through a poetics of sabotage in two things: first, it intervenes in the tendency in U.S. diasporic politics to separate immigrant narratives from the history of ongoing settler colonialism; second, it intervenes in the memorialized representation of gender and disability in Kwangju within the Korean democratic national imaginary.

The Kwangju Uprising took place in the city of Kwangju in May 18-27, 1980. Following the assassination of the autocratic president Park Chung-Hee, Generals Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo led a military coup to seize national leadership on December 12. When people took to the streets to call for immediate democratic reform on May 15, Chun’s government extended martial law on May 17, which enabled the military to rule all of South Korea and suspend the cabinet and the National Assembly. On May 18 in Kwangju, what began as a popular protest led by students was quelled by soldiers. In the following days, the people of Kwangju were captured, searched, and beaten, to which people responded by storming the streets, forming a “Citizen’s Army” and “Citizens Settlement Committee,” and creating a commune that was self-organized to supply weapons, labor, and food during the uprising. However, by May 27, the troops that had retreated from the city re-entered and took over again, ending the uprising and censoring nation-wide media reportage on the event.

A cornerstone in the history of democratization and anti-authoritarian protest in South Korea, the Kwangju Uprising is noted for the protesters’ endurance and collective

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61 From the time of the poem’s publication in 2007, the year 2016 would be a “near” future.
action in the face of police and military violence of the state, when “bodies clashing against one another, bodies being broken…was the central characteristic of the Kwangju uprising” (Shin 2003, 4). The Kwangju Uprising has been theorized as forming an “absolute community” in resistance to state power; it therefore holds a special place in South Korean and transnational history of protests for democratization. However, while Gi-Wook Shin describes such “absolute community” as one in which “all distinctions between humans disintegrated as disparate individuals joined together as one” (Shin 2003, 4), an examination of the gendered, classed, and able-bodied hierarchy maintained within and in the aftermath of the uprising questions the extent of such disintegration of difference. Indeed, DDR probes the difficulty of forming such an absolute community through a speculative crip experience of Kwangju, not to lessen its symbolic legacy but to shed light on the legacy of Kwangju beyond the limits of national memorialization.

In DDR, when Sujin claims to have renounced her radical politics upon migrating to the Desert as a service worker, she lends herself somewhat to the “protestant ethnic” narratives of assimilation through work (Chow 2002) and she appears to have adapted to the Desert’s multiculturalist hybridity. Still, the politics of sabotage and Kwangju are lived out in her clandestine participation in the Desert uprising. Important to the way we think about the migrant collaboration with natives in DDR is that it is Sujin’s situated experience under U.S. and South Korean state violence that now allows her to understand the Desert natives’ insurgency. Sujin’s history of radicalization began in her native Cholla, a region known for its historical development as an area of rice cultivation consisting of a majority of oppressed peasants and a minority of feudal lords, leading to her involvement in a Marxist student group, factory worker protests, and the Kwangju Uprising. In her
recounting, she situates her current position as having its basis in her politics as a *native* of Cholla, South Korea, challenging the initial impression that she is a migrant woman without political history in a settled land. Connecting her class and political sovereignty struggles in South Korea with that of the Desert natives, *DDR* suggests where diasporic and native alliances may meet beyond the limits of diasporic assimilation into settler colonial projects. Emphasizing the history of Kwangju does not absolve Sujin from the responsibility of working against the settler capitalist complex in the Desert; rather, the poem commands the readers to analyze how the categories of settler colonialism work to occlude the potential for such an alliance. Sujin humbly muses on the irony of her radicalization coming from a family of “yes-men”—her grandfather selling “insurrectas” to the Japanese colonial police and her father “a ’Merikken Gl chihuahua”—leading to her determination to “join movement to fightim me yesman lineage” (Hong 2007, 43-44). Surreptitiously participating in the Desert uprising is yet another way for her to “fight mine legacy” and the valuation of her labor as a migrant worker with multilingual abilities.

The poem draws together workers in national and transnational colonial projects, for whom sabotage is a form of political process in the perpetual condition of immobilization and removal. Sujin’s politics as a native of Cholla shares with the politics of the Desert natives their subjection to removal and labor under settler colonialism. In Cholla, workers are depicted as immobilized in conditions of work that are also debilitating—“hours killim workas, in window black/ paint room…bone cramp backs en airless room”—and their planned mass sit down is broken up with “a hose o wadder…hose blast a flood y/ shatta workas rib cages” (Hong 2007, 54). Still, in Cholla, dubbed the

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62 Hosing with a water cannon in fact continues to be a tactic of breaking protests and incapacitating protesters in South Korea as well as elsewhere. With the addition of Riot Control Agent, which refers to substance used
“Village of No,” sabotage take the shapes of “yam sella hatch plan to glue/ wokas toget’a” and “factory wig/ makas paste rash powda onto wigs” (Hong 2007, 53). Though apart in time and space, the factory workers and students in Cholla share similar struggles and fates with the workers of the Desert, who face an exploitative industry that shifted from factory manufacturing to tourism service. As these insurgents of different sites are subjected to torture and murder by the state in “Namsan plis boi camp” and a labor camp called “gingseng colony” after each defeated uprising, they also find new ways of halting the pace of development and manufacturing at all scales and speeds through sabotage, from the isolated and immobilized local to the cosmopolitan and mobile global.\(^{63}\) In part a tactical response to the violence directed at those who protest in public, sabotage is effective because it is omnipresent and undetectable until it cannot be undone. Moreover, the poetics of sabotage gains greater significance in relation to dis/ability, work, and protest narratives, as it interrupts the assumed capacities of individuals in the physicality of the protesting subjectivity.

By focusing on sabotage and “unrest” as intervening in the exploitation of workers and the displacement of natives, the poem questions the premise of working and protesting subjectivity with capacities found in certain forms of heroic or tragic protest and resistance narratives. Rather than reifying the able-bodied, working subject as the one who protests, the poem instead emphasizes the prevalence of disability and illness in the waves of

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\(^{63}\) To be sure, this distinction needs to be parsed out further, since the “local” work was already producing goods for global consumption and the “global” workforce of the Desert is made up of displaced natives from around the world.
resistance to state violence and the disabling conditions of work. The poem’s core concerns then, are the complexity of belonging and political participation for those with illness and disability in the making of an uprising and also, the persistence of an ability hierarchy in the very articulation of such “anti-work.” The poem addresses these questions with biopolitical considerations rather than representational ones, which is why its intervention in narratives of the Kwangju Uprising is particularly interesting and useful when considered within the way Kwangju is memorialized. Indeed, *DDR* critiques the representational inclusion of disability and illness in the grand narratives surrounding Kwangju Uprising at the national level; instead, it recasts disability and illness as modes of living that generate alternatives to the ability hierarchy inherent in the subjectivities of work, protest, and occupation. The poetics of sabotage here functions to free language from the limits of representational politics, to consider language as not just representing material reality but also materializing new realities.

For example, we learn about the Kwangju Uprising through Sujin and her lover Sah, who “found each ut’a lika two unwanted/ lints” (Hong 2007, 62); Sujin’s appearance—bald head with small patches of hair and “blind mon’s ghost-oysta-eyes” (Hong 2007, 51)—and Sah’s epilepsy make the two unlikely protagonists of a narrative about the Kwangju Uprising. Against the medical diagnosis of epilepsy, Sah explains his condition as “I got de God in me!” (Hong 2007, 61), which provides him with visions of the near future. Although Sujin dismisses his visions as inaccurate and “stolen right outta pamphlet/pics” (Hong 2007, 61) of missionaries and socialists, Sah’s vision of “a shade swallong de whole city en blood, a riva o carnage,/ Army’s mandible twain us bloody noon…” (Hong 2007, 67) comes true with the coup of Chun Doo Hwan and a military lockdown on
Kwangju following a student protest against the coup. Sah’s “God”-derived vision also incorporates Sujin’s voice, amounting to an interdependent relationship in which Sah provides the visions and Sujin the voice to the uprising. Taunted by the protesting crowds who direct at Sujin the anger they feel at the police state—“crowd dim boo me, t’row rocks a’me,/ rocks intended fo plis boi patos, balfastards, trown a’mel!” (Hong 2007, 104)—Sujin retreats from the streets. Resigned about not being able to protest on the streets but encouraged by Sah, who foresees Sujin’s role as the invisible voice to lead the uprising through his visions, Sujin becomes the “uprising’s danseur principal” (Hong 2007, 104), a position that transforms the rejection she experiences into an intimation of a different form of “dance” born amidst the uprising. Sujin dances through her voice and words and not her body as she is “cloaked deep en broom sweepa closet wit mike” (Hong 2007, 105).

The uprising takes all that the Kwangju citizens have and can afford to use as resources, including both mechanical and organic ones—the “WWII carbine rifle” of veterans, the “detonatas” of coal miners, the food of housewives, and the blood of sex workers (Hong 2007, 105); the physicality of the uprising portrayed as a dance encapsulates modes of political participation above and below that of an able-bodied subject marching on the streets. In this reimagination of the uprising as an invisible and even intangible dance, objects and bodily resources become extensions of the immobilized or restricted bodies; the presence of disability and illness is acknowledged and gives way to reconceptualizing what a political uprising can be in a more expansive sense of the collective beyond individual bodily capacities. A case in point, when the pepper gas

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64 David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder examine a queer/crip interdependency as the “politics of atypicality” shared among diverse boundaries of oppression. See Chapter Three, “Gay Pasts and Disability Future(s) Tense” in *The Biopolitics of Disability* (Mitchell and Snyder 2015).
“scourgim eyes” (Hong 2007, 105) of the protesters, it is Sujin’s voice and Sah’s epileptic visions that lead the uprising amidst chaos and dejection. The poem thereby suggests that revolutionary “visions” of a future do not necessarily rely on the physical capacity to see, which can be temporarily or permanently taken away through violent assaults and bioweapons. Rather, the poem invites one to consider the dance of the speculative, centered on the very conditions of disablement and debilitation, that hails a differently ordered social relations.

By contrast, the dominant domestic memorialization and politicization of the Kwangju Uprising tends to emphasize the inclusion of the marginalized into the absolute community or inciting action from the able-bodied male actors. Featured in the poem as well, such narrative details include women serving as motherly providers of food, sex workers donating blood in spite of the unstated stigma that their blood is not “clean,” and a military assault on a man with disability as counting among the first deaths in the uprising. In the memorialization process, the markers of gender and dis/ability fulfill the expected roles of victimhood and innocence, functioning as supporting elements for the more capable agents of protest. This is all the more crystallized by Chŏn Okchu, one of the women who led the radio broadcast in Kwangju, and her criticism of how disabled activists of Kwangju were sidelined in the process of memorialization at the national level. In the volume that invited the women of the Kwangju Uprising to share their stories and reflect on gender’s role in the uprising and its memory, Chŏn shares the incident of Kwangju activists who could not access the national venue for a commemoration event. Several activists of the uprising could not move past the mud field of the cemetery, prompting Chŏn to yell, “Selling May 18 to become the president, to be our representatives in the Congress,
what have you all truly done for May 18, for Kwangju, I say, they are busy selling it. Us in our wheelchairs, people who lost both eyes because of May 18, should they not be the ones sitting up on the stage [my translation from Korean to English]” (Kwangjujnamyŏsŏngdanch’eyŏnhap 2012, 169). Disability and gender are folded into each other in her understanding of the Kwangju Uprising, leading Chŏn over the years to organize the May 18 Women Comrade’s Association and to work for a newspaper focused on disability issues. As disability scholars have argued, such roles assigned to people with disability and illness function as “narrative prosthesis” that requires fixing (Mitchell 2000) and as metaphors of national trauma (Kim 2017a), quick to cast the presence of disability to the margins of the text and to the past but not necessarily leading the community into a new future. Eun Jung Kim’s analysis of the filmic treatment of the Kwangju Uprising involving a disabled female character, Kkonnip (A Petal 1996), demonstrates the ready use of gendered disability as a national metaphor that does not consider ways in which one might be more than a victim of national trauma.

Sujin’s narration of Kwangju, on the other hand, rejects both victimhood and resentment towards her fellow Kwangju protesters, who found her initially repelling. However, DDR continues to question the hyper visibilization of Sujin’s appearance even in her later transformation into a visual mascot of the uprising, indicating that the fetishization of her appearance still extends the logic behind the initial rejection of her appearance. Representational politics thus remains a problem, and DDR questions its persistence in the uprisings of both Kwangju and the Desert. At the same time, an alternative to representational politics is left open as well, through the poem’s imbrication of language with materiality in embodied politics. In DDR, Vizenor’s concept of “perfect
memory” is again useful, for it does not point to the memories of a past uprising or making a current one more correctly, intersectionally, or inclusively; rather, “perfect memory” requires different logics and aims in story-ing practices, ones not unlike the zigzag darting in a sea of mines.

3.2.3 Miming to Maim: On Mines as Plot and Plot as Blueprint

miming guides plotting, potting more mines
—Cathy Park Hong, *Dance Dance Revolution*

If disability is something exceptional in the memorialization of the Kwangju Uprising, in the Desert, disability is acknowledged as prevalent and even an unremarkable condition of living on contested territories. Abetted by the acceleration of militarization and the neoliberal commodification of labor and resources that take place between 1980 and an imagined 2016, the un-exceptionality and omnipresence of disability in the Desert implore one to consider disability as the point of departure and not as an afterthought or as a metaphor for trauma. To live in the Desert is to work in the service industry or to be raided and bombed for living in an “unclaimed” territory. Service labor here entails an immobilization and debilitation comparable to that experienced in the canning factory labor that the service labor industry came to replace in the Desert, a condition described by Sujin as: “Some-a-time, I’se feel lika fish en wadder balloon,/ fightim rubber confines, thrashim tail ‘gainst stretchy walls…/ little wadder y non oxygen,/ slowly expiating…” (Hong 2007, 96). Moreover, slow death, or “slow expiation,” encompasses not only service laborers but, also and more intensely, the natives who continue to be killed in the ongoing expansion of the Desert metropolis.

Each time a native laborer is considered rogue, “the Desert officials exile natives to New Town” (Hong 2007, 80), a place filled with dense housing projects made of
concrete. In a scene reminiscent of the Trail of Tears, the mass forced relocation of Native Americans across the U.S. in the 1830s, “exiled natives cross, they turn their heads so far back, their/ heads seem wired backwards, as if frozen in a paralytic fit” (Hong 2007, 81). The removal has debilitating effects of paralysis amidst forced migration, capturing how immobility is co-produced in movement under settler colonialism. Additionally, the policing and militarization of New Town multiply conditions of immobility, as surveillance and control over the exiled natives intensify to ensure the safety of the settled tourist compound. DDR offers the twisted irony of an “unemployment” problem of the exiled natives in a telling stanza describing “Jobs” in New Town. In it, the non-existent “job” of a native family, pushed out to New Town without employment, is to be disabled by a paranoid settler colonial policing:

Desert officials raided one room, slit open a boy’s belly to see if he stored land mines in his body. Afterwards, the father suffered hysterical blindness. His other son snuck back into the city to assume the role of guide. (Hong 2007, 82)

The body of the natives becomes a suspect space that needs to be checked and probed unto death, a suspicion that is ironically rooted in the settler colony’s very weaponization of the landscape with mines to remove natives. In a different light, the resulting “job” of the surviving native family member therefore also becomes that of re-entering the settler city and posing as a guide with the intent to sabotage.

DDR’s rhyme pairing of “mines” (the weapon) and “mine” (the first-person possessive) invites reflections on the extent to which the weaponization of the environment is tied to the weaponization of the bodies of the colonized. Dispossessed of land, resources, and livelihood, the natives and migrants have nothing but the mines of the Desert to claim, and the military-police see their bodies as receptacles for more mines; in the process of
dispossession and genocide, the natives and migrants are coerced and immobilized to the militarized environment. Yet sabotage brings this colonial schema that sought to possess land (“mine”) through weapons (“mines”) to its logical conclusion. The saboteurs’ intimate knowledge of the invisible mine fields allows them to undo the process of privatization of land. Leading the tourists into the mines of the Desert is also an embrace, detonating the mines an invitation to a Desert clear of mines one day, a blueprint for an ecstatic future.65 Herein lies the significance of disability as a prevalent condition of life in the Desert, beyond representational politics: it makes legible the elimination of the natives and the costs of a militarized environment at the same time as it marks the potential for bringing such a world to an end. The disablement of the migrants and natives are environmental, militaristic, and economic outcomes of sustaining the Desert city as a tourist metropolis. Sabotage becomes a way for the natives to use this predicament of disablement against the city and its global reach, to slow down its rapid development by utilizing its very infrastructures, such as mines, privatized “public” spaces, and the very disposability of labor, that enabled the city’s establishment (native removal) and continuation (transnational tourism service). Mines become plot in more than one sense, then: it is the militarized environment as plot—”a piece of ground”—becoming the plot of DDR—"the plan or scheme of a literary or dramatic work”—becoming the plot of sabotage—"a plan made in secret to achieve an unlawful end; conspiracy” (OED “Plot”). The plot of sabotage is the blueprint for a different Desert, a speculative map made with DDR’s poetics.

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65 In some sense, the general use of sabotage here could be considered within the broader literature and activism of eco-terrorism. A notable literary example set in the Southwest is Edward Abbey’s novel The Monkey Wrench Gang (1975). The poetics of sabotage I elaborate here, however, departs from this genre of literature, in a key way, which is that militarized disablement and indigenous sovereignty in DDR decenter the liberal notion of individual capacity that is often drawn upon in this literature—a departure that connotes the text’s position on settler colonialism’s effects.
Word play again becomes central to the versatility of a trickster, and language hatches speculative realities by “plotting” seeds of doubt through the acts of narrating. This doubt colors the implicit contract between the guide and the guided: the guide guarantees knowledge and cultural authenticity and protects the guided. From the beginning, Sujin wryly mentions those who “mime” as guides, intent on killing or disabling the tourists. The slippage between the guides who “mime” in order to “maim” satirizes the commodification of authenticity in tourism. It becomes disabling and even deadly for tourists who cannot discern a “fake” guide to partake in the tours. At the same time, this doubt exposes the truth of the tourist settlement in the foundational violence of its infrastructures vis-à-vis the mines, and the truth of the natives in their continued removal and experiences of assault beyond the tourist settlement. Although the tour narratives attempt to mask these realities from the tourists, they seep back in through the margins of the metropolis. The sabotage acts of miming and maiming return to the settler colony its own tactics, now with the tourists as its pawns. Through these acts, the saboteurs contest the label of un-reality imposed on their speculative visions for a decolonial future, which are the ends of the settler colony and capitalist developments.

Through the poetics of sabotage, the natives’ and migrants’ sense of immobilization gives way to an understanding that stasis and slowing down opens horizons for change. The poetics of sabotage, in a nutshell, brings stillness through undetectable unrest: “the pulse of unrest works unpredictably, in canny acts of sabotage engineered by exiled natives who crave for time to stand still” (Hong 2007, 21). This revolution may lack the wide range of movement and the physicality of dance as one knows it, but it intimates a movement freed from linear notions of progress and revolution, and the accompanied assumptions of
physical capacities needed to bring about material change. To revisit a stanza I cited earlier in the section, the saboteur seeks “…a silence to crave, not dis babel,/ a sly unrest, a sly darting dance, no delightful/ marches fo mo dreadful measures” (Hong 2007, 118). The poetics of sabotage brings erratic temporality and movement onto the page, enjambing and slowing down the drive of language, from the pace of development, removal, and “marches” that do not disrupt the “dreadful measures,” to silence and stillness. Through the “caesuras” that “slice” between words, the ecstatic future that is not yet here slips in through speculative openings.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed speculative writings that critically explore the relationship between the diaspora and indigeneity in the transpacific context of overlapping settler colonialisms and military occupations, through Gerald Vizenor’s Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57 and Cathy Park Hong’s Dance Dance Revolution. Working with the tension between the diaspora on the move and the displaced native, these works dislodge the politics of immobility from liberation narratives that prize individual capacities and physical mobility. Rather, the diaspora meets the native through their differential positions within the biopolitics of transpacific settler colonialism, yet also through their shared materiality of disablement, occupation, and illness. Survivance and the poetics of sabotage, born of immobility, allow envisioning an end of settler colonialism and occupation outside the terms of this very encounter, pointing to tactile, spiritual, and silent modes of materializing this speculative reality.

Coincidentally, in 2019, Japan enacted a new legislation that recognizes the Ainus as “indigenous people” (Kyodo April 19, 2019). The bill was an outcome of a heated debate
following the Japanese government’s 2007 vote in favor of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples but hesitation to recognize Ainu people as indigenous people given the haziness of the definition by the UN. The bill reinforces the language of cultural protection which Ainu political movements have criticized throughout the history of Japanese policies towards the Ainu people. Indeed, Ainu activists have protested the bill for falling short of the UN declaration and for not reflecting the voices of the community. Instead, the bill stipulates a commercial plan that steers close to what has been explored in this chapter as imperial victimry, simulation of the Indian, and the settler colonial tourism complex across the transpacific: “Under the new law, the government plans to open a national Ainu museum and park in the Hokkaido town of Shiraoi in April 2020. The government aims to attract 1 million visitors to the museum in the first fiscal year” (Murakami February 25, 2019). As Glen Coulthard and Elizabeth Povinelli have critically articulated, state recognition annuls the very practices of political sovereignty and survivance through the act of recognition (Povinelli 2002, Coulthard 2014). Through the texts of Vizenor and Hong, one might begin to envision a Ghost Dance outside this Ainu museum and park, through which mobility is understood as the possibility of communal politics amidst ongoing immobilization and displacement and not as the flow of capital and visitors.
CHAPTER FOUR

Sustainable Destruction and Deadpan Cyborgs: Debility and Immobility

in Speculative Fictions of Disasters

Until Iraq, the frontiers of the Chicago crusade had been bound by geography: Russia, Argentina, South Korea. Now a new frontier can open up wherever the next disaster strikes.

—Naomi Klein, Disaster Capitalism

Many programmers continuously invent packages. If it is not new, it needs to be strong to survive. Earthquake, typhoon, volcano, mudslide, drought, flood, fire, genocide, war, nuclear exposure, desertification, avalanche, serial murders, tsunami, animal cruelty, contagious diseases, water pollution, concentration camps, prisons, etc. [...] But this place has nothing special.

—Yun Goŭn, Pamŭi yŏhaengjadŭl (Night Travelers)

This chapter examines how immobilization intersects with labor across differently im/mobile populations in the contemporary transnational economy of South Korea and its rise as a sub-empire. In the speculative fictions Rina (Lina 2011), City of Terror (T'erŏūisi 2012), and Night Travelers (Pamŭiyŏhaengjadŭl 2013) by South Korean women authors, Kang Yŏngsuk, Kim Sagwa, and Yun Goŭn, I analyze how gendered and racialized migrant and native labor intersects with economies that thrive on disasters, turning profit from the debilitated body’s relation to the environment.66 I follow the questions raised by these works that, rather than turning to re-humanize the questionably “human” migrants and natives, reject the discourse of humanism itself and the infrastructures of rehabilitative aid economy that necessitate debilitating conditions, drawing from the work of Jasbir Puar on debility in The Right to Maim (Puar 2017).

66 As in Chapter Two, I will be using my own translation of these works for citation in the chapter, from Korean into English. None of these works have been translated into English to my knowledge, though I have been notified that Yun’s novel is currently being translated into English. I also offer English translations of citations from secondary literature in Korean. Korean names will also be presented with surnames first, per how they appear in Korean.
Building on Julie Livingston’s use of “debility” which encompasses disability and chronic illnesses, Jasbir Puar has offered debility as in fact that which marks both “the possibilities and limits of disability imaginaries and economies,” exposing how “the category of disability is instrumentalized by state discourses of inclusion not only to obscure forms of debility but also to actually produce debility and sustain its proliferation” (Puar 2017, xvi). Moving away from the frameworks of rights and pride as the solution to the outcomes of neoliberalism and occupation, Puar argues that debilitation is the “intended result” of biopolitics (Puar 2017, xvii), one that “functions as a form of value extraction for otherwise disposable bodies” (Puar 2017, 79) in the contexts of global laboring body and the occupation of Palestine. Conceptualizing debility in this way emphasizes an important gap between the practices of NGOs and “the reality of the occupation as the primary producer of debility” (Puar 2017, xxi). Puar’s intervention in disability rights framework and occupation economy through debility provides the conceptual framework for this chapter, as it probes how South Korean speculative fictions criticize the participation of South Korean civil society and international NGOs in mass-scale production of routine disasters and debilitation.

Two sections of the chapter focus on “diasporic” Korean migrant women laborers’ debilitation, the last section on corporate settler colonialism’s targeting of indigenous islanders.67 The themes of immobilization and material disintegration recur across them and expose the intricate workings of mobility’s entrapment of bodies in industrial and environmental disasters. Together, they challenge both notions: disasters are exceptional

67 I use scare quotes around “diasporic” Korean here because as I show in the analysis of Kang Yŏng-Suk’s novel Rina, the difference created between the Korean-American dual citizen student and the Korean-Chinese non-citizen worker is stark, raising the question of when “diasporic” subjectivity can be claimed and by whom.
and are effectively egalitarian (it can happen to us all and affects us all the same way), by revealing the deliberate processes that construct zones for impending disasters and economic dispossession. The mobility of the transnational migrant here is accompanied by their eventual subjection to material disintegration through labor and immobilization in these zones, alongside the natives to be eliminated. In Chapter Three, I had examined how diasporic and native speculative fictions question rather than accept the desire for representational realism, critical of such desires’ participation in the very production of victimhood dismissive of disability-informed politics. I build on this argument here, to assert that the speculative fictions of this chapter need to be understood as taking materialist and biopolitical approaches, rather than representational and humanist ones, to mobility and the environment’s relation to the immobilized body in a disaster economy.\footnote{Christopher Hanscom has recently argued that contemporary South Korean fictions on migrant labor, including Kang Yŏngsuk’s short story “Brown Tears,” have posed problems of representation by relying on proximity to reality but end up reducing linguistic and cultural difference into ethnic sameness (Hanscom 2019). While Hanscom is right to observe the dangers of representational failures, my argument here is precisely that the texts examined in this chapter, including Kang’s Rina, need to be read as speculative fictions that offer a glimpse at the logic of violence rather than representing violence itself realistically. This difference allows the fictions to avoid narratives of sympathy and victimhood, which the deadpan attitude likewise questions rather than endorses.}

As I stated in the Introduction of the dissertation, speculative fictions can offer what is yet out of focus from the here and now but very much in our midst in the present, which we saw Ernst Bloch articulate through the conundrum of the future-in-the-past in Chapter One. Each of the fictions analyzed in this chapter echoes ongoing and historical events that one may find familiar, but each insists on the speculative mode of depiction over documentative realism. The insistence on the speculative can be understood as a critical commentary on how already ongoing devastations might appear “unreal” because they happen “somewhere else.” At the same time, these fictions vocalize the need to
disarticulate the relation among facts shaped through affects and the changing logics of becoming: how the media reportage and structures of sympathy toward the “victims” of disaster and exploitation seek to reproduce subjectivities of victimhood and to contain the material becoming in immobilization that exceeds such attempts.

What I refer to as a “deadpan” attitude emerges in these fictions as an alternative to liberal humanist tropes on devastations and futurity, an attitude that seeks irony and wit over tragedy—as we had seen Vizenor and Hong do in Chapter Three to a different effect—and can be all around summarized as a refusal to be a source of extraction, whether for testimonials, affect labor, or as bodies to be rehabilitated.69 This is not unlike Audra Simpson’s useful concept of “ethnographic refusal” in the context of settler colonialism and indigenous people’s refusal to cooperate with extractive practices of anthropological knowledge production (Simpson 2014), with the difference that in this chapter, the first two sections address migrants rather than natives. However, the ethnographic gaze is still there in all three works, and I discuss how these fictions creatively divert the temptation to probe and extract without reinforcing a humanist narrative. Unlike the previous chapters which focused on how the speculative opens up the present and past to enable a new future, this chapter focuses on the demise of the future in the present and how to engage the speculative in such modalities of the present. In this sense, the speculative is like the gas leak alarm in the chemical plant in Rina that goes ignored until the eventual explosion takes place, rather than a concrete utopia. Thus, the speculative here refuses to represent or to

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69 On this front, Jasbir Puar has argued against Mitchell’s and Snyder’s tendency to read the figure of the non-productive disabled body and the immaterial labor market as automatically resistant or laudable, which “occludes…populations that are neither positioned as resistant to capitalism nor promoted as objects of care…their debilitation functions as a form of value extraction for otherwise disposable bodies” (Puar 2017, 79). The fictions of this chapter explore the refusal by this “neither” population narratively.
affect but commands attention to the finer grains of what can be in what is (the making of a disaster), unveiling the operative logic of coloniality that expresses itself through new technological guises.\textsuperscript{70}

### 4.1 South Korean Literature in Apocalyptic Times

The three South Korean women authors examined in this chapter, Kang Yŏngsuk, Kim Sagwa, and Yun Goûn, are part of a “new” generation of literary voices emerging in 2000s-2010s South Korea. Literary critics have described them as sharing an “apocalyptic” (Kang 2010, 255) and “dystopian” world view (Oh 2015, 319), as writers who offer unfamiliar poetics consisting of “strange sensibilities and new grammars” (Han 2010, 355).\textsuperscript{71} In one telling example, Kim Sagwa’s published works and her debate online with the more established male writers and critics Kim Young-ha and Cho Yŏngil earned her the nickname “enfant terrible.” Though used somewhat derogatorily, the term enfant terrible aptly captures these authors’ endeavors: to not only make space within the literary establishment (\textit{mundan}) for divergent voices, styles, and subject matters, but also and more essentially, in Kim Sagwa’s words, to indicate that they bear the “responsibility [and not the choice] of finding a possibility,” “keeping one’s cool while discussing the possibilities/utopia” (Kim 2009, 194). This attitude has led to the observation that “something new can be found in the un-sublime-able anger as a form of capital in 2010s South Korean novels” (Kim 2013, 384).

\textsuperscript{70} While I am not engaging it in this chapter, theorists of affect have written on the pre-emption of what can be in the implicate order by modulating futurity (Massumi 2015, Clough et al. 2007, Parisi and Goodman 2011).

\textsuperscript{71} For secondary literature in Korea, I have rendered some of the cited texts in English with my own translation.
These works have emerged in a context in which there has been an increase of disaster contents in South Korean literary, filmic, and overall cultural productions. Scholars have understood this tendency as an outcome of the paradoxes of democracy in South Korea (Oh 2015, 323) as well as a reflection of how disasters such as the Sewol ferry functioned as a catalyst for fueling protests for democratization and for holding the state accountable in South Korea (Han 2010, 397). Moreover, both within and outside South Korea, the forces of neoliberal capitalism and globalization have accelerated already existing relations of power that have been the legacy of colonialism and the ongoing military occupation in South Korea. If this has meant that South Korea has become increasingly present as an investor in racial capitalism and South Korean cultural products have circulated as commodities in the branding of K-Pop and K-Beauty (Lie 2015, Marinescu 2014), these effects are ever more tangible in South Korea, as the rights of migrant worker, LGBTQIA, and disabled populations are folded in at times and skirted around in other times in the very invocations of democracy. This tension between inclusion and marginalization is similarly found in the feminist debate that has enflamed South Korean popular discourse in recent years (Jeong 2017, Kim 2017b, Hong 2017, Chŏng et al. 2018).

In this context, many authors seem conscious of the label of “young woman author” conferred on them by critics and the literary market alike, especially as we witness the commodification of feminism accompanying its popular revival in South Korea, and the younger generation of women authors have expressed hesitation at being treated as a homogeneous body of creators (Yi and Park 2017). However, the question appears to be less whether these works are indeed homogeneous or similar with one another, than why
their focus on gendered embodiment and its material politics are not more present in other contemporary South Korean fictions at large. While these authors are not seeking to craft an “Écriture féminine” in an identitarian fashion, they indeed have put forth a critical deadpan voice unmatched by others. By discussing them together, I highlight their specific use of a speculative imagination that is keenly attuned to how populations are selected and, in Sylvia Wynter’s sense, “dysselcted” from the symbolic and ontological dimensions of the human. Their fictions attempt to find alternative modes of interrogating this process beyond the language of cyclical popular outrage followed by catharsis. Particularly, several of the younger contemporary women writers are credited with having familiarized the South Korean audience with the “post/in (the prefix tal- in Korean) human,” which is essentially a rethinking of the “human,” as So Yong-Hyun notes (So 2009, 319-23). I would extend this observation, in fact. A critique of the humanist discourse and politics emerges from this post/in-human question, of the humanism saturating civil society’s covert participation in militarization. As we shall see, rather than bringing an end to the conditions of immobilization and debilitation, the discourses and constructs of citizenship and human rights here ensure the reproduction of redress structures themselves (NGOs, some forms of activism, state reparations, etc.).

Aiding the transnational scope of neoliberal capitalism and globalization in contemporary South Korea is the pervasiveness and accompanied (in)visibility of military occupation and national division (Hughes 2012). If occupation appears as an explicit military presence in the materials examined in my other chapters, it surfaces in more coded ways here with a liberal-cosmopolitan face that underpins the militarization of national borders, tourist settlements, and the colonial sex industry. Occupation thus functions as a
negative space that nonetheless potently determines what is possible and impossible within the worlds of the speculative fictions. The military tension between North Korea, South Korea, and the U.S. remains in place in the 2000s-2010s, the period when these literary works were written and set, continually expanding both territorially and technologically (Kim July 5, 2018, Choe March 15, 2019). Yet, in lieu of depicting more obvious sites of militarism, the literary texts examined here dissect the industrial underside of global capitalist production and reveal how these relations of power are conducted through the bodies of the migrants and the indigenous. They thereby enable the understanding that these industrial and settler colonial debilitation too, are a facet of occupation beyond immediate sites of combat.

Indeed, the apocalyptic present in these texts consists of the active participation of South Korean and international civil society in militarization which blurs where military occupation ends and an economic occupation begins. Though the civil society avows to protect individuals through the liberal humanist constructs of citizenship and human rights, these constructs simultaneously extend the control mechanisms of economic developments to populations that are “newly” made available to capitalist civil societies through displacement, labor exploitation, and human trafficking. This blurring points to the infrastructural aspects of occupation (Tawil-Souri 2012) that are manifest not only in sites of direct military confrontations but also in global economic demands that work in and through the so-called “civil society.” Economic development through globalization and militarization mutually inform each other here: the debilitated and immobilized populations might be displaced by military conflicts and are euphemistically referred to as
economic migrants in the “post” Cold War era (Kim 2012b); and economic development is also enforced through militarized means of capture and control.

In the South Korean cultural imagination, Joanna Elfving-Hwang observes that the trope of disaster privileges the aesthetic of “safe soil” and hyangto, or the nostalgia for the rural earth-home, and thereby reinstates a nationalist return to the origin (Elfving-Hwang 2015). The fictions I examine command attention, then, for how they decenter the restoration of the ethnic national soil, by focusing on the effects of disaster on questionably citizen bodies and the logic of disasters themselves.\(^72\) In disaster studies, disasters are understood through the damage they cause to human life and therefore as a human construct resulting from preparedness and relief efforts (Priestley and Hemingway 2007, Huh 2015).\(^73\) The metaphorization of disaster which Elfving-Hwang points to problematically imagines a national citizenry that is equally affected by disasters. But as Huh Ra Keum argues, such “democratization” of the effects of disaster, especially understood through an ethical framework, flattens the very constructed nature of disasters and their uneven effects (Huh 2015), especially on liminal bodies. The fictions offer a metacommentary on the making of the disaster and its necessary costs, such as the exclusion and immobilization of improperly citizen bodies to give organic coherency to the equation between “safe soil” and the ethno-national body. Especially in the case of the corporate settler colonialism explored through Night Travelers, one can discern how the

\(^{72}\) Elfving-Hwang examines South Korean films on disasters to make the argument about safe soil. She shares my view when she writes on a contrasting trend in literary productions on disasters: “However, recent literary fiction shows indications of moving away from emphasizing signs of ontological security to suggesting that life is ultimately never safe” (Elfving-Hwang 2015, 25).

\(^{73}\) Thus, Priestley and Hemingway write: “it is important to distinguish between these natural ‘hazards’ and human ‘disasters.’ Natural hazards lead to disasters when they damage human lives and environments. Although natural hazards may not be eradicated, human disasters may be lessened by reducing vulnerabilities, particularly for poor or socially excluded groups” (Priestley and Hemingway 2007, 25).
construction of indigenous islands as tourist sites echoes the urban and colonial
collection of *hyangto* as “immutable” (Hughes 2012, 49).

To address how mobility is conceived in and against the environment, I specifically
consider the contexts in which bodies are collapsed into the environment at the onslaught
of disasters and the ensuing “recovery” process in speculative fictions. Naomi Klein had
proposed in *The Shock Doctrine* the evolution of the Chicago economic school and the war
on terror into a full-blown disaster capitalism complex: “disaster capitalism complex—a
full-fledged new economy in homeland security, privatized war and disaster reconstruction
tasked with nothing less than building and running a privatized security state, both at home
and abroad” (Klein 2008, 315). The disaster capitalism complex enables corporations and
states to work together to use a disaster site as an opportunity for neoliberal restructuring,
as in the case of Sri Lanka, New Orleans, and Puerto Rico (Klein 2018, 2008). I show that
disaster economies create and control toxic states and environments, for example, through
epidemic fumigation, quarantines, and the simulation of devastation for tourists, which
migrant and feral bodies endure. In the speculative disasters, the material environment, as
we shall see again and again, is structured by liberal humanist affects. Though liberal
humanism proffers to save the gendered and racialized migrant laborers, it relies on the
migrant and feral labor to materially sustain the disaster-struck environment for dark
tourism and redress structures. I argue that the literary texts’ refusal to mobilize affect in
the laboring population through the “deadpan” imagines a politics of immobility in
occupied disaster sites against liberal humanist affects.

4.2 Disaster, Debility, and the Cyborg Migrant in *Rina*

We will cough for the rest of our lives, then run wild like mad dogs.
— Kang Yŏng-Suk, *Rina*
Kang Yŏng-Suk’s novel *Rina* (2011) follows the wayward “journey” of a teenage girl Rina as she departs her unnamed country for the nation “P.” Several hints draw a parallel between the fictional countries of the novel and the divided North/South Korea: Rina’s home country is an authoritarian state in which citizens are made to chant memorized political doctrines (*kangryŏng*); it shares the same language and ethnic demographics with “P,” an affluent capitalist country to the South. As I have argued in Chapter Two, speculative geographies can suspend routine understandings of one’s relation to one’s surrounding informed by sedimented knowledge and comfort; in this suspension, speculative geographies harness the potential for alternative modalities of movement and relation building towards a decolonial future. *Rina* unravels the linear trajectory of a migrant subjectivity vying for citizenship of the neoliberal nation P. By exploring how the migrant’s body is touched and unformed by environmental catastrophe and human trafficking, the novel questions the very language of migration and assumptions about the subject in motion.

*Rina* begins at the Northeast border of an unnamed nation, presumably the border between North Korea and China, where the sixteen-year-old Rina and her family kneel before armed soldiers, waiting for their turn to cross. The tale of the doomed fate of so-called “escapists” (*t'aleh'ulchadŭl*) surfaces in this waiting space, where “young boys who get caught while trying to escape are sold to another country to work thirty-six hours day and night, and girls tour around the red light districts of many countries and are only let go when their bodies are taken ill and they are near death” (Kang 2011, 10). Though the novel goes on to show exactly this, Rina remains hopeful, believing that “the border ahead, laid
out like a blue embankment, can open any moment” (Kang 2011, 11) and magically sweep up the escapists and bring them to the other side.

The teleological narrative of saved “escapists” and their path to economic success in “P” is repeated at different points within the novel. Yet, the novel juxtaposes such a narrative of success with the conditions of those who pay to cross borders to reveal its illusory quality. This duality reveals that the alluring image of normative citizenship in capitalist “P”/South Korea is sustained by the very capital that these border crossers themselves offer. The nomenclatures for the North Koreans in the South are ideologically loaded, reflective of the political role assigned to the liminal position of the North Koreans within the political discourse of South Korea. From the Cold War legacy of “defector” soldiers, in the 1990s and onwards, they were increasingly viewed as “(political) refugees” and “(economic) migrants” (Kim 2012b). The South Korean and U.S. fascination with the narratives of young North Korean women assimilating to the life in South Korea can be traced in TV shows such as “NamNamBukNyo” and memoirs such as Yeonmi Park’s In Order to Live: A North Korean Girl’s Journey to Freedom (Park 2015). Underlying such a fascination, Sun Kyung Kim writes, is the sense that the women are “‘economic migrants’ who should accept roles working in low-paid jobs with long working hours in order to keep the South Korean economy stable in the global economic system” (Kim 2012b). The “defector” woman functions as a fetish, her ideological re-education and physical modification serving the vision of the South Korean state as a benevolent savior that uplifts and modernizes, a narrative that is replicated in various migrant narratives (Jun 2012).

The refusal to mobilize affect, through the use of a “deadpan” sensibility on disasters questions such benevolence narratives. The dynamic between assimilation and
mobilization might be thought vis-à-vis the homophonic slippage between movement and sameness in the two Sino-Korean concepts tonghwa (同化: assimilation) and tongwŏn (動員: mobilization). Both kinds of movements search for and take for granted the physical and affective mobility of the migrant worker. The migrant’s mobility is in fact a carefully modulated equilibrium for generating surplus value for liberal humanist affects, through both spatial displacement (in which movement itself becomes a form of labor) and confinement to disaster sites. Rina unsettles the teleology of movement in the assimilation of migrants with high physical and emotional capacities, by offering the complex entanglements of toxic environments and polluted bodies as another analytic from which to examine the migrant’s mobility beyond assimilation and mobilization. Dwelling with those who are “stuck,” the novel invites its readers to grapple with how the failures of disability, migrant, and reproductive rights, combined with industrial and environmental disasters, reproduce the conditions of immobility.

Thus, in a parodic gesture towards the pre-made narrative of assimilation, Rina portrays a border crosser who chooses not to go to “P” and instead extends her detour through a desert tent town of sex workers, chemical manufacturing plants, and bars for industrial laborers in the countries between her home and “P.” Rina is more enticed by the endless openness of the idealized border than the life she has been told she is guaranteed to have in “P,” and she refuses the possibility of going to P because “she had too many complaints about social problems” (86). Rina’s objection underlines the limits of the gendered “migrant” subjectivity that is deserving of state resources and media attention. The constructed position allows a critique of North Korea that benefits the façade of South Korean and international humanitarianism, but this seeming freedom precludes the
possibility of critique on various sociopolitical issues that affect a migrant’s life, of which Rina is acutely aware.

Comically fantastical and gruesomely realistic, the novel portrays the material conditions of human trafficking through Rina’s unstable narration, which often contradicts itself. The novel oscillates between these two tendencies to show how integrally connected the spaces of illicit acts and beings are to the construction of “P” as a haven. Contrary to a South Korean minister’s assumption that the migrants will hold fantasies of freedom inherent to “P,” it is the First World disaster aids and human rights activists who are portrayed as holding fantasies about the next fashionable object worthy of consumption and rescue. The novel thus offers a suspicion of the global neoliberal capitalist economy and of benevolent liberalism as frameworks through which to understand the details of Rina’s experiences, and instead of the affective framework of horror and outrage that reinforces humanitarian narratives of rescue.

Through working in one industrial factory after another, the migrant workers’ bodies in Rina sustain high levels of pollution, illness, and debilitation. The incurability of their debilitated state often renders them a part of the destroyed environment they inhabit and call home. Rina and her motley kin arrive at an industrial city divided into two. While half of it is highly active and developed, the other half of the city is “irrevocably destroyed, no different from a broken garbage disposal site. As if someone has drawn a line and declared one side as the other’s rival, only the East side—the factory area—was overly active. From the forgotten dump on the West to the city, the air occasionally blew dry dust” (Kang 2011, 194). Cut off from the main transportation systems, the overlooked western side of the city is revealed to be a product of a gas explosion from seven years before.
This spatial division of the city is described as a large-scale disablement—“a limping city” (Kang 2011, 194)—reflective of the debilitated embodiments of the workers who roam its streets. The “Free Economic Development Zone” gives preferential treatment to foreign investors. Many of the Zone’s inhabitants are foreign migrant workers because of the Zone’s loose labor regulations. Carved out by transnational corporations, the Zone offers endless development, supported by the disposability of its workforce, because the workers’ lack of citizenship status makes the migrant worker population infinitely disposable and renewable. The zone cycles through workers’ debilitation through disaster and conditions of labor, then replacement with a new flow of migrant workers. The fluid mobility of finance capital is here unimpeded by the migrant workers’ demands. Rather, the workers’ debilitation fixes them to the disaster site awaiting disposal and replacement. Objectified as part of the environment itself, they are hardly able to stake reparation claims as human subjects with rights distinct from their surroundings. The disablement of the city is made literal through the debilitated disaster survivors’ environmentalization. The conjoined force of militarization and economic demands operates through a mapping technology that plans zones of immediate and slow disasters; these disasters entrap bodies capable of producing value in such zones, a phenomenon that scholarship on disability-making in war, police violence, and industrialization have analyzed (Aoyama 2016, Moore, Lisa, and Thrower 2016, Puar 2017). The premise of general debilitation of some laboring bodies is here reflected in their naturalization as environmental and “accidental” recurrence of disasters.

The questions that Rina raises about gendered migrant labor can be thought alongside the concept of the “integrated circuit” of transnational capitalism described by
Rachel Grossman. Rina furthermore reveals that the integrated circuit can only exist accompanied by a parallel *disintegration process* that takes its toll on select bodies and environments for the material possibility of such.\(^74\) In this process, the circuit extends the nature of what Donna Haraway has theorized as cyborg labor past the tenuous divide between her abilities and disabilities as a laborer: the mined matter ranges from biocapital to affect, for which the laboring body is reinvented as productive in and through its malleability.

Disability studies has critically examined the relationship between work and livelihood, yet this particular concern of disability and debilitation gained through labor has not been central to its theorizations of work. The standards of productivity implicit to formal employment in capitalism not only justify the exclusion of people with disability and illnesses from various forms of paid work (Barnes and Mercer 2005) but also dominate occupational therapy designed to assist people with disability and illness in their daily lives (Block et al. 2016, 6). Moreover, various welfare and medical systems make it difficult for people with disability and illness to seek financial independence and medical care: as the sociologist and disability scholar Colin Barnes writes, “eligibility for various social welfare-support benefits and programmes is often determined by certified incapacity for

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\(^74\) An “integrated circuit” (also called a microchip) is a small electronic unit made up of discrete elements (like transistors) that can perform as a larger circuit for a cheaper cost and faster performance. Donna Haraway borrows the concept of the integrated circuit from Rachel Grossman’s writing on Malaysian women workers in electronics factory (Grossman 1980). In it, Grossman analogizes two tactics used by the factories to the way an “integrated circuit” works: first, the factories have their women workers perform multiple roles; second, the factories prevent the formation of alliance across different sectors of labor by separating women electronics workers and imbuing them with the sense that the electronics manufacturing is superior to other lines of women’s manufacturing. “Integrated circuit” as an analogy in Grossman’s analysis as well as in Haraway’s thus describes these two aspects: first, the distinction between the space of the industrial and the space of the private are collapsed, making a small piece perform the role of a collective as in the makeup of an integrated circuit; second, the workers of the global South are trained and integrated as a piece into the global capitalist system, the circuit itself.
(paid) work…the move into paid work may entail a financial penalty or loss” (Barnes and Mercer 2005, 537).

Yet, what is not considered in the questions around work and disability are the effects of labor that do not distinguish between (dis)abilities, types of work for which productivity is not conceived to be proportional to able-bodied health. Rather, swinging in and out of debilitating and disabling states appears to be the necessary premise and consequence of “un”-skilled work in the global South. The analysis ahead questions the formulation that has, to understand the changing form of labor in the information age, tended to problematically cast manufacturing and un-skilled labor as passé. Most important, various consumer items, services, and the possibility of a global network of information and power are predicated on the continuation of industrial labor and what it entails: constant and extensive labor, extraction of resources, and occupation in the global South and pockets of the global North.

For example, while articulating his useful and prescient theory of control societies and their difference from disciplinary societies, Gilles Deleuze prematurely declared a shift from factory production work to corporate work on the product (Deleuze 1992). Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri more problematically formulate the concept of immaterial labor against industrial, “material” labor (Hardt and Negri 2004). While the question of affect labor has generated meaningful ways of thinking about the changing relationship between value and measure in the neoliberal political economy, as in Patricia Clough’s inquiry that centers on “politics of the differential distribution among populations of capacities for living...appearing as data” (Clough et al. 2007, 75), there still is a tendency in the historicization of different forms of labor to leave behind “older” forms of labor and their ties to colonialism. Critical of Hardt’s and Negri’s distinction between material and immaterial labor, the cultural anthropologist Sylvia Yanagisako argues that the distinction “obscures the industrial labor that is crucial to the current so-called informational economy” and “the unmistakably gendered character of this distinction, moreover, lends itself toward a characterization of men's work as "instrumental" and "economically productive,” while women's "affective" work produces forms of sociality” (Yanagisako 2012).

It seems problematic to describe the affective as “immaterial” when, not only is the affective irreducible to anthropocentric sociality and emotions, but also affect’s organization of bodily matter attests to the very materiality of affect. The objection here is not to the immaterial itself as a useful category, but at the erasure of materiality of affect labor in Hardt’s and Negri’s formulation. For a consideration of the material’s relation to the ideal, see the new materialist Elizabeth Grosz’s argument on the limits of materialism in the recent volume The Incorporeal (Grosz 2017).
In *Rina*, we see how these spaces are created and protected repeatedly. Though the city’s designation as a “Free Economic Development Region” brings ample foreign investments, the transnational corporate investors had refused to offer monetary compensations to the injured factory workers and their families, who continue to live in the heap of debris in the Western part of the city. Ill and disabled from the explosion, the surviving former workers continue to live in the contaminated site and silently stand with the protest slogan “Don’t Forget us!” at the factory on the East side, where business is as usual. Transnational capital treats them as inevitable products of industrial optimization. The worker-survivors are destined to reproduce generations of disablement if they live long enough to or are still able to reproduce at all. Rina and her kin arrive at the city and begin working at the city’s East side chemical factory, but their fate turns out to be no different than the former factory workers; just as the tragic story of some distant “defectors” that opens the novel eventually becomes that of Rina, the novel points to the fixity of debilitation awaiting the migrant workers. As were those before her, Rina finds herself stranded in the East side factory site after another explosion, part of the cyclical structure of destruction and foreign aid.

In these zones, affects extend the second phase of the disaster seeking this time, to extract symbolic value from the migrant laborers as victims of disaster. Rina’s ontological value as a disposable migrant worker continues to be profitable for transnational capital post-explosion because of her debilitation. Swarms of international NGOs and environmental and human rights activists come to the explosion site to create a media spectacle. Claiming that it is necessary to “record” what happened, the foreign journalists demand quotable anecdotes from Rina, to which she retorts, “Tons of toxic materials swept
by our emaciated bodies. Where else would you get to see such a thing? Stare while you can. We will cough for the rest of our lives, then run wild like mad dogs” (Kang 2011, 294). This retort captures the unsettling productivity of Rina’s post-disaster ontology: the more she could document the toxicity of the environment and become a part of it, the more she produces the shock value that can hold onto the “stare” that the documentation is meant to evoke. In short, the more devastated Rina gets and the more she approximates death in life, the more profitable she becomes for the NGO and human rights industry’s need to represent victims. The survivors observe their own ironic disposition that they stand a chance to make money from being taken ill, sardonically conjecturing, “perhaps it was even better that they underwent an explosion” (Kang 2011, 297). Once the decision for reparation is reached, however, the survivors learn that the transnational corporations behind the chemical plant chose to pay the nation-state in which they work and not the migrant survivors themselves. Moreover, the state chooses to forgo the restoration of the affected area and makes plans to develop a different city. The city is consequently quarantined so that it can destroy itself completely without cost. Such a process identifies how, within the trajectory of disaster victimhood, the survivors are turned into an invisible element of the polluted environment to enable development without reparation.

From factory work and the explosion, Rina’s skin becomes overly sensitive and her eyes constantly tear up under the sun, leaving her to “curse all day” (Kang 2011, 326). Yet, because chronic illness and disablement are the naturalized outcome of migrant/trafficked work, Rina’s disability and illness do not situate her as a subject with disability, with the possibility of demanding rights. Instead, her conditions intensify both the symbolic and material equating of her body to the polluted environment. The visible unhealth that she
embody elides her right not to be subjected to debilitating labor. Instead, her presence naturalizes the disaster scene as an accidental spectacle rather than an outcome of corporate neglect and land development plans.

Fumigation (paŋgyŏk) as a theme captures such an equating of the exploitable bodies to the polluted environment. When the state fumigates the quarantined area to prevent epidemics from breaking out from the explosion site, Rina yells at the sky, “for whom are you fumigating? I don’t need it” (Kang 2011, 336). Fumigation illustrates the biopolitical control that continues to be asserted in regions “abandoned” by corporations and states. Though abandoned, the area still holds a potential risk of disseminating invisible matter across the quarantine line and of affecting other areas deemed safe from toxins and epidemics. Chemical interventions such as anti-epidemic fumigation and pesticides promise to protect human health against non-human organic agents. Yet, fumigation itself is harmful to the bodies it passes through, the health hazards of which are justified through the treatment of the migrant worker’s body itself as a toxic agent. Aimed to make the environment more habitable for certain humans, fumigation’s toxicity permeates and makes ill the disposable and abandoned bodies in polluted sites.

Although transnational capital, third world governments, NGOs, and environmental and human rights activists claim to “save” the debilitated migrant survivors, the novel insinuates that they further profit from the survivors’ potential to be endlessly rehabilitated and needing rescue. Rather than effectively intervening in the creation of exploitable zones of slow death such as the “Free Economic Development Zone,” the NGOs assist the naturalization of industrial disasters as accidents by circulating images and narratives of pity. The NGOs and human rights activism thus rely on the human
trafficking network to reproduce subjects of philanthropy. Environmental activists are likewise shown to rely on the constant creation of territories too destroyed for development but distant enough from global North centers of commerce to hold toxic waste disposal. Largely self-serving, they are described as always looking for combats in the spotlight with big corporations covered by international media, without which the disaster zone holds little value for them. The novel’s following satiric portrayal underlines how the NGOs produce narrative value from the scenes of disaster and just as quickly leave behind sites that are no longer productive for commoditizing affects:

The letters on the pickets that read “Rise up from the disaster. Do not lose hope” were so bruised by the gray air that they were illegible. Now that the transnational corporations have settled with the country’s government, even the radical environmental activists kept smoking and gazing at the distance. Elites that they were, they were faithful to the practical logic that activism and convictions must be marketable. With no more cigarettes to smoke, they left for a more exotic, palpitating issue on a continent on the other side of the earth [...] leaving the job to an international organization of an unknown religion.” (Kang 2011, 301-2)

The environmental activists here follow the market logic, pursuing an ever newer and more exoticized disaster site as a bankable fetish-object. Ironically, the projected radicality of the environmental and human rights activists is dependent on the logics and flows of the disaster market itself. The novel points to the perverse symbiosis between the radical critique of the activists and the disaster management that seeks temporary redress for the harm done. The survivors therefore experience the presence of the activists and news media in the post-disaster site as a second phase of the disaster itself rather than an intervention on the conditions created by the disaster. That the contents of the air-dropped aid materials are eventually replaced with “inedible” microchips, to the survivors’ surprise and anger, illustrates the novel’s suggestion that the NGO aid economy has only set the stage for the eventual use of the disaster site as an industrial waste management site.
Such a spatial division of the disaster zone from the more habitable ones is maintained by the liberal humanist framework of Western human rights discourse and environmentalism in *Rina*. At a house party not far from the Free Economic Development Zone, the Western hosts “smoke marijuana and debate global poverty, endless wars, and sustainable development” (Kang 2011, 231). They “work for some UN or other international organization’s private development committee” and claim that “there is no country as irresponsible about environmental pollution as this one [China] on Earth” (Kang 2011, 232). The ease with which they approach these issues and the plentiful world in which they live exist laterally to the imminent disaster zone in which Rina and her kin live. Though the former can “debate” about conditions of the latter and criticize industrial pollution, the encounter between the two worlds is buffered. The physical mobility and affective capacities of the environment and human rights activists, international artists, and NGO workers starkly contrast with the migrant survivors’ immobilization at industrial disaster sites.

In place of the liberal humanist work of philanthropy and a unilateral mobility towards citizenship in “P,” the novel occasionally evokes fleeting intimacies among the displaced subjects and their toxic environment. This could take the form of a temporary commune: Rina and her kin dwell for a while in the tent town of Shiring, where sex workers have created a community. Shiring takes the matter of the resident women’s wellbeing into their own hands because the government has forsaken both the land and the women. The women have also adopted orphans who have been abandoned because they were girls, disabled, or sold by their parents at a young age to the sex work industry. The orphans’ disability is understood in the novel as premature rather than extraordinary, because a
lifetime of harsh working conditions would cause disablement inevitably. Shiring lasts for a little while, setting its own rules, until the government bulldozes the tent homes and evicts Shiring residents. The fleeting intimacy can also come in the form of queer desires that relieve the effects of toxins: living in a chemical factory’s dorm, Rina and her “factory sister” find temporary relief from skin disease and insomnia through sexual pleasure. Inhaling the smell of chemical cleaners in the laundry room, Rina finds the caress of the “factory sister” on her skin difficult to disentangle from the pleasure of scratching irritated skin (Kang 2011, 174-76). The queer intimacy allows them to experience their own skin as separate from the markings of factory work on their bodies, available for their own pleasure and not only a bodily surface for enduring labor. Through kissing and rubbing the dry, rough skin against each other, they find possibilities of comfort and pleasure that temporarily flood out the chemical stench from their work clothes that have caused them headache and insomnia.

The blurring of the boundary between the toxic environment, the toxins, and the intoxicated organic body also leads to a bodily production, distinct from sex work and factory labor, that evades commodification.77 Wading in the debris after the chemical factory’s explosion, Rina begins pulling layers of dust, organic and inorganic matter, and twigs off and out of an old woman who has accompanied Rina through most of the novel. As layers of thickly caked on matter from the explosion fall off the old woman, a cloud of moths begins hatching and flying out of the debris on her back and fills the air. In contrast to the mediatization of the post-disaster victim narrative, this moment in the novel asks how the immobilized migrant in a disaster site might inhabit her environment differently.

77 See Mel Chen’s discussion of toxicity and toxins in Queer Animacies for an argument against pejorative understandings of toxicity and how toxins are racialized (Chen 2012).
The woman’s harboring and production of non-human life takes place in an environment seemingly devoid of life. In her capacity to live with moths within her polluted body, she produces a life force uncommodifiable by both sex work and factory work. Though the various factories and prostitution rings have deemed the old woman incapable of producing value, Rina proudly exclaims that the old woman is a “magnificent person, growing such odd things inside” (Kang 2011, 296). Soon after the old woman’s death, Rina buries her under a tree so that her remains can feed the tree. Rina, too, dreams of transforming into a flowering tree, “growing flower buds and leaves where her skin popped” (Kang 2011, 315).

The state sees the permeability of immobilized migrants to the polluted environment as a reason to quarantine the disaster site and label its residents as toxic. Yet, the novel suggests that quarantines cannot foreclose the possibility of human and non-human cohabitation and its organic possibilities beyond the capitalist circuit of value. In the post-disaster site, the migrant/refugee woman laborer here dreams of the possibilities of her body to regenerate the uncommodifiable organic beyond her own disintegration, rather than a restoration to normative health or to technological capacities for producing industrial value.

In the end, the novel faithfully carries out the rumored fate of defectors foretold from its beginning. Rina is last seen crossing the borderland which she claims as her home, and possibly, into death. She walks naked, with orange goggles for the eye sensitivity she acquired and accompanied by a bird. The novel repeatedly suggests that the border is neither a stage within the teleology towards citizenship in “P”/South Korea nor a fantastical limit dividing two separate worlds. Instead, the border in the novel should be understood as a material reminder for the connectedness between these parallel spaces. Rina’s debilitation is deeply entwined with the material sustenance of the idealized life as a citizen.
in “P”/South Korea. The hyper-able, body-altering, and college educated citizen of “P,” the novel appears to say, is made possible through the continued commodification of toxic bodies across the border. Rina’s refusal to follow the teleology of capitalist citizenship thus reveals, not an exceptional space of escape, but its underbelly, where toxic surfaces touch and, occasionally, give way to queer pleasures. If Rina followed the North Korean migrant/trafficked woman’s journey that ultimately rejects South Korean citizenship, the next section looks at the novel City of Terror to examine how a Korean-Chinese migrant/trafficked woman is incorporated into the folds of the South Korean workforce.

4.3 Sustainable Destruction, Unsustainable Affect in City of Terror

The biggest difference between average people and us is our facial expressions. Look at Jenny. Her face is inexpressive. It is always empty.

—Kim Sagwa, City of Terror

Kim Sagwa’s novel City of Terror mirrors many aspects of Kang Yŏng-Suk’s Rina, but with a more focused critique of liberal humanism and its affects. Such critique is echoed in Kim Sagwa’s own statement in 2005 that she “dislikes the excessive humanism of Korean literature,” which also reflects Oh Ch'angŭn’s observation that Kim Sagwa’s writings appear to be designed to betray such humanism (Oh and Chŏng 2008, 404).78 Central to this betrayal is Kim’s construction of cyborg figures in her writings; if her 2008 debut novel Mina’s problematic protagonist is a “successful cyborg” in the sense that she “reproduces the society’s values more quickly and intelligently…a metaphor for the impossibility of salvation” (Oh and Chŏng 2008, 410), City of Terror’s protagonist offers up a different kind of cyborg, a migrant woman worker whose disintegration and

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78 The novel’s title can be alternatively translated as The Poem of Terror because city and poem are homonyms in Korean.
immobilization provide for the wealth that surrounds her. For Haraway, the cyborg myth allowed her to intervene in the dichotomies of the 1980s: “one of [her] premises is that most American socialists and feminists see deepened dualisms of mind and body, animal and machine, idealism and materialism in the social practices, symbolic formulations and physical artefacts associated with ‘high technology’ and scientific culture” (Haraway 2000, 295). The cyborg was a feminist-socialist countermeasure to the insistence on the whole, organic body distinct from the animal and the machine, and also to the total disavowal of technology. The cyborg also has occasionally appeared in discussions of gender, embodiment, and animality in South Korean feminist discussions; Haraway’s works, including “The Cyborg Manifesto,” have been translated and published in Korean in 2016 and will likely contribute further engagements with the figure of the cyborg.

Yet if the cyborg proved to be a useful figure for feminist science studies and posthumanist approaches to question biological determinism, Stacy Alaimo warned that feminist cultural studies focused on the cyborg’s discursive constructedness and ignored its materiality: “feminist cultural studies have embraced the cyborg as a social and technological construct but have ignored, for the most part, the matter of the cyborg, a materiality which is as biological as it is technological…Disturbingly, the critical reception of the cyborg as technological but not biological insinuates a transcendent cyberhumanism that shakes off worldly entanglements” (Alaimo 2010, 7). Instead of a disembodied cyberhumanism, Alaimo argues that “understanding the substance of one’s self as

79 For a remapping of the cyborg/goddess in and through theories of assemblage and intersectionality, see Jasbir Puar’s “I Would Rather be a Cyborg Than a Goddess: Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory.” Here, Puar challenges the dualism created between these binaries to consider the applicability and possibilities enabled by assemblage theory and intersectionality theory (Puar 2012).
80 See Hyun Nam-Sook and Lim Ok Hee for discussions of the cyborg in the context of South Korea, gender, and animality (Hyun 2012, Lim 2019).
interconnected with the wider environment marks a profound shift in subjectivity” (Alaimo 2010, 20). In this materialist feminist turn, Alaimo follows Moira Gatens to favor Spinoza’s radically open human body over Foucault’s biopolitical one to argue that, Alaimo understands the body as “in constant interchange with its environment” (Alaimo 2010, 14). However, the cyborg as a woman worker in South Korea is interconnected to the environment in such a way that the organic matter that “composes, recomposes, and decomposes” her body circulates as biocapital.

The pattern of matter’s capture and distribution as biocapital once again reiterates the conundrum that the organic is neither in and of itself liberating nor opposed to the technology of biopolitics in this case. In that sense, what we see in Rina and The City of Terror is closer to what Patricia Clough and others have theorized, at the analytic juncture between affect and matter, as the biomediated body. Unlike the bounded individual body of thermodynamics, which is “open to energy but informationally closed to the environment,” the biomediated body of new media and quantum physics “is a definition of a body and what it can do—its affectivity—that points to the political economic and theoretical investment in the self-organization inherent to matter” (Clough 2008, 2). It aims to explain “complexification in bodily matter at the molecular level as its informational capacity is made more productive…in the service of producing a surplus of information realizable as surplus value” (Clough 2008, 10). Clough’s aim to theorize matter in general and “affect-itself;” beyond emotions and human-centered bodily matter, leads to the necessity to argue for the non-distinction in affectivity between the organic and the non-organic matter, “generalized matter beyond the laborer’s body” (Clough 2008, 65). Still, when and why does the in/organic binary become indistinguishable? This section addresses
this question, especially with regards to populations whose production of surplus value is
optimized through this very indistinction. This appears especially relevant if, as Clough
observes, “the political gain expected by the affective turn—its openness, emergence and
creativity—is already the object of capitalist capture” (Clough 2008, 19). Because the
“organic” matter of the cyborg women workers is a significant canvas for experimentation
within the “integrated circuit,” the boundless bodily matter’s dynamic with the
environmental matter needs to address why and how populations are differently affected,
beyond the realm of politics that operates in Alaimo’s invocation for a “profound shift in
subjectivity.” Instead of the openness suggested by the affective turn, sticking with the “the
laborer’s body” in fact leads to the refusal to affect, which we find in City of Terror and its
cyborg figure, “Jenny” and her lack of affectivity.

The novel tracks the story of “Jenny,” whose real name is left blank and remains
unknown to the end. Through the story of Jenny, City of Terror exposes how the
unexceptional spaces of domesticity, culture, and citizenship in South Korea are saturated
with violent desires enacted on migrant women. Jenny cycles through the roles of a sex
worker, domestic aid, muse for leftist art, and migrant “victim” saved by neoliberal
capitalist Christianity. Referred to as chosŏnchok by some South Koreans in the novel,
Jenny is a Korean-Chinese woman from “a land of sand” that also remains unnamed. The
novel begins with Jenny’s father selling Jenny to a sex club in Seoul, South Korea, where
she enters a sexual economy that is a legacy of U.S. military camp towns. At the club,
multi-national women, mostly migrants, serve the diversified sexual clienteles of South
Korea in the 2010s, visited by U.S. soldiers, South Korean men, Japanese tourists, and
Korean-Chinese men.
City of Terror takes the migrant/trafficked woman’s non-ownership of her body and affects portrayed in Rina to another level, focusing on her inability and, at times, her refusal to feel or be receptive to her environment. For example, Jenny doesn’t feel “sad” as do some of the other sex workers, because she doesn’t have what the others fear of losing through sex work, such as a state-issued ID. Drawing a parallel between emotional investment in symbolic objects with an entitlement to emotional expressiveness, the narrator quips: “Jenny has nothing and is nothing. So, she does not cry. Has nothing to cry about” (Kim 2012a, 33). This remark points to the legitimizing role that possessions such as legal residency documents play in the capacity to feel and emote in the fictional world, a capacity that Jenny is repeatedly denied throughout the novel and a capacity that the novel ultimately criticizes as a symptom of liberal humanism’s paradoxical conceits around subjectivity.

Jenny moves through a series of confined spaces in Seoul, each time revealing the connections between the seemingly discrepant spaces that constitute the elusive whole of the city. From the sex club, Jenny is brought to the upper-class home of a middle-aged, divorced South Korean government official as a domestic aid and sex partner. A contract is drawn between the sex club and the man to make Jenny a “continually renewed object of loan” (Kim 2012a, 70). At his home, Jenny diligently assimilates to the idealized upper-class domestic life of South Korea. The contrast between the pristine home environment and Jenny’s efforts to sustain it is brought into relief by an art installation in the middle of the apartment. The artist’s self-identification with the demolished concrete contrasts with Jenny’s lack of investment in objects, and through this contrast the novel mocks the conditions of art consumption—clean and private spaces cleaned by a gendered and
racialized migrant—and the artist’s conscious self-fashioning—the concrete walls representing “the identity” of the artist. The presentation of art relies on the commoditization of the feeling self with a geopolitical history, routinely maintained by Jenny’s domestic, disinterested labor. Throughout the novel, Jenny is mostly unable to identify where she is or the functions of objects and events, indicative of the multicultural, cosmopolitan anonymity of Seoul as a neoliberal capitalist urban space. Yet, the strategic absence of affect surrounding Jenny in the novel suggests much more: these spaces necessitate the disinterest and disorientation of the racialized and gendered migrant workers who maintain such spaces. From one confined space to another, Jenny’s spatial experience of Seoul is characterized by her difficulty in gaining a holistic understanding of the city. She repeatedly serves, as does the concrete fixture, as a vessel for the feeling subjects’ narration of their struggle.

Jenny’s inability, or refusal, to feel is further highlighted in the continuity between the “domestic” space of the government official’s home and the sex club: the longer history of U.S. military occupation in South Korea and the economy and culture created around it. The chapter “American Breakfast” illustrates that Jenny’s assimilation to South Korea is premised on her assimilation into the upper-class South Korean aspirations for the U.S., a trajectory in which the Korean-Chinese migrant assimilates to South Korea by becoming American. The frame of the diasporic is fractured here by the South Korean citizen’s desire to become Korean-American while the Korean-Chinese migrant worker is denied the diasporic identification that is granted to the Korean-American. Just as the sex club inherited the stratified sexual economy of U.S. camp towns in South Korea, the upper-class South Korean home-space reveals the transference of U.S. racializing ideologies on South
Korean domestic politics around citizenship. In a satiric repetition of the words “American style (*miguksik*),” the chapter labels every object in the household as “American.” The government official has a teenage son, Jaejun, who grew up with his mother in the U.S. and visits Seoul. Feeling excluded from the use of Korean by his siblings and father, Jaejun tells his English tutor, Tony, that he feels like “an illegal immigrant from China. Jaejun stares at Jenny as he spoke. Someone without a passport! Without a country! Without family and jobs!” (Kim 2012a, 87). When Tony, a white English tutor from London, asks Jaejun where he learned the word “illegal immigrant,” Jaejun proudly yells, “from Fox News!” Jaejun then swiftly applies Fox News’s conservative rhetoric on undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to the Chinese migrant workers in South Korea:

> They said illegal immigrants from China are causing many problems in South Korea. They threaten the job prospects of South Korean youths, commit crimes, and threaten minorities by forming criminal gangs. When I told my dad about them, he said they all have their own circumstances. Can you believe it? […] They are stealing what we have! Our country! Our taxes! But you are not [a] Korean [national]. Aren’t you a U.S. citizen? Asks Tony. Um yes, but, but! He is a dual citizen, says Jenny […] I am of two nations! A two-nation person! American and Korean! My dad said so. That I am a proud American and Korean! Oh, remarked Tony awkwardly. And you are Korean, yes? Tony asks Jenny. No, says Jenny, shaking her head. Then Japanese? Jenny shakes her head. Tony looks more awkward. Jenny is a Chosônchok, says Jaejun […] from China! […] But not Chinese. Not Korean either […] She is nothing. Yes, nothing at all. She is a Chosônchok, a Chosônchok! […] Jenny quietly crawls back to the kitchen on her knees, wiping the floor. (Kim 2012a, 88)

A beneficiary of South Korea’s relation to the U.S. as its junior partner, Jaejun contrasts his status as a dual citizen with Jenny’s lack of citizenship in either country. At the same time, he draws a false analogy between the cultural exclusion he feels as a mobile diasporic dual-citizen and the plight of Jenny as a Korean-Chinese migrant worker without
documents. As if to accuse Jaejun for drawing such an analogy, Jenny’s intervention that Jaejun is a “dual citizen” is a rare and poignant moment, given that she hardly speaks in the novel. Jenny is incapable of and perhaps refusing to refer to herself as a diasporic Korean, unlike Jaejun, who claims to be a proud Korean and American. The financially privileged diasporic subjectivity of Jaejun here deploys a narrative of a subject with longings who experiences exclusion. Though it might be built on a veridical desire for belonging, Jaejun’s formulation of the diaspora also follows the logic of white supremacy surrounding citizenship. Thus, through a tortuous triangulation, Jaejun’s affluent Korean American citizenship reproduces U.S. racialization and criminalization of the Latinx population, symbolically made absent here, and displaces it onto the Korean-Chinese in South Korea. Jenny was never meant to “become” a citizen in the way that Jaejun expects to be. The novel thus draws out the cosmopolitan cultural identifications in the classed “domestic” space to the geopolitics at large between the U.S., South Korea, and China. The diasporic sensibility here is premised on a racialized national citizenship that requires a “depth” of subjective feelings and a sense of exclusion that becomes a privilege. It holds together the contradictory pull between Jaejun’s claim to be in an analogical relation to the citizenship-less and his simultaneous distancing from the criminalized citizenship-less.

From the domestic space of the upper-class South Korean home, Jenny moves to another confined space in Seoul’s working-class outskirts, this time seemingly of her own volition. Jenny’s plot changes its textural grain in an unlikely romance that forms between

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81 Similarly, reactions to the anti-immigrant rhetoric of Fox News through a claim to innocence reproduce the logic at work here for the Latinx population absented in the scene. Writing on the incarceration of Latina immigrants, Martha Escobar observes that the distancing of immigrant experiences from criminality through claims of immigrant innocence serve to naturalize the racialized criminality of Blacks in the U.S.: “while I acknowledge that for many (im)migrants and (im)migrant advocates dignity may be derived from the identity of hard worker, my contention is that in the United States this identity is constructed against Blacks, who were ideologically represented as the main beneficiaries of social welfare” (Escobar 2016, 64).
Jenny and the white English tutor, Tony. Self-conscious of the liberal sensibility’s investments in a romance plot, the novel introduces twists to the predictable narrative of a white male savior. Just as Jenny is an alias of the (unnamed) heroine, “Tony” is an alias of “Lee.” “Lee” forged much of his paperwork to obtain his job as a tutor in South Korea, including his educational history, which ironically brings him closer to Jenny’s position as an undocumented migrant than at first glance. When Lee proposes to “save” Jenny, Jenny yells in English, “FUCK YOU! FUCK YOU!” as she pushes past him and runs away (98), and yet, Jenny soon after leaves her position as a domestic aid/sex partner at the government official’s home to be with Lee in a soon-to-be demolished building called “Pescama 15” in an abandoned neighborhood awaiting urban development.

Though the division between Jenny and others appear less distant at Pescama 15 than at the sex club and the government official’s home, the socio-economic hierarchy between the “cultural producers” and the rest exists here as well. While flipping through a book about the students’ and workers’ revolution in Paris 1968, Jenny is transported to its riotous streets. But as soon as she takes on its ideals of “revolution, students, workers, new left, love” and decides to “save” herself and the others that she left behind at home, she faces the word “humanism” (Kim 2012a, 109-110). “Humanism,” as it turns out, falls short of the lofty aims of Paris 68: taking care of the apartment after the other creative types, Jenny sees humanism as nothing more than the rotting matter around her to clean up left by the cultural producers. Indeed, the circulation and celebration of Paris 68 as a “Youth Revolt” separated the students’ movements from the workers’ general strike and the massacre of Algerians in 1961, privileging elite cultural producers and effectively erasing the working class and the colonized (Ferguson 2012, 47-49, Ross 2004). Jenny’s repulsion
toward “humanism” is likewise directed at the hypocrisy of the students who organize a Labor Day celebration at Pescama 15 “for” the workers. Yet the cultural capital produced through the event is of no interest to the workers of Pescama 15: “though residents were invited to the party, they either work night and day and cannot take a day off on Labor Day, or have no interest in such an event, so they don’t come” (Kim 2012a, 112). When the main organizer, a leftist sociologist and noise musician, presents a poem dedicated to Jenny, Jenny herself is nowhere to be found after the reciting, as if she is honoring the rest of the workers’ unintended boycott of the event. The leftist sociologist and artists-students’ practices absorb Jenny’s and the workers’ predicaments as “radical” aesthetics. The chapter thus questions the production and consumption of leftist, postmodern, and humanist aesthetics that are made possible by the invisible work by Jenny and the residents of Pescama 15.

Problematically, the artists and students mold Lee’s and Jenny’s life experiences into a narrative arc of accidental struggle followed by the event of being saved. Such narratives leave intact the constructed nature of the narrative itself in order to underscore the capacities for empathy and multicultural literacy expected of (neo)liberal citizenship. As the Korean literary scholar Kwŏn Myŏnga argued, in the context of postcolonial Korean nationalist reconstruction, narratives of women’s suffering (yŏsŏng sunansa) were deployed towards the argument of a national regeneration that erased internal social differences within the nation (Kwŏn 2009, 308-9). Rather than relying on the aesthetics of suffering to portray subjective depth, the novel explores the various spaces of liberal sensibility. These spaces’ need for narratives of struggle and philanthropy entraps Jenny through her status as a non-citizen. One such space, alongside the sex club and the upper-
class South Korean home aspiring for an “American” life, is the church with a “frontier” mindset. Once a church in a slum “settled by the hands” (Kim 2012a, 91) of its minister, servicing its working-class residents, the church transforms itself, with the advice from the minister’s cousin in a foreign consulting firm, into a church for the gentrifiers who eventually displace all of the original church attendees. Becoming the biggest in the area, the church adjusts its “local” philanthropy for the slum residents into multicultural philanthropy event, in which the racialized other is brought in to share stories of trauma for the wealthy church attendees who crave to be moved.

The novel uses stream of consciousness narration towards the latter chapters as Jenny uses more drugs to ease her pain, which makes it difficult to clearly delineate the novel’s “reality” from its “fantasy.” Yet the more Jenny’s hazy sensorial experiences dominate the narrative, the more strongly and clearly her repulsion toward humanism surfaces, be it toward the humanism of leftist student revolutionaries and artists of 68, toward the gentrifying church’s philanthropy, or toward other migrant characters who aspire to become citizens of South Korea and the U.S. Describing themselves as raised to be non-human animals, Lee claims on stage before the church attendees that he and Jenny were drawn to each other because “humans raised to be animals can recognize each other” (Kim 2012a, 168). Jenny and Lee confess to be repulsed by human feelings and their depth:

Humans raised to be animals are characteristically without characteristics. Put differently, they lack humanness… [other humans] try and learn because they are lonely. We do not know what that is […] All I feel is a void […] It is hardly a feeling. The biggest difference between average people and us is our facial expressions. Look at Jenny. Her face is inexpressive. It is always empty. On the other hand, humans have expressive faces. And that is very repulsive. Nauseating. Faces, and the feelings projected on them, sensations, loneliness, pain, sadness, joy, hope……I cannot stand such things. (Kim 2012a, 169)
The church occasion demands that Jenny and Lee provide moving stories about
overcoming personal trauma and violence in exchange for a speaker fee. Lee’s discussion
of facial expressions here suggests that emotiveness and affect are unevenly distributed
across the population, striated between those who are chosen to become human and those
who are not. It is a code that distinguishes a population that can be politically mobilized
through affect from a population constitutively made available as a medium for the
former’s affective projections. Belonging to the latter, Lee and Jenny make a living from
repeating the history of their trauma in a convincing way, an extractive affect economy that
resurfaces in the *Night Travelers* discussed in the next section in the context of dark tourism
and settler colonial “toleration” of native existence. The repetition itself draws out of the
“non-humans” a vital force that is released for the catharsis of the human church audience,
like a “laundry in a spin-dryer” (Kim 2012a, 177). Like the sex club and the artists, the
church seeks in Jenny a type of affect labor that is extractive.

Still, the novel suggests a possible alternative through the anti-capitalist network of
which Lee is a part. Claiming to be a member of a global organization that seeks to subvert
capitalism by “regenerating cities, accompanied by a little bit of violence,” Lee explains
that he has come to South Korea as an undercover agent for some research on the ground
in an organization vaguely described as a form of terrorism. Here the novel partially
reimagines the historical context behind the high demand for teaching and learning foreign
languages in South Korea, originating from South Korea’s dependence on the U.S. and the
economic powers of Japan and China. An increasing number of international cultural
products have been fascinated with South Korea’s cities as intensified sites of dystopian
capitalist development. In a distinctive stroke apart from these portrayals, *City of Terror* focuses on the geopolitics that surrounds Seoul’s rise as the new frontier of global capitalism rather than on its high-tech promises as a postmodern backdrop. The high demand for English education and the low level of regulation afforded to the English teachers, in contrast with the situations of undocumented Korean-Chinese migrant (sex) workers like Jenny, are comically also the same reason why an anti-capitalist organization can infiltrate and plan for Seoul’s “renewal” through such a channel. Lee describes the group’s aim as “sustainable destruction” of capitalist cities (Kim 2012a, 126), a terrorism that can last as long as capitalism stands. Their ambition turns the logic of environmental sustainability in capitalist development and the green economy on its head. It reimagines the destruction of existing structures as the object of sustainability rather than as the reproduction of existing structures. Though Jenny at first suspects Lee’s confession to be a drug-induced fantasy, a gradually executed plan of the organization avenges Jenny and appears to bring down Seoul with a sandstorm.

In the end, the terrorist cell’s plan does succeed, and Lee and Jenny are extricated from the psychiatric institution and the sex club to which they were respectively confined after a raid at Pescama 15. Still, the novel remains ambivalent about the extent to which the temporary subterfuge has succeeded, because the city “still stands” at the end. “Sustainable destruction” thus describes the partial destruction that sustains and renews neoliberal capitalism’s expansion rather than the namesake project of the anti-capitalist group. The book’s jacket shows white pointillist outline of a person’s profile and of the word “City/Poem (Si),” on a black background. The image alerts the readers to the fact that

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82 Recent examples include “The Avengers” blockbuster series, “Black Panther,” *Cloud Atlas* (novel and film), and “The Colossal.”
the “city/poem” of terror is made up of sand-like matter released from the migrants’ infinitely productive because infinitely destructible bodies. Jenny sees Seoul, her hometown, and herself as all made up of sand, connecting her to the spaces and objects that are not within her control. At the same time, sand functions as racialized matter sharing routes with Jenny’s movement from China to South Korea, revealing the unpredictable material relations that exceed the subjective boundaries of migrant women’s bodies. Writing on the U.S. scare around lead poisoning, Mel Chen argues that an “inanimate but migrant entity such as industrial lead can become racialized, even as it can only lie in a notionally peripheral relation to biological life” (Chen 2012, 160); and that “the story of lead, a story of toxicity, security, and nationality, is also necessarily about labor: when it is registered, and when it is hidden, and who pays what kind of attention to whose labor” (Kim 2012a, 177). In this sense, the sand in City of Terror exposes the story of im/mobility as the story of labor: how the migrants’ displacement produces value through their dispersal across space.

This also is a cause for reflection on how racialization, environmental concerns, and migration intersect. Each spring, hwangsa, or the yellow sand raises concerns in South Korea as it blows from China and “pollutes” South Korean air. Within South Korea’s environmental concerns over industrial pollution and yellow sand, the sand carried by air is an ambiguously organic matter, mixed with heavy-metal particles produced by nearby Chinese factories. But Yellow Sand is also a reminder of the global division of industrial production itself, as made evident in both Rina and City of Terror. The South Korean public concern over pollution problematically separates the goods produced by Chinese factory labor that enter the South Korean market from the yellow sand/air pollutants that are the
costs of mass production. Irrespective of such discursive separation, the sand drifts along the seasonal wind, laying claim to the consumer spaces that distance themselves from the factories. Though Jenny is migratory like the sand, the capital that she produces does not (only) derive from her capacity to cross national borders but from her immobilization at sites of sex, domestic, and affect work. Jenny’s likeness to sand, then, tells of her disintegration and dispersion like the sand in the process of such immobilization. Her labor approximates but never reaches the immaterial, as her labor renders her materially distributable for circulation like the sand, infinitesimally descending the scale of matter (Clough et al. 2007). Moving from the migrant laborer’s productivity to that of the immobilized native in corporate settler colonialism, the next section examines how bodily matter becomes productive in and through death in settler colonialism’s disguise as dark tourism.

4.4 The Necropolitics of Disaster Tourism in Night Travelers

Coined in 1996 to name a sector of the hospitality industry that caters to fascination with sites of death (Foley and Lennon 1996), the rise of “dark tourism” in recent times raises the question of how the elements of pornotrope (Weheliye 2014), necropolitics (Mbembé 2003), and gore capitalism (Valencia 2018) intersect in the tourism industry, when the violence on the native population is documented and channeled to affectively shake up the metropolitan traveler’s sense of safety from coming close to environmental disaster or genocide itself. I became acquainted with the term “Dark Tourism” in the Summer of 2018 while on a peace tour in Jeju island, through an advertisement about developing dark tourism routes in Jeju and Kwangju as well as at other sites. While dark tours can refer to tours designed to raise public awareness of histories of protest and state
violence, it is also difficult to easily disentangle the force of images of violence and narrative demanded of living survivors from the consumerism that overdetermines the tourism industry itself. Surely not all dark tours engage in the explicit aims of the pornotropic consumption of violence. But dark tourism as a phenomenon once again calls our attention to the division between the touring metropolitan population and the immobilized population without financial and cultural capital to leave or travel; the statue-like local population repeatedly simulates life as death or life as an afterlife of disaster imagined by the traveler-consumer.

This last section turns from migrant women laborers to consider the dynamic between a displaced native population and the South Korean tourist gaze enmeshed with settler colonialism. A native population at risk of removal by a settler colonial corporation may not be mobile in the same way as migrant women laborers are. However, I have examined how the mobility of the migrant women does not signify freedom or the constant possibility of physical migration, and I have argued that mobility outlines not her bodily capacity to move but her availability for the disintegrating circuit of global labor. The mobility of the migrant women is punctuated by general conditions of confinement and temporalized by gradual debilitation. The migrant women are distinct from subjects moving against their environment in that the demands of labor necessitates the migrant women’s dissolution into their environment. By transposing the question of the mobility and confinement of migrant women laborers onto those of a native population, this section aims to understand how the commoditization of affect and biomatter in a settler colonial context might overlap with that of the migrant woman laborer within the framework of disaster capitalism.
Disaster capitalism, as developed by Naomi Klein and Anthony Lowenstein, describes profiteering based on disaster sites (Klein 2008, Lowenstein 2017). In Rina, disaster capitalism is manifested through how NGOs, human rights and environmental activists, and religious organizations assist in naturalizing disaster sites as accidents and end up perpetuating their abandonment as waste disposal sites. In Yun Goûn’s novel Night Travelers (2013), disaster capitalism and the global division of labor collaborate in full force in a speculative island geography. As Jŏng Shilbi observed about the novel, the novel is not distinct because disaster capitalism is new; rather, the novel is distinct in how it connects disaster and capitalism to reveal the double-edged sword of risk and commodification (Jŏng 2014, 434). And, as Cho Hyŏngnae has observed, “the novel captures the aporia that arises from the database itself, the darkness within the panopticon” (Cho 2010, 487). A novel about dark tourism gone wrong, Night Travelers follows Yona, a programmer at a South Korean dark tourism company named Jungle, who departs on a business trip to “Mui” as both an employee-consultant and a consumer-tourist to assess whether Jungle should keep the Mui tour package. Mui is a fictional island in Southeast Asia where local people’s reenactments of past genocide between tribes, a small desert sinkhole, and an active but unintimidating volcano draw a meager number of dark tourists. Through a staged accident plotted by Jungle, Yona finds herself in the precarious position of being left behind by her tour group on the island. The novel explores how the thrill of dark tourism relies on an entire infrastructure that simulates “safe” dangers while the native residents of the tour site are left with the options of working themselves to death. The novel unfolds through Yona’s gradual realization that all aspects of the dark tour and the island are simulated to impress the metropolitan foreign tourists.
The type of disaster that the tourism industry offers for consumption requires distance between the tourist’s home and the tour destination. When asked why the South Korean tourists came all the way to Mui instead of going to Jinhae, a city in South Korea that, in the novel, is struck by a tsunami, one South Korean tourist responds, “it’s too scary when it’s too close” (Yun 2013, 55). The tour fulfills the affective needs of the tourists to circle through the following cycle according to Yona: “shock→sympathy, pity, or discomfort→gratefulness for my life→responsibility and a moral or feelings of superiority that I survived the disaster […] in other words, the selfish consolation that one was proximate to disaster but remained safe” (Yun 2013, 61). To secure the comfort and safety of the tourists, the environmental costs of maintaining the luxury resorts far outweigh the needs of the locals who live and work there. The only place “not suffering from lack of drinkable water on Mui was the resort […] a guest at the resort used in one night more water than the entire floating homes in the surrounding area do” (Yun 2013, 70). Mui is set up for both these affective thrills and material comforts of the tourists over those of the natives.

The novel conjectures that human rights and environmentalism discourses do concern themselves with the obvious problems of the tour industry, such as the environmental pollution and economic stratification of the tour site. However, the novel’s key intervention seems to lie elsewhere: the true horror in the novel emerges from the extent of the transnational corporations’ and the tour industry’s necropolitical calculus. They prey on the dark tour consumerism and the precarity of life for those in the global South. Yona learns that she can leave Mui safely and keep her job back home if she helps the Mui resort to come up with a better disaster package for the dark tourist market.
Assessing Mui’s humble presentation, Yona concludes, as a disaster expert: “Many programmers continuously invent packages. If it is not new, it needs to be strong to survive. Earthquake, typhoon, volcano, mudslide, drought, flood, fire, genocide, war, nuclear exposure, desertification, avalanche, serial murders, tsunami, animal cruelty, contagious diseases, water pollution, concentration camps, prisons, etc. […] But this place has nothing special” (Yun 2013, 107). Disaster, Yona explains, can “expire” as a commodity in under fifty years. Betting on an NGO’s disaster relief program that will choose one island from the archipelago of which Mui is a part, the Mui resort recruits Yona into its project of artificially staging a disaster in time to be selected by the NGOs. Yona’s job in the process is to help repackage the disaster so that it can sell well as a Jungle product.

The “real” disaster for the people of Mui and for “Paul,” the transnational corporation that owns much of the island’s infrastructure, is the absence of disaster itself. The manager of the resort tells Yona, “In Mui, waiting for something to happen is no longer commonsensical. Whether dying of a disaster or of hunger, aren’t they the same? In this situation, a disaster is better” (Yun 2013, 120). A film script writer, Hwang, assists the reproduction of the artificially staged disaster, based on photographs, and builds a giant sinkhole in the desert with construction workers. Based on Hwang’s script, Paul will recruit hundreds of the islanders and Yona into a large-scale rehearsal of the creation of the sinkhole and the “accidental” death of two hundred people who fall into the sinkhole. Hwang identifies three aspects of a disaster that makes it commodifiable: its size; that it is in a “new” geographic area, because “pity can also suffer from ennui”; and that it presents a “moving story” that elicits “fresh experiences of pain” (Yun 2013, 144). In the elaborate construction of disaster as a commodity, the image comes to “rule the actuality of the
disaster itself” (Yun 2013, 144). For the disaster to bring profits, the native populations must be available for removal.

The disaster must be affectively resonant, “revealing how devastated people’s lives have become and also render them as relatable” (Yun 2013, 144), while managing the distance between its consumers and the disaster object itself. In order to produce these affects surrounding the disaster, the people of Mui are mobilized as either survivors or “mannequins,” a euphemism for corpses in the novel. The required headcount of two hundred deaths, to raise the scale of the disaster from a minor to a major event, is secured through the economic devastation of the islanders, who gladly sell the bodies of their dead family members to Paul’s refrigerated morgue “mart.” The necropolitical “problem of who will die” (Yun 2013, 146) is determined by Paul on the level of resistance that the people of Mui put forth.

Yona thus slowly learns that she is in fact participating in a settler colonial genocide of Mui natives enacted by Paul which targets anyone who politically dissents to Paul’s plan for Mui. Because the division of labor in producing the disaster was so layered, “it had the form of a genocide but held no one responsible for genocide” (Yun 2013, 182). Those who volunteer to die were those with chronic illnesses and disabilities from lack of health care, betting on procuring better health care for the rest of their family from the money paid for their corpses. The novel’s exploration of dark tourism brings to light the most perverse aspect of land development and the biopolitics of the tourist industry at its extreme: 1) the elimination of the native that characterizes settler colonialism (Wolfe 2006) is needed to procure the land for transnational corporate development; 2) the immobilization of all aspects of living for the native renders death a mode of currency. The affective end of this
dynamic is the production of disaster as a liberal humanist narrative to be consumed, a process that incorporates the struggles of the native only when they are dead or dying.

Before the disaster, the native people of Mui are referred to as either “alligators” if alive or “mannequins” if dead. The non-human animal and object labels assigned to the natives enable Paul to mask the genocidal aspect of the project. Because the people termed “alligators” live in the most resource-rich lands of the island, Paul has constantly put legal pressure on them to abandon the area by turning them into “illegal residents” of the lands they have lived on for generations. The discourse of tourists’ safety on Mui is coded in such a way that anything having to do with the impoverished Mui natives is coded as dangerous “alligator activities.” One by one, Paul kills each alligator-Mui native through deliberate car “accidents.” Paul’s ultimate plan is to lure the remaining natives with the promise of residency papers, only to subject them to a mass “accidental” death on the day of the disaster. However, the disaster orchestrated by Paul gets interrupted by an unforeseen tsunami that hits Mui, sweeping aside the disaster that was planned while saving the fate of the alligators-Mui natives who hid in the dense mangrove forest.

If the sand particles of City/Poem of Terror never return to the sender to undo the workings of neoliberal capitalism, the disseminated pieces of other disaster sites play a bigger role in Night Travelers, coming back to overturn the human attempt at creating a disaster. Jinhae, the South Korean city that was overtaken by a tsunami in the novel, floats around the Pacific and is “found on the other side of the ocean” (Yun 2013, 127), only to return to the tsunami-devastated Mui as floating islands of trash.83 This fictional event

83 Jinhae also has a history as a tourist site during Japanese colonialism, which is notable in this context because a former colonial tourist site returns to haunt the new settler colonial tourist site of South Korea in the novel. I thank Kelly Jeong for sharing her insight on Jinhae.
overturns the supposed flow of trash, from South Korea rather than to South Korea, bridging the gap between the perceived source of pollution and disaster and its distant consumer site. The novel observes that the tsunami may have prevented the genocide of the Mui residents for now. Still, the economic infrastructure that thrives from disasters remains strong at the end of the novel, making a new market out of the tsunami-struck Mui instead of the original disaster planned by Paul. This archipelagic exposure to disaster capitalism and disaster capitalism’s convergence with the settler colonial removal of natives, also echo the analysis in Chapter Two of the typhoon as a divine wind of decolonization and environmental retribution. When mobility is granted only through death in the necropolitics of dark tourism, and populations are debilitated to amplify the affects around the staged disaster, manufacture labor and service labor coincide to commodify all in/capacities of the unbounded body. In that sense, Night Travelers exposes the reproduction of disaster capitalism, which not only sees disaster as affectively productive, but also, and more perversely, reconfigures the absence of disaster as the real (economic) disaster.

4.5 Conclusion

The speculative fictions examined in this chapter share the themes of immobility,

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84 The novel creatively combines real environmental phenomena to convey its overall ecocritical message: environmental conservationists in Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand have observed that devastations from tsunamis are concentrated in areas that were ill-advised for development but were used to build resorts anyway (Terradaily Dec 27, 2004). Mangrove forests and coral reefs are considered two natural barriers that could reduce the effects of tsunami on a region (Padma Dec 30, 2004). The South Korean city Jinhae has not been struck by a tsunami, as in the novel, but the coastlines of South Korea including that of Jinhae have been bombarded by heaps of oceanic trash, which the South Korean media named a “trash tsunami” (Min, Pak, and Ch’oe July 22, 2011). While the trash islands in the novel that arrive at Mui come from Jinhae, these fictional trash islands perhaps are inspired by the real “Great Pacific Garbage Patch” that exists between Japan and North America (Caryl-Sue Sept 19, 2014). See Michelle Huang’s article for an analysis of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, racialization, and transcorporeality (Huang 2017).
disaster, debility, and the exhaustive conditions of labor. Together, they articulate the material aspects of continuous labor that different populations are made to carry out, often collapsing the laboring and debilitated bodies into their environment. The mobility of matter extracted from these migrant and feral bodies converges, only to diverge from the supposed mobility of the subjects themselves. Regardless of the mobility of the matter extracted from them, the laboring populations in these fictions are often rendered immobile. Immobilization in disaster sites in these fictions question not only the initial capitalization of affect and matter of the debilitated but also the nature of the “disaster” that the humanist aid interventions exploit. This “second” phase of the disaster not only extends the duration of disaster itself but also reproduces the material conditions for further disasters.

I would like to end with a reflection on a formal aspect of these texts that stands out: they refuse to tell a truthful narrative of survival or testimonial and are more satiric than documentative of the topics at hand. Though the critical texts accompanying some of the literary texts describe them as having a “postmodern” aesthetic, postmodern seems too limiting (and perhaps too joyful) to accurately capture what the texts do. The sense of humor in and the irregularity of the narratives reveal a determination to unveil the conditions of life under neoliberal capitalism. One key contribution of these works is their unwillingness to offer a “moving” moment in these narratives, at the same time as their refusal to make light of the devastations.

The genre of “deadpan” encapsulates this refusal to succumb to the pressure to adopt humanist postures on disasters and debilitation. Deadpan, after all, is an emotionless, impassive face, a “dead” face that defies the expectations on the delivery of what is said. There is a methodical flatness to the language of the texts, a matter-of-fact narration of the
unfolding disasters as already having constructed the very material environment of its readers. These texts resort to a critique of the feeling neoliberal subjectivity rather than giving tragic interiority to the experience of devastation itself. They encourage one to seek other modes of analysis and openings, beyond the exhausted humanist narratives and representational politics, those that might be able to better keep pace with the biopolitics of debilitation and disasters. If affect itself entails an openness beyond enclosed entities, these texts certainly present an invitation and a responsibility to seek it.
CONCLUSION

Towards an Ecstatic Present

“When you see someone from the National Guard on your street, or outside your home, it is natural and human to find it somewhat unsettling, because it is a visible illustration that things in your community are not functioning as they normally do,” Noam Bramson, the city’s mayor, said at a news conference at City Hall on Tuesday. “But I want to emphasize that the guard is here to help us,” he continued. “They are not here to provide a military function, they are not here to provide a policing function. New Rochelle is not on martial law [italics added for emphasis]”

—Sarah Maslin Nir and Jesse McKinley, “‘Containment Area’ Is Ordered for New Rochelle Coronavirus Cluster”

“shock ➔ sympathy, pity, or discomfort ➔ gratefulness for my life ➔ responsibility and a moral or feelings of superiority that I survived the disaster […] in other words, the selfish consolation that one was proximate to disaster but remained safe.”

—Yun Goûn, Night Travelers

As if a scene out of a speculative fiction in Chapter Four, the conclusion of this dissertation project has coincided with the sweeping outbreak of Covid-19 and the emergency measures taken across the globe against it. Pangyŏk (防疫, prevention of contagious disease) has become a keyword in our everyday social spaces and we are reminded, albeit through a different medium of a virus, of how quickly the expansive transpacific can in fact contract in the throes of the virus. Tracking the virus’s rise in Wuhan, China, to its outbreak in the U.S., we are simultaneously witnessing how biopolitical measures cut people into suspect and vulnerable populations, and neighborhoods and cities into quarantine zones, in the name of safety.

Curiously, as public health guidelines and concerns about racialized violence collide in the U.S., “social distancing” and non-tactile, non-contact socialization are encouraged at the same time as angered reaction to East Asian subjects, usually women, sporadically erupt in violent and distinctly tactile ways, reversing these very health
measures that warn against contacts in general (Serhan and Mclaughlin March 13, 2020). In South Korea, where the virus in its early stage had the second highest number of affected patients, this dynamic between public health guidelines and racialized violence has appeared in the deployment of state power to track where each individual has been and locking down a cult religion for “super spreading” the virus, as well as racialized outrage and suspicion against migrants from China (Pae Jan 29, 2020). The increased state power and an unquenchable demand for the transparency of patients’ data indeed appear to support what Giorgio Agamben, one of the key thinkers on biopolitics, has observed: that Covid-19 will increase and justify the surveillance and biopower of states (Agamben 2020), albeit the pandemic has proven itself to be far more devastating than an “unmotivated emergency” as he calls it.

Facing a shortage of medical supplies to treat Covid-19 patients, doctors in Italy have begun prioritizing the young and healthy over the senior and ill (Orecchio-Egresitz March 10, 2020, Emanuel, Phillips, and Persad March 12, 2020). As Aimé Césaire had written on fascism as an outgrowth of modernity’s violent experiments in the colonies (2000), the bio-necropolitical calculation of who deserves to live and who does not in the Covid-19 outbreak perhaps ought not to come as a shock when considered in the broader view of such calculations in settler colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade. Still, the general effects of the virus have cut through, rather than binding, the already stratified social spheres and spaces of exclusion. And the now limited physical mobility of those with capital and access to spaces still starkly contrasts with the immobility of those who have been subjected to environmental and infrastructural limitations—in sites of military
occupation, industrial development maintained with transnational migrant labor, and settler colonial genocide, as this dissertation examined in the preceding chapters.

Indeed, we might then begin to see that mobility is at work in multiple ways in the transpacific in this moment of “emergency.” The perceived threats of the virus on cosmopolitan consumers who travel the world contrast with the unspoken effects it has on those considered most “vulnerable” to the virus: those without adequate access to health care services. The disability justice community organizer Mia Mingus has called out this difference when she observes that while the outbreak in Italy swept across an affluent area with a relatively high-functioning health care system, the same cannot be said of the many people with pre-existing conditions and disability who lack access to health care in the U.S., a difference that leads her to question how extensively the affected will suffer in the unfolding of this crisis in the U.S. (mia.mingus March 11, 2020).

Even if the virus spreads disregarding social differences, its effects will not be the same across social stratifications. As we saw in Chapter Four, illness, disaster, and quarantine amplify rather than dissolve the underlying debilitation on which the global economy is based. Moreover, services necessary to accommodate the self-imposed quarantine for safety will be carried out by marginalized and impoverished members of our societies. We might do well to remember too, that the virus itself arose from mutations in the context of human-inflicted incarcerations of non-human animals—a condition of violent inter-species immobilization and industrialization that has led to amplified immobilization on a global human scale through an invisible agent of our own making (Vox March 6, 2020). As New Yorkers await the New York City-brand hand-sanitizers made
with prison labor (Griggs March 9, 2020), questions of how the virus impacts incarcerated people is raised by prison activists.

As the national guard is flown into the affluent New York suburb, New Rochelle, to distribute food and resources in the one-mile radius quarantined area (Nir and Mckinley March 12, 2020), we are given a scene of disaster aid different from the scenes of disaster militarism under occupation in the global South examined in this dissertation, in which the devastated Rina or natives of Mui refuse fumigation and aid. In the latter sites, affected populations cannot afford to have the “natural or human” response of being unsettled by a military presence in their community, as New Rochelle’s mayor claims, because militarization and economic dispossession are constant and mundane. With the alarming presence of Covid-19 in our midst as a disaster causing voluntary immobility, we have much to gain by reflecting on the politics of immobility from sites of occupation and the necessity of speculative modes of analysis in imagining alternatives to the current moment. An invocation for the return of the “normal”—the absence of military and police functions in some sites of the world and the concentration of these functions in others—through quarantine, pangyŏk, and social distancing, seeks to regain one’s mobility and overcome temporary immobility while it erases how unevenly distributed such phenomena are and remain so in these very states of emergency.

In lieu of calling for mobility for all and a more inclusive normalcy, this dissertation has advocated the transformation of how mobility is valuated as positive and immobility as negative, following the imperative of the occupied to separate physical mobility from political mobilization. After all, we are still deeply entangled in political mobilization even in the stage of containment of the virus and voluntary immobility. In this light, rather than
invoke the return of the “normal,” we may instead seek the ecstatic in the present. As I had discussed in Chapter One in relation to queer and disability hermeneutics, ecstasy is a temporality of waiting and being forsaken, a standing outside of oneself as one experiences pain and paralysis (Muñoz 2009, Chen 2012). Such moments of stasis contain within them the element of non-contemporaneity too, arising from the fact that “everyone lives in the future,” as Ernst Bloch has observed (1986), even if one’s present may be stalled. Seeking the ecstatic (ex-stasis) within the immobilized present, I have argued in this dissertation, requires a speculative approach to the world, when doing so does not appear to immediately address one’s perception of reality or comply with the colonial knowledge of one’s environment. Speculative ways of knowing and relating to the world are necessary, however, not only because occupation limits the resources one has and speculating seeks to overcome such material limits, but also because the speculative is able to generate new materialities from the fabric of occupation.

It is in this sense that I have examined, in Chapter One, what Takeuchi Yoshimi’s contemporaries must have considered a foolhardy project—his project of redeeming Pan-Asianism from its imperialist legacies in postwar Japan to properly address modernity as a problem in East Asia. Still, looking at Takeuchi’s project alongside those of Ernst Bloch, Frantz Fanon, and Aimé Césaire, reveals a shared impetus to criticize fascist political mobilization and a call for a decolonial world through political mobilization that is truly dialectical in nature. Takeuchi’s conclusion was that such a movement needs to be an internally directed one of “conversion” and not an externally directed one of “recantation” that ends up reifying a linear notion of progress to fill the profound emptiness modernity brought about (2005). In various readings of Fanon, a transversal movement among the
colonized, still not free of contestations but no longer servicing colonial recognition, grounds the notion of praxis as necessarily an epistemic opening crossing national borders. I therefore interpret Takeuchi’s call for Pan-Asianism as a call to carry out the speculative task of identifying the transversal relations and ecstatic temporalities to fulfill a decolonial dialectic.

Through my analysis of Ch’oe In-Hun’s *The Typhoon*, I showed in Chapter Two how Takeuchi’s argument might be understood more concretely in the transpacific, where the militarization of islands and colonial mobilization clash to create mobilized soldiers and immobilized natives in political opposition. Ch’oe’s speculative take on imperial Pan-Asianism uniquely transforms it into a decolonial alliance between the mobilized and the immobilized. Such an imaginative retelling sees Pan-Asianism as being fulfilled only through a larger project of global decolonization espoused by the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung. This imaginative retelling also sees the true content of Bandung as being fulfilled only through a transpacific becoming that undoes the ongoing militarization of archipelagos, which is both a critique and revision of the demise of Bandung regimes. The transversal relations discussed in Chapter One are actualized in *The Typhoon* as spiritual sociogenesis and relational sovereignty, processes that, through taking a speculative approach to the 1970s reality of South Korea, produce meaning and embodiment dis-aligned with colonial mobilization and occupation’s logic of territorial possession.

Chapter Three examined the politics of immobility in the transpacific with a greater focus on the tactics developed around occupation embodiments, such as disablement from war and settler colonialism. Through Gerald Vizenor’s *Hiroshima Bugi* and Cathy Park Hong’s *Dance Dance Revolution*, I analyzed how the “dance” against settler colonialism
harbors both crip possibilities as well as spiritual significance in and through the body shaped by occupation. The use of speculative language and of plot as an anti-settler colonial device in these texts leads me to argue that an important aspect of the politics of immobility in the transpacific is resisting narratives of victimhood, by withholding a sense of reality from narration and using wit and irony to evade expectations of a tragic mood attached to representations of injury and disablement caused by war. This meant that, on the one hand, creative alliances between the migrant diaspora and natives become possible, and on the other, overcoming occupation’s logic entails using it against itself through acts of sabotage on the page. Moreover, as in Chapter Two, South Korea’s relation to the broader Pacific is imagined beyond the interests of cultural nationalism and globalization, finding transversal relations between Kwangju and a future settler colony, and Ainu people and the Anishinaabe people as overcoming dual settler colonialisms.

Chapter Four came full circle to examine how debility and immobility in speculative scenes of disaster offer a critique of humanist aid narratives in relation to South Korea’s rise as a sub-empire. Debility as the outcome of labor in Kang Yŏngsuk’s *Rina*, Kim Sagwa’s *The City of Terror*, and Yun Goûn’s *Night Travelers*, reveals how an extractive system premised on disposable migrant and native gendered labor turns even the recovery phase of post-disaster into a lucrative opportunity. In such contexts, health measures and humanist narratives of aid are designed to sustain destruction rather than end cycles of debilitation followed by death. Through these speculations on the making of a disaster, the post/in-humanist critique of humanism does not clearly offer models of alternative political mobilization. However, by exposing the spectacular ways in which South Korean civil society participates in subjecting migrant and native populations to
prolonged debilitation, these fictions offer deadpan as one aesthetic mode through which to put a stop on the need to consume affects in humanist registers. Supplanting representational concerns (are we capturing the tragic realities of devastation as well as we could) with bio/necropolitical ones (what do devastations enable through letting live and making die?), they put forth the view that the present is simply not enough without resorting to narratives of victimhood.

These speculative writings on living with military and economic occupation seek to overcome the failures of “transborder redress culture” and victim nationalism in the postwar transpacific (Yoneyama 2016). Such failures detach contemporary state and corporate violence from the persistent structures of imperialism. In the realm of literary and cultural analysis, the effort to overcome such failures, I have argued, takes place by decentering questions of representation and focusing on the questions of biopolitics and the resulting politics of immobilization that are not contained within a grid of representation. In the realm of philosophical analysis, the same effort can be found in restoring dialectical elements to movement that are absent in political mobilizations premised on linear progress and externalization. In the context of Covid-19 quarantines, the politics of immobility would warn against falling into the sway of the affective cycle of surviving a disaster from *Night Travelers* and instead require paying closer attention to the exclusionary infrastructures made more visible daily.

The dissertation has taken a distinctly material interest, addressing how the built environment and bodies are shaped by and respond to conditions of immobilization, identifying the contradictions with triumphant narratives of mobilized agents of resistance. Still, most of the energy in the dissertation, to situate an alternative mobility to overcome
these conditions, was in fact given to the spiritual significance of communal survivance and becoming—both of which are ironically often at odds with the aim of dissertation writing, and better practiced than studied in my view. The entanglement of these two material and spiritual tendencies that are pushing away from each other remains something for me to dwell on as I expand and revise this manuscript. For now, I am content to have them remain in dialectical tension at the time of submitting this work. As my friend who accompanied me in the final stages of completing this dissertation has observed, that “whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent” (Wittgenstein 1999, 27).

What we glean from examining mobility in the transpacific, as this dissertation has done, is that we might begin to understand in mobility the stories of immobility, of militarization, economic dispossession, and settler colonialism, and also the stories of alternative dialectical movements created in these very conditions of occupation. To decolonize mobility, we need to question the undialectical elements in social movements and narratives of safety, to be keenly aware of when political mobilization collapses mobility into individual capacities and forecloses the futures lived out in one’s place. And as with dialectics, decolonization as conceived by this dissertation is also an unending process in spite of and because of immobility. It is a becoming that materializes the futures in which we already live.
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