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Entangled Ecologies of the Everyday: Gender, Labor, and Nature in Rural Proletarian Literature of Korea and Japan

DISSERTATION

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in East Asian Studies

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Entangled Ecologies of the Everyday: Gender, Labor, and Nature in
Rural Proletarian Literature of Korea and Japan

by

Vanessa Catherine Baker
Doctor of Philosophy in East Asian Studies
University of California, Irvine, 2022
Associate Professor Margherita Long and Associate Professor Serk-Bae Suh, Co-Chairs

My dissertation, "Entangled Ecologies of the Everyday: Gender, Labor, and Nature in Rural Proletarian Literature of Korea and Japan," traces the co-evolution of laboring bodies, both human and more-than-human, with the land in mining-themed proletarian literature from the early twentieth century. The texts I analyze map the corporeal and ecological effects of mineral extraction on rural regions of the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese archipelago to produce what I call "rural proletarian literature." I argue that these works engage in ecological storytelling because they situate the *interrelations* among laboring bodies, gender, and the material environment of mining zones at the heart of the story. These interrelations, which I refer to as "ecological entanglements," generate a kinetic energy that propels the narrative forward; they reveal sites rife with both peril *and* promise for the sustainability of local ecosystems. Rural proletarian literature critiques colonial-capitalism as a system that extracts minerals at a rate that violently disrupts the rhythms of nutrient cycles. In order to highlight the lived effects of extractive labor, these texts immerse themselves in the sonic territory of the everyday and engage

in storytelling as care work; these narratives delineate creative collaborations that emerge in interstitial spaces, resisting the (re)production of destructive cycles of accumulation. This project consists of four chapters, each examining stories about a mineral utilized in the material axis of empire: (NPK): Soil and Sericulture, (Cu): Copper Soundscapes, (Au): Speculative Rumors of Gold, and (N): Atmospheric Mining and the Soil Crisis. Each chapter takes a trans-local perspective, placing stories about particular geographical sites in conversation with one another. Rural proletarian stories capture how laboring bodies co-produce the environment around rich ore veins and, consequently, are productive for reconsidering our contemporaneous understanding of primitive accumulation in an age of perpetual ecological crises.

Introduction
Mapping the Rural Foundation of Empire

Hirabayashi Eiko's (1902-2001) 1930 short story "Kienokoru seikatsu" (Life that Perseveres) situates the reader in southern Nagano Prefecture, near the silk-spinning center of Okaya, Japan.[1] It begins with the sound of the spring's thaw, the sound of ice melting, and the sound of the ice melt dripping off the eaves of the house. This story sheds light on the subsistence work that each member of the farming family contributes. The omniscient narrator expresses a particular empathy for the female bodies caught in an interstitial space, shuffled somewhere between the rural and urban labor markets. Okaku, the maternal head of the household, and her youngest daughter Sumie work outside in the bitter cold while Rikichi, the paternal figure, begrudgingly stretches after a nap. Home on the seasonal break from the silk spinning mills, the two eldest daughters hang kimonos out to dry in the garden. Okaku helps the girls while taking a break from preparing bags of roasted soybeans and dried *mochi* (rice cake) slices for sale in the neighborhood market. Sumie heads out to the nearby forest where she forages for butterbur stalks as a nutritional supplement to the evening meal, her frostbitten hands still stinging from the previous night's adventure. Rikichi sticks close to the home front. Preoccupied with whether or not the chickens will lay any eggs, he dashes off to the chicken coop and franticly looks around for an egg or two in hopes to sell enough for some tobacco.

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[1] Mats Karlsson traces the depiction of female awakening in the proletarian literature published in the magazine *Nyonin geijutsu* (Women's arts). Karlsson looks at Hirabayashi Eiko's fictional reportage based on her own time spent in Nagano prefecture. Karlsson highlights scenes that embody what he calls the "thirst for knowledge" (*chishiki yoku*) in story Hirabayashi's 1931 "Hottan" (The Origin) and "Mohan kōjō" (The Model Factory) (Karlsson 2013: 351). For a detailed discussion of the literary representation of women including "the factory girl" and "the woman writer" in *Nyonin geijutsu* and other magazines published in interwar Japan, see Sarah Frederick *Turning Pages* (Frederick 2006). For a detailed analysis of the politics addressed in *Nyonin geijutsu*, see chapter four.

Fluctuations in the price of rice, silk cocoons, and the recent world market crash have caused Rikichi to become completely consumed with daily calculations: the price of fresh eggs, the cost of a bag of tobacco, and the accruing interest on the family's debt. He surveys the dwindling stack of firewood and the depleted rice stock, calculating the hours until his eldest girls return to the silk mills; these wages provide the material foundation that enables the family to survive the harsh Nagano winters. Coming up short, he arms himself with a bucket and a hoe and follows the spring thaw for signs of the crimson river crabs. Parsley sprouts and fresh wasabi shoots signal that he has successfully calculated the arrival of spring in the narrow river valley. He digs into the sandy soil. Upon spotting the crimson shells, he grabs the tiny river crabs, one by one, until the bucket overflows with a nutritious meal. Reinvigorated by the feast, the eldest daughters set out on the long journey back to the silk mills for the season. The bucketful of river crabs provides the means for Rikichi to balance the daily budget and endure another day as a family of landless tenant farmers.

The process of so-called primitive accumulation interferes with the tenant farmer's ability to subsist with the land, steadily enclosing the common woodlands and watersheds. "Kienokoru seikatsu" captures the hardships faced by impoverished farming villages in the process of land privatization. In a brief aside, the narrator remarks on the materialization of colonial-capitalism in this nameless hinterland.

> 昔から、村の人々は、山中を駆けずり廻って、自然の中から植物をあさる方法しか知らなかった。人間に追われて山奥へその生存区域を自らせばめて行った熊や猿の様に、文明のサーチライトに追われて、益々生活方法を消極的にして行くより仕方がなかったのだ。
>
> Since the dawn of time, villagers have been running around in the mountains foraging for food. The habitat of bears and monkeys has been reduced by the humans who have chased them to the depths of the mountains where they live on the periphery of existence. In a similar pattern of depletion, the villagers' means of existence has been progressively extinguished by the so-called 'searchlight of

civilization.' (Hirabayashi Eiko 1930: 336).

This work explores the myriad of corporeal and ecological repercussions when tenant farmers are violently pushed away from the very land upon which they survive. A more compelling aspect of this story, however, is the narrative focus on the continued entanglements between the members of the tenant farming family with local populations of bees, river crabs, larvae, silk cocoons, and the soil itself despite the ongoing process of primitive accumulation. It is the resilient interaction between the human and the more-than-human that generates a kinetic energy, propelling the narrative forward. While the story poses a sharp critique of the process of primitive accumulation, it also reveals how the tenant farming family draws upon their own wealth of knowledge about the local topography to creatively navigate the crises that increasingly afflict rural regions of the archipelago.

Land-based knowledge informs Rikichi's interactions with the local environment, shaping his path across the fields and furrows in pursuit of a bee hive. Rikichi collects some bee pollen and shares the nutritive feast with neighbors, providing a collective moment outside the space-time of extractive labor. This land-based knowledge allows him to reimagine the spring floods as an opportunity to maneuver through the ferocious current and scour the dark, muddy torrents for driftwood to replenish the family's waning stock of firewood. Experiential knowledge guides Rikichi's decision to use a hand-axe to cut the firewood, harvesting the plump beetle larvae that emerge from the thick evergreen logs. This experiential knowledge also guides Okaku's search through the mound of silk cocoons to salvage the protein-rich pupa she hands to her youngest daughter.

The foraging farmers in Hirabayashi Eiko's short story "Kienokoru seikatsu" refuse to live in a soil where "plants" are "crops" and "insects" are "pests" (Scott 1998: 13). As such, they assert a relationship with the local ecology that resists an extractive logic that treats land merely as a mineral resource of wealth. Laboring with the land according to a rhythm that is determined in relationship to the regional harvest cycles and weather patterns is based upon a logic of subsistence. The continual process of primitive accumulation is based upon a logic of accumulation; this process criminalizes subsistent practices and redefines the foraging farmers as "potato thieves" or "wood thieves" (Marx [1842] 1975). Based upon their experiential and local knowledge of the land, tenant farming families create interstitial spaces where human and more-than-human collectively reimagine and reorganize to forage possibilities for future ecologies (Tsing 2015).[2]

"Kienokoru seikatsu" is an example of a group of texts that I refer to as "rural proletarian literature," a body of texts that is the focal point of my literary analysis. This group of texts locates the ongoing process of primitive accumulation at the heart of their narrative and, consequently, frames the entanglement between laboring bodies and the soil as *the* central relationship that cultivates (un)sustainable ecologies. The collective body of Korean-language and Japanese-language rural proletarian literature unearths the embedded ecology of Marx; it illuminates the gendered corporeal and ecological repercussions of laboring with the land in the material making of empire.

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[2] This resembles what, in a different context, Anna Tsing refers to as "salvage accumulation." But the difference in what I am imagining is depicted in rural proletarian texts is that the collaboration of human and more-than-human is not in an effort to "amass capital," which is a part of what Tsing describes in her concept of "salvage accumulation" (Tsing 2015: 63). I think with Tsing's work in my understanding of foraging and the importance of commodity chains, but I am looking at an earlier stage of the development of colonial-capitalism, so I depart from Tsing in the defining spaces of intense mineral extraction as "capitalist ruins."

Ecological Entanglements: Gender, Labor, and Nature

In his 1989 essay, "The Three Ecologies," Felix Guattari notes the critical value of creative arts to combat conformity within capitalist systems. His concept of ecological thinking requires engaging in the chaotic processes of becoming with fellow living beings, as well as a constant re-singularization among the dissident vectors of environmental, mental, and social ecologies (Guattari 2000). Guattari makes several salient points in his essay, and I appreciate his re-valuation of the creative arts to engender innovative ways of being in the world. Guattari's ideas about ecology, albeit engaging, are reminiscent of the embedded ecological thinking in Marx's concept of metabolic interrelations (*Stoffwechsel*) (Foster 2000; Saito 2017). The "really earthly question" is how the co-evolution of laboring bodies with the soil generates (un)sustainable local ecologies (Marx [1842] 1975, vol. 1: 224; Foster 2000).

This dissertation unearths the embedded ecology in a group of texts I refer to as rural proletarian literature. Rural proletarian literature immerses itself in the everyday and depicts the corporeal and ecological effects of extractive labor. These texts frame the ongoing process of primitive accumulation at the heart of their narrative. This process, to borrow Marx's words, facilitates the expansion of empire and meanwhile "sap[s] the original sources of all wealth," namely, "the soil and the laborer" (1967: 475). When capital encounters spatial and temporal limits, it takes advantage of the "elasticity" of these natural thresholds and enlists new lands and laboring bodies in its expansion (Burkett 2014: 133).[3] The central contradiction of colonial-

[3] Paul Burkett describes the process in which the "environmental crisis" arises in capitalism, see chapter nine, and also illustrates how these limits are "elasticized" with the use of colonialism, science, and technology, see chapter ten (Burkett 2014). Jason W. Moore describes how natural thresholds are overcome by the creation of the Four Cheapts, accumulation by appropriation, and the use of unpaid work (Moore 2015; 2017; 2018).

capitalism, therefore, is the so-called ecological crisis; the ecological crisis is that colonial-capitalism degrades the very grounds within which it roots empire (Saito 2017: 17).[4]

In the following, I argue that rural proletarian literature frames the co-evolution of mining bodies and the soil as *the* central relationship that determines (un)sustainable future ecologies. Rural proletarian literature depicts what I call "ecological entanglements," the interrelations of gender, laboring bodies, and the material environment that coalesce in the "spatial texture" of farming and mining regions (Lefebvre 1991). This group of texts portrays the "slow violence" intrinsic to the "environment-making" of mining zones (Nixon 2011; Moore 2017, 2018). Ecological entanglements unearth aural and proprioceptive details in order to map a sensorial topography of the everyday experience of extractive labor in empire. The dissonance and melodies coalesce and orchestrate the sonic terrain of mineral extraction, revealing sites of both peril *and* promise for the futurity of local lives.

There is a productive tension in the seam between ecological catastrophe and a utopian future; the literature examined below traverses this subterranean seam in search of collaborations that sustain life amidst colonial-capital wastelands. Ecological entanglements "talk about and to the land, rather than the landscape" and this, in Val Plumwood's words, re-conceives of nature "as a co-actor and co-participant in the world" (2006: 124). This new notion of nature as co-participant is "an alternative ethical framework" where the ecological repercussions of the interrelations of humans and more-than-humans can be examined from a fresh perspective

[4] Kohei Saito looks at argues that it is not possible to fully comprehend Marx's analysis without recognition of its attention to ecology. Saito looks at Marx's unpublished notebooks on the natural sciences and uses these as a basis that had he himself finished volumes two and three of *Capital*, that the issue of the ecological crisis would have maintained a more central theme. For a discussion of Marx's ecology post-1868, see Kohei Saito Karl Marx's *Ecosocialism*, especially chapter six (2017). For a comprehensive history of ecological thinking after Marx's death, see John Bellamy Foster *The Return of Nature* (2020).

(Plumwood 2006: 124, 130). Literary depictions of the entanglements between laboring bodies and the soil "open out imaginations" to think about what Anna Tsing calls a "collaborative survival" in the face of corporeal and ecological degradation (Tsing 2015: 19). Ecological entanglements resemble Donna Haraway's "tentacular thinking" of making attachments and detachments; there is a "generative friction" created through the process of (re)making kinships (Haraway 2016: 61). Building upon Tsing and Haraway's creative feminist modes of subsisting amidst the ruins, I look at literature and trace the creative and pragmatic strategies that life devises in the thick seams within the earth; these are interstitial spaces, where organisms reassemble rhythms of labor amidst shattered nutrient cycles in order to seek new modalities of sustaining local lives.

Rural proletarian literature bears witness to the "intertwined cycles" of everyday life, commodity production, and mineral extraction (Lefebvre 2002: 613). It is attuned to the cadences and rhythms of the human and more-than-human knowledges that collectively speak to the interruption that mineral extraction generates under empire. This body of literature is connected through the shared thought and practice of what Glen Coulthard refers to as "*grounded normativity,*" a concept he defines as "modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time" (2014: 13). The stories examined in this project demonstrate an intimate connection to the soils of a particular geographical location that has developed throughout years of working with that land. Authors engage in storytelling as an act of care work for the local soils and laboring bodies, both human and more-than-human. Each story proposes a mode of "ethical engagement" with

the land that is unique to a particular space-time (2014: 13). In other words, there is no universal solution to the conundrum of sustainability in an era of accelerated mineral extraction. These stories gesture towards the vital importance of cultivating local knowledge as a means to survive amidst the mounds of slag excavated for empire.

The storyteller asks the reader to take "response-ability" and listen to the "polyvocality" transmitted through literature (Haraway 2016; Bakhtin 1981). In crafting stories, the author resists a settler-colonial mode of listening, or what Dylan Robinson calls "hungry listening," in an invitation to actively listen to noises, rumors, and silences that share land-based knowledge (Robinson 2020; Lefebvre 2013). This "sonic encounter" invites readers to engage in land-connected practices that function outside the accumulative cycles of mine work and nurture future life in "a space of subject-subject relation" (Robinson 2020: 15). Narrators and protagonists engage in conversations with human and more-than-human interlocutors about the everyday experience of subsisting in a "wastelanded" environment (Voyles 2015). Sonic and proprioceptive details in these stories transmit the earthly process of co-evolving with unlikely allies amidst the chaos of shattered nutrient cycles.

Telling stories about the relationship between laboring bodies and the soil performs a kind of care work for the (re)making of the environment that evolves in the violent process of mineral extraction. These stories unearth what Kristina Lyons calls the "soil's corporeal generosity" and captures moments of hope when organisms reassemble and "co-laborate" to revitalize devastated ecosystems (Lyons 2020: 65). Ecological storytelling requires the reader to listen differently and attune to subtle rhythms that can potentially sustain or shatter mineral cycles. María Puig de la Bellacasa proposes the cultivation of "care time" as a practice to disrupt

the linear timeline of production (2015: 3337). "An immersion in soil time," she argues, provides an "alternative timescape" that allows for both creative readjustments in our relationship to the soil and a recognition of the "ethicality at stake in life-sustaining practices" (3568; 3594; 3657). The stories that I discuss in the following chapters ask the readers to immerse themselves in soil time and consider the resonances of early twentieth century mining-themed literature in our current moment of intensified extractive labor.

Triangulating Colonialism, Capitalism, and Primitive Accumulation

Colonialism and capitalism are two distinct systems that, while "longtime lovers," are comprised by a distinct set of ecological entanglements; conflating them would reproduce the violence of enclosure upon which both systems are constructed (Liboiron 2021: 13-14). My use of the term colonial-capitalism in this project is in response to Glen Coulthard's call to reestablish colonialism as a "co-foundational feature" of capitalism in order to reach "a more ecologically attentive critique of colonial-capital accumulation" (2014: 14). As such, the term colonial-capitalism does not assume a prescribed set of hierarchies or relationships that sustain extractive economies. Rather, it is intended to embody the unique *local* manifestations of colonial-capitalism that emerge in the process of tilling the soil or mining ore.[5]

Colonialism takes a number of forms and in the discussion that follows, I engage most closely with two: extractive-colonialism and settler-colonialism. In their analysis of pollution as

[5] The difference in how colonialism function in different locations informs my trans-local approach to presenting sites of colonial-capitalism. I draw inspiration from the work of Sayaka Chatani *Nation-Empire* (2018) and David Fedman *Seeds of Control* (2020) in their approach to bringing different scales of geography into a larger discussion of empire. I also employ a trans-local approach in my analysis to avoid the tendency of colonial-capitalism to abolish or deprive places of their specificity (Lefebvre 1991: 343).

a mode of colonial relations to the land, Max Liboiron asserts that "Colonialism, first, foremost, and always, is about *Land*" (2021: 10).[6] The following chapters trace the unearthing of minerals and their subsequent transformations into the material axis of empire. This extractive labor requires the linked systems of colonial-capitalism to acquire both land and gendered bodies as "occupied territory" to fuel the expansion of empire (Luxemburg 1923; Mies 1986: 25; Federici 2014). Maria Mies argues that the interaction with nature is a creative and reciprocal process that, when "biologistically infected," becomes a relationship of "dominance and exploitation" (Mies 1986: 45). At the same time that this "biologistically infected" relationship encloses lands as colonies to extract nature as a resource, this "biologistically infected" relationship encloses female bodies within the home in a process Mies calls "housewifization" (Mies 1986).[7] Mark Driscoll defines the regime of extractive-colonialism deployed in China and Japan as a process of "CO_2lonialism." CO_2lonialism is when a marked increase of carbon emissions appropriates new territory through what Driscoll identifies as the 4C circuit: clipper-coolie captive-contraband-capital (Driscoll 2020: 4).[8] These ideas of extractive-colonialism inform my analysis of the complex differentiation in gendered hierarchies that emerge in the local spatial textures of mining zones represented in rural proletarian literature.

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[6] Emphasis and capitalization in the original. For a discussion of the difference between "Land" and "land," see Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism* (2021: 6n19).

[7] In her pathbreaking work *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, Maria Mies builds upon Rosa Luxemburg's analysis of the conundrum of reproduction in Marx's theory of the political economy. Mies links the processes by which colonies, nature, and women are de-valued and "transformed into a vast reservoir of material resources to be exploited and turned into profit by this class," referring to the male colonial-capitalists (Mies 1986). For a discussion of the violent process in which women's labor is treated as a free natural resource, see chapter three "Colonization and Housewifization."

[8] In *The Whites are the Enemy of Heaven*, Mark Driscoll argues that the term "Climate Caucasianism" is more appropriate than the present era of the Anthropocene because of the racial capitalism that systematically sacrificed people of color and natural resources in a case study of the "superpredation" in East Asia. (Driscoll 2020)

Settler-colonialism is an ongoing process that enacts "economies of violence" in order to guarantee access to land and re-populate a terrain through assimilationist and genocidal policies (Blackhawk 2006: 20; Dunbar-Ortiz 2014). In the case of the Japanese archipelago, settler-colonialism starts as an internal process when the Tokugawa era (1603-1868) domains are unified as the nation-state of Japan during the Meiji period (1868-1912). The dispossession of the northern island of Ezo (Hokkaido) begins with the seasonal migration of fishermen from Matsumae domain to the southern peninsula of Ezo; this seasonal migration also instigates the "thanatopolitics," or the politics of death, waged against the Ainu indigenous group (Hirano 2015; Howell 1995; Lewallen 2016; Mason 2012; Walker 2001).[9] A subsequent wave of so-called "patriotic pioneers" (*tondenhei*) into Ezo naturalizes the incorporation of the northern island into the nation and this violent appropriation of the Ainu land appears in literature about the reclamation of land in the early twentieth century (Day 2012; Mason 2012).[10] Wendy Matsumura identifies three distinct moments of primitive accumulation (the years 1609, 1879, and 2015) that transformed the Ryūkyū kingdom into the Japanese island of Okinawa and, more recently, into a semi-colony of the United States (Matsumura 2015).[11] In chapters one and two, I explore how regions of agriculture, sericulture, and copper mining on the archipelago produce

[9] Thanopolitics and utopian constructions of the frontier as an empty landscape that must be tamed by pioneers resembles the westward expansion in the United States. For a detailed analysis of the similarities of assimilation practices shared by the American and Japanese governments, see Mark Caprio *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea*, especially chapters one and two (2209).

[10] Miyamoto Yuriko (1899-1951) spent a year wandering around Ainu villages and documented the impact of settler-colonists on their livelihood and ability to subsist on the land. Kobayashi Takiji (1903-1933) captured the activities around Otaru and the effects of settler-colonialism on the seasonal herring fisheries. Honjō Mutsuo (1905-1939) captures the corporeal and ecological impacts of settler-colonialism on Hokkaido as well as Karafuto (Sakhalin). Honjō's novel *Ishikarigawa* (Ishikara River) is a historical novel recounting the lived experience of the so-called patriotic pioneers who relocated their families to the region near the Tōbetsu Dam. Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1972) also paints a portrait of the human and more-than-human struggle (horses) in the reclamation of land in Hokkaido.

[11] For the complex ways that the United States has historically and systematically "hidden its empire," see Daniel Immerwahr *How to Hide an Empire* (2019). For literature that addresses the settler-colonial violence on Okinawa and the legacy of war, see Medoruma Shun (1960-) and Nakagami Kenji (1946-1992).

spaces that reflect how internal colonies are (in)formally created through the extraction of minerals and that humans and more-than-humans participate and resist the colonization of land and bodies.

The everyday experience of settler-colonialism on the Liaodong Peninsula, Karafuto (Sakhalin), Korea, Manchuria (Kando), and Taiwan was shaped by the region's natural resources, imperial policies, and the comings and goings of native folks and settler-colonists. The concept of "colonial modernity" presents the trifecta of colonialism, modernity, and nationalism as "mutually reinforcing frames" to examine the everyday experience in colonial Korea (Shin and Robinson 1999). Peter Duus argues that it was the combination of government and settler-colonialism that established and maintained Korea as a space of colonial rule (Duus 1995). Jun Uchida characterizes the colonization of Korea as "a process mediated by ordinary people" who she refers to as "brokers of empire" (Uchida 2011: 30).[12] Louise Young argues that farmers, primarily from Nagano prefecture, comprised the "grassroots agents of empire" in the case of Manchuria (Young 1998: 352).[13] In chapters three and four, I consider how gold mining and atmospheric nitrogen mining posed possibilities of living outside the limitations of a colonial-capital space-time mapped onto the Korean Peninsula.

Capitalism, like colonialism, manifests in myriad forms as it proceeds on its path towards imperialism, its most advanced form (Lenin 1969). As a system, capitalism organizes relations of production and relations with the land for the purpose of cultivating "living offspring" or laying

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[12] Jun Uchida builds upon Carol Gluck's *Japan's Modern Myths*, a work that identifies the unification of Meiji Japan as a process of negotiation between bureaucrats and locals, and Peter Duus's *The Abacus and the Sword*, a work that traces the government-general policies and settler-colonists as two forces that established and maintained Korea as a colonial land (Gluck 1985; Duus 1995).

[13] For the role of settler-colonialism in the construction of the Liaodong Peninsula and the encouragement of support for the Kwantung Army, see Emer O' Dwyer *Significant Soil* (2015).

"golden eggs" which serve as metaphors for the expansion of value that, as if by magic, occurs when money is recirculated into the market (Marx, vol. 1 1967: 152). This expansion of value, or profit, is the objective of capitalism and it is achieved through the dual extraction of surplus-value from the laborer and the land.[14] Capitalism, first, foremost, and always, is about manipulating the interrelations between the laborer and the land to extract the maximum profit from this material exchange (Liboiron 2021: 10).[15]

The mode of capitalist production is rooted in the expropriation of the laborer from the land: the so-called process of primitive accumulation. The process of primitive accumulation removes the farmer from the land. It transforms a subsistent laborer into a wage worker who labors according to the rhythms of profit dictated by the capitalist landowner. The process of primitive accumulation removes the miner from the land. This former subsistent laborer now works according to the rhythms of mineral extraction dictated by the mine manager. Primitive accumulation is central to this project because when lands are enclosed, the ownership of resources is monopolized by a handful of folks in the world. In this project, I engage with land as a term that refers to the surface soil, subterranean ore, as well as atmospheric minerals.

Labor is the magic that generates profit for the capitalist. The limits of the working day as well as human and natural resources are elasticized in order to maximize the accumulation of capital. Rosa Luxemburg's 1913 analysis of the "cycle of slump, boom, and crisis" as "the most

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[14] In *Climate Caucasianism*, Mark Driscoll argues that Euro-whites positioned themselves as "extra-actively separate and superior to nonwhite humans and extrahuman nature, with a $ubjectivity whose sole concern is profit" (2020: 15). Driscoll's use of $ubjectivity underscores the important distinction between the miser who "is merely a capitalist gone mad" and the capitalist who is a "rational miser" (Marx, vol. 1 1967: 151). Driscoll's work contributes to Cedric J. Robinson's important notion of racial capitalism in the context of East Asia and issues of environmental justice (Robinson 1983).

[15] This sentence draws from a quote in Max Liboiron to reflect the similarities and the differences between colonialism and capitalism, but my purpose in repeating Liboiron's poignant insight is to underscore that land is always at the heart of the problem and solution.

striking peculiarity of capitalist reproduction" lays the groundwork for her conclusion that capital solves its own enigma of reproduction through a perpetual "battle of annihilation" against alternative economies (1923: 35, 369). Capital pushes past the thresholds posed by ethnicity, gender, nation, and race and wages a "battle of annihilation," utilizing these categories as a way to further wrest profit from laborers and the earth. Imperial wars are the battles that Luxemburg identifies as the secret of capitalist reproduction; this is the war waged when bodies and lands are subsumed to fuel empire.

Capitalist accumulation magically expands because a large portion of this labor is disguised as unwaged work in the domestic sphere (Eisenstein 1979). Reproductive labor includes the care work for families and the local soils in an effort to subsist amidst the ongoing wars waged on lands and bodies. Silvia Federici argues that capital relations of production are facilitated by the ongoing phenomena of land enclosure, seizure of local knowledge, and appropriation of female bodies (2004; 2012; 2020). In the separation of commodity production (valued as productive) from domestic work (valued as unproductive), capitalism increases its profit margins as it accumulates unpaid labor (Federici 2004: 75). Maria Mies argues that the gendered violence of capital upon bodies and land threatens the ability to "create and maintain life" outside the rhythms of accumulation (Mies 1999: 19). Capital has waged a "battle of annihilation" on laboring bodies and soils in its degradation of local ecosystems (Luxemburg 1913: 369). "The disappearance of the rain forest, the hole in the ozone layer, the pollution of the air, the seas, and the beaches, along with the obvious shrinking of our living spaces, all combine to destroy our earthly commons" (Federici 2019: 29). In this present moment of ecological crises, it is even more imperative that the concept of reproduction expand to think beyond the

maintenance of our own skins alone (Murphy 2013). Michelle Murphy suggests the idea of "distributed reproduction" as a method for thinking about reproduction in relation to temporal latency and intergenerational time (2013: 3). Murphy employs the term "latency" to name "the wait for the effects of the past to arrive in the present…latency in ecological time names how the submerged chemicals of the past finally arrive in the present to disrupt the reproduction of the same. Latency names how the past becomes reactivated. Through latency, the future is already altered" (2013: 3). Mineral extraction in agriculture and mining has profound effects on the atmosphere, soils, and riparian regions; stories about these mining regions reactivate past relations between laboring bodies with the earth as a means to speak about the contested present and (un)sustainable future.

Imperial wars are also informed by a racialized logic that values bodies and lands differently to maximize the rate of profit, hence, the battles are waged differently. Cedric J. Robinson locates the origins of capitalism as contemporaneous with racism as compatible systems facilitating genocide and violence in what he terms "racial capitalism" (Robinson 1983).[16] Within the Japanese empire, gendered and racialized values were placed upon laboring bodies and terra nullius in order to naturalize the expansion of empire (Salleh 2017). Alyssa M. Park explores how the movement of Korean migrants throughout the region of the Tumen River challenged a fixed notion of nationality and legality in the borderlands (Park 2018). Hyun Ok Park describes Korean migration "as a volatile engine of the osmotic expansion of the Japanese empire" (2005: 63). Koreans in Manchuria formed the basis for anti-colonial liberation movements while also acting as colonizers of the region. A 1909 article published in the

[16] For an analysis of the racialized "capitalization of the womb" in the context of the United States, see Ned and Constance Sublette *The American Slave Coast* (2016).

Manchuria Daily Newspaper identifies Chinese migrant workers to be equivalent in value to "soybeans and light machinery" (Driscoll 2010: 55).[17] Tak Fujitani traces the racist discourse about ethnic Japanese in America and ethnic Koreans in the Japanese empire as a tool implemented in the co-production of empire on both sides of the Pacific (Fujitani 2011). Within capitalist relations of production, subtle hierarchies emerge and these are further complicated within colonial-capital spaces of production (Mariátegui 2022).

The "original sin" of the process of so-called primitive accumulation is the process in which the laborer is separated from their means of production, leaving them with "nothing to sell except their own skins" (Marx 1967: 667). Its history is long and violent, documented "in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire" (1967: 669). In an analysis of Uno Kōzō's Marxist theory, Gavin Walker describes primitive accumulation as "a network of capturing the energy that is in flux and redeploying it in an order, recoding its surface so as to be directly compatible, commensurable, with the starting point of capitalist production" (2016: 91). In the following discussion, I trace the energy that is embodied in minerals unearthed for empire. Regions with fertile soils or thick subterranean seams of copper or gold ore are "recoded" as ideal sites for land reclamation or mining enterprises. Rumors of earthly riches generate an ebb and flow of landless peasants, engineers, prospectors, and entrepreneurs and each site is produced through the energy of the comings and goings of laborers and mineral-rich soils.

Laboring with the ore-rich earth, farmers and miners acquire an intimate knowledge of the earth and develop strategies to subsist in the precarious material circumstances. The

[17] Driscoll quotes from a 16 June 1909 article. Chinese migrant workers were also an integral part in the mining of guano from the Pacific islands. For a detailed explanation of this circulation of migrant laborers in the toxic, offshore mineworks see Daniel Immerahr How to Hide an Empire, especially chapter four (2019), and Gregory Cushman Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World (2013). Paul Kreitman is working on a project that explores the history of Japan's offshore guano mining from 1902-1939 (EALAC, Columbia University).

particular experience of laboring with the land is affected by the confluence of factors including gendered divisions of labor, colonial policies, ethnic discrimination, and nationality. I place Korean and Japanese language texts in conversation here to illustrate the subtle hierarchies that emerge in regions of mineral extraction on the peninsula and the archipelago. In a focus on trans-local storytelling, I highlight the distinct local conditions that are represented in literary portraits of mining sites and move beyond a focus on national identities in exploring the complex inter-workings of capitalism, colonialism, and primitive accumulation in extractive labor. The energy contained in the extracted minerals circulates between the archipelago and the peninsula, forging a mineral interdependence founded on copper, gold, and nitrogen. The mineral interdependence functions to both fortify and subvert the borders imposed by empire. At the same time, it opens up spaces, or moments, where local ecologies persevere in a "wastelanded" site (Voyles 2015).

Tenant Farmer as Proletariat

When peasants are expropriated from the land, they become wandering bodies in search of a means to transform their labor into capital. When their labor-power becomes capital, "the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet" (Marx 1965: 714). The bourgeoisie produce their own "grave-diggers" in the socialization of the industrial proletariat inside the factory (Marx 1965: 715 n. 2). In *The Conditions of the Working-Class in England*, Engels writes about the figure of the agricultural proletariat and the mining proletariat, noting that the decentralized nature of farm work and mining impedes the development of a class consciousness (Engels 1975, vol. 4). The "really revolutionary class" in Marx's imagination is the white, male, heterosexual

industrial proletariat and, consequently, proletarian literature abounds with male industrial laborers who initiate the revolution (1965: 715 n. 2). The central position that the relationship between the laborer and the land occupies in Marx's analysis of the political economy in *Capital*, however, indicates that the proletarian inhabits spaces far beyond the factory walls.

Scholarship on proletarian literature maps the variegated topography of leftist literature and new imaginations of the proletariat. Paula Rabinowitz examines how female writers in 1930s America compose "narratives of desire" as "a means for women to enter history by removing it from the realm of the purely domestic, personal and psychological where it had traditionally been located" (Rabinowitz 1991: 137). These texts present the laboring female body as a product of both labor and desire in the figures of the mother and the female intellectual. In a re-valuation of American proletarian literature, Barbara Foley looks at the figure of the black proletariat as a means to interrogate the convergence of class and race in issues of social justice. In her discussion of the female proletariat, Foley looks at works that focus on reproductive labor as a means of confronting "Marxism's productive bias" and the gendered hierarchies precluding the construction of an equitable society (Foley 1993: 241).

The figure of the proletariat in East Asian literature is a heterogenous figure that emerges in the "internationalist environment" generated by the material flows and migrations that fuel the Japanese empire (Bowen-Struyk 2006: 272). In her study on the writer Nakano Shigeharu (1902-1979), Miriam Silverberg examines how Nakano's use of "vocal pluralism" narrates a tale of Nakano's own shifting perspective on mass culture and the relationship between the present and the past (Silverberg 1990: 7). Silverberg identifies four different stages in Nakano's consciousness that evolve as a result of his reassessment of history in his dialogic imagination of

a future in response to the contemporaneous socio-political climate. Samuel Perry elucidates the diverse aesthetic techniques employed in Japanese proletarian literature including children's songs, fairy tales, and wall fiction. Perry argues that these cultural products challenge the very notion of "what counted as literature" and that the proletarian subject was constructed in a dialectical relationship with the experience of folks including *burakumin*, children, colonized people, farmers, petit bourgeois, soldiers, and women (2014: 4). Sunyoung Park maps the complex network of interacting ideologies, including anarchism, communism, feminism, and nationalism, that comprises what she refers to as the "proletarian wave" in Korean leftist literature (Park 2015: 13). Park analyzes a wide range of works that present imaginations of social justice from the position of the colonized.

The surge in tenant farmer uprisings during the 1920s altered the understanding of class relations in rural regions and the new figure of the child as proletariat stepped onto the scene. Norma Field identifies the years long Kizaki Village tenant farmer strike in Niigata as the "crystallizing event" that initiated the proletarian children's movement (Bowen-Struyk and Field 2016: 189). The Kizaki Village Proletarian Farmers' School (*Musansha nōmin gakkō*) opened on June 16, 1926 with a pedagogical mission to serve the unique needs of the tenant farmer child (Perry 2014: 17). In a study of the pedagogical experiments incorporated into the public school curriculum, including prose composition essays (*tsuzurikata*) and free verse children's poetry (*jidōshi*) of the Life Writing Movement (*seikatsu tsuzurikata undō*) of 1929-1936, Mika Endo explores how instructors devised modes of writing literature that allowed working class children to speak to their unique experience of the everyday (Endo 2011). Endo argues that this literary

movement confronted a "double burden" in asserting its artistic value because of its leftist politics and unorthodox literary form (Endo 2011: 79).

Children populate the pages of proletarian novels and stories as narrators and protagonists, shedding light upon the kaleidoscopic experience of daughters and sons of factory workers and farmers. Miyamoto Yuriko's (1899-1951) 1927 story "Itta to haha" (Itta and his Mother) is narrated from the perspective of Itta, a young child, who lives with his mother in a crowded tenement house located in the pleasure quarters of Tokyo.[18] This story captures the plight of Itta who is exploited by his own mother, forcing him onto the streets to sell *nattō* (fermented soy beans) precluding his opportunity to receive an education. Sata Ineko's (1904-1998) 1928 "Kyarameru kōjō kara" (From the Caramel Factory) is a story about an eleven-year old girl who is taken out of school and sent to work wrapping caramels at a nearby factory. Both of these stories recount the plight of poor urban children who sacrifice their education in order to contribute to the family as a wage worker. Nagatsuka Takashi's (1879-1915) 1912 novel *Tsuchi* (The Soil) chronicles the life of Otsuki, a young girl, who juggles the responsibilities inside the house and out in the field to support her father and younger brother. Kuroshima Denji (1898-1943) relates the challenges of young children in a rural coastal region of soy sauce production, including the 1923 "The Sugar Thief," the 1926 "A Herd of Pigs," the 1927 "Their Lives," and the 1930 "The Cape" (Kuroshima 2005). Nagatsuka and Kuroshima illuminate the burden that rural children endure on an everyday basis.

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[18] In the introduction to her translation of Miyamoto's short story, Lucy North draws a connection between "Itta to haha" and Higuchi Ichiyō's (1872-1896) 1895 story "Takekurabe" (Child's Play) about the life of children living in the pleasure quarters (North 2015). For a study on the life and a collection of translations of Higuchi's stories, see Robert Lyon Danly *In the Shade of Spring Leaves* (Danly 1981). Sakae Tsuboi's (1899-1967) 1938 *Daikon no ha* (Radish Leaves) highlights the struggles of rural children in the fields and Sakae's 1952 *Twenty-four Eyes* chronicles the awakening of a teacher in a rural region of Shikoku as she witnesses the challenges her young students face from poverty. This novel was translated into the film *Nijushi no Hitomi* (Twenty-four Eyes) in 1954.

A 1929 edition of the journal *Nyonin geijutsu* (Women's Arts) features a story by Murayama Kazuko (1903-1946) "Kenkōna onna no ko" (A Healthy Young Girl) about a ten-year old girl who struggles with the prejudice of being a daughter of a drunk father and a mother who works at the massive tobacco factory.[19] At the beginning of the story, the girl swipes a few coins from her father's wallet to purchase a new notebook while he is still passed out. When her teacher discovers the money, she questions the girl as to the origins of the money, calling her a thief and violently attacking her for a general lack of morals and despicable conduct. Flinging insults at the young girl, the teacher stomps out of the classroom in a frenzy. The girl remains standing in the classroom, covered in sweat and shaking from the teacher's discriminatory insults that criminalize the poor. This is the moment when the child protagonist becomes a revolutionary pioneer. She leaps atop the teacher's desk, joyfully scattering mud from the bottom of her shoes all over the symbol of authority. The story ends with this remarkable moment where the young girl quite literally tramples upon the gendered expectations of young girls and the oppressive hierarchical nature of the teacher-pupil relationship.

Samuel Perry argues that *Shōnen senki* (Children's Battleflag), the first proletarian journal written for children, was not merely a reaction to class oppression but it was also a "response to the demonization of racial otherness that was being institutionalized in the public sphere" (2014: 47). A May 1929 edition of *Shōnen senki* engages readers in the issue of how to form "a brigade of pioneers" (*pioniiro buntai*) (Shōnen senki May 1929: 9). This edition includes articles of how fellow pioneers in Korea, the Soviet Union, and the regions of Miyagi and

[19] For a detailed discussion of the relationship between literature and politics in *Nyonin geijutsu*, see Sarah Frederick *Turning Pages*, especially chapter four, Mats Karlsson "Thirst for Knowledge," and Angela Coutts " How do we Write a Revolution?" (Coutts 2013; Frederick 2006; Karlsson 2013).

Yamagata have fought for equity in education and local farming unions (Shōnen senki May 1929). Throughout its publication, *Shōnen senki* espoused an international solidarity among its readers and aimed to create a community of children with shared experiences that transcended divisions of ethnicity, nationality, or race (Perry 2014).[20]

The plight of the farmer or factory worker's child is further compounded in the colonial-capital space of Korea. Kang Kyŏngae's (1906-1944) 1933 short story "Wŏlssagŭm" (Monthly Tuition) portrays the mental anguish of a tenant farmer's child whose fear of being expelled from school drives him to steal a schoolmate's pocket money. The limited opportunities for education in rural Korea are filtered through the Japanese language and place the child in a predicament where the only way he can behave as a good imperial citizen is, paradoxically, to become a petty thief. Kang's 1936 novella *Chihach'on* (Underground Village) is about the eldest boy, Ch'ilssŏng, who roams the village as a beggar to support his single mother and two younger siblings. Kyeong-Hee Choi argues that Ch'ilssŏng's disabled body is a trope, embodying the "double sense of crisis" imposed on Ch'ilssŏng as a man who is simultaneously constrained by colonial policies and physical limitations (Choi 2001: 444). Choi links the disabled body of the fictional character to the restrictions placed on the writing female body of Kang amidst strict censorship policies of colonial Korea. Janet Poole reveals a "productivity of that silence," one generated by censorship of post-1937 Korea. Poole reanimates "aesthetic constellations [that] bear witness to a clash of forces and temporalities" in the everyday to reveal a more complex portrait of the late colonial in Korea (2014: 22). In *Curative Violence*, Eunjung Kim explores the

[20] For a detailed analysis of the literary re-imagination of the child as an international community, see Samuel Perry *Recasting Red Culture in Proletarian Japan*, especially chapter two (Perry 2014). For a collection of translated stories from the children's proletarian movement, see Heather Bowen-Struyk and Norma Field *For Dignity, Justice, and Revolution*, chapter four (Bowen-Struyk and Field 2016).

cultural representations of disability and argues that "When bodies are pronounced 'incurable,' they are read as being in a condition of a 'nonlife'—without a future and denied meaning in the present" (Kim 2017: 7).[21] *Chihach'on* depicts an entire village of folks whose future is compromised by the material and social constraints of colonial-capitalism on the working and writing bodies represented in Kang's novella.

Han Sŏrya's (1900-1976) 1936 "Ch'ŏllo kyoch'ajŏm" (Railroad Crossing) depicts the corporeal carnage of colonial-capital infrastructure to the transient community of day laborers' children.[22] Kyŏngsu, a dispossessed tenant farmer, relocates his family to work on the levee construction project on the Sup'ung River in the northeast of Korea.[23] The migrant community of day laborers live near a central railroad track of the Chosŏn Railroad Company, where coal and lumber are transported out for the expanding empire. "Ch'ŏllo kyoch'ajŏm" places the narrative focus on the railroad crossing (*humikkiriban*) that is the site of multiple fatal accidents due to the failure of the Chosŏn Railroad Company to install a proper signal.[24] Yuasa Katsuei's (1910-1972) 1934 novel *Kannani* portrays the relationship between Japanese and Korean children in colonial Korea, illustrating "that an innocent, nonracist humanity preexists the ethnoracial hierarchies imposed by any particular society" (Driscoll 2005: 9). Once these ethnoracial hierarchies take

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[21] In the melding of disability and cure, violence "is made invisible in the name of cure" (Kim 2017: 9). See chapter one for a discussion of reproduction as cure and chapter two for an analysis of the gendered sacrifice for cure.

[22] For a discussion of the proletariat as the Korean migrant day laborer in Japan, see Ken Kawashima *The Proletarian Gamble* (2009).

[23] For a discussion of the Supung Dam project as part of a larger technocratic regime implemented in the expansion of empire, see Aaron S. Moore "The Yalu River Era of Developing Asia" (2013). For an analysis of the "fluid geography of forest exploitation" that reshaped the Yalu River basin, see David Fedman *Seeds of Control*, especially chapter five (2020

[24] The use of the Korean translation of the Japanese word for "railroad crossing" implicates the dual responsibility for the failure to install the rail guard as the Korean landlords and the Japanese government-general. (Hughes 2013: 287 n9).

root, however, this innocence is destroyed and subjects colonized bodies to a cycle of gendered violence. Dafna Zur traces the emergence of Korean children's literature alongside the notion of the child-heart (*tongshim*) (Zur 2017). Zur argues that Korean children's literature portrays an affective connection to the past and a vision for the future; children's literature is "a privileged space in which writers could look to the present and the past and create a world of possibilities for the future" (Zur 2017: 21). Through this literature, the relationship between children and nature reveals how the contemporaneous socio-political situation affects visions for the future of the nation.

Throughout the early twentieth century, the majority of the population labored in the rural regions of the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago.[25] Historians have explored how the temporal notion of the present was reconceived as a strategy to address the rifts emerging amidst contemporaneous socio-political changes. Sho Konishi argues that historians "have overlooked the ideas and thoughts of the farmers themselves about historical progress and their role in that progress" (Konishi 2013: 1847). Konishi looks at the Cooperative Living Farm in Hokkaido as a site where farmers established a space-time outside that of colonial-capitalism; the farm embraces the coexistence of diverse local imaginations of how to coexist with the rural

[25] Exact statistics vary according to the year and region because there was a large amount of seasonal migration to supplement primary work in agriculture. Albert Park and Paul S. Nam note that approximately eight percent of the population lived in rural regions of Korea (A. Park 2015: 56; Nam 2015: 2). Statistics in Japan fluctuate between seventy and eighty percent, depending on the region evaluated and the (Havens 1974; Waswo and Nishida 2003).

environment in what Konishi calls "anarchist time" (2013: 1852).[26] In this anarchist space-time, farmers are agents who actively transform relationships of agrarian production in an effort to actualize a progressive ideal of social justice in the present. In the context of colonial Korea, Albert Park argues that faith-based social movements grounded in rural regions of the peninsula construct a "temporality for potentiality" in its re-valuation of the everyday as a site for pragmatically reorganizing social and economic relationships based on equity and justice (A. Park 2015: 111).[27]

The redefinition of the present in Hokkaido and rural Korea were in response to the crises of space and time that accompanied rapid modernization. Kerry Smith examines the national crises of rural Japan after the world market crash of 1929 through the lens of Sekishiba, a small village in the Tōhoku region. In this case study, Smith delineates the complex negotiations of government bureaucrats and local leaders in efforts to "help farmers help themselves" to revitalize the rural village (Smith 2001: 135). Nishida Yoshiaki and Holly Stephens interrogate the everyday conditions of rural life through an examination of farmers' diaries (Stephens 2017; Waswo and Nishida 2003). In an analysis of an owner-cultivator farmer's diary, Holly Stephens demonstrates how "the rural economy [was] based on a system of interconnected cyclical

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[26] Konishi argues that the farmers who joined the Cooperative Living Farm were motivated by ideas of "progress, liberty and equality represented by the farm's motto 'Mutual Aid' (*Sōgo fujō*)" (2013: 1858). The farm drew upon ideas of Peter Kropotkin, Lev Tolstoi, and the writer Arishima Takeo, who liberated his tenant farmers in Niseko in 1922 and named as cooperative owners. Science and technology were imagined as collaborative members of the cooperatist community and this tension between sustainability and technology is a problem evident in imaginations of what comprises a sustainable future ecology. Another issue in the case of this cooperative farm in Hokkaido is the settler-colonial legacy. Arishima Takeo's father, Arishima Takeshi, founded the farm as an absentee landlord and, hence, directly contributed to the appropriation of the land from the indigenous Ainu. Kobayashi Takiji is another writer who addresses his own existence in Hokkaido as a settler-colonist. For a discussion of the complicated identity politics of settler-colonialism on Karafuto/Sakhalin, see Tessa Morris-Suzuki "Northern Lights: The Making and Unmaking of Karafuto Identity" (Morris-Suzuki 2001).

[27] Park looks at the efforts of leaders in the YMCA, Presbyterian, and Ch'ŏndogyo to explore a new definition of modernity that allowed a space for a "heaven on earth" where the colonized populace could "achieve material stability and thus spiritual fulfillment" (2015: 18).

patterns in which the weather, prices, and harvests were in constant flux" and affected the everyday life in rural Korea (Stephens 2017: 31).[28] The material conditions of laboring in the rural regions of the archipelago and the peninsula were shaped by these "interconnected cyclical patterns" and it was the tenant farmer who performed the work that produced the material axis of the Japanese empire (2017: 31).

This project is predicated on a definition of the tenant farmer as proletariat. The tenant farmer interrelates with the local soils, adjusting their rhythms of labor in response to the region's unique seasonal cycles. In this process, the tenant farmer develops an intimate knowledge of the circulation of minerals (nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, or NPK); this local land-based knowledge informs ways of laboring with the earth to maintain a fertile relationship with the soils.[29] Agriculture is extractive labor, hence, the tenant farmer is always a miner. Laboring with the earth, the tenant farmer embodies the central relationship between the laborer and the land that lies at the heart of the rural proletarian literature analyzed in the chapters that follow. This relationship between laboring bodies and soil is what determines the future (un)sustainability of local ecologies.

Chapter Outline

[28] See Paul S. Nam "The Roots of Labor" for definitions regarding the five kinds of farmers that comprised the rural villages in Korea (2010). For a careful analysis of what Sim Wŏn'gwŏn's diary reveals about the complicated factors that shaped the rise and fall of his status as a partial landowner with a marginal claim to aristocratic lineage, see Holly Stephens "Agriculture and Development in an Age of Empire," especially chapter two (2017).

[29] My understanding of land-based knowledge draws from scholarship engaged with ethical conversations between indigenous knowledge and academia in a decolonial praxis of education and knowledge production. See M. Wildcat, M. Simposon, S. Irlbacker-Fox & G. Coulthard "Learning from the Land" (2014).

Chapter one, (NPK): Soil and Sericulture, immerses the reader in "soil time" and explores the mineral foundation upon which the Japanese Empire was built: the soil (Puig de la Bellacasa 2015: 3568). Rather than engage with the soil as object or resource, this chapter roots out stories that illuminate the dynamic relationship that emerges when tenant farmers labor with the land in efforts to sustain the building blocks of fertile soil: nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). The first section reads a 1916 short story by Miyamoto Yuriko (1899-1951) and three 1930 stories by Sumii Sue (1902-1997). These works present literary sketches of the everyday space-time in rural farming villages in the archipelago. The second section looks at a poem by Makabe Jin (1907-1984) and two short stories by Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1972). I argue that tenant farming families embrace silkworms as fellow productive members of the household in order to sustain lives amidst economic crises. In the last section, I look at the literary depiction of colonial-capital spaces of sericulture on the Korean peninsula in works by Kang Kyŏngae (1906-1944) and Yi Kiyŏng (1896-1984). Tenant farmers and silkworms form a symbiotic relationship that invigorates life in impoverished farming villages. The construction of industrial-scale filatures and the electrification of silk mills, however, marks a moment when the production of silk cocoons instigates a heightened gendered violence, circulating female bodies to finance imperial infrastructure. This chapter explores the efforts of tenant farmers to negotiate their entanglements with soil and silkworms as a means to sustain life amidst the precarious material circumstances in rural villages.

Chapter two, (Cu): Copper Soundscapes, maps the sonic terrain generated in the excavation of copper ore on the archipelago for use in imperial infrastructure including electric grids, transportation networks, and war munitions. I argue that Itō Noe (1895-1923) and Matsuda

Tokiko (1905-2004) engage in storytelling as a form of care work for ecosystems shattered by the liquid and atmospheric effluents from copper mining sites. This chapter begins with my reading of the 1918 short story"Tenki" (Turning Point) by Itō Noe, which I argue is a watershed moment in her activist and literary career when she shifts from a politics of 'free love' to 'free life.' "Tenki" juxtaposes multiple temporal engagements between the protagonist and Yanaka village, a remote farming village that disappeared under the reservoir designed to mitigate damage from the massive Ashio copper mine. The protagonist in "Tenki" refuses a settler-colonial practice of listening that is conditioned for the purpose of accumulating knowledge (Robinson 2020: 72). Instead, she draws upon her multiple senses to listen to the murmurs among the reeds and bear witness to the abandoned dwellings of the expropriated farmers. These provide her the tools to tell a story that refuses to forget the asphyxiated organisms that once thrived in Yanaka. In doing so, Itō's storytelling is care work because it aims to prevent memory lapses that lead to the "mechanical repetitions" of ecological disasters (Lefebvre 2002: 626). The latter part of this chapter surveys a selection of Matsuda Tokiko's early work about the unwaged labor performed in the bunkhouse that sustains extractive labor in the Arakawa copper mines. Matsuda's protagonists bear witness to the terrestrial effects of copper ore removal from the standpoint of the bunkhouse. These stories illustrate causal relationships between the unseasonal avalanches and decayed plant life to the subterranean copper ore extraction. In writing stories about the appropriation of natural resources and domestic labor in Arakawa, I argue that Matsuda invites readers to consider the "ecological debt" and "embodied debt" accrued in the process of accumulating raw copper ore (Salleh 2009). Within the space of the bunkhouse, Matsuda proposes a reorganization of familial relationships and colonial-capital economic exchanges in

order to imagine sites where life flourishes in spite of its close proximity to copper ore. This chapter engages in trans-local storytelling to shed light upon the misconception that ecological crises have a single solution to restore sustainable cycles of life. I propose that ecological storytelling is attuned to the cadences and rhythms of the human and more-than human knowledges that collectively speak to the unsustainable interruptions that affect a particular geographic location.

Chapter three, "(Au): Speculative Rumors of Gold," examines literature that depicts the gold rush that swept the Korean Peninsula following the world financial crash of 1929. The Korean gold rush was a moment in time when authors traded their pens for a pickaxe to remake their lives as prospectors, miners, and smugglers (Chŏn 2005: 33). This chapter begins with a discussion of the gold-themed works of Kim Yujŏng (1908-1937). In these stories, prospectors forge fictive kinships as they venture into unfamiliar mountainous terrain. I propose that clandestine gold miners follow sonic cues in order to navigate a safe route to gold veins. The cryptic value of gold, however, leads miners into a kind of trance where they hear phantom noises; these "accidental resonances" lead miners to fatal misconceptions of what threatens the futurity of life (Morris 2008: 99). Next, I consider two works written by Ch'ae Mansik (1902-1950): the 1937 story "Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ" (In the Vicinity of the Train Depot) and the 1940 essay "Kŭm kwa munhak" (Gold and Literature). In these works, I examine the capacity of rumors to disrupt the reproductive cycles of life. Rumors spark an insatiable appetite for gold that infiltrates the mind and causes the synapses to misfire, leading the protagonists to have delusional thoughts about the power of gold to transform the everyday. The final part of this chapter continues a discussion of rumors in two 1938 short stories by Hyŏn Kyŏngjun

(1909-1950): “Milssu” (Smuggling) and “Penttobakkosogŭi kŭmgoe ” (The Bento Box with the Golden Nugget). I argue that it is the mythic value of gold and the temptation of smuggling gold across the border from Korea to Manchuria that infects the protagonist with a kind of madness that threatens his ability to reproduce the conditions for life. In addition, these stories depict how rumors prompt movement across and through the land in a desperate search for gold which, intern, changes the very stability of the earth underfoot.

Chapter Four, “(N): Atmospheric Mining and the Soil Crisis in Yi Pungmyŏng’s Hŭngnam Literature,” returns to the issue of soil fertility in the era of man-made fertilizer. The atmospheric mining of nitrogen leads to the production of ammonium sulfate crystals that enrich the soils of the expansive empire. The ecological footprint of this so-called technocratic solution, however, devastates what Richard White calls the “geography of energy” (White 1995). In this chapter, I examine the corporeal and ecological repercussions of aboveground nitrogen mining and chemical engineering through the lens of Yi Pungmyŏng’s (1908-1988) Hŭngnam stories. Yi’s stories present a blueprint of the transformations Hŭngnam experiences in an advanced stage of primitive accumulation. I argue that, collectively, Yi’s stories engage in a subversive cartography. The Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory is a perilous space where living organisms are asphyxiated by toxic fumes and assaulted by the cacophony of the massive machines. The era of man-made fertilizer is, in Stacey Alaimo’s words, a time when “human corporeality” must be understood as “trans-corporeality” because “the material self cannot be disentangled from networks that are simultaneously economic, political, cultural, scientific, and substantial” (2010: 20). Alaimo’s concept of trans-corporeality depicts the material effects of toxic flows that permeate bodies and ecosystems. As these toxins bioaccumulate within organisms, riverbeds, and

soil they disrupt the nutrient cycles that once replenished vital minerals to the soil. The subversive aspect of Yi's cartography is his attention to the interstitial spaces that function according to a logic outside of ammonium sulfate production. These interstitial spaces are where life forms reorganize themselves in a polyrhythmic and intercorporeal exchange that is attuned to the revitalization of life (Robinson 2020). It is through a multi-sensory connection to the land that these organisms actively respond to the melody of a material exchange that replenishes a region devastated by industrial chemical factories.

Chapter One
(NPK): Soil and Sericulture

This chapter begins with an excavation of the mineral foundation upon which the Japanese Empire was built: the soil. Rather than engage with the soil as object or resource, this chapter roots out stories that illuminate the dynamic relationship that emerges when tenant farmers labor with the land in efforts to sustain the building blocks of fertile soil: nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). The mineral exchange that occurs in the process of the interactions between farmers and the land generates a kinetic energy that lies at the heart of each narrative examined in this chapter. The first section engages with sketches of farming villages in Miyamoto Yuriko's (1899-1951) 1916 novella *Mazushiki hitobito no mure* (Flocks of Impoverished Folks) and three short stories written in 1930 by Sumii Sue (1902-1997). These authors capture the precarious material circumstances of everyday life in rural Japan and reveal how mutual aid and domestic labor function to sustain tenant farming families through the economic and natural disasters that plague rural regions. Next I turn to a poem by Makabe Jin (1907-1984) and two short stories by Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1972) that illustrate how tenant farming families open their homes and embrace silkworms as fellow productive members of the household in order to sustain life among the ruins (Tsing 2015). The last section moves to the colonized peninsula through the lens of two novels published in 1934, Kang Kyŏngae's (1906-1944) *Ingan munjae* (The Human Predicament) and Yi Kiyŏng's (1896-1984) *Kohyang* (Hometown). These texts reveal how the construction of industrial-scale filatures and silk mills on the peninsula induce a heightened scale of gendered violence to the rural regions of Korea.

Sketches of Farming Villages: Miyamoto Yuriko (1899-1951) and Sumii Sue (1902-1997)

Nagatsuka Takashi (1879-1915) began the serialization of his novel *Tsuchi* (The Soil) in the *Asashi Shimbun* in 1910 (Waswo 1989).[30] This portrait of rural life in a hamlet of Ibaraki Prefecture captures the trials and tribulations that a tenant farming family faces on a daily basis to maintain fertile soils. The enclosure of the common woodlands restricts access to the natural fertilizers. Poor tenant farmers borrow money at usurious rates to purchase imported fishmeal fertilizer or soybean cake fertilizers. This initiates a vicious cycles that exhausts tenant farmers as much as it does the soil they till. The insurmountable debts send members of the family migrating out in search of wage work to support their family. Rural proletarian literature abounds with stories about tenant farmers who migrate to work on temporary construction projects including dams, factories, railroads, and reservoirs. Other farmers relocate further afield to spaces including Karafuto (Sakhalin) or Manchuria (Kando) as employees of the logging or mining industry.[31] Opportunities for domestic wage work generally send the female members of the tenant farming family to filatures or textile mills to work for seasons at a time. Sketches of farming villages by Miyamoto Yuriko and Sumii Sue present portraits of the everyday prior to these migrations. I have chosen these works because sericulture is present in the peripheral mention of mulberry fields and the late night loom work, providing a solid foundation for this chapter.

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[30] Uchida Tomu produced the film *Tsuchi* based on Nagatsuka's novel, but it was lost in the fire bombings in 1945. One version was discovered in East Germany in 1968 and another version was found in Russia in 2000 but both have been severely damaged.

[31] Yuzurihara Masako (1911-1949) writes about impoverished tenant farmers from the Tōhoku region who migrate to Karafuto (Sakhalin) as seasonal loggers for the Ōji Paper Mill and the exploitation of Korean laborers contracted to mine on the island. Honjō Mutsu (1905-1939) migrated from Khushu to Hokkaido to cultivate land before he relocated to Karafuto to work in the logging industry. His novel *Ishikaragawa* (Ishikara River) details the hardships faced by the settler-colonists in Hokkaido in the early Meiji period and other works detail the lived experience of work in the logging industry on Karafuto.

Miyamoto as Feminist, Miyamoto as Ethnographer

Miyamoto (Chūjō) Yuriko (1899-1951) was born in Tokyo to a father, Chūjō Seiichirō (1868-1936), who was a successful architect and supported Miyamoto's pursuit of higher education within and beyond the Japanese archipelago. She studied at Japan Women's College and relocated to New York to study at Columbia University, where she met her first husband. Later, she spent three years studying in the Soviet Union. While studying in the Soviet Union in the wake of the Russian revolution, Miyamoto lived and developed an intimate relationship with Russian literature scholar Yuasa Yoshiko (1896-1990).[32] When Miyamoto returned to Japan from the Soviet Union in 1930, she joined the All-Japan Federation of Proletarian Arts (*Zen Nihon musansha geijutsu renmei* (J); *Nippona Artista Proleta Federacio* (E); NAPF) and assumed the role as chief editor of the socialist feminist magazine *Hataraku Fujin* (Working Woman).[33] She met Miyamoto Kenji (1908-2007), a fellow communist party member, in 1932 and they married soon after.[34] Both were arrested several times for their affiliation with leftist politics, but neither ever renounced their commitment to the communist party. Miyamoto Kenji was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1933 but was released soon after Japan announced its surrender on August 15,

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[32] Sachi Hamano directed a film *Yuriko, Dasvidaniya* that was released in 2011; this is loosely based on Miyamoto's novel *Noriko*.

[33] Due to ideological divisions within the group, it became Federacio de Proletaj Kultur-Organizoj Japanaj (KOPF) in 1931 and incorporated film and music in their artistic production. For a detailed history of the formation of these groups and the socio-political climate, see Kurehara Yukio (2004), George Shea (1964), and NPBS especially volumes 1-5 on the early era of the movement.

[34] Miyamoto's first marriage was a graduate student she met at Columbia. They lived together in Japan for five years before divorcing. The dissolution of this marriage is the basis for Miyamoto's serialized work *Nobuko*, which was first published in 1924.

1945.[35] Miyamoto Yuriko stepped onto the literary scene with a commitment to social justice in 1916 and throughout her life she demonstrated a commitment to socialist feminist praxis in her art as well as life politics.

In an analysis of Miyamoto's 1934 story "Koiwai no ikka" (The Family of Koiwai), Heather Bowen-Struyk explores Miyamoto's positioning of the "family as a revolutionary unit" in her reading of the prewar and postwar versions of the short story (2004: 479). Locating the site of revolution within the bourgeois site of the home is unique among proletarian works because the site of revolution is most often inside the factory or out at sea.[36] Engels' 1864 *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* critiques the nuclear family as a capitalist tool devised to secure a gendered division of labor and an abundant source of unpaid domestic labor (Engels 2015). Miyamoto's "Koiwai no ikka" takes a novel approach to the bourgeois unit of the nuclear family and, in Bowen-Struyk's words, is "extraordinary for positing the possibility of the development of socialist consciousness within the *ie*," or the home (2004: 486). Bowen-Struyk argues that while Miyamoto's fictional family is a seedbed of revolution, residual patriarchal elements of the nuclear familial structure preclude the complete liberation of women from unwaged work. The exploitation of women's work in leftist circles plagued the proletarian arts

[35] The reunion of Kenji and Yuriko after his 12 years is captured in the 1947 story *Fuchisō* (The Weathervane Plant). Yuriko was extremely prolific after Kenji was released from prison.

[36] This is in reference to the quintessential proletarian text *Kani kōsen* (The Crab Cannery Ship) written by Kobayashi Takiji (1903-1933) in 1929. An earlier novel that locates a revolution out at sea, see Hayama Yoshiki's (1894-1945) 1926 novel *Umi ni ikuru hitobito* (Life out at Sea). For a discussion of experience in Hayama's writings, see chapter two, for an analysis of Kobayashi's work, see chapter five (Bowen-Struyk 2001).

group in Japan, as elsewhere, and remained a point of contention in the prewar and postwar period.[37]

Miyamoto lived a life and created art that challenged heteronormative notions of love and family. In her 1924 proletarian autobiographical novel *Nobuko*, she addresses the problems in her first failed marriage as well as her relationship with Yuasa Yoshiko. In the 1935 story "Chibusa" (The Breast), a network of female laborers establish a collective day care as a means of support for working mothers. This story maps out the particular challenges female members of the communist party face when responsible for taking care of imprisoned male comrades. The 1946 *Banshū heiya* (The Banshū Plain) captures the atmosphere at the end of the war in a small village in Fukushima. Hiroko, the protagonist, recounts the changes in the aural and social landscape in the wake of the August 15, 1945 radio broadcast announcing Japan's defeat. In *Colonizing Language*, Christina Yi surveys the role Koreans play in *Banshū heiya* to illustrate how the concept of "an ethnically homogenous Japan was constructed vis-à-vis its former colonial subjects" (Yi 2018: 77). Yi analyzes a scene where Hiroko is on the train with a group of Koreans who are headed west to repatriate. She argues that this postwar space-time stuns the Japanese into silence and stillness while it animates Koreans as "moving, speaking, recovering individuals" that represent a hope for the future (2018: 78). As such, the ethnic differentiation employed in *Banshū heiya* facilitates a democratic revolution (2018: 81).[38]

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[37] For a work that illuminates the frustration that female writers felt within this patriarchal structure, particularly while male comrades were imprisoned, see Sata Ineko's (1904-1998) 1938 novel *Kurenai* (Crimson) and Miyamoto Yuriko's 1947 *Fūchisō* (The Weathervane Plant).

[38] Samuel Perry notes that "According to Miyamoto, ethnicity (*minzokusei*) had to be taken up in 'concrete situations' and only 'in the spirit of strengthening international class struggle and of invigorating and facilitating collective action.' For Japanese communists like Miyamoto, the 'we' of a revolutionary subject could pass through, but should not linger on, forms of nationhood or ethnicity" (Perry 2014: 167). For a detailed analysis of the problems of literary representations of ethnicities in the context of Japan and Korea, see Perry, especially chapter four, and Silverberg on Nakano Shigeharu's poetry on Koreans, especially chapter five (Silverberg 1990).

While *Banshū heiya* presents a topography of the postwar ethnic and social landscape, *Mazushiki hitobito no mure* (Flocks of Impoverished Folks) surveys the landscape of a poor farming village in the northeast of Japan. Miyamoto was just seventeen years old when she published her first novella in the September 1916 edition of the magazine *Chūō kōron* (Central Forum). The novella is narrated in the first person; the nameless "watashi" is a young girl who recounts her personal transformation as a result of her encounters with the residents, both human and more-than-human, in K village. This novella weaves threads of Miyamoto's lived experience together with fictional strands that, in conjunction, comprise a rich work of autobiographical fiction; there is a palpable kinetic energy generated as the narrative vacillates somewhere between fiction, reality, and an imagined futurity.

Mazushiki hitobito no mure is a novella that, in the words of Kirin Nayaran, reveals how "life's raw materials can be shaped into absorbing stories that might not be labeled ethnography but are still ethnographically informed" (Nayaran 2012: x). I use the term ethnography because it is in the experience as a participant observer that the narrator destabilizes her own assumed knowledges about values ascribed to both human and more-than-human lives in the village. The narrator invites the reader to stand beside her as she observes the everyday phenomena unfold from under the shadow of a tree or from the comfort of her wooden veranda. Positioning the reader on the periphery of the center of activity, Miyamoto "cultivate[s] distance" and implores the reader to "consider the possibility of different perspectives" (Nayaran 2012: 96). In the multiplicity of standpoints introduced throughout the text, Miyamoto engages in the feminist praxis of listening to the "radical multiplicity of local knowledges" that offer "partial perspectives" (Haraway 1988: 579). Collectively, these partial perspectives tell a polyvocal story

about how the everyday process of laboring with the soil fosters interdependencies between humans and more-than-humans. Each chapter is a vignette that incites the reader to listen to the ways that the entanglements of lives in a particular space-time generate the conditions for sustainable, or unsustainable, ecologies.

When the narrator pauses to reflect upon her own relationship to the land of K village, she grapples with the legacy of settler-colonialism that contaminates the relationship between the soil and the farmer. Miyamoto's own grandfather relocated to Tōhoku in the so-called "age of development" (*kaitaku jidai*) during the Meiji era (1868-1912) under an incentive that offered "patriotic pioneers" (*tondenhei*) an opportunity to own land if they successfully reclaimed tracts of wilderness and transformed them into arable fields (Mason 2012: 31). Enjoying success as a "patriotic pioneer," Miyamoto's grandfather acquired plots of land and built a large farmhouse on an elevated plane of the village. The fictional narrator, like Miyamoto, is able to "cultivate distance" between herself and the residents of K village because she is the descendent of a wealthy settler-colonial landowner. Bringing the history of settler-colonialism into the fictional space of K village, I propose, challenges the reader to consider the complexities of soil care as an act that is messy, untidy, but also, inherently political (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Inoue 2012).[39] With a thematic focus on the matter of soil care, *Mazushiki hitobito no mure* gestures towards "alternative modes of involvement with the temporal rhythms of more than human worlds" as a means to cultivate relationships that disrupt the linear production time with what Puig de la

[39] In conversation with Kawamura Minato's work on "reclamation literature" (*kaitaku bungaku*), Kota Inoue reads Miyazawa Kenji's 1921 story *Oinomori to Zarumori, nusutomori* (Wolf Forest, Basket Forest, and Thief Forest) as a story of settler colonialism. Here, Inoue delineates how this story gives voice to the violence enacted upon the land in the process of reclaiming land from the perspective of more-than-human protagonists. My understanding of agriculture as a precarious practice of care for the soil is informed by this as well as *Matters of Care*, especially chapter five (Inoue 2012; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017).

Bellacasa calls “care time” (2017: 3077). More specifically, Miyamoto experiments with literary imaginations of mutual aid that resist the settler-colonial rhythms that perpetuate the impoverished state of life in K village. Miyamoto “reappropriate[s] a toxic terrain” of settler-colonialism with “transformative seeds” that are filled with the potential to disrupt the logic of laboring with the land as a mineral resource (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 227).

In the following section, I explore how the literary depiction of a farming village in the novella *Mazushiki hitobito no mure* locates a politics of mutual aid at the heart of the text. It is in the reciprocal relations cultivated between the farmer and the soil, between human and more-than-human, that makes this a text one that employs an ecological mode of storytelling. The narrator observes these acts of mutual aid and reconsiders her own valuation of charity and shifts to embrace a politics of grassroots community focused on building as a means to foster sustainable relationships.

Mutual Aid in Farming Communities: Miyamoto’s 1916 Novella *Mazushiki hitobito no mure* (Flocks of Impoverished Folks)

The opening scene of *Mazushiki hitobito no mure* centers on a sole tenant farming household and chronicles a chaotic scene where a stray dog, three young brothers, and the resident rooster battle over rations. Witnessed from the shadow of a tree behind the farmhouse, the first-person narrator stops to observe the commotion taking place inside the tenant farmer Jinsuke’s house.

村の南北に通じる往還に沿って、一軒の農家がある。人間の住居というよりも、むしろ何かの巣

> といった方が、よほど適当しているほど穢い家の中は、窓が少いので非常に暗い…
> すべてのものが、むさ苦しく、臭く貧しいうちに、三人の男の子が炉辺に集って、自分等の食物が煮えるのを、今か今かと、待ちくたびれている。
>
> There is one farmhouse along the road that runs from the north to the south of the village. The inside is extremely dark because there is only a small window and the inside is so filthy that it seems more appropriate to call it a lair than to call it a person's residence…In the midst of all the squalor and stench of poverty, there were three boys gathered around the fire. They were waiting impatiently for their food to cook, eagerly asking, 'is it ready *now*?' (Miyamoto 1916: 7)

Located along the main route, the farmhouse occupies a negligible place as it appears to be neither a point of departure nor a destination. Instead, it is a site of complete disorder that does not merit its classification as a *human* residence (*jyūkyo*); the narrator characterizes the farmhouse as a kind of lair (*su*), a word that connotes bestial inhabitants. In doing so, she deems the site as unsuitable for human life to thrive "in the midst of all the squalor and stench of poverty" (Miyamoto 1916: 7). It is only after looking beyond the filth of the farmhouse when the narrator spots three brothers anxiously crowded around a pot hanging over the fire. Contrary to her initial impression, the farmhouse is, indeed, a *human* residence. This is the first of many recognitions that function to destabilize the narrator's ontological understanding of how human and more-than-humans co-evolve in this world.

Mazushiki hitobito no mure is a montage of incidents that takes place in K village as observed and related through the vantage point of the narrator. Each individual vignette centers on the material and mineral exchanges that co-constitute the local environment. In this particular scene, it is the nutrients contained within the boiling potato that promise to revitalize the famished brothers. When the largest chunk of potato falls to the floor, a multi-species battle ensues among a stray dog, three brothers, and the resident rooster in a battle over the dusty, but coveted, ration. Bearing witness to the ruthless battle over a portion of potato, the narrator is

overcome by "a zealous curiosity" (*hageshii kōkishin*) and approaches the threshold of the farmhouse in order to get a closer look at the struggle inside (Miyamoto 1916: 11). In an attempt to assuage the brutish battle, the narrator boldly calls out to the brothers, commenting that had she known that their father was out working in the fields, she would have brought them some sweets. From her perspective, the brothers should have respectfully acknowledged her generous sentiment. So when she is met with silence, she becomes enraged and rebukes the boys for their crude and provincial behavior. With this, she turns around and walks back out to the cedar-lined thoroughfare when the eldest brother launches a rock that strikes her heel. The narrator grabs the sturdy cedar trunk to steady herself from a disconcerting state of bewilderment. The remainder of the novella seeks a means to reconcile these two distinct world views.

This encounter marks a turning point in the narrator's assumed knowledge about how to cultivate relationships that thrive, rather than antagonize, the rifts drawn between classes, ethnicities, and genders. Disoriented, the narrator suddenly feels that it is "urgently necessary" to inaugurate "a revolution in her own life" (1916: 17).[40] The narrator's need for revolution stems from her personal observation of the boys' ferocious struggle over the potato and serves as a metaphor for the larger failure of *competition* as a means of sustainably living in the earth. The narrator relates an array of material exchanges in K village, some of which are grounded in local practices of mutual aid; these episodes, in particular, pose alternative possibilities of co-existing in the earth and are the polar opposite of the competitive struggle she witnesses inside the squalor of the farmhouse.

[40] 私は、自分の生活の革命が、非常に必要であるのを感じた。

Relationships based on the logic of mutual aid resemble a knowledge and practice that Sho Konishi refers to as "cooperatist anarchist modernity" and is premised on "the voluntary activities of associations without the intervention of or need for state governance" (Konishi 2013: 12). Konishi conceptualizes cooperatist anarchist modernity as a transnational product of Japanese and Russian interrelations through the translation and publication of works by Lev Mechnikov, Lev Tolstoy, and Pyotr Kropotkin.[41] It is Lev Mechnikov's observations of rural villages in Japan, argues Konishi, that led him to an understanding of "Darwin's 'struggle for existence' among human beings as dependent on mutual aid, not competition, for success" (Konishi 2013: 72). Kropotkin builds upon Mechnikov's idea of cooperative evolution in his 1902 seminal work *Mutual Aid* with fieldwork that broadens the concept of mutual aid to include more-than-human communities of animals and insects (Kropotkin 2021). In Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid, he traces examples where species migrate to avoid competition and forge "compound families" in order to support living ecologies (2021: 35).[42] In other words, these interrelations emerge out of a pragmatic need to support life that cannot flourish, let alone survive, amidst precarious material circumstances. As the narrator becomes familiar with the circumstances of the residents in K village, she comes to understand the complex entanglement of material exchanges that engender the plight of the impoverished tenant farmer. She feels a sense of "response-ability" to make kin with the community of tenant farmers and seeks a praxis

[41] As Konishi demonstrates in his monograph *Anarchist Modernity*, Mechnikov developed his theory of mutual aid based on his 1874 experience as a participant observer in rural Japanese communities. This experience informed his work that Kropotkin continued in collaboration with Mechnikov's widow and culminated in the 1902 seminal work, *Mutual Aid* (Konishi 2013; Kropotkin [1902] 2021).

[42] My thinking here is also informed by Donna Haraway's discussion of making kin and the praxis of sympoiesis in *Staying with the Trouble*, especially chapter three (2016) and María Puig de la Bellacasa's innovative discussion of a "soil ecopoethics" in "Embracing Breakdown" (2021).

of mutual aid that might create a kind of space for life to thrive along the edges of society (Haraway 2016).

Miyamoto juxtaposes scenes of a bucolic landscape with scenes of an impoverished village. The close proximity of these scenes within the text functions to bring into relief a critical point of tension that lies at the heart of the novella: the violent and recurrent legacies of settler-colonialism that radiate from the process of land reclamation. In the passage below, it is the narrator's position as the granddaughter of a settler-colonial landowner that affords her the leisure time to immerse herself in the wonders of her pastoral surroundings.[43]

> はてしない大空の紺碧の拡がり、山々の柔かな銀青色の連り。
> 靄が彼方の耕地の末でオパール色に輝いている。
> あらゆる木々の葉が笑いさざめき歌っている上を、愛嬌者の露が何という美しさで飾っていることだろう。…
>
> 風は、木々の葉の露を払い落し、咽ぶようなすがすがしい薫りをはらんで、むこうの空から吹いて来る。森の木々には小鳥が囀り、家禽の朝の歌は家々の広場から響いて来る。
> 道傍のくさむらの中には、蛇いちごが赤く実り、野薔薇の小さい花がそばの灌木の茂みに差しかかって、小虫が露にぬれながら這っている。
> 桑の若葉の葉触れの音。

> The immense azure sky stretches out without end; the mountains form a grayish green line on the horizon.
> The mist shines with an opal tint on the edges of the villagers' farmlands.
> The mist displays the beauty of the pleasant singing of the leaves faintly whispering in the trees.…
>
> The wind blows from the other edge of the horizon and it permeates the air with the refreshing aroma of dew that has fallen from the leaves.
> The sound of the tiny songbirds warbling in the forest and the morning song of the roosters echo throughout the village's houses.
> In the grassy patches along the road, wild strawberries ripen, shrubs are covered in rose blooms, and tiny insects are drenched as they crawl through the morning dew.

[43] My discussion of leisure time derives from Henri Lefebvre's writings on the incongruence between leisure time and work time. See *Critique of Everyday Life*, especially Part II (Lefebvre 2014).

> There is the sound of the freshly sprouted mulberry leaves rustling against one another. (Miyamoto 1916: 28-29)

As the landowner's granddaughter, the narrator's sole responsibility is to take a routine survey of the family's fields and paddies in the morning and evening. In these daily rounds, the protagonist revels in the "opal tint on the edges of the villagers' farmlands," listens to the rustling of the mulberry leaves, and delights in the tiny insects crawling in the morning dew. The land provides a diversion for her summer sojourns in K village; the land also provides the material upon which her grandparents have constructed their expansive farmhouse that overlooks the entire village. Notwithstanding that the narrator has a peripheral understanding of the ontological significance of the soil, she demonstrates no understanding of land as a relationship that structures the modes in which we co-evolve with human and more-than-human lives in the earth (Coulthard 2014: 62). More specifically, her partial perspective of the land performs a kind of violence to the land in its omission of the quantity of collaborative labor that is required to maintain a mineral balance in the intertwined cycles that circulate nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) into and out from the earth.

If we situate this passage within the context of the quasi-fictional history of the region that the narrator recounts in an earlier section, the lines are imbued with new meaning. The narrator chronicles the process of primitive accumulation that catapults landless peasants from throughout the archipelago over into the barren wasteland of the Tōhoku region and enlists them to refashion the frontier into a fertile patchwork of fields and paddies. Her account begins with the group of settler-colonists (*kaitakusha*), her own grandfather among them, who migrates to this remote region of Tōhoku and dedicates their lives to tilling the soils in order to maintain a

careful balance of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. These settler-colonists are historicized as what Michele Mason calls "patriotic pioneers" (*tondenhei*), folks who allegedly achieved their hopes and dreams in the process of laboring with the soil (Mason 2012). These tales of heroic pioneers paint a utopian vision of the frontier as a space that is rife with good fortune and resemble what Mason calls "dominant narratives" (Mason 2012). In the context of Hokkaido, these dominant narratives erase the long history of Ainu people on the island of Hokkaido, formerly Ezo. In the broader context of empire, the circulation of "dominant narratives" obscure the cycles of violence that are endemic to the process of primitive accumulation.

The narrator's urgent need for revolution stems from her own recognition that she has fallen under the spell of the "dominant narrative," a narrative that claims that the settler-colonial farmer lives in harmony with the soil (Mason 2012). Bearing witness to the competition among the starving brothers, she begins to question the disparities among residents in the village. From this positionality, "the immense azure sky" is not merely the aesthetic object of a fanciful gaze, but it is the source of relentless downpours that threaten to pummel the newly ripened rice stalks back into the ground; "the immense azure sky" is also the site from which the sun relentlessly pours down on the farmers and threatens to scorch the freshly planted seedlings to a crisp. For the farmers who labor with the land, the limitless sky symbolizes the constant uncertainty of whether or not the autumn winds will stir up dirt devils and uproot the ripened crops, devastating the entire household. The wind that blows "a refreshing aroma of dew that has fallen from the leaves" is the same wind that sweeps in the bitter cold of the long winter to the region. The mineral-rich soil that sustains wild strawberries and rose shrubs gradually deteriorates and will, eventually, exhaust the farmers who work at an accelerated pace to replenish the extracted

nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to prevent the fields from collapse into a complete wasteland.

Miyamoto vacillates between narrative standpoints, vis-à-vis the narrator, that frame the land-as-resource, land-as-identity, and the land-as-relationship (Coulthard 2014: 62). When viewed as a resource, she focuses on the whispered promises of mineral riches that entice tenant farmers to migrate to new soils as settler-colonists with the aim of forging an alliance with these new soils. When viewed as identity, the narrator is uneasy with the townies and members of the ladies' association who gather as spectators to mock folks who have fallen into madness by the unrelenting poverty plaguing K village. When viewed as a relationship, the narrator recognizes that under the rhythms of settler-colonial agriculture, the farmer and the soil cease to mutually support one another and engage in a competition for survival, much resembling Jinsuke's boys fighting over the potato in the farmhouse.

A later scene frames the tension between the different perspectives of laborer-land relationships as a moment of tragicomic miscommunication between the protagonist and Jinsuke's three sons. While struggling with the current of the stream to catch some fish, Jinsuke's boys spot the "young miss" from the city, snickering and imitating her Tokyo accent, then point to the empty fishing net and shout, "*Hoito*! *Hoito*!" Overcome with laughter at the absurdity of this novel word and the tune in which the boys articulate it, the protagonist nearly slips in the deep horse tracks left in the mud along the riverbank. "I didn't know what it was or what it meant, but as I gazed absentmindedly at the surface of the stream, I responded instinctually to the lively pleasure of the boys' chorus" (Miyamoto 1916: 32). Charmed by the boys' chorus of "*Hoito*! *Hoito*!" she softly hums the tune en route home. When her grandmother hears the lyrics

to this new tune, she scolds her granddaughter for foolishly wandering around the village singing the tune "*Hoito*!" because it is a word in the local dialect that means beggar (*kojiki*). The divergent life experiences of the narrator and Jinsuke's boys result in two distinct understandings of the word *hoito*, but this miscommunication is transformed into a productive moment of tension that abruptly shakes the narrator our of her position as a "young miss." This miscommunication provides the narrator with the opportunity to seek modes of "tell[ing] stories through and with other stories, worlds, knowledges, thinking, yearnings" (Haraway 2016: 97). In short, Miyamoto's novella is a work that employs the praxis and politics of feminist ethnography in its efforts to engage with local lives in order to craft polyvocal stories.

The protagonist's interactions with Jinsuke's boys destabilizes her authority of how to co-evolve with others in this world. As she reflects upon her inability to transform the situation of folks who forage for survival, she observes the line of rickshaws kicking dust up along the road carrying ladies in colorful kimonos into K village. This is the Tōhoku Christian Ladies' Association from the neighboring town who arrive to distribute their envelopes full of charitable donations to the residents of this cursed town. The ladies arrive to K village with what Dean Spade defines as "a moral hierarchy of wealth" that their donations will magically transform the precarious material conditions of this farming village (Spade 2020: 21).[44] They spend the day visiting farmhouses where children run around barefoot and the inhabitants are indistinguishable from beasts. The ladies are shaken to their core when they visit the barn where "happy fool" and

[44] In Spade's recent work on mutual aid, they note a critical distinction between mutual aid and charity. "Charity makes rich people and corporations look generous while upholding and legitimizing the systems that concentrate wealth" (Space 2020: 23). This resonates with the narrator's self-critique of her own vanity in thinking that she could solve the villagers' problems with candy or a minor donation. This is also evident in a scene that speaks about how the donated money was circulated back into the town from where it came, questioning the ethical implications of charitable donations.

his mother, who the villagers refer to as “baboon hag,” live. The “happy fool” began wandering around the region five or six years prior with a woman’s kimono draped over his shoulders, a dog, and a single straw mat. Due to a series of tragedies, he had suffered a psychological break and the villagers delighted in serving him liquor and musing at his drunken antics. As the ladies stand and gawk at the beast-like mother and son, they timidly hold out an envelope of cash. This is the moment when Jinsuke’s boys rush out and attack the ladies, like wild dogs, asking them what they are looking at and send them rushing out of the farmhouse. The ladies are shaken and immediately rebuke the boys for their brutish behavior, echoing the narrator’s response at the beginning of the novella.

Over the course of months that the narrator lives in the village, she cultivates distance from her former “moral hierarchy of wealth” and critiques the futility of charity (Spade 2020: 21). The donations, she observes, do not alleviate or transform the impoverished circumstances of the villagers. Instead, the ladies induce a wave of chaos that hits every corner of the village, inciting violent arguments between couples as well as parents and children. In less than a week, the donations from the ladies are siphoned back into the town as the villagers purchase *geta* (wooden sandals), sacks of rice, and frequent the local bar. Rather than function as a means to help the villagers, the ladies’ charity only functions to make them feel better about themselves. This was the realization the narrator made at the beginning of the novella, but she still seeks a pragmatic means to make a difference.

In an effort to resist falling into the vain trap of charity, the narrator decides to become a participant-observer and immerses herself in the world of farming, planting her bare feet deeply within the soft mud of the paddies.[45]

> 背の低い、片目の男が、深く差し込んだ鍬をソーット上の方へ持ちあげて引くと新しい土にしっとりと包まれた大小の実が踊るように転がり出す。
> それにつれて、思いがけず掘り出された、小さい螻共は、滑稽なあわて方をして、男達の股引に這い上がったり、さかさになって軟らかい泥の中に、飛び込んだりした。
> 私も裸足になり裾をからげて、一生懸命に薯掘りを始めた。…
>
> 泥の塊を手の中で揉んでは、出てくる芋を一つ一つもっこの中へ投げて行くと、どうかした拍子に恐ろしく妙な物を、手のうちにまるめ込んでしまった。

> The short man with one eye thrust his hoe into the earth and gently brought new soil to the surface. It seemed as though it was dancing as it scattered out onto the surface, covered in moisture.
> As he was tilling the earth, he unexpectedly unearthed small mole crickets. They comically crawled up his *momohiki*, flipped upside down, and then flew headlong into the soft mud.[46]
> I went barefoot, tied up my hem, and began digging with all my might for potatoes. …
>
> Crumbling the earth in my hand, the potatoes emerged one by one and I flung them aside. Somehow there was a surprisingly enchanting rhythm to the whole process, rolling the earth around in my hand. (Miyamoto 1916: 37)

The one-eyed farmer effortlessly unearths the fresh, moist soil to the surface, his muscles trained by years of the repetitive motion involved in farm work. Clumps of soil crumble upon impact and scatter into an organic mosaic that unfurls across the ground. Exhumed mole crickets explore the new terrain of the farmer's pants with their feet, only to return to the familiar mire of the fields. The multi-species interrelation among the farmer, the soil, and the crickets appears to be

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[45] This scene is evocative of the moment in Kimura Yūsuke's novella *Sacred Cesium Ground* where the protagonist travels from Tokyo to work on a farm after the 3-11 nuclear disaster and finds herself, quite literally, stuck in the mud (Kimura 2016). There is an interesting connection in the trans-generational efforts of Miyamoto and Kimura, respectively, to give voice to the marginalized region of Tōhoku. Margherita Long introduced me to this text in her graduate seminar Fall 2018 helped me think about these vital connections between early twentieth and twenty-first century disasters.

[46] Momohiki are workpants used in farming.

quite harmonious and invites the protagonist to immerse herself within the earth. Participating in this "surprisingly enchanting rhythm" of "rolling the earth around in my hand" is a mode of engaging with the land as resource, identity, as well as relationship (Miyamoto 1916: 37; Coulthard 2014). As such, it is an embodied practice where she learns a way to think with the soil itself in cultivating a relationship that resists the settler-colonial logic of treating the soil as terra nullius, or as wild, undeveloped territory that requires the protection of the nation-state or empire (Salleh 1997).[47]

This embodied practice does not, however, transform the narrator from a "young miss" into a hardened farmer; the energy consolidated in each potato determines the sustainability or unsustainability of an entire farming household. This energy overwhelms the narrator and she grows faint; the farmers chuckle and offer her a bowl of kudzu gruel. This scene reflects the conundrum that plagues the narrator from the beginning of the novella: there is no single solution to the settler-colonial legacies that haunt the laborer-soil relationship in this region. At the heart of this novella is the concern with how sustainable entanglements among humans and more-than-human are systematically made unsustainable when the relationship with land is understood as merely a resource.

Tenant farmers who live a life laboring with the soil navigate modes of subsistence within the unpredictable circumstances that can devastate a seemingly fruitful harvest. The privatization of land converts a means of subsistence into crimes of theft. Landowners post signs and stand guard to keep former foragers out of their fields. One evening, the protagonist peers through the

[47] Ariel Salleh makes an important connection between the female body as ground 0 and terra nullius as a means to think about how the appropriation of nature is a gendered violence. See Ecofeminism as Politics, especially chapter Part 2 on embodied materialism.

mist and makes out a figure prowling around the fields and it is moments before she realizes the so-called squash thief is Jinsuke. Bearing witness to the crime, she is trapped between feelings of anger and sadness. In a later episode, she witnesses a child shaking down fruit from a branch of her family's tree and feels torn between an admiration for the little adventurer and irritation at his impudence. In contradistinction to these criminalized acts, farmers in K village busy themselves inside the house weaving straw sandals and ropes while their children run to the forests on the edge of the village. The children forage amongst the moist shrubs and slippery tree roots for mushrooms that rear their head in the autumn rains. The autumn storms allot time for the farmers and their children to work away from the field and dedicate themselves to sustainable activities while also threatening the rich crops they have dedicated the year to cultivate.

Mazushiki hitobito no mure ends on a somber note, with the discovery of two deaths. The first is the son of the watermill owner, Shin, who hangs himself after his spendthrift mother accuses him of pilfering soybeans to sell on the market. The second is the "happy fool" who drowns in a pond in the neighboring village, clinging tightly to his dog. I read this novella as a work that speaks to the untenable relationships between the farmer and nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. These (un)sustainable exchanges are haunted by the settler-colonial logic that subtly, but violently, reshapes the wilderness of the Tōhoku region. Early reclamation projects in Tōhoku and Hokkaido cleared the ground for later projects to take root in Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria. Through the narrator, Miyamoto gestures towards the possibility of seeking sites where a reciprocal relationship to the land exists. It is in the space-time outside the settler-colonial logic where farmers weave straw goods for sale, children forage for fungi and fruit, and

the “young miss” unearths potatoes; this is where farmers labor with the soil outside the accumulative rhythms that disrupt the balance of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.

Farmer-Soil Entanglements in Sumii Sue’s 1930 Farm Village Stories

Miyamoto Yuriko’s 1916 novella *Mazushiki hitobito no mure* delineates how settler-colonial legacies infect the farmer-soil relationship and pose a challenge to the protagonist who seeks a reciprocal relationship with residents of K village. This section explores three stories written in 1930 by Sumii Sue that capture land as “vibrant matter” and “bear witness to the vital materialities that flow through and around” the soil (Bennett 2010: 104). These “vital materialities” provide the vitamins and minerals that nourish the soil and the laboring bodies, consequently affecting the everyday lives of tenant farmers in interwar Japan. “Nōson zatsukei” (Scenes of a Farming Village), “Tochi no hangyaku” (Treachery of the Land), and “Tochi no daishō” (Compensation for the Land) are written from the perspective of an omniscient narrator who portrays land as an active agent who, under a colonial-capital system, is in collusion with landowners and government authorities. As such, the land deludes the tenant farmer into believing that a plot of land will secure nutritious meals for the family. In this trio of farm village stories, however, Sumii reveals that private land ownership is, indeed, the source rather than the solution to gendered violence and labor exploitation. Instead of liberating mothers, daughters, and farmers, it catapults them into a larger network of labor that requires increasingly dangerous working conditions for a wage that is insufficient to replenish the minerals required to sustain the fertility of the purchased plot of land.

Sumii was born to a wealthy farming family on January 7, 1902 in Tawaramoto in Nara Prefecture. Like many farming households in the area, Sumii's family ran a small loom house where they spun cotton to earn a supplementary income. When the Takada spinning mill opened in 1910, however, the local loom houses were forced to close and this led to a drastic change in the quality of life for the region's farming families (Sumii 2001). Sumii married Inuta Shigeru (1891-1957), an active member of the peasant literature movement, in 1919 and began writing children's stories for publication in newspapers as a means to support their political activities.[48] In an interview with her daughter, Reiko Masuda, Sumii notes that her position as someone who had regular contact with the *burakumin* of Nara, but did not live inside the community itself, provided a partial perspective to write about the materiality and affectivity of discrimination (Sumii 2001: 73).

The *burakumin*, a group classified outside the four-class social system of the Tokugawa period (1603-1867), historically occupied positions that worked with dead flesh, including butchers, leatherworkers, and grave diggers. Although the Meiji government officially declared them as a group of "new commoners" (*shin heimin*) in 1871, they continued to suffer discrimination well into the post-war period (Bayliss 2013: Žižek 1998). In *On the Margins of Empire*, Jeffrey Bayliss traces the discursive and legal processes by which the *burakumin* and Koreans were constructed as ethnically distinct from the Japanese as a means to both assimilate and control these groups within the boundaries of empire. The *burakumin* and Koreans negotiated these discriminatory practices in an effort to "restore and maintain a sense of pride

[48] Several of Inuta's stories were published in the leftist journal *Bungei sensen* (Literary Front) including "Tsuchi ni Iku" (Living in the Earth), "Kaikon" (Cultivation), and "Kaihōsareta nōyatsu" (That Farmer who was Released). Inuta was active in the agrarian literary movement, but his work did not make much revenue. Inuta's writing and the day to day life was supported by the writings and work of Sumii. For a discussion of Inuta's involvement in the agrarian literary movement, see NPB, vol. 11.

and self-worth within a society that denied human dignity to those it imagined as irredeemably different from the majority" (Bayliss 2013: 111).[49] Sumii's seven volume novel *Hashi no nai kawa* (The River Without a Bridge), published between 1961-1992, focuses on the discrimination suffered by the *burakumin* through the lens of the Hatanaka family after the family patriarch is killed in the Russo-Japanese War. The patriarch in *Tochi no hangyaku* and *Tochi no daishō* has the given name Ushimatsu suggesting that these families are not only impoverished tenant farmers, but also belong to the marginalized group of *burakumin*.[50]

Nōson zatsukei opens with a kind of soliloquy before presenting three vignettes that illustrate how female farmers vent their frustration in bearing the burden of unwaged work in the farm villages. "If the urban proletariat is a fourth-class citizen, then the tenant farmers are certainly a fifth-class citizen. Even so, we cannot say that this fifth-class is the absolute lowest stratum of society because positioned well below the tenant farmers are the women and children" (Sumii 1930: 60). Each sketch is a moment of collective joy where the women "deny the everyday" agrarian cycles of production and embrace spontaneity; these moments provide nourishment and substance that enable the farm women to endure the unpaid work they perform on the loom in the dark, damp nooks of the farmhouse. (Lefebvre 2014: 645).

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[49] *Burakumin*, the untouchables, refers to the group of people who were assigned "dirty work" such as slaughtering animals and tanning leather. In his monograph *On the Margins of Empire: Buraku and Korean Identity in Prewar and Wartime Japan*, Jeffrey Paul Bayliss discusses the public discourse surrounding the construction of *buraku* and Korean identity in prewar and interwar Japan. He explores how *buraku* and Koreans were historically marginalized and how government politics designed to integrate and surveil the groups' activities led to their cooperation, particularly in the latter part of WWII.

[50] Ushimatsu is also the name of the protagonist in Shimazaki Toson's novel 1906 *Hakai* (The Broken Commandment). Shimazaki's novel chronicles the struggle of a teacher to hide his *burakumin* background. The protagonist's name contains the character ushi (牛) for cow which often indicated a genetic connection to the *burakumin*. Thanks to Jim Fujii for pointing that out during an independent study on Japanese proletarian literature (spring 2016).

In the first sketch, “Negi o seotta niwatori” (The Chicken Hauling Scallions), East Neighbor is fed up with West Neighbor’s chicken who continually intrudes in her kitchen to scour for scraps, but doesn’t have the decency to leave a single egg in return. In a comic act of retaliation, East Neighbor ties a bundle of scallions to the chicken’s back and returns it to West Neighbor and delights in the frustration West Neighbor will have when she has to abandon the loom and untie the scallions from the chicken’s back. In “Jinushi no sōshiki” (The Landowner’s Funeral), a group of women decide to make the four kilometer trek to the landowner’s funeral, gossiping along the way about the spread of luxurious food and drink that will be offered. Although they are turned away at the door, the women immerse themselves in chatter about the splendid feast they glimpsed through the door and this provides them a moment of diversion to step outside of their miserable position as impoverished tenant farmers, even if just for an evening. In “Mitsu tochi” (Three Plots of Land), two women delight in the malicious gossip about Torakichi, a local tenant farmer, who recently purchased three plots of land and buried his family under a mound of debt, forcing him to send his two eldest daughter to the spinning mills. *Nōson zatsukei* frames three ways that farming women nourish their bodies and spirits by stepping outside the space-time of agrarian cycles of production: they delight in chasing a chicken, bask in the luxury of a funeral feast, and enjoy malicious gossip about a presumptuous patriarch. These spontaneous moments of joy replenish the exhausted bodies of farming women and children who incessantly work to maintain the foundation of agrarian society.

While *Nōson zatsukei* frames three modalities that female farmers replenish the energy they use to maintain the mineral balance of the soil, *Tochi no hangyaku* and *Tochi no daishō* reveal the *inability* of land ownership to replenish the degraded bodies of females who labor in

textile mills or the dark, damp corners of the farmhouse to transform the tenants into landowners. *Tochi no hangyaku* frames the land as indiscriminately treasonous to anyone, not just tenant farmers, who attempt to own and profit from an accelerated circulation of minerals into and out from the earth. In hopes of unearthing buried mineral treasures, Ushimatsu invests six months of labor, fifteen yen of fertilizer, fifty yen of miscellaneous expenditures, twenty-five yen for land taxes, thirty-five yen for the interest on the loan, and his daughter, Otoku's, entire savings from working in the spinning mills. When a drought desiccates seventy percent of the harvest, the family is caught between a rock and a hard place and this is where the narrator interjects a monologue on the enigma of private land ownership.

> 土地を抵当に！それしかない。その結果は高い金利と、高い税金とで、とどのつまりは小作階級に辷り込むのだる。かくて土地は小作人を裏切り、地主を裏切り、最後に町の持主を裏切り、都会のあらゆる権力をも裏切るだろう。土地は土地を私有し、土地に富を強要するあらゆる人間を裏切るだろう。何故か？それは土地は、この資本主義社会が嫌いだからだ。土地は、土地を耕す人々のために、搾取階級に対して共同戦線を張っているのだ。
>
> Mortgage the land! That's the only way. As a result of the high taxes and usurious interest rates, in the end they slipped back into the class of tenant farmers. Thus, land betrays the tenant farmer, it betrays the landowner, in the end it betrays the town proprietor, and perhaps it even betrays the authority of the metropolis. It appears that land betrays all people who privately own land and aggressively extract riches from its soils. Why? It is because the earth abhors this capitalist system. Land forms a united front for the sake of the exploited classes and those folks who till the earth. (Sumii 1930: 56).

The above passage depicts the earth as "vibrant matter," one that responds to the extractive relationship initiated by the purchaser of the soil, whether urban dweller or rural tenant farmer (Bennet 2010). This is not to say that "a stable soil has been disturbed and provoked to crisis, but rather that capitalist agriculture has increasingly stabilized a specific idea and treatment of soil to a mechanized and rigid timetable of production that has generated volatile changes, destruction, and loss" (Lyons 2020: 170). Sumii does not present a dualistic battle of human against nature.

Instead, she challenges the reader to consider the possibility of imagining ways to labor with the land, or join it in its united front, as an ally in a collaborative effort between humans and more-than-humans to nourish, rather than destroy, local lives. In this gesture, she identifies private land ownership under the logic of colonial-capital agriculture as the source of all duplicitous relations in this earth.

Otoku suffers from a chronic respiratory illness she acquired from work in the spinning mills. Her chapped hands, blurred vision, and respiratory illness is the "embodied debt" of purchasing a plot of land (Salleh 2009). Determined to earn enough money to purchase the sardines and barley her body desperately craves, Otoku occupies the cold, damp corner of the farmhouse where she works the loom, stopping only to spit up phlegm on the dirt floor. Meanwhile, Ushimatsu trudges through the frost that forms a thin layer across the farmland; he proceeds to cross the violet mountain ridge where he will begin a new life blasting tunnels through those very mountains.[51] Contrary to Ushimatsu's optimistic hopes, private land ownership atomizes the farming family and further entrenches the members in an exploitative labor network.

In *Tochi no daishō*, the domestic space of the farmhouse is repurposed as a site for textile production during the winter season. Here, Ofusa, the second daughter, works the loom from six in the morning until eleven at night while Ushimatsu and his wife weave straw into sandals and ropes until their fingers go numb. The first daughter has already left to work at the spinning mills and it is with this money that Ushimatsu purchases a plot of land, but he is soon overwhelmed by

[51] This story also speaks to the ethnic discrimination in the labor recruitment for imperial construction projects on levees, dams, and railroads. When the labor recruiter is speaking to Ushimatsu about the ease of the tunnel work, he assures Ushimatsu that any of the really dangers work in blasting out the middle of the mountains will be performed by the Koreans, so not to worry. Sumii's writings bring into the relief the different modes of discrimination that tenant farmers, *burakumin*, women, and children face under empire (Sumii 1930: 57).

the high interest rate. Ofusa quite literally becomes the collateral damage from the purchase of land. Her family is unable to buy medicine to cure her earache and as a result, Ofusa is plagued by a constant ringing in her ears. Walking home from a spring festival, Ofusa sits down along the railroad tracks and admires the spring rainclouds gathering along the horizon. She faintly hears a strange howling, but concludes it is just her damaged ears playing tricks on her. Then she feels the earth below her tremor which jolts her into the realization that a train is charging like a large black beast in her direction. As the train approaches her, she hallucinates that the front of the train is her father's face, the father who borrowed three-hundred yen for a plot of land. The story ends here and is perhaps the most cogent imagery that connects the gendered violence that fuels the enclosure of land as private property.

This section has mapped the rural spaces of Japan as captured in the literature of Miyamoto Yuriko and Sumii Sue. Both authors highlight the hardships and discrimination that the rural populace face despite providing the nutritional foundation for empire. Miyamoto explores the possibility of mutual aid as a means to resist the degrading material circumstances of rural poverty. Sumii highlights the labor that takes place in the dark corners of the farmhouse and the spinning mills beyond the view of the village that revitalize these impoverished communities. Even so, she critiques the entire system of private land ownership as one that destroys the possibility for future life. In the next section, I explore a a poem by Makabe Jin and two short stories by Hirabayashi Taiko that present the possibility of embracing the silkworm as a fellow productive member of the farming family.

Raising Silkworms and Caring for Cocoons: Makabe Jin (1907-1984) and Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1972)

A scene in Hirabayashi Eiko's story "Kienokoru seikatsu" describes members of the farm household running around in a hurry to cater to the silkworm before it began its "last sleep" (*jōzoku*) (Hirabayashi 1930). This is the period before the silkworm spins the precious cocoon that the family anxiously awaits to harvest in order to cancel their debts remaining after borrowing money to purchase seed for the spring planting season. The labor the female members of the household have performed to feed the hungry worms is finally rewarded when the insect spins its cocoon. These precious threads can, in turn, provide sustenance for the farming family. Even though this is the general reason farmers took up sericulture, Rikichi's family is never very successful in the cultivation of their silkworms. In the end, the family only succeeds in postponing their debts until the following year. This section explores how raising silkworms and caring for cocoons can, potentially, germinate into a symbiotic relationship between the tenant farmer and the insect.

Synchronizing Bodies: Makabe Jin's 1931 "Kaiko no shi" (The Silkworm's Poem)

Literary portraits of farming villages illuminate the importance of agricultural side-employment as a means to sustain farming families during periods of poor harvests or depressed value of rice. Nagatsuka Takashi's (1879-1915) 1910 serialized novel *Tsuchi* (The Soil) is an early example of rural proletarian literature that captures the seasonal cycles of work that occupy

members of the tenant farm family. These side-employments include weaving straw into mats, pickling vegetables, and collecting firewood. Carol Gluck explores how the conservative ideology disseminated in the "agrarian myth" aimed to cure social problems accompanying modernity by government endorsement, beginning in the 1870s, of agricultural side-work to maintain the countryside as "'the fertilizer of the nation'" (Gluck 1985: 162; 34).[52] Thomas C. Smith describes Ōkura Nagatsune (1768-1856), one of the many "obscure men" writing in the Tokugawa period, as a "technologist" who was troubled by "practical and earthy" problems of farming and sericulture that required consistent innovation and adaptation to the conditions of a particular environment (Smith 1988: 173). Sericulture was a pragmatic means to supplement the shortened cropping cycle in regions with harsh winter climates including the northeastern region of Tōhoku and the central mountainous region of Chūbu (Smith 2001; Wigen 1995).[53]

Brett Walker describes silkworm cultivators as "biological engineers" who remodeled the insects themselves and also reshaped the regional landscape (Walker 2010: 23). "Japanese farmers reprioritized time and arable land to make room for more mulberry plantations, refashioned lending patterns, risked awful debt, kept children at home, and sacrificed their living space just to nurture silkworms" (2010: 33). These silkworms were not passive agents, but instead, "biological sentinels" who signaled to the farmers the toxic effects of the sulfuric acid

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[52] In *Japan's Modern Myths*, Carol Gluck negates the idea that Meiji ideology was aggressively forced upon its subjects, but instead explores the dialectical process that took place between the so-called ideologues and the common people to create a concept of national body, loyalty and patriotism, empire, family, and village (Gluck 1985). For a discussion of the agrarian myth, see chapter six. For detailed portraits of key figures in the conservative movement of agrarianism, see Thomas R.H. Havens *Farm and Nation in Modern Japan*.

[53] Kerry Smith provides statistics that highlight the prevalence of sericulture in agricultural villages on the national scale, but notes that the rates of dependence on sericulture as the predominant source of income was particularly high in Fukushima and Nagano Prefectures. "Nationally, about 40 percent of farm households grew cocoons, the sale of which accounted for 12 percent of farm income. In Nagano in 1929, however, four-fifths of the farm households were involved in sericulture, and 70 percent of farm income came from the sale of cocoons. Fukushima is another example of a prefecture in which sericulture was an important part of the local economy. Seventy percent of its farm households grew cocoons. (Smith 2001: 49).

pouring out from the smelters of the Ashio copper mines, destroying downwind crops (2010: 28). Walker describes the relationship between the farmer and the silkworm as one of "coevolution," one that mutually transformed the social and material environment (2010: 33).

In Lisa Onaga's writing on agricultural scientist Toyama Kametarō (1867-1918), she notes that Toyama came to understand silkworms as "biological entities" who were a product of *both* their inherited traits in addition to the environment where they lived (Onaga 2015: 416). Onaga argues that Toyama's research on the silkworm was just as much concerned with redefining the concept of biological inheritance as it was with improving the productive qualities of the "working worm" (Onaga 2015: 431). Like the farmer and the soil, the silkworm cultivator and the silkworm "co-laborate" to reorganize the interior of the farmhouse and the surrounding fields and paddies (Lyons 2020).

From the moment when the silkworm larvae emerge from the eggs, the intensive season of carework commences. A manual on sericulture details the grueling process required in the preparation of meals for the newly hatched worms.

> On the third day following the emergence of the larvae from the eggs and their placement in trays, the now-young worms should be moved to new trays and placed in them with twice as much space as before. This is called *hekikoku*. Then, after the transfer, the center part of the leaves of the mulberry should be prepared for feeding, taking care to chop them cross-hatch. One must be careful not to use leaves too close to the stem at this time; such leaves are tough and the young worms cannot eat them well and therefore become thin. But if the tender center part is fed them, the worms grow fat and their sleeping and waking will be regular, so that they sleep and wake in unison. In feeding the worms from this time until the first sleep, it is necessary to pick and chop the mulberry leaves separately for each of eight feedings. For if the worms are fed with leaves left from even the previous feeding, the leaves will have dried out, and the worms will be unable to feed sufficiently and will starve." (Smith 1988, quoted from "Yōsan suchi," vol. 1).

The young female members of the farming household are responsible for gathering and trimming the leaves, monitoring the temperature where the silkworms live, and keeping the area sanitary to

avoid blight.[54] The tender parts of the leaf have to be carefully chosen and chopped for the young worms to digest them properly. With this process repeated eight times a day, the everyday lives of young sericulturalists appear to be consumed by the feeding patterns of the ravenous worms.

Makabe Jin (1907-1984) was born into a farming family in Yamagata Prefecture. He published his farming poetry in journals, beginning in 1931 with "Kaiko no shi" (The Silkworm's Poem) and a collection of his agricultural poems, *Machi no hyakushō* (The Urban Farmer), which was published in 1973. In the postwar period, Makabe was involved in grassroots movements including *Chikasui* (Groundwater) and the Farmer's College Movement (Mochizuki 2017: 8). Three poems of Makabe's appear in a collected volume of proletarian poetry: "Kaiko no shi" (The Silkworm's Poem), "Sobo no shi" (Grandmother's Poem), and "Machi no Hyakushō" (The Town Farmer) (NPB vol. 38: 94-106). Each one of these poems illuminates what María Puig de la Bellacasa calls an "ecopoethical" relationship between the laborer and the earth (Puig de la Bellacasa 2021). In other words, Makabe's poems bring to light the ethical implications of caring for and being dependent upon the earth for survival in the work of farming and sericulture. Karen Thornber traces what she calls an "ecoambiguity," or an ambivalence about the ecological health of the local environment, in a quest for human survival in East Asian literature. In her chapter on literature of ecodegradation, Thornber reads an ambivalence in the authors' critique of pollution, concluding that rather than arguing for a freedom from toxic environments, the authors seek a "freedom to use the nonhuman world to their personal advantage" (Thornber 2012: 145). In my reading of both Makabe and Hirabayashi's texts, I am interested in what Greg Golley calls the "space of interconnection"

[54] In a short story by Mao Tun, "Spring Silkworms," the women in the farm family are depicted as sleeping with the eggs to ensure an ideal temperature for the larvae to hatch (Tun 1973).

where the “electromagnetic energy” exchanged in the care work between the farmer and the silkworm, the factory girl and the chrysalis, and the laboring mother and the cocoon are “magnified beyond recognition” (Golley 2008: 17, 20, 177).

Makabe’s “Kaiko no shi” consists of ten separate poems that illuminate the multiple aspects of carework, generally performed by the female members of the household, when silkworms are welcomed as fellow productive members of the farming household. The poem is narrated form the standpoint of a young child whose everyday rhythms of labor are fundamentally shaped by the six-week rearing cycles of the silkworm. In the seventh poem, the child narrator recounts how “the silkworms started to live on the second floor” of their farmhouse in 1904 (Makabe 1931: 97). Soldiers, who were sent to lodge in the agricultural village prior to shipping off to the frontlines of the Russo-Japanese War, explain that the silkworms had provided for their own farming families during years of poor harvests. “Grandpa hated, but eventually got used to” the insects that shared the domestic space (1931: 97). The grandparents gradually swapped out their nourishing crops of barley, safflower, and mint for mulberry trees to satiate the silkworms’ appetite for the young leaves.

While Grandpa grows accustomed to the “working worms,” the narrator endures the mental and physical exhaustion compounded by the sound of perpetual munching that fills the farmhouse day and night (Onaga 2015: 431). In order to provide the tender leaves of the mulberry to fatten the worms in preparation for spinning the cocoons, the narrator interrupts her circadian rhythms to accommodate the silkworm’s feeding cycles.

蚕棚のあいだごろ寝した
ねぼけた眼で桑をやった
薯の皮むくひまがなかった…

四眼を起きた蚕は夜も昼も桑を食った
人間が食いそこなっても
蚕を植えさせてはおけなかった
五日たち六日たつと
石の上でも眠れるほど草臥れてしまった

Fell asleep on the silkworm bed
Fed them mulberry leaves while half asleep
Had no time to peel the potato…

The silkworms that had already opened their four eyes munched mulberry leaves night and day
People might skip meals
Even so, they cannot let the silkworms go hungry
Five or six days time passes like this
I am so completely exhausted that I could even sleep on a rock (Makabe 1931: 94)

The young narrator frequents the mulberry fields, trimming freshly sprouted leaves to feed the insects' increasing appetite. She returns the silkworm droppings to the earth, enriching the sandy soil to encourage fresh growth. In the early stages of the larvae feedings, this carework only interferes with a midday snack. As the worms advance towards the moment when the silkworms prepare to spin their cocoons, or "the silkworm's last evening" (*jōzoku*), the narrator must push through the exhaustion and continue her endless rotation of cultivator duties: gather mulberry leaves, chop tender leaves, feed the worms, clean the silkworm beds, and monitor the room temperature. Caring for silkworms is a test of endurance that recurs in six week cycles. When the insects begin to spin their cocoons, they take over the intense labor and the young cultivator dozes off into a deep sleep.

Once the cocoons are complete, the cultivator quickly sells them to local filatures and annuls the family's debt for fish and soy sauce. The young narrator enjoys a brief period where she can nourish her own growing body and replenish the energy expelled in nurturing the larvae into plump silkworms. Through the position of a young sericulturalist, "Kaiko no shi" delineates

the complicated negotiations required in living with the silkworm as a fellow productive member of the household. The narrator describes the carework she performs as living life as a "slave to sericulture;" the labor required to nurture the silkworm successfully through its life cycles is insufferable (Makabe 1931: 98). The young child's circadian rhythms are disrupted and this impedes her ability to attend school and receive an education. Despite these sacrifices, the narrator turns to the silkworm and asserts that "Farmers treat you with respect; they provide for you" (1931: 98). And in return, "you empathize with the farmers" and the relationship that began with a single six-week cycle has expanded into a thirty year relationship founded on the mutual care between the sericulturalist and the silkworm.

The intimate relationship cultivated inside the farmhouse between the sericulturalist and the silkworm provides a pragmatic solution to the "really earthly question" that stands at the heart of all farming households: how to negotiate a sustainable relationship in the face of increasing land privatization under colonial-capitalism (Marx [1842] 1975, vol. 1: 224). "Kaiko no shi" illustrates how the co-laboration, or the associated production, between tenant farmers and silkworms sought a "healthy co-evolution" between humans and more-than-humans in an effort to maintain the mutual well-being of local ecologies (Burkett 2014: 224). The entanglements between silkworms and tenant farmers was predicated on more than principles of profit or production, but was founded on a desire to cultivate a futurity for local lives.

A Topography of Sericulture: Hirabayashi Taiko's 1927 "Sanagi to isshoni" (Together with the Chrysalis) and 1928 "Niguruma" (The Horse Cart)

This section steps outside of the intimate relationship portrayed within the farmhouse between a young child and the silkworms who mutually care for one another. Hirabayashi Taiko depicts a different landscape of sericulture, one that brings to the foreground the gendered violence that fuels the rapid expansion of filatures in rural sectors of Japan. In her 1927 story "Sanagi to isshoni," Hirabayashi situates the complex entanglement between a young female silk reeler and her cocoons at the heart of the story while the 1928 "Niguruma" traces how the electrification of the Yamadai spinning mill reshapes a single family's rhythm of laboring with the local soil and silkworms. Together, these texts map the topography of sericulture in the mountainous region of Nagano Prefecture and tell stories from the standpoint of the female silkworm caretakers about how, to borrow Kären Wigen's phrase, the "geography of production" reshapes local ecologies (1995: 72).

Hirabayashi was born in Suwa, Nagano Prefecture to a land owning family who built their wealth on the grandfather's work in the Shinshu region's silk-reeling industry. A combination of the grandfather's poor investments, the fluctuating price of silk, and the residual effects of the Matsukata deflation of the early 1880s caused hardships for Hirabayashi's parents to make ends meet. Due to financial hardships, Hirabayashi's father went to work in Korea, her mother remained in Suwa to farm and run a general store, and Hirabayashi's two elder sisters worked in the nearby silk mills (Kusakabe 2011). After graduating secondary school, Hirabayashi moved to Tokyo and worked several jobs throughout Japan before relocating to Manchuria. There, Hirabayashi gave birth to a baby who died in the charity hospital ward, an experience that is fictionalized in the 1927 story "Seryōshitsu nite" (In the Charity Ward) and "M byōin no yūrei" (The Ghost in M Hospital). The former story was published in the magazine

Bungei sensen (Literary Front) and established Hirabayashi as a recognized literary figure. Hirabayashi experienced and observed the impoverishment of tenant farmers in the Shinshu region of Nagano Prefecture which is depicted in the farming stories "Kōchi" (Arable Land) and "Yokaze" (Night Breeze). She was affected by the ethnic and class discrimination she witnessed in Manchuria as well as the aftermath of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake, seen in "Mori no naka" (Amidst the Story), a story about the massacre of ethnic Koreans in Tokyo.[55] The gendered violence in colonial-capital enterprises, particularly the silk mills, captured her literary imagination in a number of stories that illuminate the particular burden female laborers face as mothers and daughters who work to sustain the productive foundation of the empire's textile industry.[56]

In *Disruptions of Daily Life*, Arthur M. Mitchell explores the use of language in modernist works to critique the assumed knowledge of the everyday. In his reading of Hirabayashi's "Seryōshitsu nite" (In the Charity Ward), Mitchell argues that "Hirabayashi directly roots out the male-gendered foundations of narration" in the use of "the narrator's raw phenomenological illustrations of the sensations running through her pained pregnant body" and effectively subverts "the phallogocentric frameworks of knowledge and experience" to liberate

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[55] Hirabayashi's collected works consume twelve volumes, and these contain a number of stories that critique the affective, corporeal, and ecological effects of colonial-capitalism. In addition to the examples above, "Chosenjin" (The Korean) is about an encounter with a Korean on a train in Japan. "Fusetsu Ressya" (Laying Down the Rail Track) depicts the cruelty of forced labor in Manchuria to build the South Manchurian Railway and her postwar work "Mō chūgoku hie" (Blind Chinese Soldiers) highlights the violent treatment of colonial people in imperial wars. "Shokurin shugi" (The Principle of Afforestation) is about the settler-colonists who went to Ezo (Hokkaido) to reclaim the wilderness and make it into legible and cultivatable land. Like "Niguruma," there is a great deal of attention to the role of horses in the re-making of the local environment. This would be an interesting topic to pursue in a conversation with Furukawa Hideo's novel *Horses, Horses, in the End the Light Remains Pure: A Tale That Begins with Fukushima*.

[56] Imamura Shōhei 's 1963 *Nippon konchūki* (Insect Woman) chronicles the life of an impoverished rural woman from Yamagata prefecture from the years 1918 to 1961. This film viscerally captures the distinct structures of gendered violence in the rural and urban sectors (Raine 2019). For a discussion of Imamura's work writ large, see Coleman, Lindsay and David Desser, eds. *Killers, Clients and Kindred Spirits*.

the female body through language (Mitchell 2020: 51; 210). The female body is mobilized, both discursively and materially, to (re)produce the conditions for the expanding borders of imperial Japan. In *Women Adrift*, Noriko Horiguchi analyses the discursive construction of female bodies in motion through the writings of Yosano Akiko, Tamura Toshiko, and Hayashi Fumiko. Horiguchi argues that when the narrator speaks from the archipelago (*naichi*), they make a conscious effort to disconnect themselves as an appendage for the body of the nation. Even so, when they migrate to the colonies (*gaichi*), these same authors seek modes of reconnecting themselves to the torso of the imperial body, reifying imperial rhetoric of Japanese authority in the colonies.

In a spatial history of the Shimoina region of Nagano Prefecture, Kären Wigen illustrates how Japan's transition from a proto-industrial to an industrial nation required a "rewiring of the circuitry of production and exchange" and, in turn, transformed Nagano into a periphery of the centralized nation-state (Wigen 1995: 3). It was the young girls and women from the rural regions of the archipelago that filled the "sericultural rooms and filatures up and down the valley" which, Wigen argues, "helped finance Japan's colonial exploits" (Wigen 1995: 220). Hosoi Wakizō documented the recruitment of young girls and women from agrarian communities as well as the oppressive conditions within the spinning and weaving factories in his 1925 *Jokō aishi* (The Tragic History of Factory Women) (NPB, vol. 33). Hosoi began working as an apprentice at a loom house at age thirteen and spent approximately fifteen years working in a cotton spinning factory (NPB, vol, 33: 504). *Jokō aishi* is a work of reportage that outlines the multiple forces that tether these female bodies to the machines in the factory and

exploit them for the wealth of the nation.[57] While Hosoi's reportage is an important contribution to the lived experience of women in the large spinning mills and textile factories, it presents two obstacles in capturing the particular topography of sericulture in Nagano. First of all, Hosoi paints these women as passive victims who fall victim to the mechanisms of capital industry and does not give voice to the moments of resistance against exploitative factory policies, such as the 1886 strike in Kōfu or the larger 1898 strike at Tomioka Silk Mill (Tsurumi 1990: 53, 56).[58] The second problem is that Hosoi's reportage elides the predominance of small and mid-sized neighborhood silk filatures that did not rely upon machines, but instead the labor intensive hand reeling (*zaguri*) that abounded in Nagano Prefecture (Tamanoi 1998: 88).

Narrated in the third person, the 1927 short story "Sanagi to isshoni" positions the reader alongside the thirteen-year-old girl, Okei, who works in the neighborhood hand-reeling silk filature. Distracted by the gossip among the older girls and the veteran reelers, Okei unwittingly thrusts her entire arm into the scalding cauldron bubbling up with a swarm of cocoons. The salacious exchange between the red-slippered manager, Ishida, and the elder girls diverts Okei's attention from her burning arm. Although Okei does not fully comprehend the sexual innuendos exchanged between Ishida and the factory girls, she feels uneasy about the informal negotiations she overhears. Okei eventually discovers that the circulating gossip is about a planned *kyōgen* (a short, comic play) performance that will take place behind the curtain of cocoons.

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[57] Hosoi's work of reportage also included details about the sexual activity of the factory women. In *Colonizing Sex*, Sabine Frühstück demonstrates how the debates about sexual education linked the mental hygiene of children to the moral health of the nation and, consequently, a national project was put into place to protect the minds of developing youth, including those young women in the factory. (Frùhstück 2003: chapter 2).

[58] Andrew Gordon provides a brief account of the labor dispute that began in June 1914 at Tokyo Muslin, one of the oldest and largest mills in Tokyo, but Gordon also characterizes the male employees as the only active participants in the labor dispute (Gordon 1991: 76-77).

Silk spinning is a seasonal industry; the summer season lasts from the beginning of July to the end of December and the spring season lasts from the beginning of February to the end of April, at which point many of the women return home (Gordon 1991; Tamanoi 1998: 87).[59] Recruiters promised regular events during the period while factory women lodged at the filatures, but in the five years that Ishida had managed this place he had never carried through on this promise. This fortuitous event assembles an audience including the factory girls and women, who drag their futons down from the second floor to claim a good view, the male stokers who tend to the cocoon drying rooms, Ishida, and the inspectors from the prefectural government office.

As soon as she enters to join in the festivities, Ishida seizes hold of Okei's hand and pulls her outside, where the rain pours down on her face as they stand in front of the charcoal room. Ishida suggests that they had better step into the drying room to avoid the rain until the government inspectors leaves. Like the connotations of the sexual innuendos exchanged earlier, Okei does not fully grasp the reason Ishida abruptly leads her into the drying room. Ishida pauses for a moment, listening to the male stokers' song, and concludes that Okei will just have to endure the heat for a short while; he places his hand on her shoulder, grazing her breast, which causes her to jump away. Ishida curses her and forces her to climb up the ladder ahead of him.

> 乾燥場の鉄扉は二重になっていた。
> 中の扉は恐しく軋ってあいた。扉がひらくと一緒に、蛹のいきれるにおいと、恐ろしい熱とが、外の冷たい空気に向かって、わあんと押しよせて来た。石田は、鼻へハンケチをあてて入って

[59] The seasons demarcated by Mariko Tamanoi refers specifically to the small and mid-sized silk reeling filatures in Nagano Prefecture. Tenant farmers who raised silkworms in their own houses, like that seen in Makabe Jin's poem, and those in Fukushima Prefecture tended to the critters without rest for the four seasons (Smith 2001). The elder sisters who go to and from the spinning mills and silk filatures appear in a number of rural proletarian stories and often provide the seed capital with which the family purchases a plot of land, pays debt, or school tuition.

> 行ったが、おけいは、入口に立って、変に胸苦しい咳を二つ三つして、真白な繭の山をぼんやり見ていた。…
>
> おけいは、その高い温度の中に、蛹のにおいと混じった、肺を突くようないやな香をかぎ当てて、つづけざまに咳入った。
>
> There were two sets of iron gates to enter the drying room.
> The inner gate screeched dreadfully as it opened. When the gate flung open, Ishida and Okei were met with the stench of the living pupas and the appalling heat. They turned around and stepped closer to the cool outside air. Ishida held a handkerchief to his nose and went inside, but Okei stood in place at the entrance. She expelled two or three painful coughs and gazed vacantly at the mountain of snow-white cocoons. … The combination of the high temperature and the miasma of the chrysalises seemed to pierce Okei's lungs with the revolting smell and she coughed incessantly. (Hirabayashi 1927: 83)

In "Sanagi to isshoni," the bodies of male stokers and female silk reelers readily move throughout the space occupied by the silk filature. This apparent fluidity abruptly comes to a standstill at the leaden iron gates that guard the precious "mountain of snow-white cocoons" (1927: 83). Ishida quite literally ushers Okei into the hell that constitutes raw silk production. Inside the drying room, both Ishida and Okei confront the putrid smell of the pupa suffocating inside the cocoons from the intense heat, an essential technique to maintain high-quality cocoons. Armed with his handkerchief, Ishida defends himself from the miasma and coaxes Okei inside the stifling space. The malodorous air of thousands of decomposing pupa penetrates the pink tissue of Okei's lungs; she struggles for air, but is seized by a fit of coughing. Ishida quickly heads out towards the crisp, cool air outside and slams the two iron gates shut with a *batan*, *batan* sound. Submerged in the aroma of decaying pupas, Okei cries out for Ishida to open up, but her pleas are drowned out by the dense iron gates, the roar of the fire, and the pouring rain.

Ishida rushes around, tending to the government officials and assuring that the performance goes smoothly, and when he pauses for a brief moment, the fragile figure of Okei appears in his mind and he quickly grabs an umbrella. Stepping outside, the sound of the male

stokers' song harmonizes with the sound of the pouring rain and the sky is a foreboding shade of grey. The sole light bulb inside the drying room is weak, but Ishida vaguely makes out the figure of Okei crouching against the wall with her face buried in the mound of cocoons. Ishida calls out several times to Okei. When there is no response, he approaches to help her up and is suddenly thrown off balance by the weight of her body. The moment that Ishida embraces Okei's lifeless body, he recognizes the correlation between Okei and the countless pupa that have asphyxiated inside the thick water vapor inside the drying room. Manufactured to minimize the loss of heat, the walls of the drying room are thick iron plates covered with several layers of plaster. As if repulsed by the proximity of death, Ishida inadvertently tosses Okei's corpse aside and the cocoons cushion her fall, absorbing the impact. The narrator positions the reader alongside Ishida, inside the atmosphere ripe with the decay of the millions of pupa sacrificed to finance imperial projects; Okei's young body has now been added to the pile of organic matter.

In the final scene of the story, Ishida runs out of the drying room and quickly steals behind the pile of charcoal to avoid the bright headlights of an approaching car. The car stops and the government official opens the door for a woman who appears to be one of the female factory laborers. Ishida watches from the shadow of the charcoal mountain as the female silk reeler is sealed inside the steel auto. Meanwhile, Okei is sealed tight inside the iron-clad drying room, her lifeless body draped atop the mound of snow-white cocoons. Hirabayashi's story critiques the irresolute Ishida who, as manager of the silk filature, does nothing to maintain the lifeblood of the factory, the pupa, nor the factory girls. Together, the pupa and the factory girls generate the kinetic energy that circulate the cocoons out from the mountainous region of Nagano and generate profits that fuel imperial infrastructure including electricity, railroads, and

munitions factories. “Sanagi to isshoni” depicts how the local topography is reorganized for the purpose of efficient production of high-yielding silk cocoons. In this stage of the silkworms’ metamorphosis the central relationship shifts from that between laborer and silkworm to laborer and the silkworm pupae; in this stage of development the laborer and pupae are relocated to a precarious space where the rhythms of silk production threaten to drown them in a boiling cauldron of water or asphyxiate them in the hellish heat of the drying room. This volatile relationship compromises the very possibility to sustain the accelerated tempo of silk cocoon production.

While “Sanagi to isshoni” presents a detailed map of the interior of a small silk filature, the 1928 short story “Niguruma” provides a panoramic view of the topography of sericulture created in the transportation of the silk cocoons into Nagano Prefecture. This story focuses on the hardships endured by the laborers working for the Yamadai Spinning Mill. Yamadai is the regional landowner and oversees the coming and going of horse-drawn carts that use the roads that cut through his fields and paddies. He rents the farmland at usurious prices to the local farmers and charges high land taxes on top of the lofty rent. The soundscape of this region is generated by the mixture of the horses trotting along the dusty road and the creaking of the carts that have been overloaded with sacks of silk cocoons reared in rural farmhouses.

> アカシヤの花が咲いていた。薄い縞のあるこまかい葉がくれに香りの高い花が汚い白に咲いていた。低い枝を張った並木は埃をかむって堤がつきるところまでつづいていた。
>
> 馬は埃をかむってアカシヤのかげをカツカツカツカツと荷馬車をひいて行った。荷馬車のうしろにはすえた蛹の香りが淀んでのこされて行った。日よけの南京衣は馬車の背中でビラビラゆれていた。山大製糸場のはっぴを着た馬方も鞭をたてて、頭から埃をかむっていた。錆びた馬車は馬のうしろでガラガラ鳴って走っていった。
> 堤を下がると一面につややかな緑色の桑畑だった。荷馬車は繭袋を積んで、畑中の道を幾台も幾

台もガラガラ走って行った。…

繭が岐阜の山路から洪水の様に駅にとどいて来る季節であった。荷馬車は村中の道を道いっぱいになって、深い轍のあとを掘って幾台も幾台もつづいてとおった。

The acacia was in bloom. The off-white flowers release a pungent fragrance, in full bloom next to the leaves with thin stripes. The low branches of the trees along the road are covered in dust and continue up to the embankment.
The horse kicks up dust and pulls the cart with a *katsukatsu*, *katsukatsu* sound in the shadow of the acacia trees. The back of the cart was ripe with the putrid smell of the chrysalises piled inside. The burlap sacks wavered from side to side on the horse-drawn cart. The wagon driver, wearing a *happi* bearing the name of the Yamadai Spinning Mill, stood up to whip the horses and dust flew out from their heads. The rusty cart clattered with a *gara gara* behind the horse.

The mulberry field at the base of the embankment shone in a lustrous green. The horse cart was piled high with sacks of chrysalises and the road going through the mulberry field was lined with countless horse carts pushing ahead with a *gara gara* sound. …

The season had come when chrysalises inundate the station via mountain paths from Gifu. The roads throughout the village were filled with horse-drawn carts, leaving deep, hollow tracks in their wake. (Hirabayashi 1928: 146)

The *katsukatsu*, *katsukatsu* sound of the horses' hooves clipping and clopping signal the onset of the season "when chrysalises inundate the station via mountain paths from Gifu" (Hirabyashi 1928: 146). The mountain passes that undulate up and over the Hida mountain range provide a vital link between the agrarian communities in Gifu Prefecture where young females cultivate the silkworms into high-quality cocoons. Acacia trees welcome the wagon drivers with a long stretch of shade along the roads that cut through the mulberry fields en route to the Yamadai Spinning Mill. Burlap sacks filled with the precious cocoons are piled high onto the horse-drawn carts and sway back and forth with the oscillation of the cart over the dirt roads. The season when cocoons flood into the region is characterized by the mixture of the blooming acacia and the malodorous remnant of decomposing chrysalises that trail behind the overloaded carts. The sounds and smells of the cocoon harvest season coalesce and identify this space as one of silk

production. This is a space where multiple species collaborate to bring the cocoons to the spinning mill for processing.

This scene is permeated by dust; dust flies out from the horses' manes when struck by the whip and dust is stirred up when the horses' hooves strike the parched earth. Kären Wigen describes the silk mulberry as "a hardy plant, tolerant of most soils and climates" and could survive "on marginal plots of almost any description" (Wigen 1995: 147). The mulberry thrives in sandy soil is easily irrigated when planted near rivers and streams on areas that are lightly taxed (Vlastos 1986: 102). Farmers surreptitiously planted mulberry on designated wasteland as a means to avoid taxation and increase profit margins on cottage sericulture cultivation.[60] This was particularly important in regions with harsh winter climates, including Nagano and Fukushima Prefecture, which were some of the largest producers of cocoons (Smith 2001; Wigen 1995).[61] Mulberry flourish without the addition of fertilizer and thrive along the dikes between paddies; its young leaves nourish the silkworms who are reared in the farmhouses. In the milieu of sericulture, the dust does not signify a desolate wasteland but instead provides the ideal botanical environment for the cultivation of the hardy and nutritious mulberry plant. The deep hollow tracks in the desiccated road indicate the region's ability to support a lively multi-species

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[60] This became particularly necessary during the period periods of economic depression triggered agrarian crisis. For detailed analysis of how government policies to ameliorate the "time of crisis" see Kerry Smith and Thomas R. H. Havens, especially chapter six (Havens 1974; Smith 2001). For a discussion of the tenant disputes that rose in response to this crisis, see Ann Waswo (1977) for an analysis of Japan and Gi-Wook Shin (1996) and Edwin H. Gragert (1994) for a discussion of the rural land issues in colonial Korea.

[61] Kerry Smith analyzes the so-called national crisis of the early 1930s from the local level of a small village, Sekishiba in Fukushima Prefecture. As a rural village that relied upon rice and silk cocoons, Smith argues that bureaucrats and rural reformers often shared a similar approach to strategies for revitalizing the rural regions and these patterns carried on into the postwar era. Of particular interest to me is how the cultivation of silkworms throughout the early twentieth century provided an indispensable source of income for impoverished tenant farm families. "On the eve of the Great Depression, more people were involved in producing more cocoons and more silk thread than ever before in the country's history. jEven though prices had been unstable for much of the 1920s, cocoon production increased as farmers tried to make up for potential losses in income by selling more and more cocoons" (Smith 2001: 49).

network of sericultural workers, silkworms, tenant farmers, horses, silkworm egg dealers, and cocoons.

Asymmetrical plots of land are imbued with new value when planted with mulberry. As the roots take hold in sloped river and stream beds they work to replenish the nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium lost in intensive cropping cycles. The rhizomes of the mulberry plants branch out in the subterrestrial sphere and create a network that supports the marginal lands from collapsing into the current of the river below. The labyrinth of subterranean mulberry rhizomes provide the minerals and nutrients that sustain the local ecologies of communities who depend on farming and sericulture for their livelihood. Local farmers, in turn, provide the care for the mulberry plants and trim back the excess branches to maximize the nutrients it absorbs from the earth.

> 啓作がかりて作っている桑畑は道の曲り角にあった。荷馬車をよけ様として梶を曲げると桑の枝が三、四本轍でぽきぽきと折れた。驚いて梶を動かすと車の尻は馬車とすれすれになるのだ。そしてまた梶を動かすと太いいい桑がぽきぽきと折れるのであった。…
>
> 馬は馬車と離されて木柵につないであった。茶色の尾をピンピン振りながら、切藁をしゃりしゃり食った。倉庫の一階にはまぶしい程に真白な繭が雪の様に山をなしていた。帳面を持った事務員が、倉庫と荷馬車の並んでいる広場を忙しく往復した。虻は並んでいる馬の背を忙しそうに飛んでいた。蝿も集まって来た。煙の様にこまかい赤土の埃が高いコンクリート塀にそってひろがりながら流れて行った。村には蝿がふえた。
>
> 倉庫に並んで三棟の乾燥場があった。乾燥場の前から飯場の方へ石炭殻が敷いてあった。乾燥場の二階が寝室になっていた。ちょうど、石炭の山を見下ろす位置にあった。石炭山の中から幾本か棒が立って三段の物干しがあった。昼休みで今乾した襦袢と腰巻から、乾いた石炭の上へポチポチと雫が落ちた。
>
> The mulberry field that Keisaku was pruning was at a bend in the road. When the driver put the rudder down to protect the horse-drawn cart, it snapped three or four mulberry branches with a *poki*, *poki* sound. Shocked by the sound, the driver moved the rudder so that the cart just skimmed above the ground. And when he moved the rudder again, it splintered a thick branch from the mulberry tree with a loud *poki*, *poki* sound. …

> The horses were let free from the wagon and tied to the wooden fence. While they energetically swooped their brown tail from side to side with a *pin*, *pin*, they chomped on the straw with a *shari*, *shari* sound. On the first floor of the warehouse was a mountain of dazzlingly white chrysalises that looked like snow. With ledger firmly in hand, the clerk busily went back and forth between the warehouse and the clearing where the horse-drawn carts were lined up. The horseflies occupied themselves flying around the lineup of horses. Flies also congregated around the horses. The fine red dust flowed along the tall concrete wall. The number of flies in the village multiplied.
>
> Within the warehouse there were three drying rooms lined up. In front of the drying rooms, over towards the bunkhouse, there were charcoal cinders spread out all over the ground. The second floor of the bunkhouse was the bedroom. That room was situated with a view down upon the mountain of charcoal. There were three poles rising out from the middle of the mountain of charcoal and this was the triple-layer drying rack. During the afternoon break, people hung their garments to dry and when the drops of moisture fell down onto the charcoal it made a *pochi*, *pochi* sound. (Hirabayashi 1928: 146).

The care work of pruning the mulberry trees impedes the smooth procession of countless horse-drawn carts lined up one after another on the road towards Yamadai Spinning Mill. A cavalcade of cocoons is punctuated by the *poki*, *poki* sound of the weighty wheels of the horse-drawn cart that briefly pause to devour the discarded mulberry branches. The crunching of mulberry limbs is replicated in the *shari*, *shari* sound of horses munching freshly-cut straw. This sonorous moment foregrounds the exchange of nutrients that is sustained on multiple levels to maintain the vital soils that characterize a region of sericulture.

An influx of horseflies and flies that arrive with the legion of horses threatens to infect the members of the community, collectively invading the space of the village. The only obstacle is the tall concrete wall that symbolizes a growing discordance in the circulation of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium that threatens the very sustainability of local ecologies. The crescendo of dissonance is punctuated by the slate-gray mountain of charcoal embers that comprises the landscape outside the bunkhouse. Live charcoal sizzles with a *pochi*, *pochi* sound that embodies the human and more-than-human lives smothered in the drying room. Seated around the living embers are the female workers, including the protagonist Ohana, who are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of cocoons that flood the mill.

Ohana's body counters the destructive tendencies of the cart wheels and the charcoal. Her body, swollen with milk, symbolizes the lifeblood that nourishes the silk reeling industry. When her nursing breasts become swollen and her eyes itchy, she steps outside and massages her nipple until a thin stream of milk spouts out and splatters across the live charcoal embers. This thin white line of milk that steams from Ohana's breast resembles the thin white string of silk that she unravels from the cocoon. Both provide nourishments: one for her infant son, the other for the emergent empire. The dual nourishment that Ohana's body provides is all the more critical when her husband, Sanji, is laid off after Yamadai Spinning Mill purchases a steam-powered motor and his position becomes obsolete.[62] Sanji straps the infant to his back while the female laborers continue to work as indispensable parts of the silk-reeling mill. Male and female laborers unite in a demonstration against Yamadai's gendered exploitation of labor, but the most compelling aspect of Hirabayashi's story is her attention to the co-production of the local landscape. Hirabayashi locates the relationship of mother-as-laborer and cocoon at the heart of the narrative, and as such, proffers a unique topography of sericulture that is often overlooked in the economic and historical accounts of rural regions. In doing so, her critique of colonial-capitalism revolves around the tenuous relationship between the tenant farmer and the silkworm. This relationship is one that, as seen in Makabe Jin's poem, could potentially germinate into a reciprocal relationship of care. On the other hand, it could disintegrate into a competition between the living pupa and the lactating mother which inevitable leads to the asphyxiation of one for the sake of the other. In any case, Hirabayashi illuminates a complex topography of sericulture that functions to

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[62] For a detailed history of the rise of steam power in industry and its role in climate change, see Malm (2016). There are a number of rural proletarian works that detail the effects of machinery (not just steam) in the increased unemployment rate and also firing due to disabling accidents in collusion with the machines.

reinvigorate as well as complicate the livelihoods of human and more-than-humans that populate the rural regions.

Colonial-Capital Spaces of Sericulture: Kang Kyŏngae's (1906-1944) 1934 *Ingan munjae* (The Human Predicament) and Yi Kiyŏng's (1896-1984) 1934 *Kohyang* (Hometown)

This last section briefly turns to the works of two Korean authors, Kang Kyŏngae and Yi Kiyŏng, to interrogate how this literature portrays the colonial-capital spaces of sericulture as they expand from the archipelago onto the peninsula.[63] Kang and Yi highlight the gendered violence endemic to the continual process of primitive accumulation that they observe in their rural communities and translate these observations into works of rural proletarian literature, employing a mode of ecological materialism. Travis Workman discusses Kang's 1934 novel *Ingan munjae* (The Human Predicament) and Yi's 1934 novel *Kohyang* (Hometown) as two novels that depict the "chronotope of frontier expansion" (Workman 2015: 161).[64] I build upon Workman's idea of a chronotope of primitive accumulation and think with Kang and Yi's novels as important sites for understanding how an attention to the soil and sericulture illuminates the gendered and ethnic violence intrinsic to the expansion of empire.

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[63] This section needs to be expanded in a revision, perhaps developing it into a separate journal article, allowing space for close readings of the spatial textures Kang and Yi present of the colonial-capital space of the silk mill in their texts.

[64] This chronotope of primitive accumulation is employed in works about Hokkaido by Hirabayashi Taiko, Kobayashi Takiji, Kuroshima Denji, and Miyamoto Yuriko. Hirabayashi's story "Shokurin shugi" (The Principle of Afforestation) details the effects of land reclamation in Hokkaido. Kobayashi Takiji has several stories, including the 1929 "Fuzai jinushi" (The Absentee Landlord) and the 1930 "Dōshi Taguchi no kanchō" (Comrade Taguchi's Sorrow), that trace the violence of colonial acquisition in the northern island. Kuroshima Denji's 1930 novel *Busōseru shigai* (Militarized Streets) captures the chaos involved in the military occupation of Manchuria. Miyamoto Yuriko's "Kaze ni notte kuru Koropokkuru" (The Ainu-god who Rides the Wind) delineates the violence to indigenous lands and peoples in her portrait of Ainu villages. It is also seen in literature about Manchuria by An Sugil, Ch'oe Sŏhae, Kang Kyŏngae, and Pak Hwasŏng. Pak's stories details the region of Mokpo while An, Ch'oe and Kang focus on the plight of Korean migrants in Manchuria (Kando). Yi's works focus on the interior region of Ch'ungch'ŏng province.

Kang Kyŏngae was born in the Songhwa region of Hwanghae province to a father who, while poor, was a hardworking man who worked as the farmhand of a neighboring landowner. He died the same year that Kang was born and her mother remarried to an elderly, disabled man with land and money who mistreated Kang's mother. Supported by her brother-in-law, Kang pursued her thirst for knowledge in a Christian school in P'yŏngyang, but was expelled for her involvement in a strike against the restrictive dormitory regulations. Upon return to Hwanghae province, she worked as a schoolteacher and published her first work in 1924. Yi Sangyŏng notes that Kang's experience living and working in Manchuria provided her the privileged standpoint to capture the anti-Japanese sentiments as well as the everyday plight of impoverished farming communities (Yi 1999: 847).

In a 1935 essay, "Kohyang ŭi ch'anggong" (The Azure Sky of my Hometown), Kang reflects upon the disparity between the intellectual labor she performs as a writer and the manual labor her mother performs as a working mother. "I took a closer look at my mother's hands stretched out before me and the tips of all her five fingers were completely saturated red with blood" (Kang 1935: 760). In Kang's literature, the intellectual labor of the writer and the physical labor performed by females in the spinning mills and the home mutually constitute the strength to sustain local lives in resistance to colonial-capitalism.

Ingan munjae was serialized in the newspaper the *Tonga ilbo* in 120 installments in 1934. The novel opens with a scene that maps out a view of Yongyŏn village, locating Wŏnso Pond as the central "lifeline" (*saengmyŏng sŏn*) of the village (Kang 1934: 135). The legend of the pond, explains the narrator, is connected to the historic struggle of the local farmers with the landowners. The pond symbolizes a hope that remains, despite the transformation that colonial-

capitalism has brought to the peninsula. It inspires the reassemblage of laborer-land relationships in ways that cultivate a potential futurity for local lives. This novel traces the gendered violence that the protagonist, Sŏnbi, experiences as a domestic worker in her rural village and the "politics of complicity and resistance" present in the colonial-era spinning mills and the harbor in Inch'eon (Barraclough 2012: 54). The newly-constructed mills along the burgeoning harbor of Inch'eon attract large numbers of impoverished rural females seeking work as silk reelers and rural males seeking work as day laborers at the docks. According to Theodore Jun Yoo, "in 1921 female workers constituted 63.4 percent of the textile industry and 89.9 percent of the silk-reeling sector" (Yoo 2008: 111). After Sŏnbi was raped by her landlord-employer, she turns to the textile industry as a potential site to solve the social problems that generate a perpetual rift between the laborer and the soil.

Within this man-made space of the silk filature, however, Sŏnbi suffers from the sonic assault of the machines and the blinding lights of the factory that weaken her eyesight. In a short period of time, the hopeful symbol of the silk mill disintegrates before her very eyes. "The first time she looked at the silk reels, she felt some sort of affection for them…but now when she looked at them they looked more like colossal insects that threatened to chomp away at her life" (Kang 1934: 407). The cocoons that once posed a possibility for survival now present themselves as a parasitic presence that threaten to draw the lifeblood from Sŏnbi's veins. This passage foreshadows the tragic end of *Ingan Munjae* when Sŏnbi's childhood friend, Ch'ŏtchae, discovers her corpse along the harbor where he works as a day laborer. The waste threads from the silk reels wormed their way into Sŏnbi's lungs and lodged in her airways, leaving her body as part of the collatoral damage accrued in the making of a colonial-capital space for sericulture.

The novel ends with the narrator posing a rhetorical question to the reader about how to resolve the problems that have plagued society for thousands of years. I do not propose that Kang, or any of the other authors examined in this chapter, are offering a prescriptive solution to the ecological, economic, and social crises unleashed by the expansion of colonial-capital spaces of sericulture. What I do propose, however, is that these authors present the local as the site where laborer-land relations can be reorganized in rhythms that sustain lives rather than asphyxiate them.

Yi Kiyŏng was born to a father who belonged to the elite *yangban* class in the Asan region of Ch'ungch'ŏng province in 1895. His father's activities in the Enlightenment Movement (*Kaehwa undong*) caused the family's riches to dwindle and Yi spent a great deal of his youth in poverty. Yi studied abroad in Tokyo from 1922-1923, but returned after the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake and dedicated his efforts to documenting the plight of rural tenant farmers in literature. He published his first work, "Oppaŭi pimil p'yŏnji" (Father's Secret Letter) in 1924 in the leftist journal *Kaebyŏk* (Creation) and quickly grew to be the foremost proletarian writer among the Korean Proletarian Arts Group (Korea Proleta Artista Federatio KAPF). The majority of Yi's works focus on the plight of rural villagers in colonial Korea, however he also wrote stories about intellectuals as well as factory life. After liberation, Yi joined the proletarian arts group in the north and began the long serialized work *Tuman kang* (Tuman River).

Yi's novel *Kohyang* (Hometown) was serialized from 1933 to 1934 in the newspaper the *Chosŏn ilbo*. Each of the chapters focus on a different storyline and animate the hardships of rural life on the colonized peninsula. These chapters paint a portrait of a farming village, Wŏnt'ŏ, and because the village itself functions as a protagonist in the novel, *Kohyang* performs what

Sunyoung Park calls a "materialist anthropology" of an agrarian village (S. Park 2015: 120). The village is permeated by the pungent mixture of barley grass and manure amassed in mounds behind the farmhouses. Women walk along the freshly plowed furrows, hoe in hand, and dripping with sweat. The sound of a young calf calling out to its mother resounds across the fields while a boy cutting grass sings an *arirang* folk song. A young girl takes a break from her domestic work and catches fireflies, wrapping them carefully in gourd flowers to show her younger sibling. These pastoral scenes are woven into the tales of tragedy ushered in with seasonal floods, increasing prices of fertilizer, and poor harvests. Yi marks Wŏnt'ŏ as a colonial-capital space with the presence of a military policeman who patrols the village with his saber in hand. The white-gloved military policeman puts everyone on edge, causing the village pack of dogs to bark as he makes his way over to the tenant manager's house.

Wŏnt'ŏ is not only marked as a colonized space, but more specifically, a colonial-capital space of sericulture. Kim Hŭijun, one of the main characters, reflects upon how the surroundings have been completely remade for the purpose of producing cocoons and spinning thread for the empire. He hardly recognized his hometown that now boasted wide avenues and a web-like network of electric and phone lines that enclosed the tile-roofed houses from all four sides. A massive levee had been installed and the avenues were lined with Japanese cherry trees and willows, a botanical trace of colonial presence.[65] The road narrowed as it traversed up the steep mountainside where a massive mulberry orchard had been planted adjacent to a small brook. A lofty wall stood at the far end of the mulberry orchard, enclosing the silk filature that had been expanded in his five years away in Tokyo.

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[65] For a discussion of the material makings of the "empire of forestry" see David Fedman *Seeds of Control* (2020).

Black smoke streams out from the chimney night and day, providing the heat for the bubbling cauldrons of cocoons. This massive filature began as a small wooden shack that served as a sericulture school where local folks were trained in the art of silkworm cultivation and spun silk reels by hand. Kim walks into the door of the newly built silk filature scanning the unexpected scene before him. Hundreds of factory girls rush to keep pace with the electric reels, stealthily moving their hands as quick as lightning careful to tend to the delicate mechanism of the spinning machines. The relentless revolution of the machines push the girls to keep pace with the rate of the industrialized sector of sericulture established in the region.

Kohyang delineates the colonial-capital space of sericulture in rural Korea, a place that actively recruits young, single women to keep pace with electric machines in the silk mills. Meanwhile, mothers and wives spend their days planting and weeding in the fields while their daughters are enclosed in the domestic sphere where they care for younger siblings. Collectively, this labor is mobilized as the material base of sericulture to contribute to the finance of empire. In the course of the novel, however, Kim establishes a night school and starts collaborating with locals on strategies about how to re-appropriate this space-time of Wŏnt'ŏ. *Kohyang* traces the struggles of rural residents to wrench their village from the colonial-capital imagination and recreate it as a site for sustainable relationships between the laborer and the land, a space-time that exists outside the logic of accumulation.

Conclusion

This chapter has placed a critical focus on the three essential minerals for fertile soil: nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). It has traced how the symbiotic relationship between farming and sericulture is depicted in literature as a means to mutually sustain human and more-than-human lives. The sketches of agrarian life seen in Miyamoto Yuriko and Sumii Sue illuminate the precarious circumstances of rural lives and gesture towards the burgeoning importance of mulberry, silkworms, and textiles in the livelihood of tenant farming families. Makabe Jin and Hirabayashi Taiko frame the mutual dependency that emerges between the sericulturalist and the silkworm, pupa, and cocoon throughout the silkworm's lifecycle. Lastly, Kang Kyŏngae and Yi Kiyŏng highlight the importance of reappropriating the colonial-capital spaces of sericulture in order to establish ecologies that facilitate a futurity of life.

Chapter Two
(Cu): Copper Soundscapes

This chapter turns to the rich copper seams of the archipelago in the sites of Ashio and Arakawa. I begin with a reading of the 1918 short story "Tenki" (Turning Point) by Itō Noe, a work that I argue marks a watershed moment in her activist and literary career. It indicates Itō's shift from a politics of 'free love' to 'free life' and her politics of 'free life,' as seen in this short story. In addition, it demonstrates that she is a much more radical anarchist than her more legendary partner Ōsugi Sakai. "Tenki" juxtaposes multiple temporal engagements between the protagonist and Yanaka village, a remote farming village that disappeared under the reservoir designed to mitigate damage from the massive Ashio copper mine. The protagonist in "Tenki" refuses a settler-colonial practice of listening that is conditioned for the purpose of accumulating knowledge (Robinson 2020: 72). Instead, she draws upon her multiple senses to listen to the murmurs among the reeds and bear witness to the abandoned dwellings of the expropriated farmers. These provide her the tools to tell a story that refuses to forget the asphyxiated organisms that once thrived in Yanaka. In doing so, Itō's storytelling is care work because it aims to prevent memory lapses that lead to the "mechanical repetitions" of ecological disasters (Lefebvre 2014: 626).

Next, I turn to Matsuda's 1930 stories about Arakawans, laborers working in and around the Arakawa copper mines in Akita prefecture, told from the perspective of the bunkhouse. These stories and poems bear witness to the decay of plant life, the presence of blue vitriol in the watershed, and the degradation of miners' bodies from the standpoint of the bunkhouse. I argue that Matsuda invites the readers to consider the "ecological debt" and "embodied debt" accrued

in the process of copper ore extraction (Salleh 2009). Within the space of the bunkhouse, Matsuda proposes a radical reorganization of familiar relationships and colonial-capital economic exchanges in order to imagine sites where life may potentially flourish.

In January 1897, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* published a series of articles entitled "Ashio dōzan kōdoku mondai" (The Ashio Copper Mine Pollution Problem).[66] These articles report on the catastrophic floods of July and September 1896 that carried toxic wastewater down from the Ashio copper mines into the fields and fisheries of the agrarian villages scattered throughout the Watarase River Valley. According to the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the floods wreaked "havoc" upon the entire region by completely "wrecking" agricultural fields and irreparably "damaging" fisheries (1897). The fallout from the floods caused "harm" to human bodies and the "decay" of native plant life (1897:5). Regional disturbances from copper, gold, and silver mining operations were not uncommon occurrences by the late Meiji period, however, the *Yomiuri* series is striking because it expands its narrative focus from the human and weaves together observations of festering plant life, diminished fish populations, withered crops, and a compromised soil fertility to focus upon the more-than-human lives affected by the so-called "Ashio copper mine pollution problem." In the edition published on January 22, the affected region is referred to as an "infertile desert" (*fuke no sabaku*), suggesting that copper mining operations engender a *particular* disruption to local everyday ecologies (1897:6).

From the year 1882, fish populations along the Watarase River exhibited strange patterns of behavior prompting locals to refer to the Watarase as "'the river of death'" (Stolz 2014: 33).

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[66] *Ashio dōzan kōdoku mondai*.(The Ashio Copper Mine Pollution Problem. 足尾銅山鉱毒問題). *Yomiuiri Shimbun* (Yomiuri Newspaper). January 15, 1897- January 24, 1897 (Meiji 30). Online archive of Yomiuri Shimbun, https://database.yomiuri.co.jp/rekishikan/, accessed via UCI Libraries.

Political activists Tanaka Shōzo (1841-1913) and Kōtoku Shūsui's (1871-1911) writings, journalist Matsumoto Eiko's (1866-1928) 1902 reports *Kōdokuchi no sanjō* (Sufferings of a Mine-Poisoned Land) in the *Mainichi Shimbun*, and writer Arahata Kanson's (1887-1981) 1907 work of literary reportage, *Yanakamura metsubōshi* (The Ruination of Yanaka Village), clearly articulate the injurious effects of copper mining pollution on rural communities. These works detail the affective and corporeal violence to rural residents, an aspect of the pollution problem that was obscured in the Meiji government's ambiguous definition of pollution as "that which harms the public good" (Sugai 1983:100). In this chapter, I argue that the fiction of Itō Noe (1895-1923) and Matsuda Tokiko (1905-2004) engage in storytelling as a form of care work for the ecosystems shattered by copper ore extraction in two separate sites: Yanaka village and the Arakawa district. These ecological stories map the sonic territory of copper ore extraction and, as such, capture the violent disruptions that produce "infertile desert[s]" and also reveal productive "co-laborations" between species (1897: 6; Lyons 2020: 65).

From a Politics of 'Free Love' to 'Free Life': Storytelling as Care Work in Itō Noe's (1895-1923) 1918 "Tenki" (Turning Point)

Itō Noe (1895-1923) published her first work, a poem entitled "Higashi no nagisa" (The Eastern Shore), in the November 1912 edition of the feminist journal *Seitō* (*Bluestockings*). She contributed an article to *Seitō* nearly every month thereafter and in 1915 she took over the editing duties from the founding editor, Hiratsuka Raichō (Bardsley 2007: 126; Itō 1970: 427). Founded in September 1911, *Seitō* members engaged in contemporaneous debates on women's issues (*fujin mondai*), the institution of marriage (*kekkonhō*), the figure of the new woman (*atarashi*

onna), and the concept of free love (*jiyū renai*).[67] *Seitō* provided a forum where writers could conceptualize strategies for women to discover her true self and maintain a sense of individuality while involved in love relationships. Some contributors argued that the Meiji "good wife, wise mother" (*ryōsai kenbo*) was a position of power, where women could yield their authority within the private sphere of the home. Others adamantly refused to be cast in the role of the good wife *or* the wise mother, arguing that neither provided an opportunity to live as a true individual and discover her true self.[68]

Itō's early *Seitō* writings vehemently opposed the institution of marriage because she believed that it prevented men and women from evolving beyond the restrictive roles of husband and wife. Her aversion to the institution of marriage was partly due to her dissatisfaction with her arranged marriage to Suematsu Fukutarō, a young man from Itō's hometown who had recently returned from study in the United States. In the 1913 short story "Wagamama" (Willfullness), Itō chronicles her sense of disenchantment upon return to the rural coastal region of Kyushu because she was in love with her teacher Tsuji Jun (1884-1944) with whom she developed a relationship while studying in Tokyo (Itō 1970). Within the marriage, Itō envisioned herself falling into the role of a farmer's wife, so after eight days she escaped her marriage with Suematsu and made her way back to Tokyo. There, she wrote to Raichō about her plight, initiating her involvement with the *Seitō* group, and began living with Tsuji. These personal struggles directly inform Itō's early

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[67] As Vera Mackie notes in her history of socialist women in Japan, marriage and 'free love' was a frequent topic of newspaper articles published in the early decades of the twentieth century. In particular, Mackie notes, the *Heimin Shinbun* (*Commoners' Newspaper* 平民新聞) and the socialist women's newspaper *Sekai Fujin* (*Women of the World* 世界婦人) devoted a lot of space to the debates surrounding love and marriage (Mackie 1997: 52-62). For a general history and partial translations of articles in *Seitō*, see Bardsley 2007, Hane 2003, and Sievers 1983; see Lowy 2007 for a discussion of the new woman through the lens of *Seitō*. For the construction and consumption of media and the production of new genders categories in interwar Japan, see Frederick 2006, Sato 2003, Silverberg 2006.

[68] For a comprehensive history of feminist debates in Japan throughout the twentieth century, see Kano 2016.

standpoint on love and marriage. Itō's short essay entitled "Kono koro no kansō" (Some Recent Impressions), published in the February 1913 issue of *Seitō*, illustrates the beginnings of what later developed into her politics of free love.

> 覚醒した男女の恋には目的や要求を含まない。夫だの妻だのいう型にはめられたくない。あくまで自由な愛だ。異なった自己を守り異なった客自の生活を営みつつ、ある一面によって接触し共同生活を営むのだ。しかして相互に人としての権威を保ちまた尊敬を払うのである。

> The love between men and women who have awakened to their true selves does not involve any stipulations or objectives. These men and women do not want to be trapped into the roles of 'husband' or 'wife'. It is free love to the very end. Each individual continues to live life as his or her respective self while also sharing a life together. They mutually protect and respect one another's rights as human beings. (Itō v. 2 1970: 17)

In the passage above, Itō strongly opposes the institution of marriage and the nuclear family because it subsumes the individual under the categories of husband, father, wife, and mother.[69] The nuclear family was formulated by a fraternity of men as the foundational unit of the new civil order of the modern nation-state. The single dominant figure of the father or king was stripped of his power and it was shared among the fraternity of men. The nuclear family functioned to sustain fraternal patriarchy, consequently, stabilizing the nation-state as a whole (Hunt 1992; Pateman 1988). Itō proposes the concept of free love as an embodied practice that actively resists the enclosure of female and male bodies within a nuclear family. Itō contends that "men and women who have awakened to their true selves" (*kakusei shita*) are cognizant of and refuse to allow the self to be subjugated within the institution of marriage (Itō v. 2 1970: 17). Free love produces a space where the individual is able to pursue his or her own path while also

[69] Mikiso Hane describes this essay as an elaboration on Itō's "conviction that women must become independent minded" (Hane 2003: 257). For a thorough discussion of how *Seitō* engaged with ideas of the so-called woman problem, see Lowy 2007.

aiming to "mutually protect and respect one another's rights as human beings" (Itō v.2 1970: 17). Within this space of free love, both males and females are recognized as individuals.

This essay is a response to Itō's own struggles with love and marriage and also informed by her study of anarchist Emma Goldman's writings. Itō and Tsuji worked together on a translation of Goldman's "The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation," an inspirational work that influenced Itō's politics of free love. Goldman writes, "the problem that confronts us today, and which the nearest future is to solve, is how to be one's self and yet in oneness with others, to feel deeply with all human beings and still retain one's own characteristic qualities" (Goldman [1911] 1969: 219). Goldman contends that class and gendered hierarchies must be abolished before men and women can experience social justice and true emancipation. In her 1914 essay "Marriage and Love," Goldman argues that the system of marriage impedes the ability of women to become true individuals; marriage transfigures women into mere dependents or parasites. "It incapacitates her for life's struggle, annihilates her social consciousness, paralyzes her imagination, and then imposes its gracious protection, which is in reality a snare, a travesty on human character" (Goldman 1969). Goldman characterizes the institute of marriage as a deceptive system, promising a safe haven where women are graciously provided with economic security, what Goldman refers to as "an insurance pact" (Goldman 1969). In contrast to a promised place of protection, Goldman calls the domestic sphere a "snare" where women are lured under false promises of freedom. She portrays the home as a colonized space where the actions and thoughts of women are determined and surveilled by the fraternal patriarchal order (Engels 1884; Mies 2014).[70] Feminist scholar Maria Mies argues that the colonization of the

[70] "She learns soon enough that the home, though not so large a prison as the factory, has more solid doors and bars." (Goldman 1914:)

domestic sphere occurred in unison with the enclosure of female bodies in a process she refers to as "housewifization." (Mies 2014). The housewifization of women devalues reproductive work in the home and appropriates their labor for free (Federici 2012).[71] The institute of marriage disguises itself as a kind of contract into which two individuals enter of their own free will. Although Itō, Goldman, and Mies write in different geographic and temporal contexts, they all conclude that marriage does not, in fact, carve out a space for two individuals. Instead, it secures an agreement that guarantees the dominant position of the individual, which is in itself a patriarchal category and hence assumed to be male, over the wife as sexual property (Pateman 1988: 185).

In her *Seitō* era essays and semi-autobiographical works of fiction, Itō confronts what Pateman refers to as "the story of the sexual contract," a treaty that grants a male sovereign ownership and access to the female body as private property (Pateman 1988: 38).[72] Itō's free love is a practice that cultivates an individual who, regardless of gender, can feasibly retain the boundaries and sense of self within a romantic relationship as an equal. In short, no single person is transformed into a commodity to be dominated and utilized as the property another. Itō's free love is an embodied practice that actively resists the privatization or colonization of female bodies. In practice, however, Itō's theory of free love failed to resist the enclosure of her own body in the relationship with Tsuji Jun and also in the subsequent relationship with anarchist

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[71] The construction of the domestic space served to strengthen the nation and was also enlisted in imperial expansion. In particular, the nuclear family was a powerful tool in settler-colonialism "Manifest domesticity" domestic space "became the engine of national expansion" (Kaplan 2002: 29). Sexual matters are "foundational to the material terms in which colonial projects were carried out." (Stoler 2002: 14)

[72] Published from 1913 to 1914, "Wagamama" (Willfulness), "Shuppon" (Flight), and "Mayoi" (Perplexity) are three autobiographical stories that chronicle the obstacles the protagonists, modeled after Itō, encounter in their pursuit of free love. The utopian ideal of Itō's free love faced a number of obstacles in her relationship with Tsuji as well as with Ōsugi Sakae. The failure of free love to achieve a truly free self is, I argue, in part what propelled her on a journey to discover a more inclusive politics. (Itō 1970 v.1: 426)

Ōsugi Sakae (1885-1923).[73] Particularly in her relationship with Ōsugi, Itō confronted the reality that violence is inseparable from the practice of free love. When Itō officially began her relationship with Ōsugi in January 1916, he was already married to Hori Yasuko and seeing journalist, and former *Seitō* member, Kamichika Ichiko (1888-1981). Ōsugi began formulating his own theory of free love as early as 1906, the same year that he married Hori Yasuko and began publishing the magazine *Katei zasshi* (Household).[74] In a June 1916 piece entitled "Danjyo kankei ni tsuite" (On the Relationship between Men and Women), published in *Onna no Sekai* (Women's World), Ōsugi writes in the form of a letter to Itō, noting her resistance to his three rules in the practice of free love.

> 僕のいわゆる三条件たる「お互いに経済上独立すること、同棲しないで別居の生活を送ること、お互いの自由（性的のすらも）を尊重すること」の説明があって以来、君は全く僕を離れてしまった形になった. … 君には、この「性的のすらも」ということが、どうしても承知できなかったのだ.
>
> Each person must remain financially independent; each person must live on their own; and each individual must respect the freedom of the other people (even in the realm of sexual escapades). …In no way shape or form did you accept the rule about 'free sexual escapades'(Ōsugi vol. 3 1995 [1916]: p. 221)

Itō's theory of free love was fundamentally incommensurable with Ōsugi's theory of free love because his was founded on the sexual contract. Ōsugi's free love requires each individual to enter into the sexual contract and, consequently, become a piece of sexual property for Ōsugi. Itō, however, disagrees with Ōsugi's third rule as it subjects her corporeal self to circulation as

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[73] Tsuji Jun was a devotee of Max Stirner who promoted a kind of egoism as this will enable an individual to follow his or her true path. Through the protagonists of her autobiographical fiction stories, it is clear that Itō struggled with the Tsuji's application of egoism. In the context of Yanaka village, in particular, Itō felt that egoism led to an inability to empathize with other humans, but also more than human life. (Itō 1970: 423-424) "Dōyō"「Turmoil 動揺」is a story about the unsettling event when Itō discovered a letter from a former student, Kimura, to Tsuji about her feelings for him. (Hayashi :pp.16-18). as recounted in her story "Dōyō"「Turmoil 動揺」and her 1916 essay "'Bekkyo' ni tsuite" (On Separation 別居について)

[74] One of his earliest essays that engages with the concept of free love is the essay Dōbutsu no renai. (Ōsugi 1995 vol. : pp.)

sexual property. As in the process of the expropriation of land or labor-power, the annexation of body as sexual property is an inherently violent act.[75] The inseparability of free love and violence came to a head in the 1916 Hikage teahouse incident; Kamichika Ichiko stabbed Ōsugi when she discovered him at the inn with Itō.[76] Much has been written about the scandal, but ultimately, this was the materialization of Kamichika's refusal to enter into the sexual contract. In practice, free love proved insufficient for Itō and Ōsugi because it did not succeed in freeing the individual from mental or physical violence; the individual was, instead, devoured in violence.

Itō writes in a September 1923 essay entitled "Jinsei ni okeru renai no ichi" (The Position of Love in Life), published in *Fujin Kōron* (Women's Review), from a new standpoint on love. Here, it is clear that she no longer regards free love as her central political praxis. Instead, love is an opportunity to discover new ways to meaningfully interact in the world. "Love often presents a big crossroad in people's lives. Love is also an impetus that sends people on a number of journeys in their lives" (Itō 1970 v.1: 513). Itō describes a love that emerges from compassion for mor- than-human lives, hence marking a distinct shift from humanistic tendencies in her *Seitō* era notions of 'free love' and a concentration on the 'complete self' (*jiko kansei*). Romantic love is no longer her raison d'être. Itō is motivated by the profound compassion she feels for people and places beyond her everyday interactions; this compassion is what compels her to embark on

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[75] The subjugation of women as sexual property and unpaid care takers within leftist circles was the topic of several literary works including Alex Kollontai's *Red Love*, Sata Ineko's Kurenai (Crimson), and Miyamoto Yuriko's *Nobuko.* These works reveal the hypocrisy in the sexual practices of men in the leftist circles who worked for the liberation of the individual while still robbing women of their corporeal sovereignty.

[76] Yoshida Yoshihige's 1969 avant-garde film *Eros + gyakusatsu* (Eros + massacre) draws a parallel between the violence inherent in the practice of free love during the 1910s and the violence resulting from the practice of free sex in the 1960s. This film explores the destructive effects of free love and free sex on the mind and body of its practitioners. Thanks to Margherita Long for recommending watching this film and inviting me to her class to dialogue with her and her students in winter 2021.

a journey in search of a more inclusive political practice, one where social justice extends to living beings that exist outside of the bourgeois male individual.[77]

In *Anarchist Modernity*, Sho Konishi argues that the anti-war movement during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 led to "the invention of 'the people' (*heimin*) without the state" (Konishi 2013: 145). The concept of compassion (*hakuai*), freedom and equality for all humanity, regardless of gender, class, or nationality, characterized the politics of the group *Heiminsha* (Commoners' Society) and its organ the *Heimin shimbun* (Commoners' News) (Konishi 2013: 181). Konishi claims that the "ideological and social interconnectedness of the Nonwar Movement with the ecological movement that grew out of the environmental destruction caused by the Ashio copper mines was based on a shared idea of *heimin*" (Konishi 2013: 196-197). The compassion outlined by Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko, the cofounders and editors of the *Heimin Shimbun*, was an essential part of the inherent ethics involved in mutual aid practices, or what Konishi terms 'cooperative anarchism' (Konishi 2013: 12, 65).[78] With a strong emphasis on the human, however, 'cooperative anarchism' does not provide the more inclusive politics that Itō sought because it still privileges the human among the hierarchy of living organisms. The repeated failures of activists to effect change in the battle over the ecodegradation caused by the Ashio copper mine, I argue, is what motivates Itō to abandon her anthropocentric politics of 'free love' and pursue a politics of 'free life.' Itō's politics of 'free life'

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[77] Konishi notes that *Heiminsha* used the word *hakuai* (博愛) for compassion which privileges compassion among brothers, as it can be translated as fraternity, and inherently contains a gendered bias as to whom is worthy of direct action to resolve social injustice.

[78] In chapter six, Konishi notes there was a trend among Japanese cooperative anarchists to study natural sciences and etymology to inform their theory of mutual aid and cooperativism. He performs a brief rereading of Ōsugi and the role of natural science and etymology played in his later life. I, however, think that his concern with the more than human subject is a consequence of Itō's obsession with the village of Yanaka. (Konishi 2013: 322-323)

are based upon a practice of compassion that cultivates the interrelations between living organisms in a local environment that sustain life.[79] It is Itō's encounter with the deserted village of Yanaka, I contend, when she recognizes her politics of 'free love' are insufficient to care for the more-than-human bodies affected by the Ashio copper mine pollution problem.

Towards a Politics of Listening

"Tenki" chronicles the personal and political journey that the narrator-protagonist, Machiko, embarks upon after her friend 'M' recounts the tragic history of Yanaka.[80] This oral history of Yanaka village marks Machiko's first encounter with the so-called Ashio copper mine pollution problem (*kōdoku mondai*) (Itō 1970: 295). Yanaka was one of the many villages along the Watarase River basin that suffered the effects of what Robert Stolz calls "bad water" (*akusui*) streaming down from the Ashio copper mine (2014: 7). Stolz argues that the 1896 floods were the turning point when "liberal politics and the language and ideology of individual compensation" proved devastatingly insufficient to quell what Tanaka Shōzo referred to in his writings as the 'invisible' (*me ni mienai*) nature of the problem" of pollution (2014: 66, 45). The presence of poison in the Watarase watershed posed a challenge that was markedly distinct from a natural disaster: this was an ecological disaster.

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[79] Itō uses the word dōjō (同情) for compassion which does not have the androcentric connotation of the word *hakuai* (博愛), which can be translated as compassion or fraternity, and opens up the possibility to extend compassion for living organisms that are not human in form.

[80] Miyajima Sukeo (1886-1951) had first-hand experience of the ecological effects of mining during his year working in the tungsten mines in Ibaraki Prefecture. His representative work *Kōfu* (The Miner), published in 1916, details the struggle to sustain life within the mining regions (NPB, vol. 3). For a discussion of early literary anarchism in the worlds of Ōsugi Sakae, Arahata Kanson, and Miyajima Sukeo, see Filler 2012.

The dismantling of the village commenced on June 29, 1907, memorialized with a photograph of the Tochigi governor in front of the ruined village (Walker 2010: 106). Villagers, including Tanaka's assistant Shimada Sōzo, remained behind in resistance to the expropriation of the local residents' land. The application of the 1896 River Law to the area in 1906, however, criminalized these steadfast natives. In 1915, an eviction order was posted for remaining residents because the government planned to flood the area with a reservoir designed to contain the toxic effluents from the copper mine. The impending eviction of remaining inhabitants is what prompts 'M' to visit Machiko's home; this is Machiko's first encounter with the story of the disappeared village of Yanaka. Word spread around the archipelago about the dismantling of Yanaka village. Activists were outraged by the notion that compensation money was a stufficient method to reinvigorate local ecologies in a toxic terrain.

Machiko's first encounter with Yanaka village is based on Itō's real-life encounter with Miyajima Sukeo when he visited Itō and Tsuji's home in 1915. As the narrator-protagonist of "Tenki," Machiko is the literary embodiment of Itō; Machiko's split from 'T' and subsequent relationship with Yamaoka is nearly indistinguishable from Itō's own separation from Tsuji Jun and romantic relationship with Ōsugi Sakae. In form, "Tenki" bears a resemblance to what literary scholar Barbara Foley terms the proletarian fictional autobiography. Foley characterizes this genre of literature as one that "efface[s] the boundaries demarcating any firm distinctions between author, narrator, and protagonist" (Foley 1993: 288). Itō firmly contextualizes her story in the politics of Taishō Japan and blurs the divisions between reality and fiction in her portrayal of Tanaka Shōzo, Shimada Sōzo, and Kotoku Shūsui, who worked to attain social and environmental justice for the villagers of Yanaka. Telling the story of Yanaka village is an act of

care for the inundated land as well as its expropriated residents, both humans and more-than-humans. This story picks up where the decades of grassroots work falls short; Itō's story depicts a mode of listening that engages her multiple senses and draws attention to the more-than-human voices. "Tenki" tells the downstream story of the so-called Ashio copper pollution problem beyond the limited temporality of crisis and opens up to what Michelle Murphy calls a temporality of latency (Murphy 2013).

The middle sections of "Tenki" give an account of Machiko's initial encounter with Yanaka, a watershed moment in her personal and political life. As Machiko listens to 'M' chronicle the events that led to the ruined village, she presses him for more details and "at some point became completely consumed by the maelstrom of anxious excitement" (Itō 1970: 303). This is the moment when Machiko recognizes that her anthropocentric politics of 'free love' are an inadequate response to the case of Yanaka village, a place that suffered through a process that I refer to as neo-primitive accumulation. In *Capital I*, Marx contends that primitive accumulation, defined as "the expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil" is the starting point of colonial-capital accumulation and that this expropriation is inherently violent, "written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire" (Marx 1967: 669). Neo-primitive accumulation resembles the cruel process of ripping laborers from their means of subsistence described by Marx's term primitive accumulation. However, neo-primitive accumulation identifies the concurrent phenomenons of privatization and pollution as inaugurating a new mode of tearing peasants from the land. Brett Walker uses the term 'hybrid causations' to describe the engineered and natural factors that route toxins through environments and generate bodies in pain (Walker 2010). At first, Machiko does not yet appreciate the 'hybrid

causations' that route toxins through rivers and bodies in the Watarase watershed. She is still informed by her humanistic politics of 'free love' and focuses on the immediate lived effects of the Ashio copper mine pollution. She expresses compassion for the villagers who live in dilapidated huts and peddle their goods in nearby villages, but has nothing to say about the role of toxins in the reproduction of local lives. Machiko condemns the violence the government authorities inflict upon the villagers when they raze the homes to make space for a giant reservoir designed to contain toxins. She asserts the villagers' unequivocal lawful right to sustain their lives amidst the fallout from the mine pollution. She is concerned with the human bodies in pain as she listens to the tale of Yanaka and positions herself as a compassionate ally alongside the residents' resistance to the 1915 eviction notice.

M's anthropocentric storytelling prompts Machiko to consider the illusive disruptions that the reservoir construction creates in the everyday lives of villagers. Machiko is possessed with the space-time of Yanaka village, explaining in an aside to the reader, "as much as I try to forget the place called Yanaka, I am unable to stop thinking about it. The name of Yanaka village is deeply etched upon my mind" (Itō 1970: 317). Machiko is haunted by the site of Yanaka because 'M's storytelling is incomplete in its univocality. As Machiko discovers upon her visit to Yanaka, there are gendered aspects to the ways that landless farmers are dispersed throughout the archipelago. Expropriated men find day work in civil engineering projects or migrate to Hokkaido as "patriotic pioneers" to reclaim land (Mason 2012). Meanwhile, women remain behind with children in dilapidated huts and struggle to cultivate narrow ridges of arable land to sustain life. Machiko seeks a polyvocal account of the long process by which landless farmers were dispersed throughout the archipelago. In actively listening to the human and more-than-

human voices, Machiko practices a politics of listening that demonstrates a concern for the futurity of the local ecologies.

Storytelling as Carework

The extraction of minerals from the depths of the earth in the Ashio copper mines occurs in narrow tunnels enshrouded in darkness. Unearthing the copper ore and lugging it to the mouth of the mine, where women and girls sort the mineral-rich rock and send it to the refinery, are all labor processes that occur hundred of miles away from Yanaka village. And yet, when effluents from copper mines pour into waterways and transform the ecological entanglements of living organisms, the distance between Ashio and Yanaka is contracted. Mining for copper impedes sustainable life cycles in disparate locations and over an indeterminable period of time. Rob Nixon devises the term 'slow violence' to "engage a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales" (2011: 2). The depiction of slow violence is what is missing from 'M's account of Yanaka; this is the story that Machiko seeks when she sets out to the former site of Yanaka. In the following, I show how Itō, through the character of Machiko, bears witness to the slow violence by physically immersing herself in the ruined farmlands. This practice of sensorial absorption in the place is a necessary process to complete the story of Yanaka, and writing the story is a practice of care for bodies in pain (Walker 2010).

Itō and Ōsugi originally met at a lecture organized by *Seitō* in February 1913, but it was through an exchange of letters that the two established a personal relationship; the unfinished story of Yanaka village lay at the core of their early communications. Ōsugi's 1916 autobiographical work "Shikai no naka kara" (From out of the Ashes) details Itō and Ōsugi's respective impressions of the destruction of Yanaka village.[81] Ōsugi first wrote to Itō in January 1915 and enclosed a photograph of Rosa Luxemburg.[82] Itō responded with what Ōsugi refers to as an "unexpectedly long letter" that describes her passionate response to the "tragic plight of Y village" (Ōsugi 1995 vol. 12: 231, 232). The relationship between Itō and Ōsugi developed over a mutual concern about the tragic plight of Yanaka and on December 10th, 1916, they went to survey the former site of Yanaka village (NPB vol. 2: 442). The initial and final sections of "Tenki" follow Machiko and Yamaoka on their journey over man-made levees, raised footpaths, and through withered ochre reeds in search of a language appropriate for the multiple experiences of neo-primitive accumulation.

The corporeal interaction with the site of Yanaka, the sensorial experience of moving through that particular place facilitates an ecological materialist mode of storytelling because it places the *interrelations*, or the material exchanges, at the heart of the narrative (Foster 2000). Kirin Nayarin interrogates the productive potential of combining techniques from creative nonfiction and ethnography to write stories that "point beyond what we can immediately see" and "fathom what the world looks like from other perspectives" (2021: 14). It is when Machiko

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[81] Gakugei Shorin. 2000. *Teihon Itō Noe zenshū* (The Standard Edition of the complete Works of Itō Noe) 4 vols. Mori Mayumi, ed. 2001. *Fukeyo areyo kaze yo arashi yo: Itō Noe senshū* (Howl, Wind! Rage on, Storm! The Selected Works of Itō Noe). Contains letters exchanged between Ōsugi and Itō.

[82] Itō caught Ōsugi's attention as a potential comrade after she had published a translation of Emma Goldman's essay "The Tragedy of Emancipation of Women" in a 1914 edition of *Seitō*.

physically immerses herself within the everyday space-time of Yanaka that she decodes the rhythms that tell stories of more-than-human bodies struggling to subsist in this ruined village. This is the moment when Machiko assumes the role of what Henri Lefebvre calls a rhythmanalyst. Machiko uses her body like a metronome to discern the "garland of rhythms" that living bodies produce as a multi-species ensemble; she engages her senses to "listen to the silences" and to "grasp the natural or produced ensembles" (Lefebvre 2004: 29, 30). Resisting the remaking of her body into a machine in service of capitalism, Machiko implements it as a tool to critique the unseen and unheard violence waged on ecosystems in the colonial-capital extraction of copper ore (Federici 2004).[83] En route to the former site of Yanaka, Machiko interacts with remaining villagers, crosses over man-made levees, plunges her bare feet in frigid muddy water, and weaves her way through fields of withered ochre leaves. Each and every person she stumbles across curiously asks her, "What did you come here to do?" reminding her that "Yanaka village was destroyed more than ten years prior and turned into a marsh" (Itō 1970: 283). I suggest that Machiko goes to Yanaka with the purpose of storytelling; this storytelling is a form of care work for the land and bodies that have been robbed of their vitality. Christine Marran defines 'obligate storytelling' as "a kind of storytelling that emphasizes the bond, the fetter, the bowline, the *ligare*, of one being to another at the level of care and substance, of thought and matter" (2017: 27). As a kind of obligate storyteller, Machiko foregrounds the life sustaining bonds between the soil, the plants, and the farmers in a space that has been inundated for decade with mining effluents.

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[83] Marxist feminist Silvia Federici discusses the process of how the human body "was the first machine developed by capitalism" in the context of early modern Europe (Federici 2004: 146). She pays particular attention to the particular mode in which female bodies were remade as machines for the reproduction of labor.

In the opening scene, Machiko and Yamaoka proceed on an unfamiliar road that leads them beyond the outskirts of Koga, a city bordering Ibaraki and Tochigi prefecture, and closer to the towering levees. After climbing up the steep levee, Machiko takes her own experience of standing atop the levee and in turn invites the reader to bear witness to the story unfolding through the landscape.

> 今、私達が立っている堤防は黄褐色の単調な色を持って、右へ左へと遠く延びて行って、遂には何処まで伸びているのか見定めもつかない。しかも堤防外のすべてのものは、それによって遮りつくされてただようように一二ヶ所ずつ木の茂みが、低く暗緑の頭を出しているばかりである。堤防のないは一面に黄色な枯れ葦に領された広大な窪地であった。
>
> Standing atop the levee, the land stretched far out to the right and to the left in a monochromatic shade of ocher. We were unable to discern just how far it continued. And with the exception of the levee, the only thing that obstructed the view was one or two short trees popping their dark, hunter green heads from out of the boundless sea of ocher. The interior of the levee was a huge basin that had been taken over by withered yellow reeds. (Itō 1918: 282-283)

It is through the experience of navigating unfamiliar roads that Machiko becomes acquainted with the monochromatic reed beds and clusters of hunter green trees. As she moves through the space, she develops a connection with the local elements and joins together in a polyvocal story about the ruptures toxins create in life-sustaining material exchanges. The monochromatic sea of ocher stretches out as far as the horizon, attesting to the paucity of life in the region; it communicates the struggles to sustain life amidst the copper mine effluents. Canals and reservoirs were assembled to mitigate the effects of mine pollution, but result in violent interruptions to material exchanges over an area that exceeds the range of vision.

From atop the levee, Machiko bears witness to the “infertile desert” that resembles the scene after the 1896 floods (1897: 5). Deep green trees stand out as an anomalous presence in a

barren and deserted landscape that bears little other sign of life. From this vantage point, this is all that remains of the village that had consumed Machiko's thoughts for months on end. Surveying the desolate scene from the standpoint of the towering embankment, Machiko presumes that all life forms have been crowded out by the colonies of withered yellow reeds. As Machiko and Yamaoka continue walking along the narrow path and move through the space of the basin, however, the reeds become sparser, revealing a complex system of irrigation canals and confirming that the land has indeed been heavily cultivated by hand. These traces of working with the soil were invisible from atop the lofty levee, but walking through the basin unearths a different tale, one of a fertile plain narrated in the spaces unoccupied by clusters of reeds.

> 道の片側にはきれいに耕された広い畑が続いていて、麦が播いてあったり、見事な菜園になっていたりする。畑の周りには低い雑木が生えていたり、小さな薮になっていたりして、今、橋のそばで見てきた景色とは、かなりかけ離れた、近くに人の住むらしい、やや温かなけはいを感ずる。片側は、直ぐ道に添うて河の流れになっているが、川の向かう岸は丈の高い葦が、丈を揃えてひしひしと生えている。その葦原もまた何処まで拡がっているのか解らない。
>
> On both sides of the path, the beautifully cultivated fields stretched out far and wide. They were planted with barley and gorgeous vegetable gardens. Around the fields were planted an assortment of squat trees or small shrubs. The view I was looking at now was a stark contrast to what I had seen beside the bridge. Here, there was a rather cozy feeling as though people were living in close proximity. There was a stream running just alongside the path and on the opposite bank of the river, tall reeds were sprouting up in tightly knit clusters. The reed bed spread out far beyond where the eye could see. (Itō 1918: 285)

Employing the body as metronome, Machiko navigates a route through the basin as a rhythmanalyst, engaging the senses to listen to the more-than-human stories about living through neo-primitive accumulation. Relationships among the fields, trees, and rivers reorganize themselves in response to the deluge of copper mine toxins. In the process, they establish a relationship based on a logic of sustaining vital material exchanges rather than the extractive logic of colonial-capitalism.

Corporeal immersion within the site of Yanaka is the technique Itō employs, through the narrator-protagonist of Machiko, to compose a story about the slow violence of copper mine pollution; this story transcends the temporal and spatial density of a spectacle or a crisis (Nixon 2011). As the above passage shows, there are patches of thriving ecologies tucked away within the folds of the undulating infertile desert. Even so, the majority of scenery that Machiko traverses is eerily inanimate. "The frigid gloomy air blew across the surface of the marsh, covered with withered reeds that were completely devoid of life" (Itō 1970: 289). Excavating traces of Yanaka village provides the tools to tell a more-than-human story that testifies to the unspoken violence extractive labor wages on rural villages. The storytelling functions as care work because it refuses to relegate the violence waged in extractive labor to the past. Storytelling resurrects this violence as a present and a future battle. Walter Benjamin captures the vital relationship established in the process of storytelling. "The storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale" (Benjamin 1968: 87). When 'M' tells Machiko about the impending eviction of remaining Yanaka residents, she becomes consumed with the plight of the village and personally sets out to exhume the voices missing in 'M's story. Machiko embarks on a journey where she moves through the interrupted ecologies of Yanaka in order to create a space for the reader to witness the slow violence of copper mine pollution, as experienced in and on the ground.

At the former site of Yanaka village, Machiko witnesses how, in the words of Henri Lefebvre, "everyday life has lost the quality and vigor it once possessed, and dissipated, like the space that has been smashed to bits and then sold in pieces" (Lefebvre 2014: 685). Trekking

through a silent environment and listening to the smashed bits and pieces of the village provides a new perspective on everyday life in the region. “Just considering what she could see, there was no indication that trees or grass were growing because there was not a single insect around. There were just withered reeds that were lifelessly tossed around in the wind” (Itō 1970: 290). The sound of the wind passing through the withered reeds, however, gestures towards the reemergence of toxins that ripple throughout the region years beyond the *Yomiuri Shimbun*’s headlines of devastating floods.

Multi-species Settler-Colonialism

The previous section illustrates how Machiko uses her body as a metronomic tool, measuring the spatial and temporal scale of the rifts in material exchanges resulting from copper extractions. This section examines how the knowledge acquired from the site of Yanaka equips Machiko with the tools to tell the story of settler-colonialism, which begins with the dispossession of land. As a rhythmanalyst, Machiko tells a multi-species story of settler-colonialism where farmers, reeds, levees, and toxic waters co-produce a bleak landscape saturated in yellow ocher.

I propose that this multi-species story of settler-colonialism identifies copper as an agent of land dispossession. As an act of care work, this gestures to the number of untold stories about neo-primitive accumulation that occur on a daily basis. The material properties of copper as an electrical conduit meant it served as the mineral foundation to achieve the dual objectives of the Meiji government: “civilization and enlightenment” and “rich country and strong military.”

Copper was used to construct the definitive elements of modern civilization including electricity, railroads, and telegraph lines; it was also used to manufacture the materials to wage imperial wars including ammunition, arms, and ships. The area around the rich veins of copper in Ashio had long been subsumed for the purpose of copper extraction and refinery. Rosa Luxemburg argues that imperialism facilitates the exponential growth of capitalist accumulation. "Expansion becomes a condition of existence. A growing tendency towards reproduction at a progressively increasing scale thus ensues, which spreads automatically like a tidal wave over ever larger surfaces of reproduction" (2015: 40-41). As the rate of copper extraction increased to meet demand for the mineral, progressively larger tracts of land were annihilated as a result. Expanded production intensified the mine pollution problem along the Watarase River Valley and, in turn, led to the 1907 destruction of Yanaka village. As seen in "Tenki," dispossession hits the region like a tidal wave, leaving wasteland and damaged bodies in its wake.

The annexation of Yanaka transpired over several decades and enlisted a multi-species army; this army included copper-laden water, common reeds (phragmites australis), and landless farmers. Indigenous studies scholar Greg Coulthard argues that "reestablishing the colonial relation of dispossession as a co-foundational feature of our understanding of and critical engagement with capitalism opens up the possibility of developing a more ecologically attentive critique of colonial-capitalist accumulation" (Coulthard 2014: 14). Coulthard proposes a practice of what he calls 'grounded normativity' as a way to live in opposition to value based relationships. Grounded normativity is a place-based knowledge that informs ways of "living our lives in relation to one another and our surroundings in a respectful, non dominating and non

exploitative way" (Coulthard 2014: 60).[84] This practice of grounded normativity emphasizes the mutual obligations among life forms to sustain one another in reciprocal relationships. It counters the destructive tendencies of colonial-capital accumulation and is oriented towards the futurity of life. Machiko takes her knowledge of Yanaka and translates it into a story about multi-species settler-colonialism; it warns of the perils of neo-primitive accumulation, but also maps out spaces where interrelations, based on reciprocity to sustain life.

When Yanaka was chosen as the site for the massive reservoir, the entire area was reorganized to contain the effluents from the Ashio copper mine. Lofty levees eclipsed rice paddies, fertile fields, and human abodes in what 'M' refers to as a form of water torture (*mizuzeme*) (Itō 1970: 296). The scale of the living organisms adjusted to the engineered landscape and it conjured a sense of melancholy in Machiko. She stumbled upon traces of a thriving ecology, but a new order had annihilated the vibrant life that once inhabited the Tochigi plains.

> この先の見透かしもつかないような広い土地—今はこうして枯れ葦に領されたこの広い土地—に、かつてはどれだけの生きものがはぐくまれたであろう。人も草木も鳥も虫もすべての者が。だが、今はそれ等のすべてが奪われてしまったのだ。そして土地は衰え果ててもとのままに横たわっている。
>
> 「なぜこのように広い、その豊饒な土地をこんなに惨めに殺したものだろう？」
>
> This vast open space that stretched out as far as the eye could see—This expansive land that was now dominated by withered reeds—how many living organisms were once cultivated in this earth? This earth nourished people, plant life, birds, and insects. But now all those life forms had been dispossessed of their lands. The land was completely withered and exhausted, covering a vast space as before.
>
> "Why would someone reprehensibly destroy such a large tract of rich land?" (Itō 1918: 291)

[84] "Place is a way of knowing, of experiencing and relation to the world and with others; and sometimes these relational practices and forms of knowledge guide forms of resistance against other rationalization of the world that threaten to erase or destroy our senses of place…"land" (or dè) is translated in relational terms as that which encompasses not only the land (understood here as material), but also people and animals, rocks and trees, lakes and rivers, and so on. Seen in this light, we are as much a part of the land as any other element" (Coulthard 2014: 61).

The reeds are phragmites which are invasive, perennial plants. The sentence that describes the land dominated, or colonized, by reeds is written in the passive form with the agent, identified with the particle *ni*, as the withered reeds. Kota Inoue argues that the children's literature of Miyazawa Kenji is narrated "from the viewpoint of the indigenous plants and animals, [where] the settlers are unwelcome colonial invaders" (Inoue 2012: 198). In "Tenki," the colonial invaders take the corporeal form of phragmites, concrete levees, and landless farmers. Employing her body as a tool to listen to the polyphonic soundscape of the plain, Machiko begins to understand that she needs to write a story about the entwined processes of dispossession and settler-colonialism. The construction of the massive reservoir and system of levees transformed Yanaka into a marshland where reeds sprout in dense clusters and asphyxiate the diverse plant life that once painted the landscape in an assortment of colors.

Settler-colonialism transforms the material exchanges in a particular locale and, at the same time, affects places further afield. The Meiji government implemented 'forced migration projects' (*kyōsei ijyū*) that enlisted 'patriotic pioneers' (*tondenhei*) in the 1869 colonization of the Ainu territory of Ezo, renaming it Hokkaido. Michele Mason traces the process in which indigenous Ainu inhabitants were written out of Japanese national history in efforts to paint Hokkaido as a *terra nullius* (Mason 2012).[85] In the penultimate chapter of volume one of

[85] Mason reads the literature of Kunikida Doppo and Arishima Takeo to think through the settler-colonial philosophy that consumed the northern island into the national territory of Japan (Mason 2012). Environmental historian Brett Walker argues that the Wajinchi-Ezochi Line was porous because of the mutual dependence established in the exchange of abalone, herring, kelp and firewood beginning in the seventeenth century (Walker 2001). The process of writing indigenous inhabitants out of national history is a pattern that can be traced in a large body of scholarship including, but not limited to works mentioned here. For an overview of how the United States has consistently obscured indigenous nations in a national history, see Dunbar-Ortiz 2014. For an analysis of the use of settler-colonialism in the United States, particularly the process of 'manifest domesticity,' see Kaplan 2002. For a discussion of the indigenous led environmental movement in the United States, see Gilio-Whitaker 2019 and Redness 2020.

Capital, Marx depicts the inherent connection between colonialism, or the dispossession of land, and capital accumulation (Marx 1967). This intrinsic connection is the focus of Rosa Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital*, it is what Glenn Coulthard's concept of grounded normativity works to unearth, and this is the interconnection that Itō's care work of storytelling highlights. Itō triangulates the connections between colonialism, capitalism, and primitive accumulation in her storytelling. In the above passage t the reeds are given agency, but in a later passage the spaces between the reeds open up to reveal a concurrent story of the settler-colonial occupation of spaces outside Yanaka as a result of the copper mine pollution.

> いつか土手に添うた畑地はなくなって、土手のすぐ下の沿岸の、疎らになった葦間に、見窄らしい小舟がつなぎもせずに乗り捨ててあったり、破れた船が置きざりにされてあると見てゆくうちに、人の背丈の半ばにも及ばないような低い、竹とむしろでようやくに小屋の形をしたものが、腐れかかって残っていたりする、長い堤防は人気のない沼の中をうねり曲って、どこまでも続いている。
>
> At some point the fields alongside the embankment dwindled and from in-between the spaces of the sparsely growing reeds, was a dilapidated boat that had been abandoned on the shore just below the dam. As we approached to take a look at the rotten boat that had been abandoned, objects that appeared to be huts made of nothing more than bamboo and woven straw mats were left behind to rot. The long levee meandered endlessly through the lifeless marsh. (Itō 1918: 293)

The dense clusters of phragmites dwindle and reveal the story of copper pollution that displaces farmers who once shaped the landscape with their tools and cultivated the rich Tochigi plains. Historian Matsūra Hideko draws a connection between the Ashio copper mine pollution problem and the deluge of new emigrants to Saroma village in Hokkaido (Matsūra 2014). The so-called 'era of development' (*kaitaiku jidai*) that marks Japan's imperial expansion encouraged dispossessed farmers to 'develop' (*kaitaku*) unfamiliar land with an incentive to become

landowners within three years if they successfully cleared arable land.[86] The dilapidated boat and huts are testimonial to the vibrant life that this earth once sustained, but the copper pollution deployed them to Hokkaido as part of the imperial project. "Tenki" is a multi-species story of settler-colonialism precipitated by the Ashio copper mine pollution.

Composing Subterranean Soundscapes

Walking through the terrain of Yanaka village equips Itō, through the protagonist of Machiko, with the tools to compose landscapes that speak to the subterranean soundscapes of copper ore extraction. I use the term subterranean soundscapes to refer to the environmental repercussions of extracting minerals from the bowels of the earth. These are the ecological footprints of copper mining on the space-time of Yanaka. The subterranean soundscapes that Itō composes in "Tenki" speak directly to Yanaka village, but also gesture towards the countless villages within and beyond the Japanese archipelago that suffer the metabolic rifts generated in copper extraction and multi-species settler-colonialism. Immersing her bare feet in the frigid mud, Machiko engages her senses through a rhythmanalaysis that captures experiences that escape the visual. She captures the slow violence that emerges from in consequence of the extraction of minerals several hundreds of miles away.

The aural composition of subterranean soundscapes is a language of 'free life' politics. The dispossession and multi-species settler-colonialism had sapped the life from the land and people in Yanaka. When Machiko and Yamaoka had reached 'S's residence, he was not present

[86] For a literary depiction of the deployment of patriotic pioneers to the frontier of Ezo (Hokkaido) and landless Korean farmers to Kando (Manchuria) see the literature of Hirabayashi Taiko, Kang Kyongae, Yi Kiyong, Ch'ae Sohae, Arishima Takeo, Nakano Shigeharu, and Kobayashi Takiji.

but the space itself inspire a life politics that combat the destructive tendencies of colonial-capitalism. “There was the wretched poverty of the house, the bleak landscape outside, and on top of everything, there was the onerous road to get there. It was so remote from any human habitations, it was an indescribably destitute existence. It was a life of painful isolation” (Itō 1970: 325). The atomization of Yanaka residents imped the ability to maintain community, directly affecting the reciprocal relationships that sustain life. But, when Yamaoka places his walking stick in the sludge and both Machiko and Yamaoka sink their bare feet into the mud of the toxic earth, they immerse themselves in the symphony of sounds that speak to the subtle ways that toxins reemerge from the soil. When Machiko and Yamaoka return to the outskirts of Koga city, “the breeze grew frigid and the sounds of their *geta* intertwined with the sound of bamboo leaves that brushed against the side of the path” (Itō 1970: 329). The aural details facilitate a storytelling that cares for more than human bodies. It speaks to the “temporal latency” that mineral extraction wages upon sustainable ecologies and challenges the very notion of engineering a solution to an ecological crisis (Murphy 2013).

Machiko immerses herself in the site of copper mine pollution and invites the reader to experience this strange life. It requires assimilating to a peculiar rhythm in the everyday, one that has been intercepted by toxic copper particles. Machiko and Yamaoka witness and converse with remaining villagers who continue to till the earth as they had before the copper mine pollution became an issue. “The majority of people assimilate quickly to an unconventional life, life goes on without much conflict” (Itō 1970: 330).[87] Residents of Yanaka village had been dispossessed of their land, but they persevere and seek plots of arable land to local ecologies. “Tenki” traces

[87] 大部分の人間は、異なった生活をすれば、直ぐその生活に同化してしまうことができるんで、世の中はまだ無事なんだよ. (Itō 1970: 330).

the ecological violence of copper ore extraction through the figure of Machiko, a rhythmanalayst. In her story of multi-species settler-colonialism that transform Yanaka and lands far afield, Itō asserts a life politics that embraces organisms beyond the human. Trekking through the engineered landscape of the former site of Yanaka provides the tools for an ecological materialist mode of storytelling and function as an act of care for the land and bodies ravaged by the imperial extraction of copper ore.

Early Experiments in an Epistemology of Extraction

In 1928, the young writer Matsuda Tokiko (1905-2004) emerged on the literary scene when her poem “Chibusa" (Breast) and "Nigeta musume” (Runaway Girl) appeared in the April and May issues of *Bungei kōron* (Literary Criticism). In June, Matsuda’s short story “Umu” (Giving Birth) was selected for publication by the *Yomiuri Shinbun*.[88] Matsuda published two poems in the October edition of the leftist journal *Senki* (Battle Flag): “Shiki no Musume” (Mineshaft Girls) and “Haha yo” (Mama!). In these inaugural works, Matsuda stakes her claim as an artist who is invested in shedding light upon the social injustice endured by unwaged and re/productive workers. More specifically, these works describe the socio-political milieu that engenders a violence aimed at female laboring bodies. By the 1920s, the role female workers

[88] Matsuda’s submission was in response to an advertisement calling for literary submissions to commemorate the *Yomiuri Shimbun*’s fiftieth anniversary. *Umu* was published on June 4, 1928 in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. Given the large readership of the newspaper, “Umu” received a wider audience than other works published in smaller venues in 1928 and consequently, sometimes “Umu” is incorrectly referred to as her maiden work. Her first publication was in April 1928 of her poem “Chibusa” (Breast) in *Bungei kōron* (Literary Criticism). This was followed by her short story entitled “Nigeta musume” (Runaway Girl) published in May 1928 of the same journal. In October 1928, Matsdua’s poems “Shiki no Musume” (Mineshaft Girls) and “Haha yo” (Mama!) were published in the leftist journal *Senki* (Battle Flag). For more details on the publication history of Matsuda’s early stories see *Matsuda Tokiko jisenshū: Onna no mita yume: vol.3*, especially pp. 359-365. For details on the publication of Matsuda’s poems see NPB, vol. 38 especially pp. 380-390.

played in Japan's sericulture and textile mills was a topic of fiction and non-fiction writing, but the voices of women and girls from the mines remains relatively inaudible.[89] In the opening stanza of her poem "Shiki no musume," Matsuda carves out a space for the collective voice of female ore haulers to ring out from the depths of the pitch black mine tunnels.

私達は手子だ
坑夫の掘り出した鉱石を運ぶ
私達は運搬婦、私達は坑内の娘だ。

私達は暗黒の中を雌鷹の様に易々と飛ぶ。
監督も、坑夫も支柱夫も捲揚機械夫も
奈落に導く竪坑も恐れはしない。

We are equipped with small hands
We carry the ore that miners dig up
We are the women haulers, we are the girls of the mineshaft.
We fly with ease like female falcons through the darkness
Just like the foremen, the miners, the carpenters, and the machine operators
We do not fear the mine shafts that lead into the hellish depths of the earth. (Matsuda 1928: 381-382)

The repetitive use of the collective first-person subject, the female ore haulers, asserts the mineshaft girls as the dominant narrative voice. At the same time, this repetition lays claim to their central role in extractive labor. The mineshaft girls are suited to working in the mineshafts, "equipped with small hands" and gifted with a keen sense of proprioception that allows them to "fly with ease like female falcons through the darkness" (1928: 381). They have been recruited

[89] Hosoi Wakizō published *Jokō aishi* (The Tragic History of Female Factory Workers) in 1924 in the journal *Kaizō* (Restructure). Hosoi began working at the young age of thirteen and held a number of jobs before he began writing poems and novels at the age of twenty three. *Jokō aishi* is a long piece of reportage detailing the labor conditions of women working in the textile mills. Another important piece about the plight of female workers in the spinning mills is Sakura Takuji's reportage entitled *Seishi jokō gyakutaishi* (Mistreatment of Female Workers in the Spinning Mills) published in 1927 in *Kaihō gunsho* (Liberal Writings).
For more works of reportage, see volumes 33 and 34 for a selection of works that address issues including unsanitary dormitories, dangerous working conditions, labor strikes, firing of injured employees, and disputes between fishermen and farmers and landowners, NPB, vols. 33 and 34.

by labor contractors for their physiological attributes as well as their psychological stamina, a strength that steadies their gait as they trudge down into the tunnels "that lead into the hellish depths of the earth"(1928: 381). The word *naraku* (奈落) comes from the Sanskrit word for hell, with deep roots in Buddhist theology, but also communicates the horrific working conditions in the mine pits. In this poem, I translate *naraku* as "hellish depths of the earth" to maintain the dual significance of the word: these dark narrow tunnels posed a threat to the physical and psychological well-being of the mineshaft girls.[90] "Shiki no musume" vocalizes the courage, fear, and pride that the mineshaft girls felt as they hauled heavy ore from the bottom of the shaft up to the mouth of the mine.

This poem displaces male laborers (foremen, miners, carpenters, and machine operators) from the heart of mining work and locates them on the same plane as the mineshaft girls. Inside this subterranean space, male and female workers navigate similar physical dangers while submerged in the darkness: unstable mine supports, falling rocks, unpredictable explosions, and seismic tremors that trigger deadly cave-ins. Regardless of gender, underground laborers must summon courage to protect their own lives as they walk around the entrails of workmates torn to shreds by unforeseen rockfall or step over corpses. "Shiki no Musume" shines light on the gendered violence women and girls experience when working in close proximity to lecherous supervisors, carpenters, and miners inside dimly lit spaces. The sense of danger from sexual violence is palpable; mining mothers offer advice to their daughters to keep fighting while they

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[90] Matsuda's literature about mining does not mention much about the role of spiritual beliefs or folk tales surrounding the space of the underground. For a postwar exploration of the ideas about the underworld in the context of the northern Kyūshū coal mines, see the writings of Morisaki Kazue.
Morisaki Kazue. *Naraku no Kamigami: Tankō rōdō seishinshi* (*The Gods of Hell: A History of the Spiritual Beliefs of Coal Mine Workers*. 奈落の神々 : 炭坑労働精神史). Tokyo: 1974.

are still alive. This poem depicts the mineshafts as a space rife with dangers, for male and female miners, and emphasizes the sexual violence that female miners face. It also presents this space as the starting point for reimagining the epistemology of extraction from the ground up. The physical and psychological strength that makes the mineshaft girls suited for this kind of labor also prepares them with the skills to re-purpose their mining tools. Rather than using these tools to meet the daily quota, Matsuda ends the poem with a scene where the mineshaft girls grasp their tools and use them to violently disrupt colonial-capital rhythms and shatter the logic of extractive labor.

"Shiki no musume" foregrounds the physical and sexual precariousness of the laborers who push ore out from the dark mine tunnels. What changes by 1931, I propose, is that Matsuda's epistemology of extraction has expanded from an anthropocentric materialism to a feminist ecological materialism. In other words, her narratives expand to recount the stories of more-than-human lives that are consumed in the process of ore extraction; she tells stories about the corporeal, mental, and environmental repercussions when mineral treasures are uprooted from the earth. Published in a 1931 edition of *Jyonin Geijutsu* (Women's Arts), Matsuda's poem "Jitto suwatteiru Akahageyama" (The Stoic Akahageyama) is a work that words "immerses itself in everyday life" (Lefebvre 2014: 46). This poem emphatically declares its standpoint as "here" (*koko*) in "our hometown" (*furusato*) in the Arakawa region of Akita Prefecture with a clear view of the familiar Akahageyama. The Sino-Japanese characters that comprise the mountain's name are "red" (*aka*) "bald" (*hage*) "mountain" (*yama*) (1931: 382-384). There is, in fact, a mini 'mountain' (standing at 54 meters) near the Arakawa copper mines where Matsuda was born and raised, but this combination of characters may also refer to any mountains denuded from logging

and/or “smoke pollution” (*baien mondai*).[91] While I read “Jitto suwatteiru Akahageyama” as a portrait of the unique site of Arakawa, I also read it as a testimony to the number of sustainable ecologies that have been degraded as a result of copper ore extraction.

This poem captures the struggle to sustain life in and around the copper mining region, poignantly marked by the treeless Akahageyama. The central concern of this poem is the (un)sustainability of local ecologies within the parameters of a colonial-capital extractive economy. The opening line presents the reader with evidence of an environmental crisis and the second line confronts the reader with the tragic consequences of remaining silent and complacent during this slow catastrophe. This first stanza calls attention to the fact that sustainable ecologies are destabilized by invisible mine pollutants.

じっと座っている赤禿山
お前は言わぬ
ズングリ背の太い二本の煙突
お前は言わぬ
鉱石の洗濯に汚れた川は
ダクダクと唯流れるばかりだ
墓場、幾千と知らぬ俺等の仲間が
半ば腐り
カラカラの骨になり
幾千の板片にあせた文字となって
空しくーーおお、一ト度も叫ばない私等の仲間が

[91] Construction projects facilitated the rapid industrialization in the first decades of the Meiji period and placed a heightened pressure on the woodlands of the archipelago, leading to what David Fedman notes as the “appearance of ‘bald mountains’ (*hageyama*)” (Fedman 2020: 28). Fedman’s monograph traces the role of ‘bald mountains’ in the Japanese imperial project of forestry that began with the annexation of the peninsula and notes how “on the heels of timber moved a variety of minerals that markedly expanded the material (and pollutive) footprint of regional commerce” (Fedman 2020: 131). Matsuda’s Arakawan works, particularly the longer monograph *Orin no kuden* (Orin’s Tale) vividly portrays the local ecological degradation resulting from mineral extraction. This will be incorporated in a revision of this chapter into a monograph.

Akahageyama stoically stands firm[92]
You remain silent
With two thick chimneys rising from its broad ridge
You remain silent
The river has become polluted with the washing of ore
And just keeps flowing with a *daku daku* sound
In the cemetery, thousands of our unknown comrades
Lie in a state of half-decay
Becoming parched bones that rattle *kara kara*
Becoming thousands of wooden planks with faded characters
Lifeless—Oh, never again
Will our comrades cry out (Matsuda1931: 382)

The narrative voice switches between the third person, outlining the peculiar sights of a hometown that has become a kind of wasteland, and the second person, implicating the reader as a participant in the engineered landscape. Akahageyama's profile is refashioned, with "two thick chimneys rising from its broad ridge" to release the toxic smoke from the refinery room (1931: 382). The residue settles as sediment in the river, becoming "polluted with the washing of ore" (1931: 382). The *daku daku* sound of the river flowing downstream deludes the passive witness into believing that nothing is awry, but the color of the river speaks to the tailings that cause rice plants to wither, silkworms to die, and fish to suffocate in the water (Walker 2010). The "parched bones" of "thousands of our unknown comrades" who "lie in a state of half-decay" underlines the human collateral damage with a *kara kara* sound (1931: 382). Matsuda's epistemology of extraction has undergone a marked revision to move beyond a narrow focus on the corporeal degradation of female mineworkers. Here, Matsuda employs a feminist ecological materialism and her poem is informed by the interrelations that coevolve on and within the grounds of the Arakawa mines.

[92] 赤禿山=Akahageyama, literally means 'Red Bald Mountain' which is a 54 meter 'mountain' near the Arakawa copper mines, though this term can be used to refer to treeless mountains that have been denuded as a result of deforestation, erosion, acid rains, and/or swidden agricultural practices.

Matsuda presents a new way of seeing the networks that co-produce the ecologies on and below the ground in “Jitto suwatteiru Akahageyama.” This ecomaterialist mode of storytelling is an act of care work for the local ecologies of Arakawa. As such, it calls for a reconsideration of the modes of extraction in order to resist the extractive labor employed in this remote region of Akita. The poem embarks on a survey of the region, assessing the condition of the soils, the woodlands, the mountains, and the rivers; it is a survey that resists the foundational principles of government land surveys that aim to expropriate peasants from fertile lands in order to extract profits for the state.

ハッパ！
おお聞け
カラミもはじける
ベルトは血と指にひた鳴り
鑿岩機は地殻に反響する

お前は言わぬ
山吹色の鉱石
お前は言わぬ
赤紫色の鉱脈
だがーー守らねばならぬ
此処は城基

The dynamite explodes with a *happa*!
Listen carefully
It has blown apart the slag heaps
The region seethes with blood and guts
The rock drill reverberates throughout the earth’s crust[93]

You remain silent
Bright golden yellow ore
You remain silent
Reddish-purple veins
Nonetheless——You must protect them both
This is our fortress (Matsuda 1931: 383)

[93] Reverberation is written as 反響 (はんきょう) and glossed with the hiragana こだま (木霊). This word also as the meaning of the Kodama spirit believed to live in certain trees in Japanese folklore. According to the folklore, when you cut down a tree that houses a Kodama spirit, you bring misfortune upon yourself.

The sound of the dynamite, "*happa*," is one sonic representation of a violent rupture intrinsic to the pursuit of ore, violently transforming everyday ecologies above and below ground. The sudden explosion unnerves the reader, startling them into a new consciousness that is attuned to subtle signs of corroded life cycles. The explosive *happa* makes it impossible to calmly sit back and listen to the *daku daku* of the river and the *kara kara* of decaying bones; these sounds of a contaminated local habitat signal the presence of heavy metals in the waterways and sulfur dioxide in the air. These toxic elements are blasted out from the slag heaps and introduced to the soil, water, and atmosphere.

Arakawa, the "here" in "Jitto suwatteiru Akahageyama," "seethes with blood and guts" from rock drills that ferociously tear through bedrock in search for "bright golden yellow ore" (1931: 383). The vibrations of the rock drill send seismic waves throughout the earth's crust, destabilizing the very foundation of terrestrial life and compromising the integrity of the underground tunnels. Matsuda likens the earth's veins of "bright golden yellow ore" to the "reddish-purple veins" that sustain life in animals, humans, and plants (1931: 383). These two stanzas propose a mode of care work that tend to the entangled life forms existing around Akahageyama; this unwaged labor participates in the fortification of the mine workers' "fortress," the starting point for a revolution where the miners subvert the colonial-capital rhythms of copper ore extraction and actively construct a new way of coexisting at the base of Akahageyama (1931: 383).

The Territory of Arakawans

Matsuda was born and raised in the Arakawa copper mining region of Akita Prefecture, and she draws upon this lived experience as the raw material for her creative works. Her creative works are populated with fellow residents of Akita including labor contractors, female ore sorters, construction workers, miners, factory workers, and farmers. These characters are firmly rooted in the topography of Akita Prefecture; they demonstrate knowledge about the properties of the soil, are familiar with the labyrinth of subterranean tunnels, and they converse in Akita dialect, rife with mining-specific terminology.[94] Arawakans (*Arakawashū*) played an essential role in the material development of infrastructure for the Japanese empire and yet, their everyday experiences are largely absent from the national history of Japan and its imperial expansion.[95] Matsuda's literature reclaims a space for the Arakawans in the story of Japan's rapid industrialization and imperial expansion.

In telling the story of the Arakawans, Matsuda writes against the mythology of the "treasure mountain" of Akita as terra nullius and relates the personal histories that provided the material for electric lines, railway tracks, and munitions (Salleh 2009). Matsuda received the eighth Tamura Toshiko Literary Prize in 1967 and the first Kobayashi Takiji-Miyamoto Yuriko

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[94] In order to make the labor-specific terminology accessible to urban readers, Matsuda often provides an intertextual explanation of terms or phrases that would be foreign to a populace who had not experienced the hardships of living and laboring in the mines.

[95] In the afterword she wrote to *Orin kuden* in 1974, Matsuda laments the fact that the only academic consideration of the people who were born and raised in Akita has been "from a contemporary scientific point of view, they have studied the histories of elderly mountain villagers and miners from Akita, where Orin lived. But my perspective comes from my own corporeal experience of have been born and raised in the mines where Orin lived" (Matsuda 2004: 435).

Literary Prize in 1969 for her postwar novel *Orin kuden* (Orin's Tale).[96] As recipient of two literary prizes, *Orin kuden* is Matsuda's most well-known work.[97] This extensive novel is a fictional biography that traces the life of the protagonist Orin. The opening scene of the novel accompanies Orin, the orphaned daughter of a ruined landlord, on the journey from her impoverished farming village to the Arakawa copper mines. Her nephew and his wife have made arrangements for Orin to marry the labor contractor, who also manages a bunkhouse in Arakawa. Just prior to reaching the guard post at the entrance of the mines, Orin looks up and "at that moment the evening sun set *Hageyama* aglow, with its chimneys standing tall. Plumes of smoke poured out of the chimneys, whittling away at the bald face of the mountain" (2004(2): 21). This postwar novel is filled with elements that are present in her 1930s short stories; these early works are where Matsuda develops the methodology to write about the experience of working in and around the mines.

In January of 1974, Shin Nippon Shuppansha published a new edition of *Orin kuden* that appended a new afterword to the novel that was written by the author herself. In the afterword, Matsuda explains that *Orin kuden* is the result of her long-held "desire" (*ganbō*) to relate the untold stories of thousands of women through its protagonist, Orin (2004(1): 441). The power of Matsuda's writing is its recognition of the limits of her own knowledge, or "standpoint" (*kanten*), "as someone who had personally been born and raised in the very mines where Orin lived"

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[96] *Orin kuden* was originally published in two separate volumes by *Bunka Hyōron* (Cultural Critique) in January and May of 1966. In May of 1966, Shin Nippon Shuppansha published the two volumes as one single edition in May of 1966. The Tamura Toshiko prize was organized by Yuasa Yoshiko in effort to recognize the important contributions of female authors while the Kobayashi-Miyamoto Literary Prize was awarded by the central committee of the Japanese Communist Party to honor works that carried on the revolutionary tradition of proletarian literary arts from the prewar era; it was also established on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the death of Kobayashi at the hands of police (Matsuda 2004: 441-443).

[97] See Mack about the role of Akutagawa literary prize in the valuation of literature in Japan.

(2004(1): 435). In order to overcome the limits of her knowledge, Matsuda shadows the movements of Arakawans as they dig into the earth for copper in pursuit of a mode of storytelling that resists the modern fiction that an individual is disconnected from its natural environment. She writes, "The true lived experience lies below our native land's topsoil (*hyōdo*), down in the depths of the earth (*chitei*) where the blood and sweat of some of our ancestors is still being absorbed" (2004, vol.1: 435). Her process of telling stories requires a complete immersion in the space of the everyday, where the unpaid work at the bunkhouse sustains the lives of miners and ore sorters despite the exposure to toxic gas and suffocating particulate matter. The everyday is the temporal while the local is the spatial site where the seeds for sustainable life practices are cultivated.

(Re)Productive Work as Temporary Solution

Matsuda's 1933 short story "Hanba de" (In the Bunkhouse) is framed in and around the immediate space of the bunkhouse, tracing the everyday rhythms of (un)paid labor that sustain workers in the Arakawa copper mines. At the age of six, the protagonist, Okinu, lost her mother in a mining accident and she begins living at this bunkhouse near the A mines with her father. The lodge boss, his wife, their daughter, Tatsuko, and the mass of miners become her surrogate family after her father is crushed by a rockfall in the mineshaft. The bulk of the story takes place within the structure of the bunkhouse, describing the everyday chores that change along with the seasons. The domestic work that Okinu performs in the bunkhouse, I propose, sustains life in active resistance to the destructive effects of toxins introduced to local ecologies by ore

extraction and refinery. In contrast to the repetitive monotonous tasks of the miners and ore sorters, (re)productive work is performed in response to the particular condition of the laborers and the environment. In saying this, it is not a solution to the environmental crises generated by copper mining, but it is a practice that fosters alliances and creative alternatives.

The unwaged work in the bunkhouse is the essential work that facilitates ore extraction. The domestic space fuels the expansion of the electric and transportation system throughout the archipelago and provides the raw material for munitions used in imperial wars (Walker 210). Copper ore extracted from the bowels of the earth destabilizes the terrestrial foundation and seeps into the local ecosystems, imperiling future cycles of life. Miners venture into subterranean spaces where access to fresh air and sunlight is limited, short-circuiting the circadian rhythms of the body. The materialization of this rift appears as illness or catastrophic accidents. After the accident that crushed Okinu's father to death, the narrator maps the subterranean space through the sights, scents, and sounds of the tunnels.

> そこは、——- 災害なく暗いところだった。蛍のようなカンテラの光をたよりに、ぽタッ、ぽタッと落ちてくる水の音を聞きながら、あの、ぷうんと生土臭い、鉱石のにおいのする、しめりを帯びた暖かい風のやってくるところへ入って行く時の、そぞろ寒いような気持ち、… 坑口から五六間も奥へ行けば、もうあの丈夫そうな丸太の支柱は、天井にも両側にも見られなくなる———周囲の岩角がしだいにそそり立ってくる。——- さく岩機の気ちがいじみた音響、ハッパの唸り、…それよりも、それらの轟音とともにくだけ、あるいは破裂する岩壁の胴震い。… そして、——— 人間一人がやっと腹んばいになってとおれるぐらいの穴を往復して、何年来同じ鉱脈にタガネをあててゆく手堀坑夫。…ポロッ、ポロッと岩かけが落ちてくる。カンテラの火がゆれる。岩壁には亀裂が生じているのだ。——— が、タガネは打ちこまなければならない。監督がまわってくる。そして行く。——- タガネを打ちこむ。… 頭の上の岩がきしむ。… それは、忍耐強く、忍耐強く ——- 支柱を待って、待ちきれずに、 ——- 落ちる！
>
> ハッパが唸った。

> That place—it is a place of endless darkness. The miner relies upon the firefly-like light of the *kantera* lantern, and as he hears the sounds of water dripping down with the sound *pota pota*, he also catches a whiff of the fresh, pungent earth; it is the scent of ore. When he arrives at a spot where the warm air is tinged with dampness, it somehow feels cold…Walking a mere five or six steps inside the pit of the mine, those sturdy-looking wooden supports start to block the ceiling on both sides —- surrounded entirely by sharp boulders that tower high above — The reverberations perhaps originate from the chaos induced by ripping the boulders to shreds, exploding with a *happa* sound,...this is accompanied by the thunderous sound of something shattering. Perhaps it is the quaking of the exploding rock faces…And so, —- each and every person who passes into and out of the mine really has to muster their courage; the miners dig by hand, year after year, hammering their chisel away at the same vein of ore….the boulders collapse with a *poro poro* sound. The light of the *kantera* lantern flickers. Cracks appear in the rock faces. —- But, they have to keep striking the rock with their chisels. The foreman will make his rounds. And then he'll go on his way. —- Hammering away with the chisel. ….The boulders above their head crumble…They stick it out, hanging on —- pinning their hopes on those supports, that they cannot count on, ——-they're all toppling over!
>
> An explosion, *happa*, resounded throughout the mine. (Matsuda 1933: 115-116)

This expedition into the underground world of the miners is one of the few moments when the narrator ventures beyond the bunkhouse. This scene plays out in Okinu's mind as she mourns her father's death. This passage is punctuated with dashes and ellipses, a montage composed with Arakawan's personal accounts about life in the tunnels. Darkness characterizes the space of the tunnels, so miners rely on aural cues to navigate their way to the ore and away from falling rocks. The *pota pota* sound of dripping water provides details about the rock faces; where the sound of dripping water grows silent indicates locations of crevices and cracks. These are details that remain in the shadows untouched by the tiny "firefly-like light of the *kantera* lantern" and only accessed by miners skilled in the local soundscapes and topographies of the subterranean sphere (1933: 115). Mineral deposits emit a particular scent, that of "fresh, pungent earth," that marks a spot where miners should dig (1933: 115). Following the scent of ore, the miner hammers through the rock to dislodge the precious treasures buried within. The foremen make rounds to assure the docility of the miner's chisel, extracting ore in accordance with the demands of the market economy aboveground. But once he goes on his way, of course, these are moments

when the miner can hammer at a tempo that follows a rhythm outside of those determined by colonial-capital accumulation.

Soundscapes within the tunnels communicate how rock faces and boulders are reshaped by the miners' chisels and explosions of dynamite. Vibrations diffuse through layers of rock and cause exterior layers to tumble down with a *poro poro* or *gu-ra gu-ra*. The booming *happa* of dynamite compromises the structural integrity of the wooden mine supports and rock walls. It is not the darkness that makes these tunnels precarious, it is the incessant reengineering of the subterranean sphere that generates the hazardous conditions. These seismic waves reverberate up through the topsoil and extend horizontally. On the morning Okinu's father died the waves reached Okinu in the bunkhouse and startled her out of sleep with the uneasy feeling that her father would never return home. Years of working inside the tunnels equip miners with an intimate knowledge of the spatial information communicated through sounds like *poro poro* or *gu-ra gu-ra*. These sounds guide them to safety when the lantern flickers. But, as seen in this passage, the tunnels are unreliable sites. The echos occasionally lure miners into precarious spaces under the illusion of safety. Even a miner with years of experience, like Okinu's father, falls prey to a colossal rock collapse.

The montage ends when Okinu tries to imagine what kind of sounds the rocks made before crushing her father to death. This passage speaks to the precarious nature of extractive work. Regardless of mining laws or installation of safety equipment, the fact of the matter is that there is no guarantee of life in the mineshaft or aboveground for miners, they are disposable in the juggernaut of colonial-capital accumulation. Miners are crushed, refinery workers suffocate, and their daughters are sold to labor brokers. The unpaid work Okinu engages in at the

bunkhouse is merely a temporary solution to a structural problem in the logic of extractive labor. It is in this passage that Okinu recognizes the limits to her own ability to sustain life in a domestic colony founded on the logic of an extractive economy. While the (re)productive work of Okinu at the bunkhouse is not able to protect miners from the dangers in the tunnels, it replenishes the exhausted bodies and minds of the laborers. It provides a space where miners forge alliances and collaborate on strategies for a way to break out of the degenerative cycle of copper ore excavation.

In illustrating the temporal and spatial limitations of Okinu's labor, Matsuda bears witness to the challenges local ecologies face in a domestic colony that is organized for the sole purpose of maximizing the rate of copper extraction for the material construction of empire. These objectives affected the Arakawans as well as the local environment of Arakawa itself. The colony of copper in Arakawa was built, owned, and operated by the 'M' Kingdom (Mitsubishi); this kingdom profited on the high quality of the copper ore, particularly during wartime. The narrator is critical of the company's acts of benevolence that are aimed to distract from the local effects of mining pollution: free film screenings, selling sundries at a low price despite national inflation, and selling rice on credit. "Hanba de" details a complex network of corruption orchestrated by the M company that suppresses local farmers' complaints about the "smoke pollution problem" (*baien mondai*) and demands monetary compensation for devastated crops.[98]

The "smoke pollution problem" refers to the sulfur dioxide that poured out from the copper refinery chimneys and fell down as sulfuric acid upon the woodlands, rice paddies, and

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[98] Watanabe discusses the politics of scientific knowledge in relation to two incidents of air pollution petitions in Ehime Prefecture: the Niihama Refinery Pollution Incident of 1893 and the Shisakajima Refinery Pollution Incident of 1905. p. 73.
Watanabe, Takehiro. "Talking Sulfur Dioxide: Air Pollution and the Politics of Science in Late Meiji Japan," in *Japan at Nature's Edge*. pp. 73-89.

farm fields. The high concentrations of sulfuric acid destroyed plant life, leaving damaged crops and denuded mountainsides in its wake. Crops that were not entirely desiccated bore traces of toxicity and presented an ethical problem for the farmers. Twice monthly, the market at the Arakawa mines provided a chance for the local villagers to sell their produce. These markets provided an economic advantage for the impoverished tenant farmers, but one farmer wonders to himself, "How can we possibly have the nerve to go and sell buckets of vegetables and tree roots that have been tainted with copper sulfide?"[99] Because they work with the soil on a daily basis, these farmers were the first to notice the irregularity in growing cycles and agricultural products. But, if the mining bureaucrats heard any of the farmers mention anything about mine pollution, they were criminalized as dangerous agitators and disappeared from the so-called M copper kingdom.

In efforts to dissuade talk about pollution, the M company re-engineered the woodlands to reduce the visible damage to the surrounding woodlands. They instructed mining authorities to plant Oshima cherry trees around the Arakawa mines because, even though they were not native to the region, they were resilient to sulfur dioxide emissions. The narrator describes that more than anything, those Oshima cherry trees "were planted as forged evidence (*kyogi no shōmei*) that the increasing amounts of smoke from the refinery had inflicted no damage on the surrounding rural towns and villages" (1933: 116-117). Removing withered native trees and transplanting healthy robust Oshima cherry trees created the facade of an environment unaffected by the toxic smoke of the refinery. The maintenance of this manufactured woodlands affected the locals' relationship with the surrounding forests. In preparation for the long Akita winters, miners

[99] Matsuda Tokiko. *Hanba de*. p. 117.

and farmers alike cut firewood from the nearby mountains. This sustainable practice threatened the semblance of a forest unaffected by copper mining, consequently, those caught with firewood from the Oshima cherry trees "were shown no mercy"(1933: 116).

The criminalization of sustainable activities accompanies the privatization of land. In "Hanba de," the narrator describes the M kingdom of copper as demarcated with a tall wooden plank fence and each entrance equipped with a guard station. M kingdom is regulated by strict protocol that governs the crossing of "unregistered visitors" and "unsavory characters" (1933: 117). Police and prefectural bureaucrats ensure that "the only thing that passed through the slats of the fence is the poisonous water permeated with chalcanthite (*tanpan*) flowing down the rock cliffs"(1933: 117). Chalcanthite, or blue vitriol, is a naturally occurring copper sulfate mineral that forms in the oxidized layer of copper ore deposits. It appears on the support beams of mine tunnels and the rock faces of the mines. Because it is highly soluble, its toxins are quickly absorbed and spread throughout the local region. The "blue-black color of the river" (*aoguroi kawamizu*) is an unmistakable sign of the presence of toxins in the waterways (2004(1): 13). In her survey of the Arakawa copper mines, the narrator relates these subtle details that indicate the toxic effects of mining on the environment. These details reveal the multiple ways that the M corporation intended to disguise the degradation of the ore-rich land. She notes that police and prefectural bureaucrats were remunerated for rejecting petitions filed by regional farmers who demanded compensation for their ruined harvests. The effects of copper mining on the crops, woodlands, and rivers are indisputable: drilling into the earth and ripping open the veins of ore releases toxic particles into the atmosphere, soil, and waterways. The heavy metals accumulate in the plants and animals affecting the life cycles.

"Hanba de" is a fictional account grounded in an experiential understanding of toxic disruptions in sustainable metabolic exchanges in everyday ecologies. It also reveals the inability of the M kingdom to prevent affected farmers from arriving to negotiate terms of compensation for devastated crops. In a scene in late autumn, several years after Okinu's father's death, Okinu waits in a line of horse-drawn sleds used to transport goods from the villages including rice, miso and soy sauce in exchange for limestone, ore, and charcoal. While hugging the warm lunch boxes she has brought to deliver to the refinery workers, she starts up a conversation with some young folks from the devastated farming villages who have come to demand "compensation" (*baishō*) from the M corporation (1933: 125). Okinu then proceeds to the refinery, the source of the toxic smoke that withers rice plants and denudes mountains.

> 板一枚の下はゴウゴウと無気味な唸り声をあげていた。それはあの山吹色の黄銅鉱や焼鉱が、一定の調合率によって投入される石炭、コークス、石灰石などの熔煤材料とともに瞬間にして沈み、数秒にしてまったくその真紅泥沼にのみこまれ送風機のあおりを受けつつ燃えさかる音だった。
>
> 男たちはここでも頬かむりの鼻ねじり手ぬぐいで、まっ赤な焼銅の照りかえしを受けつつ、身体をしならせ、またのめるような急ぎ足で、ナベトロといっしょに動きまわっていた。
>
> Beneath the wooden planks an eerie moan rang out *gōgō*. In an instant, the bright golden yellow copper pyrite and roasted ore sank into the mixture of charcoal, carbon, and limestone. In a matter of seconds, they were completely swallowed up in the bright crimson quagmire and there was the sound of it continuing to burn with the ventilation from the fan.
>
> The men here also tied a kerchief around their head to protect their nose and face. The molten red copper continued to give shine with a hot glare, causing their bodies to yield to the heat, and move around with the crucible. (Matsuda 1933: 127)

This scene details the hellish conditions that mine workers endure aboveground. Okinu never grew accustomed to the "ferocity of the refinery," where somewhere below "an eerie moan rang out *gōgō*" (1933: 126). This is an otherworldly space where oppressive heat and harsh fumes impede the circulation of oxygen to the lungs of the refinery workers. The invisible fumes are so

powerful that it has permanently singed off the eyebrows of one of the female refinery workers. The cloths they tie over their nose and mouth do little to protect their throat and lungs from the noxious fumes. This glimpse of the refinery is the penultimate scene of "Hanba de." The final scene returns to the bunkhouse where Okinu observes from afar while the miners pepper the lodge boss with questions about the Cottrell Method. The Cottrell Method refers to the electrostatic precipitator designed by Frederick Gardner Cottrell, first used in 1907 to reduce toxic emissions from a refinery in California. The miners are enthusiastic about "the device that you put in the middle of the chimney, right where the smoke comes out, and it pulls out all the toxic gases. If you do something like that, it won't matter which way the wind blows, and it won't matter where the smoke falls, in any case it won't damage the fields or rice paddies" (1933: 128). The lodge boss aloofly responds to the miners who remain blind to the monetary benefits the M company brings to the region, including the installation of electricity sold at a reduced rate, and a steady market to sell agricultural goods. Okinu remains silent throughout this exchange between the miners and the lodge boss. I read this as a refusal to believe that a machine or technology will solve the smoke pollution problem and erase the environmental footprint on the agricultural villages. It is from her own experience of reproductive labor that Okinu came to know the temporal and spatial limits of sustaining life in an area immersed in the toxic effluents of copper extraction.

Conclusion

The effluents that burn foliage and the blue vitriol that tinges the rivers a neon blue signal a new stage of primitive accumulation. These toxins flow through waterways and enter

organisms, impeding the absorption of vital nutrients. This chapter has argued that Itō Noe and Matsuda Tokiko engage in storytelling as a mode of care work by the practice of relating stories of interrelations between human and more-than-humans. They achieve this through a new mode of listening that requires the use of all their senses and a corporeal immersion in the local ecologies. Itō's 1918 short story "Tenki" and Matsuda's story "Hanba de" refuse a a settler-colonial practice of listening that is conditioned for the purpose of accumulating knowledge (Robinson 2020: 72). "Tenki" marks a watershed moment for Itō in her activist and literary career, indicating her shift from a politics of 'free love' to a politics of 'free life.' Matsuda's Arakawan works bear witness to the decay of plant life, the presence of blue vitriol in the watershed, and the degradation of miners' bodies from the standpoint of the bunkhouse. Matsuda invites the readers to consider the "ecological debt" and "embodied debt" accrued in the process of copper ore extraction and proposes a radical reorganization of familiar relationships and colonial-capital economic exchanges in order to imagine sites where life flourishes (Salleh 2009). These stories compose the soundscapes that emerge when copper ore is removed from the earth. The process of refining the ore disperses inorganic particles into the air, soil, and waterways and interrupt the material exchanges that sustain life around copper mines. Itō and Matsuda perceive these arrhythmias in the local ecologies through a multi-sensory immersion in Yanaka and Arakawa, respectively, and invite the reader to consider how new 'co-laborations' emerge in resistance to the destructive tendencies of extractive labor (Lyons 2020).

Chapter Three
(Au): Speculative Rumors of Gold

This chapter explores the literary depiction of the gold rush that swept the Korean Peninsula following the world financial crash of 1929. The Korean gold rush was a moment in time when authors traded their pens for a pickaxe to remake their lives as prospectors, miners, and smugglers (Chŏn 2005: 33). This chapter begins with a discussion of the gold-themed works of Kim Yujŏng (1908-1937). In these stories, prospectors forge fictive kinships as they venture into unfamiliar mountainous terrain. I propose that clandestine gold miners follow sonic cues in order to navigate a safe route to gold veins. The cryptic value of gold, however, leads miners into a kind of trance where they hear phantom noises; these "accidental resonances" lead miners to fatal misconceptions of what threatens the futurity of life (Morris 2008: 99). Next, I consider a novella written by Ch'ae Mansik (1902-1950), the 1937 "Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ" (In the Vicinity of the Train Depot). Here, I examine the capacity of rumors to disrupt the reproductive cycles of life. Rumors spark an insatiable appetite for gold that infiltrates the mind and causes the synapses to misfire, leading the protagonist to have delusional thoughts about the power of gold to transform the everyday. The final part of this chapter continues a discussion of rumors in two 1938 short stories by Hyŏn Kyŏngjun (1909-1950): "Milssu" (Smuggling) and "Penttobakkosog ŭi kŭmgoe " (The Bento Box with the Golden Nugget). I argue that it is the mythic value of gold and the temptation of smuggling gold across the border from Korea to Manchuria that infects the protagonist with a kind of madness that threatens his ability to reproduce the conditions for life.

Collectively, these stories depict how rumors prompt movement across and through the land in a desperate search for gold which, in turn, compromises the very stability of the earth underfoot.

This chapter functions as a counterpoint to the vertical axis of relations explored in chapters one and two and surveys the horizontal ecological entanglements generated by the unearthing of gold ore as depicted in the works of Kim Yujŏng (1908-1937), Ch'ae Mansik (1902-1950), and Hyŏn Kyŏngjun (1909-1950). Gold is, on the one hand, a "solid crystal of value" and on the other hand is a chrysalis of value, a mineral that is constantly undergoing a metamorphosis (Marx I 1967: 113). Gold is central to the story of empire. Speculative rumors about the value of gold embed themselves within the inter-crystalline spaces and imbue the gold ore with a mythological power to transform the everyday. This power sparks an insatiable appetite, triggering an outburst of violence. This violence, in turn, leads to the destruction of arable land, kinships, and familial ties; it undermines the very stability of life cycles on a terrain that has been ruined by swarms of tenant farmers who, infected with gold fever, become settler-colonists. These literary works are populated with clandestine miners, brokers, prospectors, and day laborers who reveal the differential masculinities that emerge within this chaotic era of the gold rush. I argue that the circulation of speculative rumors functions to disrupt life cycles, compromising the very ability to subsist on the land, and let loose a stream of wandering bodies. Listening to these rumors and accepting them as truth, the listeners transform themselves into settler-colonists who relocate to devour the riches rumored to be embedded in the ground below.

Navigating Sonic Cues: Kim Yujŏng's 1935 Stories of Chaos in the Gold Mines

This section focuses on the work of the quintessential Korean author Kim Yujŏng (1908-1937), a writer who is better known for his depictions of bucolic landscapes and the innocence of childhood. I explore the embedded ecological thinking in his stories about the gold mines. Rather than a picturesque portrait of the rural regions on the peninsula, I contend that Kim highlights the chaos that ensues in kinships when the illusion of gold promises an escape from the monotony of the everyday.

Kim as Realist, Kim as Modernist

Kim Yujŏng (1908-1937) was born the seventh of two brothers and six sisters on January 11, 1908 in Sille, a village near the present-day city of Ch'unchŏn in Kangwŏn province. His family was an affluent landowning family who possessed houses in both Sille and Seoul. Kim lost his mother at age six (1914), his father at age eight (1916), and then his elder brother began to squander away the family fortune by drinking and gambling (Woo Hanyong 2013: 46). After learning classical Chinese in Seoul, Kim studied in primary and secondary schools, dropping out several times, before finally graduating in 1929. In 1931, Kim returned to Sille village and began running a night school as part of the "enlightenment movement for rural villages" (*nongch'on kyemong undong*) as well as setting up associations for cattle farmers (*nonguhoe*), the elderly (*noinhoe*), and women (*puinhoe*) (Kim 2019: 526). Once a school was established in his rural hometown, in 1932 Kim began wandering around the gold mines scattered around the region of Yesan, located in Ch'ungnam province. He returned to Seoul to live with his sister in 1933. That same year Kim published a number of short stories including "San'gol nagŭne" (Wanderer in the

Mountain Valleys), published in the March 1933 edition of the magazine C*heilssŏn* (Battlefront), and "The Bachelor and the Fool," published in the September edition of *Sinyŏsŏng* (New Woman). Kim's 1935 story "Sonakpi" (Sudden Rainshower) won the first prize in the *Chosŏn ilbo* (Korea Daily) newspaper's spring literary competition while his 1935 story "Nodaji" (Bonanaza) received an honorable mention in the *Chosŏn chungang ilbo* newspaper's spring literary competition.[100] That same year Kim joined the literary coterie Kuinhoe (Group of Nine), which consisted of members including Chŏng Chiyong (1903-?), Pak T'aewŏn (1910-1986), Yi Sang (1910-1937), and Yi T'aejun (1904-?).[101] Kim's health deteriorated after catching tuberculosis in 1936, but he remained a prolific writer until he passed in 1937.

Kim's stories live on as a tourist attraction in the so-called literature village located in the Sille region of Ch'unchŏn, Kangwŏn province. Scenes from Kim's 1935 "Pom, pom" (Spring, Spring) and his 1936 "Tongbaekkot" (Camellias) are represented in statues dispersed throughout the literature village. These statues crystallize an idealized notion of childhood in the countryside and convey a kind of nostalgia for the space-time of the rural. What these scenes in the literature village fail to capture is the complexity of Kim's storytelling, one that, in the words of Raymond Williams, generates an "ebb and flow of feeling from and to others" (Williams 1977: 167). Williams describes the act of reading and writing literature as an "active and interactive relationship" that invites the reader to dig "thoroughly into its full (and not arbitrarily protected)

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[100] Post-liberation literature and film also engages with gold mining as a source of creative inspiration. Examples include, but are not limited to, the 1953 short story "Wang morae" (Coarse Sand) by Hwang Sunwŏn (1915-2000) and the 1961 film directed by Jeong Chang-hwa (1928-?) entitled *Nodaji* (Bonanza).

[101] The members of Kuinhoe employed a variety of rhetorical techniques, but as Christopher Hanscom notes, in contrast to the overtly political aims of the Korea Artista Proleta Federacio (KAPF), Kuinhoe adhered to the notion of literature as "art for art's sake" (Hanscom 2013: 9). A closer look at the individual artists in the Group of Nine, however, reveals the diverse nature of the group as well as the commonalities with critiques that KAPF writers waged against colonial-capitalism. For detailed studies of members of the Kuinhoe in English, see Christopher P. Hanscom *The Real Modern* (2013) and Janet Poole *When the Future Disappears* (2014).

expressive significance" (1977: 170, 167). The assumption that the written word holds a static meaning disrupts the ebb and flow of feeling generated in Kim's use of humor and satire; it reduces the layered meanings of Kim's texts down to a simple story with a unidirectional narration.[102] Humor and satire function to create characters who embody disparate ethics; these characters challenge readers to consider the very possibility of retaining any semblance of a moral code within the debauchery inherent in gold mining ventures.

In a survey of post-liberation literary critique of Kim Yujŏng in 1950s South Korea, Kim Seryŏng notes three distinct trends in the assessment of Kim's works. The first group of critics essentializes Kim's literature and concludes that its fundamental worth is to convey the "traditional essence of Korea" (*Han'gugŭi chŏnt'ongjŏgin saengni*) (Kim Seryŏng 2013: 307). A second group of critics focuses on the use of humor (*haehak*) and satire (*p'ungja*) as literary devices to communicate the general chaos of 1930s colonial Korea and, simultaneously, demonstrate a profound understanding of "the language of the ethnic nation" (*minjogŭi ŏnŏ*) (2013: 307).[103] The third group of literary critics examines the unique perspective that Kim's stories provide on everyday life in colonial Korea, opening up a site for contemporary readers to engage with the texts and imbue them with new meaning (2013: 308).

Kim Kŭnho separates scholarly research on Kim Yujŏng's rural stories into two distinct categories: one evaluates Kim as a realist who documents the authentic experience of living in

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[102] Bakhtin uses the term heteroglossia to highlight the importance of the context a word is read rather than the static meaning of the written word. For a detailed discussion of techniques to create layered meanings, see the essay "Discourse in the Novel" M.M. Bakhtin *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981).

[103] For a study on the development of *minjok* in the writings of Sin Ch'aeho, see Henry H. Em's chapter "Minjok as a Modern and Democratic Construct" in *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (1999). For a discussion of how historical processes through which a racialized and ethnicized concept of nation arose in Korea, both the "prize and price of ethnic nationalism," see Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea* (2006). For an analysis of the construction of identity and voice in the context of the *minjung* movement in 1970s and 1980s South Korea, see Namhee Lee, *The Making of Nimjung* (2007).

the impoverished countryside under colonial rule; the other employs structuralist theories to an analysis of Kim's literary aesthetics (Kim Kŭnho 2013: 48). As an alternative to these two schools of thought, Kim Kŭnho contends "the narrator as storyteller" (*hwajanŭn iyagikkunin kŏsida*) is a powerful rhetorical device for shaping the readers' emotional perception of the characters in Kim Yujŏng's farm village stories (2013: 50). Accordingly, the charm of Kim Yujŏng's literature is the layering of narrative voices which is achieved through the simultaneity of the acts of storytelling and reading (2013: 51). Kim Kŭnho identifies the storyteller as a kind of shapeshifter: at times the storyteller critiques the characters, while other times the storyteller expresses empathy, and in some occasions the storyteller appears to remain neutral about the observed situation. Kim Kŭnho argues that this results in an amalgamation of narrator and reader, a positionality where the ethical position of the reader is indecipherable from that of the narrator (2013: 71-79).

Yi Kyŏng traces the recurring motif of "failure" (*silp'ae*) in Kim Yujŏng's stories as a means to expose the impossibility of escape from the dual maladies of colonialism and capitalism. Drawing upon Walter Benjamin and Silvia Federici, Yi argues that the recurring failures depicted in Kim's literature are a direct result from the characters' blind faith (*maengsinsŏng*) in the promise of capitalism (Yi 2013: 165). Dispossessed tenant farmers in Kim's work hold onto the belief that they will successfully sell their labor-power and eventually strike it rich, but these always lead to failure. Yi contends that Kim's work reveals the so-called promise of capitalism to be a risky gamble (*tobak*), a complete illusion, (*ch'akkak*), and an utter fantasy (*hwansang*) (2013: 167-168). Not only does this undying faith unleash a mass of landless

tenant farmers out on a perpetual search for a false promise, but it also guarantees their failure to escape the cycle of poverty.

In a discussion of "money = currency" (*ton'= hwap'ye*), Hwang T'aemuk explores the multiple forms that money circulates in Kim's stories including "human trafficking (*insinmaemae*), prostitution (*maech'un*), violence (*p'ongnyŏk*), [and] gambling (*norŭm*)" (2013: 225). Hwang argues that the root source of conflict and tragedy in Kim's stories lies in money when it appears, in Marx's words, as the "glittering incarnation of the very principle of its own life" (Marx I 1967: 133). Kim's stories are inhabited by debtors, gamblers, penny-pinchers, misers, tenant farm managers, gold miners, wanderers, peddlers, and barmaids which, contends Hwang, reflects the profound way that money dominates interpersonal relationships (Hwang 2013: 225-6). Agricultural policies implemented by the government-general exacerbated the debt of impoverishment of tenant farmers, but Hwang proposes that Kim's stories pay less attention to the material circumstances of this poverty. Instead, Kim's stories highlight the inhibitions of characters who are willing to sacrifice anything and everything for money; money has become more valuable than anything and characters surrender their wives, brothers, and their own life for money (2013: 237).

In *The Real Modern*, Christopher P. Hanscom explores how three members of the Kuinhoe (Group of Nine), Pak T'aewon, Kim Yujŏng, and Yi T'aejun, theorize "language as a flawed medium of communication" and utilize "language itself as the material of their art" to communicate their "loss of faith in the capacity of language to represent reality as such" (2013: 10, 14). In a study of Kim Yujŏng's use of language, Hanscom argues that Kim is a modernist writer who employs irony as a tool in response to the "fallibility of language" in the context of

1930s colonial Korea (2013: 17). Irony is an attempt to "overcome the insurmountable and parallel gaps" between the written word and the referent, what Hanscom calls the "crisis of representation in language," and the challenges posed by "intersubjective communication and knowing" (2013: 93). At the heart of Kim's stories, Hanscom contends, is the "continual, oppositional interaction between the two levels of reality," the reality of the everyday and the reality of the "groundless fantasy" (2013: 101, 118). The momentum of the narrative lies within this chasm between the real and the fantastic, between what is written and what is intended.

Building upon the important work of these scholars, I propose that Kim writes stories about the ecological entanglements that emerge when gold is unearthed from the soil. Kim draws upon his experiential knowledge of working in the gold mines, incorporating the sonic realm of illicit and lawful mines, and employs humor as a way to highlight the absurdity of seeking value embodied in the transient "gold-chyrsalis" (Marx I 1967: 130). These are ecological stories because Kim locates the entanglements *between* laboring bodies and gold ore at the heart of the narrative. Interrelations between mining bodies and gold ore produce the kinetic energy that propels the stories forward. Kim's use of humor is a literary tool to highlight the misconception that the origin of all money is in the gold mines (Luxemburg 1917: 164).[104] In framing these stories around the entanglements between laboring bodies and gold ore, Kim underscores the fundamentally *un*sustainable nature of this collaboration and gestures towards the potential of storytelling as functioning to perpetuate the illusion that gold can transform the everyday.

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[104] The problem with gold, as Marx notes in *Capital I*, is that in order for it to be transformed into money, to have any intrinsic value in the market, it must be prevented from circulating. As Luxemburg points out in *The Accumulation of Capital*, his model of simple reproduction, particularly in *Capital II*, does not account for expanded reproduction. In order to reach the genesis of accumulation, the source of demand for the expanded production must be taken into account. More specifically, it is the land and laboring bodies that are subsumed in the process and enables colonial-capital to expand its terrain.

Shattered Kinships in Kim Yujŏng's "Kŭm" (Gold) and "Nodaji" (Bonanza)

"Kŭm" is a short story about a miner, Lee Tŏksun, who smashes his leg to pieces in order to smuggle gold ore out past the heavy surveillance at the entrance to the mineshaft. Although Tŏksun conceives of this act as a solo operation, he requires the assistance of fellow miners to exit the mine, return home, and sell the smuggled ore. "Nodaji" is a short story about a fictional brotherhood forged between Kkongbo and Tŏp'ŏl in order to survive the violent world of clandestine gold mining. In the end, Kkongbo betrays his brother and opts to co-laborate with the latent promise in gold. Both stories trace the corporeal and ecological repercussions of what Lauren Berlant refers to as "cruel optimism." In the context of neoliberal America, Berlant defines cruel optimism as the desire for a particular object that is, in fact, the obstacle to flourishing (Berlant 2011).[105] In this section, I propose that Kim's characters possess a "cruel optimism" in gold and, rather than equipping them with the power to transform the everyday, gold causes these characters to be implicated in the propagation of rumors about the mythic power of gold. Rather than performing care work, in the sector of gold mining, storytelling becomes a colonial-capitalist tool that disseminates the myth of gold around the peninsula. While cruel optimism in gold leads Tŏksun to destroy an appendage that facilitates his means to sustain life, it leads Kkongbo to destroy the brotherhood that facilitates his survival in the hyper-masculine world of illegal mining. The mythic value of gold imbues it with the power to

[105] Berlant's work is about cruel optimism in the context of neoliberal America in the 1990s, but the concept is quite similar to the catastrophes perpetuated by the mythic value of gold.

instigate betrayals, so much so that the storyteller becomes a participant in this fundamentally unsustainable alliance.

The opening line of "Kŭm" locates the reader in the liminal space of the entrance to a gold mineshaft; the narrator describes it as a site of "complete and utter chaos" (Kim 1935: 97). The mineshaft is a portal through which miners and ore constantly flow into and out of the subterranean sphere. Miners crawl out of the shaft, strip naked, and silently line up for inspection as they toss aside their dust-laden coveralls to the next shift of miners. The supervisor looks the nude, dusty miners up and down, eager to apprehend a gold thief. This cycle repeats itself three times a day: energized laborers exchange places with the exhausted laborers who crawl out of the mineshaft. The replenishment of the labor force not only sustains a steady rhythm of ore extraction, but also facilitates an exponential rise in the excavation of high-quality ore. The site is "complete and utter chaos" because the continual circulation of ore out from the mine interrupts circadian rhythms of miners and ore transporters to the point that the solar and seasonal cycles blur to the point of indecipherability. The mineshaft is a place where the "intertwined cycles" of everyday life, nutrients, and commodity production endanger the futurity of life and, at the same time, miners hear promises echoing within the shaft that guarantee an escape from the mayhem of the mines (Lefebvre 2002: 613). The entrance to the gold mineshaft is a time-space where mining bodies and unearthed ore have become thoroughly entangled; "Kŭm" is a story that is narrated from the co-laborative standpoint where laboring bodies and gold ore have amalgamated into a nebulous entity (Lyons 2020). On the one hand, "Kŭm" unearths the inherent violence involved in the process where mining bodies form an alloy with gold ore. On the other hand, "Kŭm" reveals the unlikely alliance of mining bodies and gold ore as a potential means to break

free from the ever-expanding scale of extraction. The simultaneity of these two contradictory significations of the laborer-ore kinship is captured in the polyvocal narrative voice that Kim's irony allows. The reader digs through the strata of meaning to uncover the fundamental unsustainability of this alliance.

The story begins with a series of humorous anecdotes that occur during the routine inspection of the miners following each shift. Differential masculinities among the naked miners emerge under the scrutiny of the supervisor. Old Man Ch'oe, a miner well over sixty years in age, shakes uncontrollably in the numbing cold to the point he loses control of his bladder, drenching the pants of his supervisor. Other miners stand firm against the biting cold of winter while Old Man Ch'oe cowers under the mounting pain of the supervisor's cane and the emasculating laughter of his fellow miners. During inspection, the supervisor and miners engage in a battle of wits, both scheming plots to successfully co-laborate with gold ore. As though letting the reader in on a secret, the narrator shares a number of tactics that miners use to smuggle gold ore. This, in turn, compels the supervisor to sharpen his own tactics of surveillance which miners continue to subvert in more creative means smuggling tactics. Some miners stick ore inside their topknots or wedge it between the woven ropes of their sandals, while others stick it up their bum or choke down chunks of raw ore. Ingesting or lodging raw ore within the soft tissues of the body impedes the circadian rhythms of the body's organs, compromising their basic ability to sustain healthy bodies. These scenes are written with a humorous tone; this emphasizes the instability of *any* relationship founded upon a blind faith in the power of gold to transform the everyday.

The next scene turns to a mountain valley that bursts with vitality, painted in the bright shades of camellia, forsythia, and rhododendron blossoms. This vitality stands in stark contrast to the subterranean space where miners toil, "plagued by nothing but monotonous work" and where, "in the end, [they] are driven into the ground" (Kim 1935: 100). The monotonous rhythms of ore extraction quite literally pounds the life out of the miners. The incessant extraction of ore is fueled with the blood of laboring bodies; the sound of the lifeblood streaming out of miners flow out from the mineshaft and echos throughout the mountain valley.

> 요 아래 산 중턱에서 발동기는 채신이 없이 풍, 풍, 연해 소리를 낸다. 못 사내가 그리로 드나든다. 허리를 구붓하고 끙끙 매는 것이 아마 감석을 나르는 모양. 그 밑으로 골물은 돌에 부대끼며 콸콸 내려 흐른다.
>
> Alongside the base of the mountains, the hollow sound of the engine churning along the coast resounds with a *p'ung*, *p'ung*. It is the sound of all sorts of men coming and going, bent over and moaning with a *kkŭng kkŭng*. It looks as though they are transporting the high-grade ore. The stream in the valley below flows along with the gushing sound *k'wal k'wal* as it forces itself past the rocks. (Kim 1935: 100)

The soundscape of the gold mine is attuned to the rhythms of accumulation and transportation of gold ore. It is the sound of laboring bodies gradually losing lifeblood in order to maintain the steady tempo of extraction demanded by a rapidly expanding empire. Literally weighed down by the weight of the rocks, laborers yield to the power of gold that shapes their everyday lives. The current of the stream strengthens and weakens with the kinetic energy generated when the water hits the rocks scattered along the riverbed; the sound of the water gushing through the crevasses and fissures of the rocks resounds throughout the mountain valley. In a gesture towards the sounds of labor in the process of extraction, the narrator invites the readers to listen to the entanglements of laborers and ore, rocks and rivers. As a storyteller, Kim compels the reader to listen differently and attune their ears to the story that emerges from within those dynamic interrelations between laborers and ore, rocks and rivers.

The narrative abruptly shifts in tone when Lee Tŏksun emerges from inside the mine slung over the back of a fellow miner. Humorous anecdotes disappear entirely and the sonic territory of the text is consumed by the cadence of lifeblood pouring out from the miners and the earth. The sound of the water flowing past the rocks in the river valley is replicated with the sound of blood gushing from Tŏksun's wound as it hits the ground with a *p'ung p'ung*. The reader discovers another reason why the site of the gold mine is one of complete and utter chaos. It is a place that resembles a slaughterhouse (*tosujang*) because dead miners emerge from the mineshaft as often as butchered cattle or pigs emerge from the slaughterhouse. Gold miners constitute a wandering, and expendable, population that, like bovine or swine, are consumed in the process of empire-building.

After reaching Tŏksun's house, the miner stands next to the wall and quietly watches as the situation unfolds.

> 쓰러져가는 납작한 낡은 초가집. 고자리 쑤시듯 풍풍 뚫어진 방문. 저 방에서 두 자식을 데리고 계집을 데리고 고생만 무진히 하였다.이제는 게다 다리까지 못 쓰고 드러누웠으려니! 아아!
>
> The thatch-roofed house is old, flat, and dilapidated. The door looked as though maggots had bore holes in it. In that room were his wife and two children. They looked as though they had suffered to no end. And now on top of all that, there he [Tŏksun] was sprawled out on the floor with a completely useless leg! He and his wife had struggled day and night to make ends meet, but then, he caught a glimpse of gold slag! Aha! (Kim 1935: 103).

This gold slag offers a hope of escape from the cycle of debt and poverty that plagues landless tenant farmers. Tŏksun slowly removes the blood-saturated rope tied around his injured leg and peels back the soaked coveralls to reveal his injury. "[I]t is difficult to distinguish the bone from the flesh…and the blood just keeps gushing out with a *ch'ŏlch'ŏl*" (Kim 1935: 104). This resembles the sound readers encounter when Tŏksun emerges unconscious from the mine, but now it is the sound of his lifeblood gushing out onto the floor. Several pieces of ore fall from

Tŏksun's blood-stained palm, and after washing away the pools of blood on the floor, a chunk of glittering gold catches their eye. "In order to live you have to eat. In order to eat you have to ruin your body, or even destroy your entire life" (Kim 1935: 105). Tŏksun's plan was to co-laborate with the ore and break free from an interminable cycle of debt and poverty. In order to succesfully co-laborate, however, Tŏksun destroys his leg, the very appendage he requires to go and cash in his windfall.

Tŏksun makes a critical error in forging the laborer-ore alliance. He fails to recognize the tendency of gold to shatter kinships and perpetuate a crisis of sustainability. Within the bowels of the earth, when Tŏksun relies upon the camaraderie of a fellow miner in North Tunnel Three to carry him out from the mineshaft. He depends on the brotherliness of another miner to carry him up over the mountain pass and back home. Tŏksun must trust this miner with the ore for which he sacrificed his leg. When Tŏksun hands the ore to the unnamed miner, the latent power of the gold ore is unleashed and shatters the very kinships that he requires to sustain life. Tŏksun's comrade is infected with the cruel optimism that had originally deluded Tŏksun into believing gold can magically transform the everyday. The miner violently spits on the ground, ore in hand, and the story ends with Tŏksun unleashing a loud caterwaul of heartbreak/misery (*ch'amhakhan pimyŏng*) (Kim 1935: 106). This scream symbolizes Tŏksun's recognition that the power of gold to fuel an escape from the crisis of sustainability, a crisis that is endemic to colonial-capitalism, is nothing but an illusion.

While "Kŭm" is a story narrated from the co-laborative standpoint where laboring bodies and gold ore have amalgamated into a nebulous entity, "Nodaji" centers on the precariousness of life within the chaotic world of clandestine gold mining. This story traces the vicissitudes of a

brotherhood forged between Kkongbo, "a worry wart" (*sinch'ŏnbu*), and Tŏp'ŏl, his 'elder brother,' from its origin to its catastrophic end (Kim 1935: 83). Leading a group of miners to a rich vein, Kkongbo divides the unearthed treasures among the four men. Skeptical of the equivalent value contained in each pile, one miner who is "sturdy as an ox" lashes out and beats Kkongbo to his near death (1935: 85). This is the moment when the robust Tŏp'ŏl swoops in "like a blessing from heaven" (*kŭttae ch'ŏnhaengiralkkachŏrŏm*) and tosses the offender off the side of the mountain, never to be seen again (1935: 85). It is in this moment that Kkongbo and Tŏp'ŏl forge a kinship that mutually fortifies their capacity to survive the treacherous environment of covert gold mines.

Kkongbo draws upon his extensive knowledge of the sonic terrain of remote mountain valleys to map the murmurs and silences for evidence of imminent dangers as well as rumors of rich veins of gold ore. Tŏp'ŏl's physical strength bolsters Kkongbo when his panic attacks leave him incapacitated. The mental prowess of Kkongbo amalgamated with the physical strength of Tŏp'ŏl form a powerful alloy.[106] The two reassure one another of their unwavering allegiance to their shared kinship, both benefitting from the strengths of the other. "Regardless of whether you strike it rich or I strike it rich, we will share the wealth all the same. We will live comfortably, purchasing a house, finding a wife, and eating well" (1935: 89). Kkongbo and Tŏp'ŏl share these sentiments while sheltering between two rocky crags, but the narrator alludes to a looming presence that threatens the ironclad kinship of the two prospectors.

The looming presence manifests in the sounds of withered grasses in the wind or a hallucinated tiger. Kkongbo cannot shake this presence that presses him to "wash his hands

[106] For literature that considers the division between mental and physical labor, see Kang Kyŏngae.

clean" of Tŏp'ŏl (1935: 88). In an attempt to conceal himself from the desire for gold that stalks him night and day, Kkongbo camouflages himself in the thick fissure of a boulder or crouches down amid the grasses. This fear is emasculating, it causes Kkongbo's entire body to tremble and enlist the assistance of his 'elder brother' to reach the next rumored source of gold. No matter how much Kkongbo wants to wash his hands of Tŏp'ŏl, however, these scenes [that depict Kkongbo's attacks] reify the importance of their brotherhood to navigate the chaotic soundscape of clandestine gold mines.

The brotherhood is a powerful alloy that, in theory, can withstand the ferocious environment where prospectors covertly sniff out rich gold veins. The narrator shatters the illusive strength of this brotherhood, remarking that "[n]ot once had they struck it rich, however, so all this talk was just a bunch of nonsense" (1935: 89). The promises Kkongbo and Tŏp'ŏl make in the shadows of a steep precipice are "just a bunch of nonsense" because the mythical power of gold radiates out from the shadows and intoxicates Kkongbo with cruel optimism (1935: 89). This cruel optimism in gold is inflamed when the 'brothers' drop into a tavern where rumors circulate about the nearby mountain with unending riches (*hwasubun*), where "gold flows out with a *p'uk p'uk*" (1935: 91). The fantastical sound of the gold streaming out from the nearby mountain with a *p'uk p'uk* syncopates the rhythm of Kkongbo and Tŏp'ŏl's sleep and catapults them out into the night to navigate the unfamiliar valley and follow the speculative rumors of gold.

Hinting at the destruction of Kkongbo and Tŏp'ŏl's brotherhood, the narrator remarks that "it would be a long time before this guy [Tŏp'ŏl] would ever see his gold" (1935: 89). Tŏp'ŏl' possesses the corporeal constitution to maneuver along the precipitous ridges and deep

valleys while Kkongbo possesses the skills to navigate the sonic terrain of regions rumored to be rich in gold. In his discussion of Kim's "Kŭm" and "Nodaji," Chŏn Ponggwan argues that the stories pose a critique of human nature as fundamentally unstable. In both works, Chŏn argues, the allure of gold unleashes a violence that destroys friendships and guarantees a tragic end to the tale (Chŏn 2012: 158-160). Chŏn's analysis is keenly attuned to the socio-economic milieu of the 1930s, however, it understates the energy in the laborer-ore alliance that destabilizes life-sustaining kinships. It is in the seams where the most compelling stories emerge, and this is the standpoint from which Kim writes his gold-mining stories.[107]

In the final scene of "Nodaji," Kkongbo draws upon his aural mapping skills of the subterranean topography to exploit his 'elder brother's' physical strength and exhume the rumored rich seam of gold. When the 'brothers' reach the site, Tŏp'ŏl lights a pine-resin torch and climbs inside a promising opening in a rocky crag, but quickly loses his footing and falls deep into the legendary mine. Reading "the raspy sounds he [Tŏp'ŏl] makes as he stands up" (*ssŭkssak irŏsŏtta*), Kkongbo quickly plots a route down to a space that smells of riches (1935: 92). Aboveground, Kkongbo is a weak prospector equipped with the aural skills to sniff out rich veins of gold but remains susceptible to the dangers that lurk in remote mountain valleys. In the subterranean sphere, however, Kkonbgo artfully directs his 'elder brother' to the vein, but "upon seeing gold, the change is tangible" (1935: 94).[108] The ironclad brotherhood is shattered by the mythical power of gold; this mythical power instills Kkongbo with the bravado to subvert the

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[107] The idea of thinking about the seams, or rather the seamless parts of a chapter/project/story, as being the most interesting was raised by Professors Laura Kang and Jennifer Terry in response to my presentation of an earlier version of this chapter at the GFE Emerging Scholars Series, February 2, 2022. Their insightful feedback has been critical for reworking this chapter.

[108] 금을 보더니 완연히 변한다. (1935: 94)

assumed hierarchy of masculinity that had dominated his brotherhood with Tŏp'ŏl. Meanwhile, Tŏp'ŏl is in a precarious position[, literally and figuratively,] as he lies prostrate under the unstable mine posts and boulders that support the roof of the mine. This is the moment when Kkongbo decides to shift his alliance from his 'elder brother' to gold ore. In the form of a high-pitched scream, Kkongbo releases the calculated sonic vibrations that send the mine supports and tailings tumbling down to entomb his 'elder brother.' The story ends with the soundscape of a brotherhood destroyed by a cruel optimism in gold: "the dust gushed out of the entrance to the mineshaft with a *tchwarŭk, tchwarŭk*" (*kunmunkkesŏ moraerŭl tchwarŭk, tchwarŭk, tŭri ppumnŭnda*) (1935: 96). Kkongbo abandons his 'elder brother' Tŏp'ŏl for a blind faith in the power of gold to transform the everyday.

Harvests of Gold: Kim Yujŏng's "Kŭm ttanŭn k'ongbat" (Gold Plucked From the Bean Patch)

In *Notes on the Underground*, Rosalind Williams argues that the "subterranean conscious," a term she defines as the understanding that we do not live *on* the earth but *in* the earth, is synonymous with the contemporary term "environmental consciousness" (Williams 2008: 2012-213). Kim's gold-themed stories invite readers to listen to subterranean spaces in order to illuminate both the corporeal and environmental consequences of what Williams calls an "empire on earth" (2008: 273). Kim's "Kŭm ttanŭn k'ongbat" is a story about Yŏngsik, the tenant farmer as proletariat, who actively transforms his rented fertile bean field into a wasteland in hopes of unearthing a rich vein of gold. The desperation of Yŏngsik's circumstances lead him to believe that an alliance with this rumored ore will be more powerful than any kinship or

friendship. The absurdity of this storyline resonates with "Kŭm" and "Nodaji;" all three stories experiment with the creative potential latent in the chasm between the everyday and fantasy.

In the opening line of "Kŭm ttanŭn k'ongbat," Kim locates the reader inside a gold mining shaft, or in Williams' words, along the axis of verticality.[109]

> 땅속 저밑은 늘 음침하다.
> 고달픈 간드렛불. 맥없이 푸리끼하다. 밤과 달라서 낮엔 되우 흐릿하였다.
> 겉으로 황토 장벽으로 앞뒤 좌우가 콕 막힌 좁직한 구뎅이. 흡사히 무덤 속같이 귀중중하다. 싸늘한 침묵. 쿠더브레한 흙내와 징그러운 냉기만이 그 속에 자욱하다.
> 곡괭이는 뻔질 흙을 이르집는다. 암팡스러이 내려 쪼며
> 퍽 퍽 퍽—
> 이렇게 메떨어진 소리뿐. 그러나 간간 우수수하고 벽이 헐린다.
>
> Inside the earth, it is always dismal.
> The waning light of the headlamp. Fine at night, but murky in the daytime.
> A narrow shaft surrounded on all sides, front and back, left and right, by yellow-ochre clay walls. It is dirty and squalid, like the inside of a tomb. The space is thick with an icy silence, the rancid stench of the soil, and a bitter cold.
> The pickaxe repeatedly digs into the earth, gouging out chunks of soil,
> *p'ŏk*, *p'ŏk*, *p'ŏk* —
> This sound was almost distasteful, interrupted by the intermittent rustling as loose dirt crumbled from the wall. (Kim 1935: 64)

With every swing of his pickaxe, Yŏngsik digs out more earth from beneath his rented plot of land. The frequent *p'ŏk*, *p'ŏk*, *p'ŏk* indicates he is venturing into an increasingly risky gamble. He is literally destabilizing the very earth that he and his wife live upon. Yŏngsik is gambling the futurity of his crops, his family, his friends, and his job as a tenant farmer. He commences this gamble based solely on speculative rumors, or in other words, on a cruel optimism in the rumored riches lying below his rented bean fields. As the tailings from his informal gold mine accumulate around the edges of his once-fertile bean field, the ruin is palpable.

Sujae, the local prospector, wanders rural regions in search of tenant farmers willing to collaborate in the re-making of fertile fields into rich gold mines. Charmed by these rumors of gold lurking below his fields, Yŏngsik actively cultivates his tenanted subterranean space into a

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[109] This chapter is more about the circulation of rumors, gold, commodities on the horizontal plane.

wasteland. *Wastelanding*, an environmental history of uranium mining in Navajo country, Traci Brynne Voyles introduces the term "wastelanding" as a lens for understanding the settler-colonial project of "rendering resources extractable and lands and bodies *pollutable*" (Voyles 2015: location 736, emphasis mine). Voyles argues that gender and race have systematically been implemented as technologies in the extraction of resources and, consequently, create environmental injustices (Voyles 2015: 2020). During the expansion of the Japanese empire, agricultural policies implemented on the archipelago and the Korean peninsula affected the relationship between the farmer and the soil, causing it to be increasingly precarious.

Tenant farmers develop an intimate relationship with the soil through labor (Engels 1925, White 1995). Indigenous scholar Glen Coulthard employs the term "grounded normativity" to explain how a particular mode of laboring with the land informs "our ethical engagements with the world and our relationship with human and nonhuman others over time" (2014: 13). "Kŭm ttanŭn k'ongbat" locates the interrelation between the laborer and the soil at the center of the narrative. When Yŏngsik decides to gamble on gold, he first has to drastically transform his relationship with the soil in order to re-make his bean field into a gold mine. In doing so, Yŏngsik deviates from the land-based knowledge he has accrued through years of laboring with the earth and caring for crops. He initiates a new relationship with the soil based upon the rhythms of accumulation and this is, ultimately, the very source of his demise because it prompts Yŏngsik to transform his fertile bean field into a wasteland.

Yŏngsik's pockmarked field stands in stark contrast to the vibrant fields surrounding his ruined plot of land. Speculative rumors infect Yŏngsik with a cruel optimism in gold and, in turn, lead to a radical remaking of the local environment. These rumors prompt a new valuation of the

soil, causing Yŏngsik to abandon his care work of the earth. They require him to violently destroy the reciprocal relationship he has cultivated with the soil and replace it with a settler-colonial logic that values human and more-than-human as resources rather than potential allies to sustain life.

> 멀쩡한 밭에가 구멍이 사면 풍 풍 뚫렸다.
> 예제없이 버력은 무데기 무데기 쌓였다. 마치 사태만난 공동묘지와도 같이 귀살쩍고 되우 을씨넌스럽다. 그다지 잘되었던 콩포기는 거반 버력더미에 다아 깔려버리고 군데군데 어쩌다 남은 놈들만이 고개를 나풀거린다. 그 꼴을 보는 것은 자식 죽는 걸 보는 게 낫지 차마 못 할 경상이었다.
>
> The pristine field had been burrowed through all over the place.
> Mounds and mounds of tailings were piled up all over the place. It was a desolate and truly disquieting sight, just like cemetery that had been ruined in a landslide. The beans that would have grown into a decent crop were smothered with random heaps of tailings. By chance, a few bean plants survived and they fluttered in the wind. Looking at this scene was just as painful as watching your own child die. (1935: 67)

In the process of "wastelanding" his bean field, Yŏngsik asphyxiates the young bean plants that had provided sustenance for his family and community. The previously unscathed field bears the scars that chronicle the violence that unearthing money requires. This violence pulsates beyond the tunnels under the bean patch and destroys Yŏngsik's relationship with his wife, tenant manager, and Sujae. The piles of tailings resemble gravestones marking lives that have been sacrificed for the magic of money. This scene assesses the fallout from re-assembling the bean field as a space for producing gold rather than beans. This environment-making destroys the very foundation that had sustained Yŏngsik and community for generations (Moore 2015).

Striking it Rich: Speculative Rumors of Riches in Ch'ae Mansik's 1937 *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* (In the Vicinity of the Train Depot) and 1939 *T'angnyu* (Muddy Waters)

In this section I turn to read two works of Ch'ae Mansik in conversation to consider how the speculation of gold is fundamentally a question of how to navigate sustainable co-laboration within the context of colonial-capital gold and agricultural policies. First, I delineate the spatial texture of the alluvial fields created through the flows of rumors and goods in the fields surrounding the train depot. Next, I consider how the "housewifization" and subsequent circulation of female bodies facilitates the overnight transformation of an indebted tenant farmer into a local moneybags (Mies 2014). Lastly, I propose that the settler-colonial logic of "hungry listening" infects the protagonist with an insatiable appetite that causes synapses to misfire and compels him to devour a handful of raw ore and smuggle it across the border to Kando (Robinson 2020).

Ch'ae as Journalist, Ch'ae as Speculator

Spanning across ten volumes, *The Collected Works of Ch'ae Mansik* consists of a diverse group of literary styles including novels, novellas, short stories, plays, short skits, 'conversational novels' (*taehwa sosŏl*), scenarios, radio dramas, literary criticism, as well as essays (Yi Chuhyŏng 1987: 618). In the essay appended to the final volume, entitled "Ch'ae Mansik ŭi saengae wa chakp'umsegye" (Ch'ae Mansik's Life and Literary World), Yi Chuhyŏng delineates nine facets of Ch'ae Mansik's (1902-1950) life that fundamentally shape the literary world depicted in Ch'ae's lifework. The first is the years Ch'ae spent working as a journalist at the *Tonga Ilbo* and *Chosŏn Ilbo* where, through the process of writing magazine and newspaper articles, he acquired a profound understanding of reality (*hyŏnsil e taehan ihae ŭi p'ok kwa kipi*)

and developed a critical perspective of the complex social problems in colonial Korea (Yi 1987: 619). Ch'ae was born in Okku-kun, Kunsan, Chŏlla Province, to wealthy farmers, the fifth of nine children. Upon his return from study in Tokyo in 1922, however, Ch'ae's father had brought the family into ruin after repeated failures on the rice exchange market. Yi writes that Ch'ae's personal experience with financial ruin is another factor that shapes his literary world and is the creative inspiration for the recurring figure of the land-owning rice speculator in his works.[110] A third factor is his experience as a gold miner. Two of Ch'ae's elder brothers were working as managers (*tŏktae*) of gold mining plots in the regions of Kimje and Ch'ŏnan when, in the summer of 1938, Ch'ae decided to actively participate in the venture of gold mining as an investor (Chŏn Ponggwan 2005: 34). I highlight these three lived experiences that equip Ch'ae with the tools to compose literary portraits that center on the ethical quandaries encountered in the speculative ventures that comprised everyday life in colonial Korea.

In the essay "Yŏngu hyŏnhwang kwa kwaje" (The Present State of Research and its Task), Yun Yŏngok recounts the critical reception of Ch'ae's works from the 1930s to the 1990s. In the 1930s, poet and literary critic Im Hwa (1908-1953) characterizes Ch'ae's novel *T'angnyu* (Muddy Waters) as a social novel (*set'e sosŏl*), a literary genre that highlights the interconnectedness of multiple protagonists as they contend with the injustices of colonial-capital society, one that "conveys the immorality of reality to the readers" (*tokcha ege hyŏnsil ŭi*

[110] One of Ch'ae's most well-known works is his 1938 novel *T'aep'yŏng ch'ŏnha* (Peace Under Heaven) which poses a sharp critique of an absentee landowner, Master Yun, who grows fat and takes pleasure in hoarding the money he earns on the fertile Chŏlla soil he leases to farmers at usurious rates. In this chapter, I discuss how the insatiable desire of patriarch Jeong Jusa to strike in rich in the rice market directly contributes to his decision to leverage his eldest daughter, Ch'obong, as commodity in *T'angnyu* (Murky Waters).

chijŏbunham ŭl chŏndal) (Yun 1997: 12).[111] Kim Namch'ŏn (1911-1953) likens *T'angnyu* to Pak T'aewŏn's (1909-1985) *Ch'ŏnggyech'ŏn p'unggyŏng* (Scenes from Ch'ŏnggye Stream) because it details the complex ethical dilemmas emerging in colonial society through "panoramic depictions of social customs" (*p'ungsokset'ae rŭl p'anoramasik ŭro chŏn'gaehanŭnde*) (Yun 1997: 12). Paek Ch'ŏl (1908-1985) notes that Ch'ae's work sharply critiques the corruption rampant in quotidian exchanges. As such, although Ch'ae never officially joined the group of proletarian writers, Paek argues that he was ideologically aligned with the political line of KAPF (*k'ap'ŭjakka ŭi hwaldongbangch'im e hyŏpcho*) (Yun 1997: 11).[112] These pre-liberation critics share the opinion that Ch'ae is a writer who conveys the tragicomedy of characters whose lives are destroyed in the maelstrom of a colonial-capital environment.

A number of factors in the immediate post-liberation period, from 1945 to 1970, led to a paucity of critical work on Ch'ae's literature. Kim Sangsŏn attributes this to the fact that critics who actively wrote on Ch'ae, including Im Hwa and Kim Namch'ŏn, were writers who relocated to the North (*wŏlbuk chakka*) after liberation (Yun 1997: 14 n4).[113] The inclusion of Ch'ae in a group of writers implicated as pro-Japanese collaborators in Im Chongguk's 1966 *Ch'inil munhangnon* (A Theory of Pro-Japanese Literature) generated a resistance to engage with Ch'ae's work as part of the cannon of Korean literature. The 1948 edition of Paek Ch'ŏl's *Chosŏn sin munhak sajosa* (A History of the Trends in Modern Korean Literature) contained

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[111] See chapter ten in Radical Representations for a detailed analysis of what Foley characterizes as "the proletarian social novel" in the context of American proletarian literature (Foley 1993). While this does not translate exactly to what critics in 1930s Korea were calling the social novels (*set'e sosŏl*), there are still similarities in proletarian literature written in different countries.

[112] Theodore Hughes also makes a similar claim that although Ch'ae never officially joined KAPF, he held similar political beliefs about the corruption rampant in the expanding Japanese empire (Hughes 2012: 86).

[113] For a more detailed discussion of censorship, please see [] ()

over two hundred pages devoted to the cultural production associated with leftist politics, but the 1953 edition, renamed *Sin munhak sajosa* (A History of the Trends in Modern Literature), reduced the section on leftist literature to just twenty pages (Park 2015: 11-12 n21). As a result of the oppressive socio-political climate of the 1950s and 1960s, Ch'ae's work received little attention beyond a discussion of his characteristic style of satire (*p'ungja*) in social novels. After the discovery of previously unpublished works, Ch'ae's literature received renewed attention after 1970. During this period, critics write about the intertextuality of Ch'ae's works, tending to the elements of folklore and classic Korean literature that appear, and his realist perspective of the injustices suffered in the context of colonialism and capitalism. In the 1980s, critics analyze the role of Chŏlla dialect, as well as his skillful use of satire that imbues his stories with multiple meanings and opens endless possible interpretations for the readers. In the 1990s, critics turn to the realistic and historical components of Ch'ae's literature. More specifically, they focus on the nihilistic "loss of hope for the future" (*mirae chip'yŏng ŭi sangsil*) and the incorporation of p'ansori style storytelling in the depiction of female characters who endure harsh treatment from the overlapping systems of feudal, imperial, and capitalist societies (Yun 1997: 23).

As Yun Yŏngok's essay clearly demonstrates, there has been a rich body of work in the Korean language that engages with the artistic, cultural, and political significance of Cha'e's literature. These critical works, from 1930 until the present, are markedly affected by the contemporaneous post-liberation politics in which they are produced, published, and received. In *Freedom's Frontier*, Theodore Hughes notes that Ch'ae is one of the few writers whose work successfully crosses the post-1948 border between the North and the South; Ch'ae's works are included in literary anthologies and histories compiled and published in 1950s North and South

Korea (Hughes 2012: 86). As Hughes astutely demonstrates, the shifting politics of (in)visibility shape the structure of so-called *Han'guk munhak*, or South Korean literature (Hughes 2012: 63). This binary is further complicated in Hughes' reading of Ch'ae's 1946 "Non iyagi" (Once Upon a Rice Paddy). In this story, Hughes argues that Ch'ae frames "August 15 as nonevent" because the land that was illegally appropriated by a Japanese settler during the colonial period was not returned to the original Korean owner after liberation (2012: 87). Instead, it was classified as one of the "vacated Japanese factories, properties, and homes (*chŏksan*) by USAMGIK (United States Military Government in Korea)" (2012: 86). This, consequently, destroyed any hope that the moment of liberation would bring justice anywhere south of the thirty-eighth parallel.

Hughes' notion of (in)visibility in the creation of a literary cannon corresponds to the (un)speakable acts of collaboration that occurred in the latter part of the colonial period, or what Louise Young terms the era of total empire (Young 1998).[114] Ji Young Kim interrogates the (un)speakable acts of pro-Japanese collaboration in Ch'ae's 1948 post-liberation autobiographic novella "Minjok ŭi choein" (Sinner of the People) (Kim 2021). Kim argues that Ch'ae portrays collaboration as an "unforgivable sin" that, in "Minjok ŭi choein," is symbolized by the "dirty mud that was once stuck to my skin" like "immortal rubber boots on my legs"(Ch'ae [1948]; Kim 2021: 86). But rather than impose a moral stance on the reader, Kim argues that Ch'ae "provid[es] the reader with a fictional site for interrogation and reflection" where they can contemplate the meaning and significance of confession and truth in the context of a post-colonial society (Kim 2021: 88). Hughes' concept of liberation as nonevent and Kim's attention

[114] For detailed historical analyses of the ethnic, gendered, national, and racial dynamics of this war mobilization period leading up to and after the so-called Manchurian Incident, see *Japan's Total Empire* (Young 1998) and *Race for Empire* (Fujitani 2011).

to the fictional site for a critical reflection upon the so-called sins of the author/narrator underscores the ethical implications of Ch'ae's storytelling.

Sunyoung Park critiques Ch'ae's 1936 story "Pin che il chang che i kwa" (Poverty: Part I, Chapter II) for its "patriarchal perspective" that "a financially independent woman" must be "regarded with suspicion, as though her earning money could constitute a threat to male authority over her" (Park 2013: 221). In contrast to what Park reads as Ch'ae's affirmation of "traditional Confucian gender ethics," Kang Kyŏngae's stories about female factory workers and laboring mothers replace the "sexual concerns of male writers" with "a relational and communitarian morality that makes a woman responsible for fostering the well-being of other women" (Park 2013: 208).[115] Park is right to critique the "patriarchal assumptions" that persisted in nationalist and socialist circles throughout colonial Korea, however the differentiated femininities and masculinities that emerge throughout the colonial period deserve more attention in order to complicate the spectrum between patriarchy and feminism (Park 2013: 231). Through the lens of Ch'ae's late colonial stories, Su Yun Kim argues that colonized men utilized sexual relationships with settler-colonial women as a tool to leverage and advance the social position of Korean men within the empire, simultaneously bolstering their masculinity (Kim 2019: 86). Male writers, including Ch'ae, were not only facing what Nayoung Aimee Kwon calls "conundrums of representation," but instead "were actively seeking ways to elevate colonial masculinity in the empire, by creating female images that supported their own position without

[115] Park contends that fellow feminist socialist writers Pak Hwasŏng and Paek Sinae, along with Kang, relocated gender to the heart of the politics in their literature as a means to challenge proletarian literature that had neglected to confront the remnants of patriarchy that dominated the hierarchy within the socialist and communist sphere. (Park 2013: 198, 227)

disrupting the imperial order" (Kim 2019: 106).[116] Both Park and Kim gesture towards the ethical dilemma inherent in the sexual politics practiced by the characters in Ch'ae's stories. Building upon these insights, I consider how Ch'ae's situated knowledge as a journalist amalgamates/synthesizes/alloys with his situated knowledge as a speculator to paint a portrait of the complex gender dynamics of a space-time that is consumed by a madness induced by the magic of gold.

In *Hwanggŭmgwang sidae* (The Era of Gold Fever), Chŏn Ponggwan demonstrates that by 1935, the gold rush in Korea had reached its height and was referred to as "Tongyang ŭi El Torado" (El Dorado of the East) (Chŏn 2005: 79). Gold prospectors were not only interested in digging for gold, but were oftentimes more eager to get their hands on mining concessions and application cards for rights to the gold mines in order to sell them at a premium (2005: 71). Negotiations over the sale of mining concessions and applications for mining rights orchestrated the soundscape of Korea's gold rush. People attuned their ears to the reports of bonanzas in order to snatch up the concessions to profitable gold veins/seams. Ch'ae's 1940 essay "Kŭm kwa munhak" (Gold and Literature) depicts the soundscape of gold fever from the standpoint of a journalist.

> 시골로 다니면서 보면, 웬만한 사람으로 금광이나 몇 구역 출원(出願)해 두지 않은 사람 이 없다.
> 경성에 한번 들여놓으면 여관의 유속인 가운데 열에 아홉까지가 금광업자들이다.
> 10만 원이니 1000만 원이니 하는 홍정 소리에 귀를 기울이면 죄다가 금광의 매매다.
> 의사는 메스를 집어던지고, 변호사는 법복을 벗어던지고 금광에로 금광에로 달려간다.
> 기생이 영문도 모르고서 105원을 들여 광을 풀원 (出願)하는가 하면 현직의 교원이 광석을 들고 분석고엘 찾아간다.

[116] Kim claims that "male writers like Ch'ae were not colonized subjects in crisis, as they have often been described in literary scholarship, but active participants and agents of Japanese and global imperialism" (S. Kim 2019: 87). In *Intimate Empire*, Nayoung Aimee Kwon explores the "conundrums of representation" in colonial Korea and explores how three of Kang Kyŏngae's depict the shifting role of Koreans between victims and collaborators in Kando, implicating them as part of the imperial project (Kwon 2015: see Chapter Nine).

> 브로커며 건달이 며 건달이며 난봉이 광산도면을 한 집씩 안고 구석구석에서 수군거리는 것쯤은 유로 셀 수가 없다.
> 하는 덕에 소설쟁이도 금광을 하자고 덤벼보았었고.
> 그리하여 아뭏든지 금광광시대 (金鑛狂時代)는 날로 그 광도 (狂度)가 강화되어간다.
>
> If you go out to the countryside, any sort of respectable person has filed an application for a gold mining plot.
> If you go to the capital, nine out of the ten boarders at any given lodge are dealing in gold.
> The sound of people squeezing as much as 100,000 won or 1,000,000 won out of a deal is heard as gold is bought and sold.
> Doctors toss aside their scalpels; lawyers toss aside their judicial robes and run from one gold mine to the next.
> Kisaengs, who do not know how to read, take their money [105 won] and file the application for a mining concession, take the ore from the fields adjacent to the city, and look for a place to assay the ore.
> There are a slew of brokers, scoundrels, and philanderers in every nook and cranny who whisper to one another while holding tight to the map of their mining plot.
> There were also novelists who ran off with the intention to mine gold.
> In any case, this was how the era of gold fever escalated day by day.
>
> (Ch'ae, v. 9, 1940: 531)

The peninsula echos with the commotion of people haggling over the price of gold, whispering about new mining concessions, and mumbling to themselves about schemes to strike it rich. The noise, the murmurs, and the silences reverberate among the mounds of alluvial soils and comprise a soundscape where the mythical power of gold reigns supreme (Lefebvre 2013: 29). These sounds co-opt wandering bodies, mineral-rich earth, and streams to labor in concert with one another. The power inherent in these rumors is that they contain a glimmer of hope for the futurity of life; it is a promise to break free from the dual reigns of colonial-capitalism.[117] Speculative rumors of gold dazzle doctors, farmers, lawyers, and writers and convince them to pick up a chisel and hammer to try their luck in gold mining. The ravenous consumption of these rumors sends people in droves to dig for the alleged untapped treasures throughout the peninsula. Abandoning their hometowns, they re-locate to unfamiliar regions and participate in a form of settler-colonialism as they synchronize their rhythms of labor to those of accumulation. These rhythms that regulate the unearthing of gold are the same ones that finance the material axis of

[117] This hope manifests as Berlant's concept of cruel optimism discussed in the previous section.

empire. These masses of settler-colonialists flock to regions rich in gold ore and co-labor with the soils in hopes of striking it rich. In the process, they have reproduced the "ghost-like" state of the impoverished farming village from which they had fled (Albert Park 2015: 68).

Speculation in Gold and Rice

This section places Ch'ae Mansik's 1937 novella *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* (In the Vicinity of the Train Depot) in conversation with his 1939 novel *T'angnyu* (Muddy Waters) in order to survey the critical role that speculative rumors about gold and rice play in a process that Jason W. Moore refers to as "environment-making" (Moore 2015: 77).[118] These two works reveal how speculative rumors about imminent windfalls fundamentally reshape the rhythms of human and more-than-human environment-making in two particular locations: the surroundings of a provincial train depot and the city of Kunsan. As such, these speculations imbue gold and rice with a kind of mythic value that transforms them into magical objects that can transport tenant farmers outside the cycles of debt and impoverishment that were compounded by colonial agricultural and gold mining policies.

In a discussion of the signification of myth, Roland Barthes defines myth as a form of language that "*hides nothing*: its function is to distort, not to make disappear" (Barthes 1972: 121). Following Barthes, the rumors about nearby seams of gold or latent riches in alluvial fields that circulate in Ch'ae's texts merely *distort* the reality of striking it rich in the mines or stock

[118] Moore argues for an epistemological shift from "the" environment, a concept that characterizes nature as an exterior object to be acted upon by capital, and proposes the concept of "environment-making" as better suited for thinking about environments as co-produced by "bundles of human and extra-human nature" (2015: 77, 7). Moore's argument is premised on the pathbreaking work of Paul Burkett and John Bellamy Foster that frame the "rift as reconfiguration and shift" (2015: 83).

market. The so-called "magic of money" dazzles the characters in Ch'ae's stories and possesses them with a ravenous hunger that can only be satiated with gold (Marx 1967, v. 1: 96). These characters abandon the labor market and wager their luck in a variety of get-rich-quick schemes. Consumed by the madness induced by gold fever, the synapses misfire and bewitch these characters into participating in the corporeal and environmental devastation intrinsic to gold mining. Ch'ae's stories interrogate what is at stake when the myth of "El Dorado" is hungrily devoured as truth.

In order for the mythic value of gold to manifest, the "owner of money" must meet the "free labourer" in the market (Marx 1967, v. 1: 166). The labor market, like the stock market or grain speculation market, is a site produced by the precarious nature of chance encounters. In *The Proletarian Gamble*, Ken Kawashima defines the experience of the laborer seeking work as an "aleatory encounter[s] within the process of commodification" (Kawashima 2009: 215). This aleatory encounter is intrinsically determined by and subject to chance. Kawashima illustrates the "inherent contingency of exchange" through the lens of Korean migrant workers seeking work on the day labor market in Japan (2009: 21). The exchange of labor-power for money is a "continuity of discontinuity" (2009: 206). The process follows a rhythm that is "chronically interrupted, disrupted, suspended, deferred, delayed, and prolonged" and functions to maintain the proletarian in a constant state of precariousness (2009: 10). This volatile rhythm is what characterizes the everyday experience of the tenant farmer-come-miner throughout the Japanese empire.[119]

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[119] As this project argues, the tenant farmer as proletariat has been a neglected figure despite comprising the majority of the population in the expanding borders of the Japanese Empire. This project takes a critical focus on the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese archipelago, but that is not to imply that there is not fascinating trans-local work that can be done

With a critical focus on Ch'ae's 1939 novel *Kŭm ŭi chŏngyŏl* (The Passion of Gold), Yu Inhyŏk argues that "there is no such thing as a completely safe investment in capitalist society" (*chabonju ŭi sahoe esŏ wanjŏnhi anjŏnhan t'ujaran chonjaehal su ŏpta*). *Kŭm ŭi chŏngyŏl* recounts the experience of multiple protagonists who are completely consumed with the "passion" (*chŏngyŏl*) of either winning it all or losing it all. This passion for the thrill of the gamble leads them to invest in the risky ventures of gold mining concessions. Mining is always a risk. At the same time, this incessant fear of loss creates a sense of pleasure and functions as a remedy for the boredom and monotony that permeates colonial-capital relations (Yu 2019: 70). The adventurous entrepreneurs populating Ch'ae's novel employ science and technology in efforts to dominate nature (*chayŏn ŭl chibaeharyŏnŭn sido*) (2019: 67). These attempts to dominate nature weaken their own positionality within the hierarchy of colonial-capital relations, places the lives of miners in increasingly precarious situations, and triggers natural disasters that devastate the gold mines. Yu reads the prevalence of failure in *Kŭm ŭi chŏngyŏl* as a satirical critique of entrepreneurs who place a kind of blind faith in science as an infallible tool to acquire omniscient knowledge of the subterranean sphere.

In the process of mining the earth for gold ore, the protagonists fuel their passion for the risk embodied in the ore itself. Yu reads these failed entrepreneurs as embodiments of the contradictions inherent to colonial-capitalism. For example, the carefully measured holes bored into the mountains result in massive floods that inundate the infrastructure that had been carefully assembled. Also, the policies implemented by the Korean government-general to increase the extraction of gold from the peninsula instigate a rampant market in smuggling ore across the border to Kando. Rather than contribute to the financial stability of their place within

colonial-capitalism, these entrepreneurs and smugglers destabilize the very soil they stand upon. Yu argues that this novel illustrates how "The future remains a space-time that is impossible to predict" (*mirae nŭn yech'ŭk pulganŭnghan sigonggan ŭro namnŭnda*) (2019: 65). It is that slight chance, the thrill of the windfall, that motivates these adventurous entrepreneurs to uncover their own path of demise.

There are a number of scenes in *Kŭm ŭi chŏngyŏl* that detail the environmental damage created in the process of mining for gold ore. Yu cautions that this novel should not be understood from an ecological perspective (*saengt'aejuŭijŏk kwanjŏm*), but instead as illustrating the agency of nature, or what Yu terms "nature's revenge" (*chayŏn ŭi poksu*) (2019: 68, 62).[120] While I agree that *Kŭm ŭi chŏngyŏl* is not written from an ecological perspective, per se, I propose that reading Ch'ae's works along with Jason W. Moore's concept of "environment-making" explores the interrelations between human and more-than-human rather than focus on a dualist struggle between man and nature, endemic to thinking within the concept of the Anthropocene. Thinking with what Moore calls the Capitalocene, metabolism, or the exchanges that take place in the process of labor, "become[s] more than a way of seeing flows 'between.' It can become a way of seeing flows *through*" (Moore 2015: 78). Moore argues that a consideration of metabolism has to focus on the *connection to* nature, not just the *separation from* nature. Thinking with metabolism as a kinetic energy that moves through corporeal and terrestrial bodies, this section interrogates the central role that speculation and rumors play in the "environment-making" in the 1937 novella *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* (In the Vicinity of the Train

[120] In the revision of this chapter for a book manuscript, I will bring this gold mining novel into conversation with the three other 'gold mining works' that I have included in this chapter. The incorporation of this work requires further research into the colonial policies about gold mining and the logistics of boring into mountains and the disruption of the water table because these are part of the narrative.

Depot) and the 1939 novel *T'angnyu* (Muddy Waters). Ch'ae's situated knowledge as a reporter and as a speculator in the gold mines equips him with rich details about the gamble inherent to the everyday in 1930s Korea. Investment in rumored gold-ore rich mining plots or fertile soils is always a gamble because it is contingent on how much the myth distorts the reality.

Prospecting for gold is a gamble; speculating on the rice stock exchange is also a risky venture. Fortune is fickle, but the tenant farmer in colonial Korea, who comprised approximately eighty percent of the population, had nothing to lose (Nam 2016).[121] An article published on 27 March 1932 in the *Chosŏn ilbo* (Korean Daily) illustrates the desperation of starved farmers throughout the nation in a season commonly referred to as "spring poverty" (*ch'un'gunggi* 春窮期). "Most of them [tenant farmers] are roaming about the countryside nearly starving…deprived of such farm products… by merciless landlords and by iron-hardened usurers in the early autumn. …By eating the grass roots and tree bark they barely escaped imminent death…they have to wander away from the villages with their little children on their back and arms" (Nam 2016: 14; Shin 1996: 93).[122] The temporal proximity of the 1920 Tokyo stock market crash, the 1929 world financial crash, the implementation of Japanese colonial agricultural and gold mining

[121] Paul S. Nam further outlines the diverse categories that comprised this agricultural population in Korea: "(1) non-cultivating landlords; (2) landlords who cultivated parcels of land and rented out the rest; (3) smallholders, or owner-cultivators; (4) semi-tenants, owners and renters of land; and (5) pure tenants" (Nam 2016: 3). According to Nam's research, there were a number of colonial policies that led to an immiserated population including crop failures, usurious interest rates of up to eighty percent, the Japanese colonial government's cadastral survey (1910-1918), and plummeting rice prices in the 1930s. For a detailed study of the relationship between Koreans and the land in the colonial period though the lens of land registers (*yang'an*) and the cadastral survey, see *Landownership Under Colonial Rule* (Gragert 1994). For a discussion of the role colonial cartography plays in the restructuring of Korean farmers' relationship to their land in the colonial period, see "Japanese Colonial Cartography" (Fedman 2012).

[122] This is Shin's translation of an excerpt of the newspaper article. This article is also referenced in Nam's article (Name 2016: 14).

policies in Korea, and a series of natural disasters drove landless tenant farmers out in search of the high-risks labor market to wager their luck.

In *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ*, Ch'ae classifies the immiserated agricultural population into two distinct groups: those who "live in a state of starvation" (*kulmŏsandanŭn kŏt*) and those who "die of starvation" (*kulmŏjungnŭndanŭn kŏt*) (Ch'ae 1937: 318). Ch'ae portrays impoverished tenant farmers as people who "live in a state of starvation." Consequently, they have "more urgent matters [to tend to] than to die of starvation" (*kulmŏjungnŭndanŭn kŏt poda tagŭphan irida*) (1937: 318). Through the figure of Tŏksoe, a landless and impoverished tenant farmer, Ch'ae frames the labor performed to sustain life at the heart of the novella. The narrative trajectory follows the volatile rise and fall of market prices. At the same time, it captures the effects of colonial policies, implemented to encourage the increased extraction of gold ore from the peninsula to fuel the material expansion of the Japanese empire, on the everyday lives of the agricultural population.

Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ was published serially in eight installments of the 1937 journal *Yŏsŏng* (Woman) (Ch'ae, v. 5: 290). While Tŏksoe is the protagonist of the story, his ability to continue to "live in a state of starvation" is entirely dependent on the leveraging of his wife, Ippŭn, as commodity. The narrative follows Tŏksoe in his follies as he squanders his seed money in a gambling house and, ultimately, is left with no other choice but to sell his labor in the gold mines adjacent to the train depot. This novella is a portrait of a tenant farmer who wagers his luck on a number of ventures rumored to engender riches. Ultimately, these all fail to fully transform him into a figure who succeeds in guaranteeing any semblance of a futurity of life in the fields. Within the pits of the gold mine, Tŏksoe has come to believe that the mythic value of

gold can only materialize once it transcends corporeal and national borders. This blind faith in the magic embodied in gold leads Tŏksoe to ingest three large chunks of raw gold ore. The novella ends with a future-oriented gaze towards Kando as a potential space-time that exists outside of the colonial-capital rhythms of (re)production, hence, still retaining a possibility for life in the fields.

T'angnyu is set in what Carter Eckert refers to as the "rice basket" of Korea (Eckert 1991: 19). By the mid-1890s, rice from Chŏlla province provided nutrition to residents on the Japanese archipelago. After the Russo-Japanese War, it also nourished settler-colonial communities in the Kwantung Territory and Southern Manchuria (Duus 1995: 270-1). The Honam Plain in Chŏlla province is fortuitously located in close proximity to the port city of Kunsan. This "lucky geography," in combination with their position as landowning tenant managers of large tracts of paddies in Chŏlla province, facilitated the Koch'ang Kim's rise as capitalist entrepreneurs and the establishment of the first Korean-owned and operated corporation: Kyŏngsŏng Spinning and Weaving Company (Eckert 1991).[123] Ch'ae's depiction of Kunsan captures the energy generated in the daily speculation in the rice exchange market (*midujang*) and traces its origins as rooted firmly in the local fertile soils.[124]

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[123] Eckert challenges the "stagnation theory" as well as the "sprouts theory" that have postulated ideas about the origins of Korean capitalism. Instead, Eckert proposes that Japanese imperialism motivated a shift towards capitalism and that colonial policies on the peninsula cultivated an environment that both facilitated and hindered the native growth of capital industry (Eckert 1991). See *Landlords, Peasants & Intellectuals in Modern Korea*, especially Parts I and II, for articles on the "sprouts theory," particularly chapters one and four for Kim Yŏngsŏp's pathbreaking use of *yang'an* (land registers). (Pang Kie-Chung and Michael D. Shin, eds. 2005).

[124] The translation of the compound 濁流 is a challenge. Translator Kim Chunghee chooses to render it as *Turbid Rivers* which functions to highlight the volatile socio-political changes in colonial Korea (Ch'ae, trans. Kim 2016). I prefer the translation *Muddy Waters/ Streams* because this better captures the ethical implications of how promises of striking it rich cloud the judgement of characters in the novel and this, in turn, leads to the circulation of windfalls and mishaps that lead to successes and failures.

T'angnyu was published serially in the *Chosŏn Ilbo* from October 12, 1937 to May 17, 1938 in 198 separate parts and was published in novel form in 1939 (Ch'ae 1987, v. 2: 6). This multiple-protagonist social novel is primarily situated in Kunsan and traces how Jŏng Jusa, a former county clerk, has brought his family into a hand-to-mouth existence due to an incessant determination and passion to strike it rich in the rice speculation market. Jŏng repeatedly fails to magically transform himself into a local moneybags and, like Tŏksoe, proves incapable of providing the economic means to sustain his family. Instead, he relies on the combined revenue from the work that his wife, Madame Yu, and his eldest daughter, Ch'obong, perform to keep the family "[a]live in a state of starvation." When Madame Kim, the wife of the pharmacist Baek Jeho, proposes a marriage between Ch'obong and the banker Go Taesu, Jŏng Jusa sees this as his windfall opportunity to finally strike it rich in the rice speculation market. Ultimately, Jŏng's mercenary leveraging of Ch'obong initiates a series of misadventures that result in the incremental degeneration in the corporeal and psychological health of his daughter. Rather than read this novel as an intertextual satire that weaves in elements from classic Korean folktales, including *Simch'ong* and *Ch'unhyang*, I am interested in how *T'angnyu* complicates gendered constructions of passivity and sacrifice (Pyŏn Hwayŏng 1997). More specifically, *T'angnyu* highlights the waged and unwaged work of female characters that provide the material means for speculative exchanges to continue inside and around the Kunsan stock exchange.

The exchanges that take place in and around the rice market constitute the narrative focus of *T'angnyu*. Likening the rice market to a place of debauchery, the narrator describes the place as nothing more than a gambling house.

조금치라도 관계나 관심을 가진 사람은 시장(市場)이라고 부르고, 속한(俗漢)은 미두장이라고 부르고, 그리고 간판은 '군산미곡취인소(群山米穀取引所)'라고 써붙인 XX도박장(XX 賭博場).

집이야 낡은 목제의 이층으로 협수룩하니 보잘것없어도 이곳이 군산의 심장임에는 갈데없다.

Those who have even the slightest connection or interest in this place refer to it as 'The Market.' Unsophisticated folks refer to it as 'The Rice Market," and the signboard designates the XX gambling house as 'The Kunsan Rice Stock Exchange.'

A shabby, run-down two-story house, the building itself is utterly forgettable. Even so, it is obviously the heart of Kunsan. (Ch'ae, v.2 1939: 72)

Characterizing the heart of the city as a gambling parlor connotes the unethical exchanges that take place and radiate from the economic and agricultural heart of the city. These unethical exchanges seep beyond the walls of the "run-down two-story house" and permeate the relationships forged and failed throughout the city. Ch'ae's novel is populated with gamblers who manifest in a variety of forms: Jŏng Jusa is enchanted with the thrill of the high-stakes risks inside The Kunsan Rice Stock Exchange, and like a parasite, scrounges up any spare change from his wife's work or fellow speculators at the market.

그러나 많고 적고 간에 그것도 노름인데, 그러니 하는족족 먹으란 법은 없다. 가령 부인 유씨의 바느질삯 들어온 것을 한 일 원이고 옭아내든지, 미두장에서 어릿어릿하다가 안면 있는 친구한테 개평으로 일이 원이고 떼든지 하면, 좀이 쑤셔서도 하바를 하기는 하는데, 그놈이 운수가 놓아도 세 번에 한 번쯤은 빗맞아서 액생한 그 밑천을 흘랑 불어먹고라야 만다. 노름이라는 것은 잃는 것이 밑천이요, 그러므로 잃을 줄 알면서도 하는 것이 미두꾼의 담보란다.

하바를 할 밑천이 없으면 홀은 개평이라도 뜯어 밑천을 할까 하고 미두장엘 간다. 그렇지 않더라도 먹고 싶은 담배나 아편의 인에 몰리듯이 미두장에를 가보기라도 않고서는 궁급해 못 배긴다.

정저사도 어제 오늘은 달랑 돈 십 전이 없으면서 그래도 요행수를 바라고 아침부터 부옇게 달려나와 비잉빙 돌고 있었다.

It's all a gamble, regardless of whether the stakes are high or low, so there is nothing to do but roll with the wins and losses. For example, when Jŏng Jusa swindled a won out of his wife's wage from sewing, or when he happened to get a one or two won tip from the winnings of a friend while he was roaming around inside the rice market, he got the urge to play. Even if his luck was good at first, by the third round he inevitably fell into the red and lost all his earnings. Gambling is an activity where money is lost. Even though the rice speculator knows that they will eventually lose everything, the act of gambling provides a kind of peace of mind.

Even when a speculator has no money, he still visits the rice exchange in hopes that he might get a hold of some spare winnings to wager. Like someone who desperately wants a drag of a cigarette or some opium,

> he rushes to the rice exchange to satiate his curiosity about what is going on in the market.
>
> Without a cent to his name, Jŏng Jusa returned to the market day after day. He dawdled around from morning to evening hoping to strike it rich.
>
> (Ch'ae 1939: 18-19)

Rumors of windfalls that strike due to rapid rises and falls in the market ring in Jŏng's ears and weakens his ability to successfully commodify his labor on the market. Failed ventures have left Jŏng dependent on the work of the women in his family to provide seed money for the day's gamble. Go Taesu skillfully deploys rumors about his wealthy background in Seoul to distort the reality of his risky "business of selling money" embezzled from the bank (Ch'ae 2016: 109). Baek Jeho manipulates the truth to increase sales at the pharmacy, and Suengjae dabbles in a "game of nerves" when he administers medicine to patients (Ch'ae 2016: 225). Risky ventures, the thrill of potentially losing everything, provides a kind of remedy for the monotony of life lived in colonial-capital system (Yu 2019). *T'angnyu* captures how this passion to transform the everyday radiates from outside of the rice exchange market and permeates the entire region of Kunsan.

In the following section, I examine Ch'ae's engagement with the element of gold in two works: the 1937 novella *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* (In the Vicinity of the Train Depot) and the 1939 novel *T'angnyu* (Muddy Waters). In *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ*, I consider how alluvial soils, gold miners, and speculative rumors co-laborate in order to tell a polyvocal story about how the process of gold mining interrupts the circulation of materials that sustain laboring bodies and "vital soils" (Lyons 2020). In *T'angnyu*, it is the co-laboration of farmers, rice harvest, and fluctuation in stock prices that determine the (un)sustainability of lives in Kunsan. It is the

process of "environment-making" around the train depot and the rice exchange, respectively, that lies at the heart of these narratives (Moore 2015: 45).

The Spatial Texture of Alluvial Fields

High-risk stakes characterize the spaces within and around the rich alluvial fields on the Korean Peninsula. They are sites where raw ore becomes money, future harvests are gambled, and labor power is exchanged for cash. Bodies moving through these sites are susceptible to becoming infected with gold fever, a condition where "the magic of money" consumes the mind, body, and soul (Marx I 1967: 96). Once infected, the synapses start to misfire and spark a blind faith in gold as something that contains the mystical power to transform the everyday. Attuned to rumors about where the next windfall lies, whether in the form of gold ore or rice stocks, bodies migrate and co-laborate to produce spatial textures. These textures are woven in patterns that reflect the rhythms of accumulation; they guide the circulation of corporeal, mineral, and terrestrial materials through the train station and the rice exchange market and create the unique local texture reflected in *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* and *T'angnyu*.

The spatial texture of alluvial fields is co-produced through the creation, circulation, and consumption of reported bonanzas. These reports spread like wildfire throughout the peninsula, beginning in the winter of 1931. This was a bleak phase of the colonial period: the price of grain had drastically fallen, tenant and labor disputes had incrementally increased, Manchuria was on the brink of war, unemployment rates were high, and consumer goods suffered violent price fluctuations. In a sense, the only sector that appeared to be flourishing was that of gold mining

(Chŏn 2005: 45). According to a report published on January 1, 1934 in the *Chosŏn chungang ilbo*, the number of mining concessions granted were 5,025; 3,222 of those concessions were for gold mines, which speaks to the sheer volume of independent miners who were eager for the opportunity to remake their everyday circumstances through the prospect of gold mining (2005: 41). Within the context of colonial-capitalism, the search for gold was a pragmatic strategy to reclaim a relationship with the peninsula's rich soils. A 1932 article in the *Chosŏn ilbo* captures the cruel contrast between the riches embedded within the earth and the dire poverty of those living upon that very soil.

> 모든 광 (狂) 시대를 지나서 이제는 황금광시대가 왔다. 금광! 금광!…강화도는 사십 간만 남겨놓고 모두가 소유자 있는 금 땅이라 하고 조선에는 어느 곳이나 금이 안 나는 곳이 없다 하니 금 땅 위에서 사는 우리는 왜 이다지 구차한지?
>
> The era of complete madness has passed and the era of gold mining has arrived. Gold mines! Gold mines!…On Ganghwa Island, there are forty landowners who all have gold-rich soils and endure the rises and falls. In Korea, there isn't a single place where gold doesn't turn up. Why are we Koreans, who live atop this gold-rich soil, living in such poverty? (Chŏn 2005: 47)

There is a tangible discord in the riches guaranteed by the gold coin and the return to the gold standard that never circles back to mining tenant farmers who unearth the valuable ore. Gold facilitates the successful exchange of commodities and, like money, it contains the power to "transcend limitations of time and space" because, as Karatani Kojin reminds us, "the person who has money can always exchange it for commodities: it carries the right of direct exchangeability" as well as a superior position of power within the market economy (Karatani 2014: 93). The owner of money successfully transcends the precariousness endemic to the proletarian condition, where the successful exchange of labor for wage is always a gamble.

Rumors about sites containing rich gold veins fuel the mythological construction of a space where the colonized can re-make their relationship with the soil. In a survey of African

literature, Carla Calargé explores how myths perpetuate clandestine immigration and "invite people [immigrants] to construct their lives around consumption as the ultimate value. And by doing so, these images hide the violence (symbolic and otherwise) of such a system and the existential void that ensues" (Calargé 2015: 10). Thinking with Calargé, the greedy consumption of rumors is similar to the settler-colonial practice that Dylan Robinson refers to as "hungry listening" (Robinson 2020). This mode of listening is attuned to rhythms of *accumulation* rather than *sustainability* and compromises the material vitality of the rumored paradise. The ravenous consumption of speculative rumors dispatches prospective miners in droves to unearth purported untapped treasures. Relocating to a mythologized space, expropriated farmers become participants in a new phase of settler-colonialism that is attuned to the accumulation of minerals, in this case, gold.

The first scene in *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* maps the immediate surroundings of the train depot. The below passage describes a region that has been cleared of its previous inhabitants and has been prepared with the infrastructure to grow into a productive co-laboration of settler-colonial gold miners and local alluvial soils.

> 밤 열한점 막차가 달려들려면 아집도 멀었나보다. 정거장은 안팎으로 물만 환히 켜졌지 쓸쓸하다. 정거장이라야 하기는 이름뿐이고 아무것도 아니다. 밤이나까 아니보이지만 낮에 보면 논 있는 들판에서 기
>
> 차길이 두 가랑이로 찢어졌다가 다시 오므려진 그 샅을 도독이 돋우어 그 위에 생철을 인 허술한 판장집을 달랑 한 채 갸름하게 앉혀놓은 것 그것뿐이다.
>
> 그밖에 전등을 켜는 기둥이 몇 개 섰고, 절 뒷간처럼 쫓겨간 뒷간이 있고 쇠눌로 도롱태를 달아놓은 우물이 있고, 그리고 넌지시 떨어져 술집, 사탕집, 매갈잇간, 주재소 그런 것들이 초가집, 생철집 섞어 저자를 이룬 장터가 있고.
>
> It still seemed like quite awhile before the last train at eleven would pass through. The train depot was all lit up inside and out, yet it was bleak.
>
> It was a train depot in name only, as there was nothing there. Since it was nighttime, it was visible. But in

> the daytime, there was just a single run-down shack with a tin roof tucked just above where the two train tracks came together again after tearing through the fields filled with rice paddies.
>
> In addition, there were a number of light poles, a toilet that looked like it had once been a temple outhouse, and a well with a wheelbarrow attached to it with a chain. There was also a bar that appeared to have fallen to pieces, a sweets shop, a rice-hulling mill, and a police station. Scattered amidst all these buildings were thatch-roofed houses, tin roof houses, and marketplaces set up by locals.
>
> (Ch'ae 1937: 291)

The reader first encounters a train depot that exists "in name only, as there was nothing there" (1937: 291). This is hardly a portrait of a thriving area of commerce, meriting the financial investment necessary for the infrastructure to connect this desolate corner of the peninsula to the imperial metropole. The sole country gentleman in the waiting room and the long wait between trains give the impression that there are few comings and goings to this unnamed train depot. An assemblage of dilapidated structures and crudely constructed residences immerse the reader in the area's "bleak" atmosphere conveyed through this passage. These structures, however run-down, are not even discernible in the evening; this region appears to be devoid of the hustle and bustle characteristic of typical train depots.

Train tracks tear through the rice paddies, gesturing towards the "economies of violence" innate to the construction of imperial transportation networks (Blackhawk 2006:20). Paddies cultivated by local farmers are ripped asunder and repartitioned according to the logic imposed by cadastral surveys conducted by the colonial government. The annihilation of the rice paddies suggest that this is a space that is undergoing a radical transformation in accordance with the de-valuation of rice and the re-valuation of gold: this former rice production region is being re-made into a site of gold mining. Transforming the land into a space of gold mining enlists past and future "economies of violence" to create a place where human and more-than-human synchronize their circadian rhythms to that of incessant mineral extraction. This is evident in the

massive amounts of copper that were unearthed from the archipelago to work as both "connector and conductor" in the infrastructure of empire (Walker 2010: 72). This sketch of the vicinity of a train depot captures the mineral dependence forged by the copper from the archipelago and the gold from the peninsula; the copper facilitates communication, electric, and transportation connections while the gold finances infrastructure and war.

In *T'angnyu*, the violent fluctuations of the rice exchange market and speculations in stocks lie at the heart of the narrative. The protagonist demonstrates an unrelenting faith in the latent potential of the rice market, resembling the cruel optimism in gold ore that leads Kim Yujŏng's characters to shatter kinships and destroy fertile fields, as seen in the previous section of this chapter (Berlant 2011). Rather than gold ore, however, in *T'angnyu* it is the glimmering gold of ripened rice stalks that promises a windfall in the rice market. This, in turn, fuels a steady flow of laborers, money, and rice to keep the heart of Kunsan pumping and flowing with life-sustaining entanglements. The novel begins with an ethnographic sketch of the provincial city of Kunsan and highlights the role that bounteous rice harvests and rumored riches of rice play in generating the pulsating vitality of the region.

> 미두장은 군산의 십장이요, 전주통 (全州通)이니 본정통 (本町通)이니 해안통 (海岸通)이니 하는 폭넓은 길들은 대동맥이다. 이 대동맥 군데군데는 심장 가까이, 여러 은행들이 서로 호응하듯 옹위하고 있고, 심장바로 전후 좌우에는 중매점(仲買店)들이 전화줄로 거미줄을 쳐놓고 앉아있다. (Ch'ae, v.2 1939: 9)

> The rice exchange is the heart of Kunsan. Wide boulevards such as Jŏnju Avenue, Bonjŏng Avenue, or Haean Avenue form its large arteries. There are several banks scattered along these main arteries/roadways, clustered near the city center as if protecting one another. Brokerage houses circumscribe the heart of Kunsan, bound together by a web of telephone lines. (Ch'ae, v.2 1939: 9)

This passage delineates specific interrelations that take place in and around the rice exchange, the site that functions as the lifeblood of the city, and (re)makes the environment of Kunsan.[125] The copper mined from the archipelago, including the Arakawa and Ashio regions examined in chapter two, provides the material infrastructure for the telephone lines that crisscross in a weblike tangle of communications about the speculated value of golden harvests of rice.[126] These telephone lines connect broker-dealers with one another in local negotiations over the price of rice. These telephone lines also connect broker-dealers with the Osaka rice exchange market in transnational exchanges where the price of the annual Chŏlla rice harvest is passionately negotiated.

Returning to *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ*, we observe a region that bears little resemblance to the bleak landscape presented in the first passage. Circulation of rumors about the riches to be had in the gold mines sparks an exponential increase in trains arriving and departing from the depot on a daily basis. These trains transport entrepreneurs, mine managers, prospectors, and tenant farmers to and from the region in hopes of unearthing the soil's mineral wealth. The region no longer appears bleak and deserted, but now buzzes with the comings and goings of miners into and out from the subterranean sphere. An entire city has sprouted up from the wasteland witnessed in the readers' first encounter with the depot. In the following passage, the area around the train depot is pulsating with energy and life.

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[125] Jason Moore refers to this process as "environment-making" and defines this as the "symbolic, cultural, and scientific processes central to modernity's reworking of the *oikos*…Environment-making is , consequently, not limited to earth-moving. It encompasses those epoch-making revolutions in cartography, mathematics, agronomy, economic botany, quantification, and rationalizing endeavors of all kinds—the relations of abstract social nature" (Moore 2015: 79). Moore proposes environment-making as a corrective to the metabolic school of eco-socialism that he critiques focuses on the material and neglects the role of cultural and scientific ideas in historical change.

[126] Copper and gold form an alloy that functions as the mineral foundation of empire and forged the relationships between Japan and Korea into a relationship of mineral interdependence.

> 금을 파면서부터 논이 고르게 연해 있던 이 들판은 무엇이든지 형용이 괴항하다. 군데군데 벌흙을 파서 싸올린 것이 피라밋인가 있는 애급 풍경이다. 들판 가운데 사무소로 생철집이 생기고 논 가운데로는 ㅌ럭이 놓였다. 일꾼들한데 한 상에 칠 전짜리 현미 싸래기밥을 파느라고 밥집이 십여 군데 생기고 일꾼들을 재우느라고 네 귀에 기둥을 박고 가마니쪽을 둘러치고 바닥에는 등겨를 깔고 그 위에다가 가마니쪽을 깔고 집(?)이 생기고 호떡가게가 생기고 술집이 생기고, 담배가게 사탕가게 이런 것들이 들 가운데 아무렇게나 새로 생겨났다. 그야말로 지리(地理)가 변해버렸다.
>
> Since starting to dig for gold, the fields along the coast all had a uniformly peculiar appearance. With mounds of excavated earth heaped up here and there, it resembled the pyramids of Egypt. In the center of the fields was the tin-roofed office and in the middle of the rice paddies was a mine cart. There were about twenty places that sold brown rice meals to the workers for seven chŏn apiece. To house the laborers, there were four columns enclosed with a straw sack and the ground covered in rice chaff. There was a rice mill, a hottŏk shop, a bar, a tobacco shop, a candy shop and other kind of stores that were newly built in the middle of the fields.
>
> (Ch'ae 1937: 353)

The environment created in the process of mining for gold is described as possessing "a uniformly peculiar appearance" (1937: 353). In the disassembly of the riparian regions, masses of soil have been removed and "heaped up here and there" fabricating ore-rich structures that "resembled the pyramids of Egypt" (1937: 353). In the pursuit of precious metallic minerals, miners excavate quantities of soil from within the earth and relocate it aboveground. This process transforms the horizon of the once-fertile plains and manufactures a landscape that occludes the instability created when the environment is radically reorganized.

Kathryn Morse characterizes "the work of gold mining" as "the work of disassembly," a procedure where miners deconstruct the entire ecosystem and leave it in pieces (Morse 2003: 91). This work of disassembly interrupts water cycles, strips vegetation from the mountainsides, and transforms "river ecosystems into almost lunar landscapes of mud, rocks, and silty, clouded water" (Morse 2003: 92). The incessant digging of ore from the bowels of the earth destabilizes the very rigidity of the ground the miners stand upon, but also the ground where a new village has taken root.

The above scene captures a former farming region that has been re-made according to the rhythmic logic of gold mining. "Ordinarily, there would have been farmers with ox-drawn carts to till the fields and prepare the rice seedbed. However, in those expansive fields there was not one single person farming. There was no need to farm because gold turned up from the ground, and its price was much higher than rice" (Ch'ae 1937: 352). Ripened rice crops have been replaced by a tin-roofed assay office that stands obtrusively in the middle of the field; ox-drawn carts have been replaced by a mine cart piled up with chunks of raw gold ore. Structures along the periphery of the gold mines contain no elements feigning stability. The author himself questions his use of the word "house" for the miners' housing, inserting a question mark in parenthesis after the word *chip* (house), demonstrating his own loss for language to describe this poor excuse for a residence. These makeshift bunkhouses repurpose straw rice sacks for walls and rice chaff for flooring; these impromptu structures signal the fundamental inability of gold mining to single-handedly sustain the regional prosperity. This scene foretells the inability of this region to continually satiate the appetite for gold; it alludes to the problem posed by the mineral depletion of the soil with every pyramid that is constructed along the riverbed. Speculative rumors have triggered an environment-making that is fundamentally inhospitable to ethical engagements between humans and more-than-humans. Fertile soils are torn asunder to install railroad tracks; armies of laborers form an interminable procession that transports ore from the fields to the shore. Mine carts, tin roofed assay offices, and bunkhouses have appropriated the fields from farmers who tilled the soils for generations. The myth of gold has distorted reality to the point that tenant farmers are deluded into the credence that unearthing a "solid crystal of

value" from the bowls of the earth is a sustainable practice and will, one day, propel them out of the vicious cycle of debt (Marx, v. I 1967: 113).

A later passage in *T'angnyu* presents a different vantage point of the port city of Kunsan. This time, the provincial city is anthropomorphized as an ogre who thrives on the lifeblood siphoned from the constant stream of rice, laborers, and money that pass through the city. Kunsan continues to grow plump and prosper on its human and more-than-human acquisitions. The tragic murder of Ko T'aesu and Madame Kim, the rape of Ch'obong, and the circumstances that lead Ch'obong to flee and then return to Kunsan do not interrupt the juggernaut of imperial rice production.

> 그러자 이곳 항구(港口) 군산은 그러한 이야기는 잊은 지 오래다. 물화(物貨)와 돈과 사람과, 이 세 가지가 한데 뭉쳐 생명 있이 움직이는 조고마한 거인(巨人)은 고만한 피비린내나, 뉘 집 처녀가 생애를 잡친 것쯤 그리 대사라고 두고두고 잊지 않고서 애달파할 내력이 없던 것이다.
>
> 해는 여전히 아침이면 동쪽에서 떴다가 저녁이면 서쪽으로 지고, 철이 바뀌는 대로 풍경도 전과 다름 없이 새롭고, 조수 밀렸다 썰렸다 하는 하구(河口)로는 한모양으로 흐린 금강이 쉴새없이 흘러내리고 있다. 그러는 동안 거인은 묵묵히 걸음을 걷느라, 물화는 돈을 따라서, 돈은 물화를 따라서, 사람은 그 뒤를 따라서 흩어졌다 모이고 모였다 흩어지고, 그리하여 그의 심장은 늙을 줄 모르고 뛰어, 미두장의 XXX도 매일같이 벌어지고 있다.

> However, quite a lot of time had passed since this port city of Kunsan had forgotten all about that series of misfortunate events. The city was a small ogre that flourished with the energy provided by the flow of three things: commodities, money, and people. It was too bustling of a place to recall some incident of minor bloodshed or a tragic story about a young woman's ruination.
>
> Just like always, when it is morning, the sun rises in the East; when it is evening, it sets in the West. As the seasons change, the scenery changes anew. The Kŭm River constantly flows downstream, powered by the ebb and flow of the tide that collects in the estuary. Meanwhile, the ogre inaudibly proceeds ahead, fueled by the commodities that follow the money and the money that accompanies the commodities. People scatter all over the place and gather in others, all in pursuit of commodities and money. In this way, the heart of the ogre remains virile. This hold true for the XXX in the rice exchange market as well.
>
> (Ch'ae 1939: 344)

Ch'ae's anthropomorphic depiction of Kunsan as an ogre highlights the indiscriminate consumption of human and more-than-human bodies that powers the expansion of colonial-

capital on the Korean Peninsula. The incessant flow of bodies provides sustenance to propel the ogre forward. He does not stop to reflect upon the collateral damage left in the wake of his feeding frenzy, but simply pushes forward to keep pace with the whirlwind of transactions that comprise Kunsan. His path is littered with bloodied bodies and barren fields. Even so, sacks of freshly milled rice, wandering speculators, and the stream of laboring bodies continually sweep through the city. They are pushed further downstream by the current of the Kŭm River and consistently generate a flood of profits. The river's current maintains a perpetual flow of money and goods; it generates the dynamic kinetic energy that sweeps up masses of unemployed clerks, like Jŏng Jusa. Inside the maelstrom of the rice exchange, they are spellbound with the magic of money and obsess over the thrill of the gamble and the prospect of striking it rich. The above passage foregrounds how the movement of commodities, money, and laborers through the port city is what brings the ogre into existence. The novel traces the violent effects that radiate from this strong current of speculative and material exchanges.

The complex web of interchanges between humans and more-than-humans lies at the heart of both *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* and *T'angnyu*. Reading these works in conversation highlights the mineral interdependence forged between the archipelago's copper and the peninsula's gold to produce two spaces: the vicinity of the train depot and the rice stock exchange in Kunsan. In this section, I have traced how murmurs, negotiations, and rumors contribute to the flow of human and more-than-humans through the gold mines and the rice exchange market. Textual passages bring into relief the exchanges and alliances formed in the pursuit of gold. These works gesture towards the ethical implications of regional prosperity and confront the reader with the corporeal and environmental repercussions of maintaining a steady

flow of profit. A blind faith in gold and a passion for gambling (re)shapes the environment and (re)casts farmers into settler-colonial miners. In the following section, I explore how the leveraging of female bodies is employed as a means to transform the impoverished tenant farmer into a local moneybags.

From Tenant Farmer to Moneybags

In *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ*, the reader first encounters Tŏksoe, the protagonist, crouching outside the waiting room of the newly built train depot. The expansion of the train line to this unnamed rural region facilitates the comings and goings of entrepreneurs and prospectors, but it offers nothing more than an "aleatory encounter" for landless tenant farmers like Tŏksoe (Kawashima 2009). Shivering in the cold, Tŏksoe gazes longingly at the bright crimson flame of the heater inside the station; he stealthily slips inside once the station attendant has dozed off. Inside the waiting room, Tŏksoe converses with an elderly gentleman about local windfalls and the two scoff at the purported benefits of the so-called enlightenment (*kaemyŏng*) of modern society: "what kind of enlightenment is this if a man cannot even enjoy a smoke" (Ch'ae 1937: 291). This scene frames the paradoxical gap, that between rumored riches and impoverished realities, at the heart of this encounter inside the waiting room of the train depot.

Taking the local reports about the gold mines at face value, the elderly gentleman is under the impression that there is a fortune to be made in the newly opened mines adjacent to the station. He tells Tŏksoe that working as a porter is a waste of time and recommends that he join the mass of miners digging for gold in the alluvial fields. Tŏksoe explains to the elderly

gentleman, based on his calculations, the mines are a far riskier gamble than the day labor market. Day after day, a mass of a thousand farmers shows up at the mines and competes for the three hundred jobs available (Ch'ae 1937: 295). Regardless of the competition for employment, the promise of a daily wage offers the tenant farmer a better opportunity than conjectures about a bumper harvest.[127]

Rumors of riches embedded within the subterranean strata depict an ulterior reality to the everyday lived experiences around the train depot. The synchronous sounds of the train signal and the shouts of the station attendant disrupt the fantastical time of speculation and rouse Tŏksoe back into consciousness of himself as a "transient tenant" (Du Bois 2021). W. E .B. Du Bois's trope of the "transient tenant" captures how "unequal economic transactions" in empire send "colonized peoples around the world" in a continuous "movement through time and space" (Kaplan 2002: 187-188). In short, "transient tenants" must remain in constant motion; the train signal and shouts of the station attendant remind Tŏksoe that he belongs to this group of "transient tenants." Hence, he does not belong to a space-time of leisure, symbolized here by the interior of the waiting room.[128] He quickly shoulders his A-frame and returns to the precarious space-time of a day laboring tenant farmer, one whose ability to subsist from one day to the next is entirely contingent on chance.

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[127] Tenant farmers in Korea and Japan were plagued by usurious lending rates, high taxes, increasing prices for fertilizer, volatile prices for agricultural goods, as well as natural disasters including floods and droughts. These all contributed to an unstable financial situation for the tenant farming families. For studies on Korean tenant farmers, see Bruce Cumings 1981, especially chapter two, Paul S. Nam, and Holly Stephens 2017, especially chapter two where Stephens examines the rural economy through the diary of a tenant farmer in early twentieth century Korea. For studies on Japanese tenant farmers, see Ann Waswo 1977 and Thomas R.H. Havens 1974.

[128] This section draws upon Bakhtin's idea of the chronotope and also the relationships between the everyday and leisure that is theorized in Henri Lefebvre's Critique of the Everyday, v. I, II, III (Lefebvre 2014). These inform my discussion of how money grabs hold of the tenant farmer who is condemned to float somewhere between work time and leisure time.

Like the hundreds of landless tenant farmers turned away from the mines, Tŏksoe's limited participation in the space-time of work casts him into a liminal space of constant financial insecurity. The (in)ability to acquire ownership of land contributes to the differentiated masculinities that emerge on the peninsula, and are directly responsible for making Tŏksoe a "transient tenant," but the presence of money mystifies the relationship between the laborer and the soil. Tŏksoe commences the long journey home when a chance encounter with a man named Ch'unsam proffers an unforeseen windfall. Everything Tŏksoe knew about Ch'unsam was based entirely on hearsay. The two men used to pass one another on the road in the early morning and late evening en route to till the fields, but since then, their lives had taken divergent paths. It was only a few days prior that Tŏksoe had heard talk that a decade prior, Ch'unsam had sold his land and become a successful entrepreneur in the city. With capital in his pocket, Ch'unsam returned to his hometown in order to invest in a bar near the train depot. This serendipitous meeting catapults Tŏksoe outside the space-time of "transient tenant" and initiates his metamorphosis into a local moneybags. Ch'ae Mansik plays with what Harry Harootunian calls a "fantasizing discourse" in his gold literature to capture the transformations that colonial-capitalism brought to the daily lived experience in Korea (Harootunian 2000: 13).[129] In doing so, Ch'ae locates the (un)paid labor of his wife as the root force that prompts this fantastical metamorphosis.

Ch'unsam's homecoming represents a discursive fantasy of modernity that has manifest into a reality. As such, he is a symbol of hope for the impoverished rural populace. His transfiguration from a tenant farmer into a local moneybags signals the possibility of social

[129] Harootunian traces how the modern appealed to fantasy and myth in the context of modern Japan. He gives an example of how the figure of the so-called "modern girl" was cast as the heroine of "a new, feminized culture" that was prominent in the discursive construction of a modern life in literature before it was experienced in everyday life. Ch'ae Mansik's gold literature, I contend, explores a more complex gendered relation that appears in rural regions of the peninsula.

mobility despite contemporaneous colonial policies that reinforce class, ethnic, and gendered divisions throughout the peninsula. With an empty A-frame and empty pockets, Tŏksoe is a day laborer who has failed to complete the process of commodifying his labor-power and, as a result, is stuck in a transitory space where his work is not valued.[130] In an earlier scene, the station attendant chases Tŏksoe out from the leisure space-time of the train depot. In a narrative parallel, a waitress sends Tŏksoe out from the leisure space-time of the bar in a later scene. As a day laborer whose work is not valued, he is not embraced within a space-time of leisure, but continually chased back into the precarious space-time of day labor. It is only through his association with the wealthy Ch'unsam that enables him to surreptitiously slip back into the bar and join this space-time of leisure. In the course of the evening, Ch'unsam and Tŏksoe become increasingly intoxicated and Tŏksoe flippantly jokes that his wife, Ippŭn, is a real beauty. This is a play on words, her name a cognate with the adjective *yeppŭda* (pretty), but the commodification of his own wife is *such* an absurd proposition that Ch'unsam counters with an offer of one hundred won. Dazzled by the prospect of pocketing a thick stack of bills, Tŏksoe jumps on the fortuitous moment. In doing so, he places Ippŭn in circulation to leverage his own social mobility from day laboring tenant farmer to a venture capitalist.

This is the magic of money; this is the fantasy of the modern. In an instant, Tŏksoe's wife is magically metamorphosed into a handsome stack of bills that facilitate's Tŏksoe's metamorphosis from tenant farmer to a local moneybags. The process of financial leveraging, or what Mark Metzler calls "monetary alchemy," enables Tŏksoe to go the market as a changed

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[130] For a discussion of the "repeated doubling of violence" that occurs in the exchange of a laborer's body through the substance called labor-power for money, which attempts to measure the potentiality of this labor-power, see *The Sublime Perversion of Capital*, especially chapter four (Walker 146: 2016).

man, as a capitalist (Metzler 2006: 53). Japan began its own "monetary alchemy" in 1897 when it adopted the gold standard to generate funds for industrial and imperial projects. It was the financial leveraging of the indemnity received from the Sino-Japanese War that facilitated this financial leveraging (Harootunian 2000; Metzler 2006). This "monetary alchemy" transformed Japan from a debtor into a creditor nation and provided the fiscal foundation for empire-building. Tŏksoe's performs his own sort of "monetary alchemy" when, with the creative leveraging of his wife's labor, he is reborn as a capitalist.

In an environmental history of the Klondike Gold Rush, Kathryn Morse underscores the cultural construction of gold "as commodity, currency, capital, and as a sacred container of pure value" (Morse 2003: 19). As such, gold money and the gold standard were "divinely ordained" in contrast to the "inferior, unstable, non-white, uncivilized nations" that relied upon silver money (2003: 27). These gendered, nationalist, and racist arguments are embedded within the golden mineral and critical for understanding its elusive value. Isabelle Stengers highlights the mystical aspects endemic to capitalism in her concept of "capitalist sorcery" (Stengers 2011: 45). This is a *pragmatic* concept necessary to protect oneself from being "captured" by the bewitching powers of capital, those that aim to separate people from reality (2011: 51). This is the paradoxical gap, the one between reality and fantasy, that we see framed in the space of the waiting room. Stengers's notion of "capitalist sorcery" underlines the supernatural power of money to hoodwink and co-opt bodies, human and more-than-human, as working parts of the expanding machine of empire. It challenges readers to "think against the fairytale of progress" and recognize the persistent and present danger of being swept up by the magic of money (2011: 61). *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* and *T'angnyu* are both works about the bewitching power of money.

These narratives explore the challenges of navigating the dangers posed to human and more-than-human lives within the seams of gold.

The elements for capitalist sorcery are unearthed in the entangled processes that Maria Mies refers to as colonization and housewifization. These processes transform colonies, nature, and women into "a vast reservoir of material resources to be exploited and turned into profit" (Mies 1986: 88). Primitive accumulation is continuous and predicated upon the dual processes of colonial-capitalism that function to create new borders for production and consumption (Federici 2019; Luxembourg 1913; Moore 2015). This incessant process claims bodies (human, mineral, terrestrial) as "occupied territories" (Mies 1986: 25). Laura Hyun Yi Kang explores the "complex of power/knowledge/violence and belated address/redress in an expanded historical and geographical grid" in regards to the "paradoxical hyper-visibility *and* unknowability of the 'traffic in women'' (Kang 2020: 24; 51). Both *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* and *T'angnyu* make the "traffic in women" hyper-visible as the mode of leveraging that magically transforms the impoverished tenant farmer, Tŏksoe, and the unemployed civic worker, Jŏng Jusa, into venture capitalists.

In *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ*, Tŏksoe initiates the process of housewifization when he encloses his wife, Ippŭn, as a young girl in his home. Once married, he sells her to Ch'unsam to complete his metamorphosis into a local moneybags. In *T'angnyu*, Ch'obong's parents are enchanted by the prospect of marrying off their eldest to the young banker Ko T'aesu. After negotiating the transaction, they consciously ignore the hyper-visible indications of this being a rotten deal for Ch'obong. They place their faith in the mythical figure of Ko T'aesu, perpetuated by the rumors of his wealthy background in the capital. In both of these works, Ch'ae poses a

sharp critique of the ethics involved in enclosing and circulating one's wife or daughter as commodity in a scheme to magically sprout seed money. Enchanted by the thrill of the gamble, Tŏksoe and Jŏng Jusa engage in "housewifization" and "traffic in women" as a strategy to magically transform the everyday.

The financial leveraging of his wife, Tŏksoe's own style of "money alchemy" or "capitalist sorcery," lands ten crisp bills of ten wŏn each in his jacket pocket. Each bill that Ch'unsam stacks in Tŏksoe's palm sends the mythical power of money surging through his palm and coursing through his veins. This moment of transaction initiates a process that dislocates Tŏksoe from the transitory space-time of a day laboring tenant farmer and into that of an investor in a market economy.

> 돈 백원—-십원짜리 열 장을 저고리 속 고비에 넣고 새끼로 젖가슴 밑에를 질끈 동이고서 장터로 나선 덕쇠는 외양이야 그냥 덕쇠지만 아주 속은 딴 사람이 되었다.
> 더구나 그는 술이 한잔 얼큰했다. 춘삼이가 인찰지에다가 무어라고 쓴것을 가지고 지장을 누르라니까 시키는 대로 누르고, 그러고 나서 십원짜리 열 장을 금융조합소 사람이 하듯이 착착 세어 내주는 것을 그는 바르르 떨리는 손으로 받았다. 가슴은 손보다도 더 떨리고 두근거렸다.
> 십원짜리 열 장을 한 장씩 침을 묻혀가면서 세어 수를 맞추기에 힘이 들었다.
> 그놈을 저고리 속 고비에 넣으면서 밑바닥에 구멍이 뚫리지 아니했나 잘 신칙해 보았다.
> 다시 새끼를 한 발 집어다가 저고리 위로 젖가슴 밑에로 질끈 동여맸다.
>
> 100 won—-with ten bills of ten won each tucked inside his jacket, securely bundled together with a straw rope, Tŏksoe went out to the marketplace. On the outside he was the same Tŏksoe, but on the inside he was a *completely* different person.
> He was tipsy from the drink. Ch'unsam brought over a piece of lined paper with something written on it, signed it with his fingerprint, and pushed Tŏksoe to order something. Then, as though he were a financier, Ch'unsam counted out ten bills of ten won each and handed it over to Tŏksoe, whose hands were trembling. His heart was pounding harder than his hands were shaking.
> Tŏksoe wet his finger with spit and checked that there were ten bills of ten won each.
> As Tŏksoe tucked the bundle inside his jacket pocket, he took the precaution to double check that there were not any holes in the lining.
> He tugged at the straw rope again to secure the bundle inside his jacket. (Ch'ae 1937: 326-327)

Money and gold are imbued with a mythical power that causes Tŏksoe's hands to shake and heart to pound. He obsessively checks the rope that secures his stack of cash inside his pocket.

This rope serves as Tŏksoe's own lifeline, tethering him to his new identity as "an embryo capitalist" (Marx v.I 1967: 163). With his hand securely around the rope, he passes the gold mines and comments that the miners are a pitiful (*hinsamhaetko*) group, much like he had been prior to his "aleatory encounter" with Ch'unsam (Ch'ae 1937: 328). Year after year, Tŏksoe labored with the soil and tried his luck on the day labor market, but ultimately "all that hard work was pointless" (*aessŭdŏn il i usŭwŏtta*) because it never functioned to sustain his family (1937: 328).

Through the figure of Tŏksoe, *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* illuminates the differentiated masculinities co-existing in colonial-capital Korea. The country gentleman and Ch'unsam represent figures familiar to talk of burgeoning economy and prosperous gold mines. Tŏksoe, on the other hand, represents the thousands of landless farmers who repeatedly fail to negotiate a basic living wage on the day labor market. The transformation we witness in the previous scene, where Tŏksoe is intoxicated with the power of money, is based upon the commodified labor-power of his wife. When Tŏksoe commodifies and circulates Ippŭn's unwaged labor, he generates a small fortune. This sudden windfall bewitches Tŏksoe into believing that he has successfully negotiated his way out beyond the precarious existence of an underemployed tenant farmer. Infected with the power of money, he holds a blind faith in his stable position of as embryo capitalist. With his cash securely in pocket, he peruses the goods for sale in the local market and relishes his new position in the negotiations over prices for rice, aluminum pots, meat, textiles, and cigarettes. Seemingly under a spell, the mythical power of money creeps into the recesses of his mind and consumes his thoughts, dominated by the rhythms of accumulation,

and overshadowing the fact that he has enlisted Ippŭn into an interminable cycle of violent exchanges.

In this feverish state, Tŏksoe spends days on end in a clandestine gambling parlor, dazzled by the prospect of reproducing the seed capital into yet a larger heap of cash. The omniscient narrator depicts Tŏksoe's affliction with gold fever in a tragicomic light. Each time he steps outside the gambling ring to relieve himself, he touches the inside pocket of his jacket and computes his accumulated losses. When his hand reaches up to find nothing left inside his pocket, his synapses suffer a complete disconnect. In this complete failure to reproduce capital, he grabs a rope and heads towards the woods at the base of the mountain where he looks for a large oak to hang himself. When he finally finds a suitable tree, a bee flies up and, in a comically mad moment, disrupts the hallucinations induced by gold fever. Still disoriented by the feverish delusions, Tŏksoe's friend Sun'gap appears in the forest and convinces him to spend the last few coins on a couple of drinks. Inebriated by the toxic mixture of money and alcohol, Tŏksoe stumbles to Ch'unsam's bar where he learns that Ippŭn has run away with mine-manager Kim. In a series of risky gambles, Tŏksoe was swept up by the supernatural power of gold and this, ironically, lands him in the gold mines across the train depot where he works for a measly forty chŏn a day. Cha'e's novella places a narrative focus on the reproduction of violence that radiates from Tŏksoe's decision to enclose and exchange his wife as an "occupied territory" in hopes of striking it rich. In making the "traffic in women" that fuels colonial-capitalism "hyper-visible," Ch'ae poses a sharp critique of the stakes involved in the thrill of the gamble and the complicated gendered dynamics that emerge in this high-risk game. Meanwhile, in a cruel twist of fate, it is implied that Ippŭn has skillfully navigated her way among small entrepreneurs like

Ch'unsam and a larger capitalist mine-manager Kim to seek a better price for her body-as-territory.

In a collection of critical essays on the literature of Ch'ae Mansik, Kim Sŭngjong delineates several ways that parody is employed in the novel *T'angnyu*.[131] First, Kim discusses the symbolic significance of the title *T'angnyu* (muddy waters), drawing a parallel between the downfall of the protagonist Ch'obong and the demise of Korea's sovereignty after the 1876 Treaty of Kanghwa that precipitated the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910 (Kim 1997: 122-123).[132] In this allegorical reading of the text, Kim contends that the ruination of Ch'obong is a direct result of her living dependent on one man after another: her rice speculating father, Jŏng Jusa, the adventurist entrepreneur, Pak Chaeho, and the embezzling womanizer, Ko T'aesu. Kim likens Ch'obong's fall from grace to the crumbling of Korea's sovereignty, forced to endure the humiliation (*ch'iyok ŭl kamsuhaeya haessŭni*) of annexation after the success of what Andre Schmid terms "decentering the Middle Kingdom," in a reference to the end of the centuries-long tributary relationship with China (Kim 1997: 123: Schmid 2002: 55).[133] Kim reads Kyebong,

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[131] Kim Sŭngjong analyzes this novel as a kind of bildungsroman (*sŏngjang sosŏl*) as well as a satirical novel (*p'ungja sosŏl*) (Kim 1997). See Barbara Foley for a detailed description of genres of the proletarian novel in early twentieth century America; see Sunyoung Park for a literary history of the anarchist origins of the proletarian wave in colonial Korea; see Samuel Perry, Norma Field and Helen Bowen-Stryuk for a literary analysis and translations from representative texts from the Japanese proletarian movement.

[132] The Treaty of Kanghwa established a number of notable changes in the relationships between Japan and Korea, but the real objective, as argued by Duus, was to "'open' the country" through its ports (Duus 1995: 46). One of notable, though perhaps understudied significance, is the end of the ceremonial exchange between nations mediated by the Sō family on Tsushima Island/ Daema Island (Duus 1995: 48). In addition, the fact that it resembled the "unequal treaties" that Americans and Europeans had imposed on ports in China and Japan is important for considering how empires are co-produced (Fujitani 2011).

[133] Korea held a tributary relationship with China for centuries, and with the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, between the Qing and Meiji empires, the Qing empire recognized Korea as a sovereign nation for the first time (Schmid 2002: 56). This propelled a movement among intellectuals to advocate for a "decentering of the Middle Kingdom" and a re-articulation of Korea's place within the larger space of East Asia. This movement was championed, as Schmid shows, by the print media published in the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement but lost momentum with the 1905 establishment of Korea as a protectorate, then the 1910 annexation, and even further with the stricter censorship laws after the 1919 independence movement (Robinson 1988; Schmid 2002; Shin 2006).

Ch'obong's brazen younger sister who embraces the ideologies and mannerisms of the so-called new woman, and Nam Sŭngjae, who welcomes modern medicine as a means to transform the uneven access to life-sustaining nutrients, as characters who actively live according to their own instinct of maintaining livelihood and, hence, model how Korea should live from this point should it attain any sense of sovereignty in the future.[134]

In *Ch'ae Mansik munhak kwa p'ungja ŭi chŏngsin* (The Essence of Ch'ae Mansik's Literature and Satire), Chŏng Hŭngsŏp characterizes *T'angnyu* as a novel that captures the debauchery of colonial-capitalism as well as the warped traditions in Korea that, in collusion, result in the tragic demise of Ch'obong (2004: 183). In Chŏng's reading, each of the characters are trapped somewhere within the seams between feudal and colonial-capitalist modes of patriarchal appropriation, exchange and circulation of female bodies as "occupied territories" (Mies 1986). I propose that reading *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* and *T'angnyu* in conversation with one another complicate the concepts of "passivity" and "sacrifice." Ch'ae pauses the narrative momentum in both works that highlights both Ippŭn and Ch'obong as figures who demonstrate their agency; these moments resist a reduction of these female characters as mere victims consumed and regurgitated within the cycle of patriarchal colonial-capitalist systems.

Despite the horrific circumstances that Ippŭn endured, she navigated her way out of a debt of sexual servitude at Ch'unsam's bar and, potentially, landed on a path towards a more independent life than her husband who crawled back into the gold mines, humbled by debt.[135]

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[134] In the same volume, Pyŏn Hwayŏng also reads Kyebong as the character who embodies the potential of Korea to transform itself into a sovereign nation, and hence, she symbolizes the futurity of Korea (Pyŏn Hwayŏng 1997: 106-107).

[135] The fate of Ippŭn is never articulated, but her ability to break free from what Suh terms the "chains of utility" is implied in Ch'ae's novella (Suh 2023).

Ch'obong, on the other hand, suffered a lifetime of victimization from a chain of men and in the ultimate act of sacrifice, she murders Hyŏngbo, the vile creature who calculated a strategy that involved rape and murder to acquire her as his own territory. In a study of anti-utilitarian sacrifice, Serk-Bae Suh turns to Georges Bataille's idea of sacrifice as "an exit from subjectivity" to explore how a work of 1970s literature features a moment that offers a vision of exiting "the closed circuit of this utilitarian sacrifice" (Suh 2023: 13).[136] Suh's concept of utilitarian sacrifice is one that moralizes an individual's sacrifice for the sake of strengthening the national economy.[137] In a sense, Ch'obong's murder of her rapist and captor is "an exit from subjectivity" that releases her from what Suh refers to as the "chains of utility," or the "closed circuit of utilitarian sacrifice" (Suh 2023). At the end of *T'angnyu*, once the police are at her house in an investigation of Hyŏngbo's sudden death, she turns to Nam Sŭngjae; she challenges him to answer whether or not she has committed a crime by killing a swindler. A swindler is a con artist, a hustler who thrives on the thrill of the gamble. These are the characters who populate Ch'ae's gold mining literature. *T'angnyu* concludes with Ch'obong, the formerly idyllic main character, confronting the reader with a complex question: what value does a gambler have when we are all forced into a situation where we have no choice but to gamble? "He [Sŭngjae] didn't have the words to answer at that moment, so he responded to Ch'obong's plea with a 'promise for the future' as he couldn't hardly bear to refuse her search for hope" (Ch'ae 1939: 468-469).

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[136] Suh, Serk-Bae. 2023. "Anti-Utilitarian Sacrifice in Cho Sehŭi's *A Little Ball Launched by the Dwarf*." *The Journal of Korean Studies*. March: forthcoming, current pagination is based on pdf sent by author but will change in publication.

[137] Suh develops his concept from a reading of Park Chung Hee's (1917-1979) book *Our Nation's Path* (1965) in conversation with the labor incentives enforced under the authoritarian regime.

This promise reifies Ch'obong's removal of the "chains of utility," but does not map out a clear path towards living life free of those "chains of utility."

These chains are similar to the rhythms of accumulation that govern the extractive logic of gold mining, the mineral focus of this chapter, but also relate to the patterns of imperial agricultural and copper mining in previous chapters. In placing *Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ* in conversation with *T'angnyu*, I place a critical focus on the magic of money in order to open a creative space for a more nuanced reading of Ch'ae Mansik's gold mining literature. In my reading, neither Ippŭn nor Ch'obong are passive victims, embodying an idyllic sacrifice for the good of the empire and/or patriarch. Rather, I read these works as critically engaged with a larger question about what constitutes mutual care and ethical relationships in the sector of gold mining which is infected with the magic of money and the sorcery of colonial-capitalism. In the following section, I discuss how Ch'ae argues for a local practice of mutual care in his tragicomic turn towards a fantastical space where ethical interrelationships are maniacally cultivated.

Satiating a Hunger for Gold

Recorded in 1940, a folk song entitled "Nodaji" (Bonanza) captures the madness and mania that suffuses the subterranean spaces under alluvial fields. The mythical power of the "gold-chrysalis," rumored to lie within the earth, contains a transformative power to change the everyday for these toiling bodies (Marx 1967: 130).

노다지 노다지 금노다지
노다지 노다지 금노다지
노다진지 지랄인지 알수가 없구나
나오라는 노다진 아니 나오고
칡뿌리만 나오니 성화가 아니냐
엥여라 차 차 차 엥여라 차 차 차
눈깔먼 노다지야 어디가 뭍혔길래
요다지 태우느냐 사람의 간장을
엥여라 차 차 차 엥여라 차

Bonanza, bonanza, a golden windfall
Bonanza, bonanza, a golden windfall
Never know if its gold mine, maybe lose your mind
If what emerges is a bonanza, all is well
If what crops up is a kudzu vine, then you'll be inflamed
Engyŏra ch'a, ch'a, ch'a, *engyŏra ch'a, ch'a, ch'a*
Golden ore will bury you alive and blind you with its luminescence
Reigniting people's passion
Engyŏra ch'a, ch'a, ch'a, *engyŏra ch'a*

(Kim Tonghun, Hŏ Kyŏngjin, and Hŏ Hwihun 2010: 521-522)

This song captures the rhythms of the monotonous cycles of digging into the bowels of the earth in an impassioned quest for gold ore. Laboring with the alluvial soils, miners acquire an intimate knowledge of the subtle changes in the substratum that hold secrets about the treasures within. The fine line between fortune and financial ruin sets these day laborers on edge, always teetering on the edge of survival.

Tŏksoe has now joined the multitude of miners he earlier observed from the vantage point of the train depot. With an empty pocket and a runaway wife, Tŏksoe attempts to dig himself out of the debt he has accrued in his brief venture as a local entrepreneur. Tŏksoe's ears perk up when he hears whispers exchanged between miners working in the opposite side of the tunnel. He briefly pauses his work, breaking free from the tedium of digging up soil for a moment. The veteran miner known as "string bean" has struck gold. The miners fail to conceal the discovery and the commotion attracts the attention of the mine manager, pockmarked Ch'oe. Tŏksoe sees this as his golden opportunity to satiate his hunger for gold and in a frenzied panic,

before Ch'oe reaches the group, he gulps down three massive piece of raw ore. As the jagged edges of the ore tear up his esophagus and threaten to lodge in his duodenum, Tŏksoe daydreams about the two hundred won worth of ore guarded safely within his organs.

The comic madness of Tŏksoe in this scene is evocative of M.M. Bakhtin's figure of the rogue who creates his own chronotope, his own special little world, through his "cheerful deceit" while still retaining "some ties that bind him to real life" (Bakhtin 1981: 162, 159). Tŏksoe's gluttonous consumption of raw ore, I propose, is an active "re-creation of a spatially and temporally adequate world" that allows for mutual care between gold and the miner (1981: 168). In short, Tŏksoe establishes a space-time where the transient tenant farmer and the raw gold ore co-laborate in an effort to cultivate an ethical interrelationship that fosters the future life of both laborers and minerals.

Chŏnggŏjang kŭnch'ŏ culminates with a scene that returns the reader to the vicinity of the train depot. The area is washed in the vibrant yellow hue from the blooming forsythia. Sounds of people coming and going, crying and laughing, reverberate between the abundant spring blossoms. The train depot is crowded with a mass of farmers awaiting to board the migrant train bound for Eastern Manchuria (K: Kando C: Jiando).[138] Tŏksoe is one of these farmers. A belly heavy with raw ore, Tŏksoe joins the migrants in one last venture to transform his seed money into a fortune. The juxtaposition of these two images, the yellow forsythia blossoms and the golden raw ore, tethers this scene to real life and brings into relief the

[138] The southern space known as Manchuria was acquired in 1905 by Japan after its victory in the Russo-Japanese and it was established as Manchukuo in 1932. Kando is the word for this region in Korean and Jiando in Chinese; I use Manchuria in this section and throughout the dissertation for clarity as this is the more commonly recognized name for the region, but this is not meant to legitimize the colonial (re)naming of this region. For a history of the migration to Manchuria from Japan, see Louise Young Japan's *Total Empire* (1998); for postwar memories of Japanese migration see Mariko Tamanoi *Memory Maps* (2009). For a history of the migration to Manchuria from Korea, see Hyun Ok Park *Two Dreams in One Bed* (2005).

fundamental *un*sustainability of this monstrous collaboration. In the following section, I look at two short stories by Hyŏn Kyŏngjun that focus on this liminal space between Korea and Manchuria and explore how smuggling sustains the ecologies on both sides of the border.

Cryptic Values: Smuggling Gold into Manchuria in Hyŏn Kyŏngjun's (1909-1950) 1938 Stories "Milssu" (Smuggling) and "Penttobagosok ŭi kŭmgoe" (Golden Nugget in the Bento Box)

This section picks up from Manchuria, the geographical territory where Ch'ae's novella transported the readers, in a reading of two 1938 short stories by Hyŏn Kyŏngjun: "Milssu" (Smuggling) and "Penttobagosok ŭi kŭmgoe" (Golden Nugget in the Bento Box). These stories focus on the space of the Tumen River, the porous border between Korea and Manchuria, where the so-called "illicit flows" of commodities sustain life on the north and south of the border (Andreas 2015: 2). The migration of minerals and humans across this boundary nourishes the newly imagined communities that form around the riparian region of the Tumen River.

A Hyŏn as Fisherman, Hyŏn as Manchurian

Born in Hamgyŏng province in 1909, Hyŏn Kyŏngjun (1909-1950) dropped out of secondary school in his third year and wandered around Siberia from 1927 to 1929. In 1929, Hyŏn moved to P'yŏngyang, then to Tokyo to study but returned to Korea when he was expelled for his involvement in the so-called "thought incident" (*sasang sagŏn*) (Yi Kwangil 2005).[139] In

[139] Like many of the authors featured in this project, Hyŏn actively read and propagated socialist ideas and this activity was strictly monitored and punished, particularly among the student populations studying abroad in Tokyo.

1937, he migrated to Manchuria (K: Kando; C: Jiando) and taught in a school near present-day Yanbian. From August 1940 he lived and worked as a reporter for the *Mansŏn ilbo* (Manchurian-Korean Daily) in Changchun before returning to focus on the publication of his own works. After liberation, Hyŏn returned to Hamgyŏng province and became involved in local committees and the association of artists. When the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950, Hyŏn traveled to the battlefront as a war correspondent and died in October of that same year.

Hyŏn began the serial publication of his debut work, "Myŏngil ŭi t'aeyang" (The Sun of Days to Come), in May of 1934 in the *Chosŏn ilbo*, but it was his 1935 short story "Kyŏngnyang" (Raging Seas) that established his name as a literary figure when it won the *Tonga ilbo*'s annual spring literary contest. Scholarship on Hyŏn generally categorizes his writings into two distinct groups: stories about the hardships of everyday life under colonial rule in Northeastern Korea's fishing villages and stories about Korean migrants living in Manchuria (P'yo ŏnbok 2010: 224). Oh Sangsun notes that many scholars have critiqued Hyŏn's writings as "propaganda literature" (*kukch'aek munhak*), one that, according to critic Yi Myŏngjae, "actively participates in the dissemination and support of Manchukuo's national policies" including the development of (Oh Sangsun 2007: 88). Hyŏn's 1940 works, in particular "Toraonŭn insaeng" (Return of Life) and *Yumaeng* (Wanderers), were sharply critiqued for containing pro-Japanese elements and considered texts that supported the imperial project in Manchuria (Yi 2005: 22). More specifically, Hyŏn's work, particularly *Yumaeng*, was condemned for its apparent support of state-run villages built to rehabilitate opium addicts and smugglers. No Sangrae performs a reading of *Yumaeng* that explores the state-run village as a heterotopia, offering a fresh perspective on the novel (No 2013). Rather than thinking of Hyŏn Kyŏngjun's body of work in

support or resistance to the imperial projects in Manchukuo, however, I read his stories as representations of partial perspectives: one from the terrestrial and one from the shoreline.[140] Hyŏn's body of work is critically engaged with the entanglements between the human and the more-than-human that launch migrations over land and through the seas. More specifically, Hyŏn's stories underscore the plight of Korean fisherfolk, seaweed harvesters, and landless farmers who perennially migrate across terrestrial and coastal borders in order to sustain life.

In her study of the interconnected relationship of colonialism and nationalism in the making of Manchuria, Hyun Ok Park argues that Korean migrants were like molecules, "fluid agents that could pass through the membrane" of the border between Korea and Manchuria (Park 2005: 43). These migrants "embodied Japan's power in Manchuria like the cellular webs of a larger, expanding body" in a process of settler-colonialism she terms a "politics of osmosis" (Park 2005: 24). The politics of osmosis was a strategy to decenter Chinese authority and grant sovereignty of Manchuria to Japan; Korean migrants were required to negotiate complex and fluid roles somewhere between agents and subjects of empire. Hyŏn's work captures the complexity of Manchuria as both a land of promise and a place of precariousness. On the one hand, Manchuria symbolized a land of promise: it was a kind of terra nullius, a fertile plain abound with unclaimed land awaiting the arrival of farmers who could claim their stakes on the

[140] This section focuses on the two works about gold and smuggling, but the conclusion addresses Hyŏn's works about the colonial-capital sardine fishery industry that provided the raw material for fertilizer and munitions manufacture that facilitate the expansion of war in Manchuria, particularly following 1931 Manchurian Incident. For the connection between fisheries and war munitions, see An Mijŏng 2008 and Eleana Kim 2022.

land. On the other hand, Manchuria symbolized a place of precariousness: it was a barren wasteland where a frigid wind tore through, unimpeded by mountains or trees.[141]

Park reads An Sugil's (1911-1977) novel *Pukkando* (Northern Kando), written between 1959-1967, as a literary embodiment of this "politics of osmosis." An contrasts the unwelcoming terrain of Manchuria to the idealized space of Korea, where "'peace and comfort dwell in trees and forests'" and "'the air is tender and the sky is a more lucid blue'" (Park 2005: 32). In the course of the novel, however, the protagonist undergoes a radical transformation where "his bitter memories of hardship in Kando [Manchuria] turn into a sense of achievement (2005: 32). This post-liberation work is a quintessential work of "Northern consciousness" (*pukhyang ŭisik*) that emerged after the division of the peninsula.[142] Literature by writers including An, Kang Kyŏngae, Ch'ae Sŏhae, and Hyŏn Kyŏngjun collectively elucidate the complex political topography of Manchuria as a kind of frontier.

As demonstrated by Andre Schmid, the border between Korea and Manchuria has occupied a tenuous position in national history. Schmid notes that during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), "illegal crossings" between Korea and Manchuria were technically prohibited by law, but in reality, the long tradition of transnational ginseng gathering and hunting constructed a rather porous border (Schmid 2002: 214). Kim Seonmin shows that famines plaguing Hamgyŏng and Pyŏng'an provinces sent a wave of migrants to Manchuria in the 1860s and the 1870s. A

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[141] The opening scene of Hyŏn's 1935 story "Sasaengch'ŏp: iljeijangil" (Sketchbook: Volume One, Chapter Two) captures the inhospitable landscape the migrant families encounter as they walk towards their destination in North Manchuria. There is a focus on the gaze towards something better, but the characters only encounter a dilapidated hut and a pile of manure before reaching their destination. The group had migrated to start digging gold in the clandestine mines and invest the gold in building a school (1935: 213).

[142] For a detailed discussion of An Sugil and the relationship between "Northern consciousness" and the space of Manchuria in his literature, see *An Sugil sosŏl ŭi kŭndaesŏng yŏn'gu* (Research on the Modern Novels of An Sugil) (Kim Yŏngŭi 2009).

government document from the Hunchun office [an area on the North of the Tuman River] notes that the Korean migrant population was "heading to the south of Hunchun in search of gold or cultivable land" (Kim 2017: 138). Nianshen Song explores the negotiations between Qing China and Chosŏn Korea over policies to mitigate illicit crossings over the Tumen River and clandestine farmers "squatting on wildlands" in Manchurian territory (Song 2018: 33). In short, the surveillance of the porous border of the Tumen River failed because this was a space created by and that thrived upon the constant stream of farmers, ginseng foragers, hunters, loggers, miners, and smugglers.

Contraband Markets

Kim Jaeyong describes the literary imagination of Manchuria as a "land of migrants" or a "land of promise" (Kim 2019: 286). Watanabe Naoki contends that stories about Korean victimhood written from the standpoint of Korean soil functioned to protest colonial rule, but when written from Manchurian soil, it oftentimes demonstrated a support of imperial expansion in Manchuria (Watanabe 2019: 284). Kang Kyŏngae's (1906-1944) 1934 novella *Sokŭm* (Salt) captures the complex entanglements of contraband goods, wandering bodies, and colonial authorities. Sunyoung Park reads the space of Manchuria in *Sokŭm* "as a warring territory, a place where Korean peasants were leading precarious existences under the threat of foreign armies" and consequently this was a work that wrote "against Japan's propaganda of Manchukuo as a model state of racial harmony" (Park 2015: 214). Pongyŏm's mother, the protagonist of *Sokŭm*, fails to provide the basic necessities for her family and Park reads this as a

rejection of the "collusion between the Japanese and the Korean cult of motherhood" alleged to save the family, and by extension, the empire (2015: 217). My interest in *Sokŭm* here is in the final scene when Pongyŏm's mother joins a band of salt smugglers because it highlights the role of contraband markets as the lifeblood that sustain communities to the north and the south of the Tuman River; the contraband markets are the sites where the "fluid agents" of empire transport the minerals and crops necessary to reproduce life (Park 2005: 43).

Ch'ŏn Ch'unhwa traces the imagery of the city of Tomun in Hyŏn Kyŏngjun's literature and argues that it emerges as a city characterized by "smuggling" (*milsu*) and "wandering" (*yumaeng*) (Ch'ŏn Ch'unhwa 2014: 162-168). More specifically, the "illicit flows" of marine products and salt into the city and the outflow of tobacco and sugar created a situation where Koreans "are perpetually migrating" (*kkŭnhimŏpsi idonghanŭn kŏsida*) (Andreas 2015: Ch'ŏn 2014: 165). "Milsu" opens with a scene where K teacher, the protagonist, is lecturing students on the "dishonorable shame" (*pulmyŏng yesŭrŏn ojŏm*) that smuggling goods across the border brings to the school (Hyŏn 1938: 222). K teacher emphasizes the ethical implications of the illicit trafficking and emphasizes the importance of maintaining the noble reputation of the school that had been built by Koreans and for Koreans in T city, located in Manchuria.

Adjacent to the Tumen River is the customs office where smuggling students are held until K teacher brings them back to the school where he brutally beats them for their immoral behavior. Interrogating the students one by one, K teacher discovers that all the students have learned the art of smuggling goods in their bento boxes from the fifth grader Yŏngsun. Baffled that the best student in the school would engage in such dishonorable behavior, K teacher crosses the bridge into N city and navigates the labyrinth of dark allies until he finds Yŏngsun's house.

Prepared with a lecture on the ethics appropriate for a student in T city, K teacher pauses when he sees Yŏngsun's emaciated mother sprawled out on the floor. Yŏngsun's mother implores K teacher to forgive the fatherless boy who smuggles to earn tuition money.

The story ends with a scene where Yŏngsun returns to school. K teacher asks after his mother, but Yŏngsun remains silent as tears roll down his face. The story ends with K teacher gazing out at the sun shining outside the school's window. "Milsu" is a story about the slippery boundaries of ethical conduct in a place where, to borrow Ch'ŏn Ch'unhwa's words, people and goods are "are perpetually migrating" (*kkŭnhimŏpsi idonghanŭn kŏsida*) (Ch'ŏn 2014: 165). In this state of constant movement, there is no stability or security for the future. Because there is a constant stream of goods and people through T city, K teacher confronts the impossibility of promulgating a solid set of ethics when the conditions of daily life are constantly in flux. More troubling, perhaps, is the criminalization of children who smuggle to provide the daily provisions for their families to survive from one day to the next.

The government-general in Korea attempted to control the high rates of smuggling over the Yalu and Tumen Rivers, but were never successful in completely eradicating the widespread practice. Inflation was one of the main reasons for the illicit traffic of goods. Marine products and foodstuffs were commonly smuggled items, as was gold. When the price of gold in Manchuria surpassed that in Korea, there was a marked increase in newspaper headlines about the schemes to smuggle gold into Manchuria (Chŏn Ponggwan 2005). Smugglers lodge gold within bars of soap, inside children's bento boxes, and in all sorts of orifices, particularly female bodies because they were not subject to the rigorous surveillance that male bodies were (Chŏn

Ponggwan 2005: 113-116). The potential profit earned from smuggling generated a constant flow of mineral and human bodies over the border and also led to cross-border smuggling rings.

The protagonist of "Penttobakkosok ŭi kŭmgoe," Pyŏnggu, becomes unwittingly entangled in a gold smuggling ring en route back home from work. The story opens with a line that describes the single bridge that connects Namyang city, in Korea, to Tomun City, in Manchuria, like thin belt. "The area between Namyang and Tomun is misty; the Tumen River is like a belt that flows between them. To travel from one city to the other, you just cross the single bridge across the river" (Hyŏn 1938: 231). This is the bridge that Pyŏnggu crosses in his daily commute into Namyang where he works as a typesetter at C Printing Press. The opening line locates the bridge as a site of central importance; the customs procedures shape the area around the Tumen River as one that is shaped by the collusion of smugglers and officials in, to use Peter Andreas's terms, the "illicit flows" and creation of "contraband capitalism" (Andreas 2013: 2-3). Pyŏnggu has developed a level of trust with the customs officials, and is permitted to casually smuggle goods across the river to Manchuria where he lives with his mother.

This story poses a sharp critique of the colonial-capital economy that forces Pyŏnggu to smuggle daily necessities to supplement meagre salaries. Japanese-owned businesses dominate both sides of the river: Pyŏnggu's mother works in a Japanese-owned shop and does domestic work for a Japanese family. The colonizer is the primary source of income, but this never provides sufficient funds for basic necessities like socks and long underwear. Given this wretched financial situation, it was like a dream come true when Pyŏnggu's mother discovered a large nugget of gold in Pyŏnggu's bento box, a Japanese-style lunch box that had been repurposed as a means of transporting contraband across the border.

Pyŏnggu's mother inquires about the mysterious appearance of this gold nugget, but the events of the previous night were shrouded in a drunken haze, so Pyŏnggu remains silent. This is where the narrative takes a distinct turn; the presence of the gold begins to infect Pyŏnggu's mind, consuming his thoughts, and interrupts the circadian rhythms in his body. For several days Pyŏnggu falls into a kind of trance, afraid to step outside the house and thinking of nothing but the gold that magically appeared in his bento box. When he finally does return to work, the commute takes much longer than it used to. En route to the border crossing, he stops dead in the middle of the street and convulses, as if shaking with laughter at the absurdity of his sudden windfall. While working at C Printing Press, he suddenly stops moving his hands in tandem with the machines and gazes off into the distance. Anytime he saw someone carrying a bento box, he raced back home to check that it was not his own bento box The appearance of this seemingly magical golden nugget infects Pyŏnggu's mind, causing synapses to misfire and precluding his ability to maintain the rhythms of labor required at C Printing Press.

Pyŏnggu is taken into custody and questioned about his affiliation with the local gold-smuggling ring. The stress of the situation causes him to fall into a further state of madness. He is released when his mother turns the gold nugget in the bento box to a customs officer, though she never admits this to her son. For Pyŏnggu, the gold simply inexplicably vanished without a trace. This exacerbates his obsession with the gold, unable to eat or think about anything else, "Ah, mum. The gold…the gold…Where did the gold go? What about the gold? What about the ye—-low gold, the gold that was in my bento box. Ah, the gold—my gold was taken away!" (Hyŏn 1938: 239). Pyŏnggu bombards his mother with nonsensical mutterings about the gold that disappeared without a trace until, one day, he picks up his empty bento box and tucks it

under his arm and wanders out into the streets in search of this gold nugget, causing a ruckus in the neighborhood.

Speculative rumors about the mythical power of gold to transform the everyday imbues Pyŏnggu golden nugget with a kind of supernatural power. The rumors worm their way inside Pyŏnggu's ears and infect his mind with a blind faith that this golden nugget contains the power to catapult him outside the cycles of debt that plague the perpetual migrants crossing the Tumen River. In the end, the nugget transports Pyŏnggu outside the space-time of colonial-capitalism. But, this is not the fantasy that interrupted his work at the C Printing Press. Instead, the nugget instigates a metamorphosis that transforms Pyŏnggu into a rumor. After grabbing his bento box and setting out in search of his gold nugget, he was never seen again. According to local rumors, the young man, with disheveled hair who blabbers on and on about his "Ye—-llow gold," who wanders the subterranean tunnels of the Padugu gold mines is, in fact, Pyŏnggu. Gold quite literally transformed Pyŏnggu into a legendary myth.

Conclusion

This chapter has navigated the horizontal entanglements that generated the madness in the era of gold fever on the Korean Peninsula following the world market crash of 1929. Gold plays a central role in stories of empire. In the case of the Japanese empire, the switch to the gold standard transformed Japan from a debtor into a creditor nation. This solidified its mineral base from which it financed empire. It is the speculative rumors about the value of gold in the fields, however, that embed themselves within the inter-crystalline spaces and imbue gold ore with a mythological power to transform the everyday. This power sparks an insatiable appetite,

triggering an outburst of violence. This violence, in turn, leads to the destruction of arable land, kinships, and familial ties; it undermines the very stability of life cycles on a terrain that has been ruined by swarms of tenant farmers who, infected with gold fever, become settler-colonists. These literary works are populated with clandestine miners, brokers, prospectors, and day laborers who reveal the differential masculinities that emerge within this chaotic era of the gold rush. I have argued that the circulation of speculative rumors function to disrupt life cycles, compromising the very ability to subsist on the land, and let loose a stream of wandering bodies. Listening to these rumors and accepting them as truth, the listeners transform themselves into settler-colonists who relocate to devour the riches rumored to be embedded in the ground below. In the following chapter, we return to the vertical axis and look towards the atmosphere as the future space to mine minerals for empire.

Chapter Four
(N): Atmospheric Mining and the Soil Crisis in Yi Pungmyŏng's Hŭngnam Literature

This final chapter returns to the issue of soil fertility, discussed in Chapter one "(NPK): Soil and Sericulture," but pivots the analytical focus above ground to explore the role that atmospheric nitrogen capture plays in the (re)making of the environment of Hŭngnam, a city in the northeast of the Korean Peninsula. The primary texts examined here are Hŭngnam-based stories written from the standpoint of laborer-as-author, Yi Pungmyŏng (1908-1988), who situates the reader-as-laborer alongside the tenant farmers, day laborers, dock workers, factory workers, and technocrats who populate Yi's texts. Yi's Hŭngnam literature reveals the sonic terrain orchestrated in the chemical fabrication of ammonium sulfate crystals. This region is seething with sonic assaults as well as creative collaborations that materialize in the colonial-capital rhythms of nitrogen fertilizer production. Author-as-laborer Yi invites the reader-as-laborer to engage in a new modality of listening that unearths what Rosalind Williams refers to as a "subterranean consciousness" (2008: 212). Yi's Hŭngnam works are saturated in the soundscapes of volatile chemical reactions and remind the reader-as-laborer that we do not live *on* the earth but *inside* the earth (2008: 213).[143] Laboring bodies, human and more-than-human, become active participants in the degradation of local ecologies as well as potential agents of change. I argue that Yi's Hŭngnam-based stories form a blueprint of three critical sites: the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory, the peri-urban fields, and the coastal regions. Collectively, these perform a kind of subversive cartography of the violence endemic to colonial-capitalism. This

[143] Williams' idea connects to Jason W. Moore's notion of "double internality" that reframes metabolism as a way of understanding how colonial-capitalism works *through* and not on nature. (Moore 2015: 78-87).

virulent triad emerges from the overlapping processes of primitive accumulation, colonialism, and capitalism as experienced in the northeast region of Hamgyŏng province. The aural atmosphere of each particular site resonates with both peril and promise for the sustainability of local ecologies.

Laborer-as-Author

Yi Pungmyŏng was born in Hamhŭng City, Hamgyŏng Province where he attended Hamhŭng Normal Secondary School (1925-1927). After graduation, Yi worked in the Hŭngnam Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory for three years (1927-1930) until he was arrested for his involvement in the labor union. He began writing as a student in Hamhŭng Normal Secondary School, but it is the short story about his experience as a factory worker in the Japanese-owned industrial chemical complex, *The Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory* (*Chilsso piryo kongjang*), that impressed writer Han Sŏrya (1900-1976). Han recommended Yi's story for serialized publication in the newspaper *Chosŏn ilbo* (The Korea Daily) where it also attracted attention from members of the Korean proletarian arts group KAPF (Korea Artista Proleta Federatio), including Paek Ch'ŏl and Chŏng Chiyong. During a December 1932 meeting in the *Chosŏn ilbo* office, Paek and Chŏng raised a concern that plagued proletarian arts groups worldwide: writers who lacked experience in farm or factory work were incapable of writing from an authentic proletarian perspective

(Foley 1993; Hartsock 1998; Lukács 1971).[144] Paek suggested that KAPF needed to publish the work of laboring authors, like Yi, who possessed the experiential knowledge necessary to write from the standpoint of the proletariat. (Nam 2010: 460).[145]

The issue of authorship in the 1932 meeting was part of a broader trend in leftist literature to give, in Sunyoung Park's words, "renewed attention to places in their physicality" and place a "narrative emphasis on bodily experiences" in order to capture the real "human cost of the capitalist exploitation and abuse resulting from the accelerated modernization of Korean society" (Park 2015: 119-120). These texts, argues Park, place humanity at the heart of the narrative and comprise a body of literature that she refers to as a "materialist anthropology" (2015: 120). These ethnographies take the form of wall novels and reportage, conveying the corporeal experience of laboring in farms and factories. The democratization of South Korea brought a renewed interest to labor literature and Yi Pungmyŏng's repertoire. After nearly fifty years' absence from the national literature canon, South Korean literary scholars praised Yi as "Korea's first laborer-as-author" (*Chosŏn ch'oech'oŭi nodongja chakka*) (Yi 2010: 11). Yi possessed a talent for translating his factory work experience into a compelling body of literature about the Hŭngnam industrial chemical complex, hence he was the ideal laborer-as-author that KAPF members were seeking.

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[144] Debates about the 'authenticity' of authorial perspective remained a contentious issue in proletarian arts groups in China, Germany, Japan, Korea, the Soviet Union, Taiwan, and the United States. In Japan, new forms of writing including "wall fiction" and "reportage" were the topics of discussions in the Japanese proletarian arts group NAPF (Nippona Artista Proleta Federatio) addressed by authors including Kobayashi Takiji and Nakano Shigeharu (Bowen-Struyk and Field 2016). In the case of the US, a 1934 advertisement in the leftist magazine *Pollen* called for poets with the "dung not yet dry on their shoes" (Foley 1993: 91).

[145] Paek evaluated Yi's authenticity as a laborer in contrast to the so-called "intellectuals" in the writing coterie in Japan who assumed roles as laborer to gain access to a privileged perspective in their own works about exploitation in colonial-capitalism. In Japan, for example, Nakamoto Takako worked in the textile mills to write about the experience of women whereas Sata Ineko grew up working in a factory and later drew upon that knowledge.

Yi's maiden work, *The Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory*, hereafter *NFF*, gives an account of a typical day for a factory worker employed in the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory. The first two installments were published on May 29th and May 31st of 1932 in the *Chosŏn ilbo*, but the Korea Government-General banned further installments.[146] The novel was translated from Korean into Japanese where it was published under the title of *Shojin* (First Battle) in the May 1935 edition of the leftist journal *Bungaku hyōron* (Literary Criticism). Literary scholar Yi Chŏngsŏn uncovered a version of *NFF* that was published in the March 1936 edition of the mainland Chinese journal *Yŏngmun* (Translation) (Yi 2010: 13). In 1937, Yi Pungmyŏng relocated to Changjin and in 1939 became a construction worker at the Changjin hydroelectric power plant.[147] At the time of liberation, Yi was employed at the Changjin construction site and remained in the North as a prominent figure in the proletarian arts groups until his reported death in 1988. The original manuscript of the *NFF* was lost, but the Japanese-language version *Shojin* was preserved and returned to the North. It was translated back into the Korean language, then published in its entirety for the first time on the Korean Peninsula in 1958. Since Yi remained in the North, however, his work was not published in the South until *NFF* appeared as part of a collected volume entitled *Korean Literature* in November 1989.

The manuscript of the *NFF* went through a number of linguistic and textual modifications before it reappeared as a Korean language text available to readers in the South. Yi's manuscript was translated from the language of the colonized (Korean) into the language of the colonizer

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[146] In *Redacted*, Jonathon Abel reads censorship as not merely a process in erasure, but potentially a mode of creative potential, in his effort to reveal the "process of internalization" in internal and external censors (Abel 2012: 19). See Part Two for a more in-depth discussion.

[147] In *Constructing East Asia*, Aaron Moore argues that Nitchitsu's ability to gain water-use rights on the Pujŏn, Changjin, and Sup'ung Rivers formed the foundation for the Noguchi Empire and Korean industrialization during the late colonial period (Moore 2013: 153-155).

(Japanese), then from the language of the former colonizer (Japanese) into the language of the socialist North (Korean) and then the language of the democratic South (Korean). Heekyoung Cho argues that translation is a creative process that reflects the deliberate choices writers make when rendering Russian texts into Korean via the Japanese language; the linguistic choice of an author is a "constituent force" in the making of a national literature (Cho 2016: 27). In addition to the triadic process of translation, the *NFF* was reshaped by the contemporaneous socio-political climate; it was mediated by censorship authorities from the Korean Government-General and the Japanese government censor bureau as well as the Cold War politics of North and South Korea.[148] Serk-Bae Suh argues that translation has ethical implications because the valuation ascribed to languages, particularly in a colonial environment, creates a tangible difference, hence, exhibiting the impossibility of translation as an "equal exchange" (Suh 2013: 47). This theoretical scholarship on translation informs my own material analysis of works by "Korea's first laborer-as-author" (Yi 2010: 11).

Laborer-as-author Yi draws upon his experiential knowledge of the corporeal rhythms, sounds, and smells of the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory; these multi-sensory details give the factory a palpable physical presence in the *NFF*. The Hŭngnam region was a rural farming and fishing region before Noguchi Jun's (1873-1944) Japan Nitrogenous Fertilizer Corporation (Nihon chisso hiryō kabushiki gaisha), hereafter Nitchitsu, rapidly transformed it after 1927 into "The City of Japanese Nitrogen" (Maloney 1990; Yang 2015: 309). Yi's Hŭngnam literature depicts the rapid process of primitive accumulation that remapped the region with the purpose of circulating nitrogen fertilizer from the peninsula into exhausted imperial soils. The works I refer

[148] Literary scholar Ch'a Sŭnggi describes the process of censorship as a "scar" (*sangch'ŏ*) on Yi's works (Ch'a 2014: 338).

to as Yi's Hŭngnam literature include the 1931(2)/1958 novella *NFF* (*Chilsso piryo kongjang*), the 1932 piece of 'wall fiction' entitled "Ammonia t'aengk'ŭ" (Ammonia Tank), the 1933 short story "Yŏgong" (Factory Girl), the 1935 short story "Minbo ŭi saengwalp'yo" (Minbo's Daily Budget), the 1937 short story "Taepssari" (Summer Cypress), and the 1942 short story "Pingwŏn" (Ice Field).[149] Building upon Sunyoung Park's idea of "materialist anthropology," I read these works as a literary blueprint that triangulates the soundscapes of the Hŭngnam Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory, the peri-urban fields, and the coastal regions (Park 2015: 120). Collectively, these sonic territories tell stories about the corporeal and ecological effects that nitrogen fertilizer production has on human and more-than-human lives. As such, Yi's literature is a kind of subversive cartography of the Hŭngnam region because it reveals sites where organisms creatively reorganize rhythms of "co-laborations" that function to revitalize life amidst an industrial wasteland (Lyons 2020). The kinetic energy released in the labor performed in the factory, fields, and coastal regions reverberates throughout the region and vitalizes Yi's ecological materialist storytelling.

Folk Song as Subversive Cartography

Yi Pungmyŏng's 1933 short story, "Yŏgong" (Factory Girl), commences with a scene alongside the Hŭngnam dock where a group of female factory workers sing a folk song while they bind together straw sacks of nitrogen-rich ammonium sulfate crystals. Each line of this folk

[149] For a discussion of wall fiction (*kabe shōsetsu*) in the context of the proletarian movement in East Asia, see chapter three of Samuel Perry's monograph *Recasting Red Culture in Proletarian Japan*. Perry has an excellent analysis of "Ammonia Tank" and his astute attention to the aurality in this short piece of wall fiction inspired my initial interest in the soundscapes in proletarian literature. (Perry 2014: pp.105-114)

song maps out a distinct space that, in concert, comprises the soundscape of nitrogen fertilizer production. The factory girls' song resonates across the harbor and its sound waves align and collide with the monotonous tempo of the machines from inside the Hŭngnam Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory. As the song echoes out over the nearby fields, farmers hear the dissonant symphony that transforms their everyday "co-laborations" with the land.

> 공장의 기게는 우리 X로 돌고
> 수리조합보ㅅ동은 X물로 찬다
> 제품창고 안—[150]
>
> Factory machines run, greased with our blood
> Canals, hollowed out by the irrigation cooperative, are filled to the brim with tears
> Within the warehouse— (Yi 1933: 49)

The interrelations of laboring bodies with machines, farmers with soil, and women with sacks of fertilizer comprise the subject of each respective line. This folk song maps the sonic territory of the "co-laborations" that coalesce and reverberate throughout the region, subtly transforming local ecologies in and around the Hŭngnam Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory. Blood greases the engines of the machines, farmers' tears replenish the parched earth, and the unfinished line about the warehouse gestures towards acts of gendered violence. This traditional folk song confronts the reader as a kind of subversive cartography because it delineates how cycles of nutrients are shattered in order to sustain the momentum of empire. Yi has taken what E. Taylor Atkins identifies as the "polysemic versatility" of the 'arirang' folk song and implements it as a tool to shatter tenant famers' "affective attachments" to their soil, releasing the newly landless masses to seek work in a factory where they actively participate in the manufacture of their own unsustainable environment (Atkins 2010: 157). Yi's Hŭngnam literature depicts how chemicals

[150] The censored words are (피) and (눈), meaning blood and tears. The same first two lines of the folk song appear in *The Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory*. The third line, however, differs. 아리랑 아리랑 아라리요. (Yi 2010: 25)

released in the process of nitrogen fertilizer production permeate the porous bodies of human and more-than-human organisms in a process that Stacey Alaimo refers to as "trans-corporeality" (2010). Alaimo's concept of trans-corporeality defines bodies as "vulnerable to the substances and flows of its environments" (2010: 28). The kinetic energy generated in shipping straw sacks of fertilizer, produced to revitalize impoverished soils, determines the amount of nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, and carbon dioxide released into the local environment. Yi's literature maps the flow of these toxins as they affect laboring bodies and contribute to the physical transformations of the surrounding areas. While Yi's Hŭngnam works undoubtably critique the degradation of colonial-capital nitrogen fertilizer production, they also reveal what Henri Lefebvre refers to as a "constellation of moments" (2014: 638). These moments are what I call interstitial spaces; they are sites where organisms engage in new modes of "co-laboration" in order to revitalize life and foster the futurity of life. While interstitial spaces are never fully separate from chemical currents, they are everyday locations where human and more-than-human creatively co-evolve in resistance to the destructive logic of mineral accumulation and reveal the "tenacity of life" (Lyons 2020: 3).

The chemical process that converts atmospheric nitrogen into translucent crystals of ammonium sulfate not only permeates porous bodies but it also saturates the content and form of Yi's Hŭngnam literature. Laborer-as-author Yi employs the reader-as-laborer in the ammonium sulfate division of the Japanese-owned and operated Hŭngnam Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory, in the farms of peri-urban fields, and on the Hŭngnam harbor. As such, the reader is a participant-observer and bears witness to the productive, destructive, and regenerative interrelations emerging in the cycles of production. These works are narrated in the third person and guide the

reader-as-laborer around the work sites, suggesting an intimate familiarity with the rhythms of work as well as the local terrain. Working as a kind of apprentice in and around the factory complex, the reader is presented with three views of Hŭngnam, none of which are a privileged perspective. Laborers in the Hŭngnam Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory, peri-urban farms, and littoral spaces are all engaged in care work for the soil. The triangulation of these spaces in Yi's Hŭngnam literature, I propose, is an example of what Donna Haraway refers to as "situated knowledges" (1988). Yi's literary blueprint is an active "joining of partial views and halting voices into a collective subject position that promises a vision of the means of ongoing finite embodiment, of living within limits and contradictions—of views from somewhere" (Haraway 1988: 590). Yi's use of "situated knowledge" in his Hŭngnam stories joins partial views from inside the factory, from the fields and reservoirs upstream, and from along the industrial harbor in order to narrate the everyday ecological entanglements emerging in the era of man-made fertilizer.

Three Views of Hŭngnam in The Era of Man-Made Fertilizer

A headline in the June 1, 1924 edition of the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* declares the advent of "Jinzō hiryō no jidai" (The Era of Man-made Fertilizer). The article begins with a brief outline of techniques that farmers have implemented throughout history in order to preserve the fertility of the soil. The *Asahi* article frames the transition to man-made fertilizer, in the form of chemically engineered ammonium sulfate crystals, as an ingenious technocratic solution to the imperial soil crisis.

> 肥料使用の史的発展の跡を見ると何れの国でも動物性肥料時代、植物性肥料時代、化学肥料時代の三[__]を踏んで居る。
>
> When you look at the vestiges documenting the development of fertilizer application, every single country in the world has passed through three phases of fertilizer usage: the era of animal-based fertilizers, the era of plant-based fertilizers, and the era of chemical fertilizers. (1924: 4)

The article lists the raw materials used in each respective era to replenish the soil with essential mineral components: nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). Regional differences in soil fertility have been affected throughout history by a confluence of factors including climatic conditions, cycles of crop planting, enclosure of the commons, and methods of soil cultivation. In the era of animal-based fertilizers, bone powder, along with human and animal excrement, was commonly incorporated into the exhausted soils (Kim 2014; Nagatsuka [1910]1989; Totman 1989). The spring run of herring attracted a seasonal migration of Japanese fishermen to the Ainu lands of Ezo, present-day Hokkaido, where they captured, dried, and ground herring into nitrogen-rich fishmeal fertilizer. The increasing demand for fishmeal fertilizer prompted the growth of a proto-industrial herring fishery on the southern coastline of Ezo (Howell 1995; Walker 2001).[151] The "cycles of violence" displaced Ainu from their native lands, staked claims on local resources, and ultimately claimed Ainu lands as part of Japan in 1869. These imperial processes echo what Ned Blackhawk describes as the "enduring economic and environmental

[151] David Howell defines proto-industrialization as "the nexus between commercialization and capitalism" and demonstrates that proto-industrialization does not inevitably lead to industrial-scale production (1995: 9). Howell illustrates how the settler-colonialist fishing industry in Hokkaido interrupted the relationships of indigenous Ainu peoples to the land and also contributed to the last herring run documented in 1958 (1995: 2). Walker discusses how settler-colonial fishing, hunting, and trading practices disrupted and transformed the land-based relationships the Ainu had developed for centuries with the environment. See D*ominant Narratives* for a fascinating discussion of how the dominant narrative of Hokkaido in literature depicted the island as *terra nullius* and uninhabited (Mason 2013). The search for nitrates in the nineteenth century prompted settler-colonial projects and imperial expansion. England appropriated Ireland when its soils were parched and later ventured down to South America to gain rights of the nitrogen-rich guano on the Chincha Islands of Peru and and nitrates in the territory of the Atacama Desert (Clark and Foster 2020; Cushman 2013; Saito 2017). As Daniel Immerwahr notes, The Guano Islands Act of 1856 declared that "whenever a U.S. citizen discovered guano on an unclaimed, uninhabited island, that island would, 'at the discretion of the President, be considered as appertaining to the United States'" (Immerwahr 2019: 51).

crises" that indigenous groups in North America faced in the nineteenth century (Blackhawk 2006: 7, 10). The ethnic and racial myths constructed in empire delineate gendered and national hierarchies that provide the very fuel that perpetuates the expansion of colonial-capitalism. Imperial strategies employed in the discursive, material, and political spheres of empire resemble one another and function to co-constitute empire (Fujitani 2011).

Settler colonialism performs a particular kind of violence that escapes documentation or visualization because, while it maps the horizontal terrain for mineral riches, it discovers that the subterranean veins have been exhausted. Suddenly, there is an interest in vertical space. The Japanese empire reached a point when it had to make a spatial turn to imagine what Mark Carey refers to as "elevational life zones" (2010: 55). The material aims of the Japanese empire have been well documented and, keen attention has been paid to the types of fertilizers that were used (O'Dwyer 2015; Uchida 2011; Young 1998). In the era of plant-based fertilizers, fermented soybeans and vegetable dregs were used in fertilizer cakes to improve soil structure and fertility. After its successive victories in the Sino-Japanese War (1895-1896) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), Japan acquired vast plains in Manchuria that provided arable land to cultivate soybeans; Japan also gained rights to overland rail routes in mainland China and access to ports along the Korean coastline which bolstered the import of soybean fertilizer cakes to the archipelago (Mizuno and Prodöhl 2019). Plant-based fertilizers were an attractive alternative to herring fishmeal fertilizer due to their high nitrogen content and comparatively stable prices.

The mythic de-valuation of these fertilizers is founded on the temporal tendency of profits to fall. In order to create the illusion of profits falling, colonial- capitalism actively engages in the process of what Traci Voyles refers to as "wastelanding" (Voyles 2015). In this

process, lands are denied a historical collaboration with humans and more-than- humans in order to extract them as value-rich resources.

The soil crisis, however, reaches a critical stage in the early twentieth century when the combination of animal and plant-based fertilizers fail to reproduce natural cycles of nitrogen. This brief history of fertilizer production illustrates Rosa Luxembourg's point that the reproduction of capital is only possible when colonial lands and bodies are appropriated to fuel the process of accumulation ([1913] 2015: 355).[152] The soil crisis in early twentieth century Japan emerges as an ecological crisis because the empire has reached the limits of what Jason Moore calls a "commodity frontier" (2015: 144). In response to this crisis, "new kinds of nature" are engineered through imperial and scientific projects that generate "biophysical and geological" transformations as well as seek new "frontiers of appropriation" (2015: 151,158). These technological innovations are assigned a hierarchy based on ethnicity, gender, nationalism, and race (Mies 2014).

The era of chemical fertilizers constitutes a period when colonial-capitalism begins working through nature differently in response to exhausted soils.[153] On the one hand, the era of man-made fertilizer hailed in the *Asahi* article marks a watershed moment when science succeeds in overcoming the mineral scarcity of the soil. On the other hand, the increasing severity of the soil crisis indicates that modern farming, as agricultural scientist Justus von Liebig suggests in *Agricultural Chemistry*, is nothing but a "system of robbery

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[152] Feminist Marxist scholars have built upon Luxembourg's development of the fundamental relationship between colonialism and capitalism. Recent work critique the enclosure of female bodies and, in Mies' words, the "housewifization" as a domestic process of colonial-capitalism that lays the ground where accumulation takes place (Federici 2014; Mies 2014).

[153] This projects places a critical focus on the interrelations between land and laborers in a particular environment because this, I argue, is the relationship that determines the sustainability or potential unsustainability of a particular ecosystem (Burkett 2014; Foster 2000, 2020; Moore 2015; Saito 2017).

(*Raubwirthschaft*)" (Foster 2000; Liebig 1862: 149; Saito 2017). Liebig notes that the perpetual export of crops to cities, where fertile waste accumulates and pollutes the waterways, "gradually but constantly makes the soil poorer and exhausts it in the end" (Liebig 1862; Saito 2017: 198). The division of labor separating town and country, therefore, is not merely an economic or social problem (Engels 1845; Marx 1967(I, III); Williams 1973). The division between town and country shatters mineral cycles affecting the sustainability of labor-land relationships, hence, constituting an ecological problem. In volume one of *Capital*, Karl Marx builds upon Liebig's concept of capitalist agriculture as a system of robbery in an ecological critique of capitalist modes of production. It is here that Marx identifies *the* central contradiction of capitalist production as its tendency to degrade the corporeal and terrestrial foundation upon which it flourishes.

> It [Capitalist production] disturbs the circulation of matter between man and the soil, *i.e.*, prevents the return to the soil of its elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; it therefore violates the conditions necessary to lasting fertility of the soil…. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the laborer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility. … Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the laborer. (1967(I): 474-475)

According to Marx, a disruption in the circulation of nourishing minerals precludes the possibility of inter-corporeal exchanges vital to the futurity of living organisms and local ecologies. In other words, the perpetual disruption of material exchanges guarantees the *un*sustainability of a particular ecosystem. John Bellamy Foster refers to the disruption of the circulation of matter between man and the soil, or metabolism (*Stoffwechsel*), as an "irreparable rift" (2000: 155-163). The rift in material exchange is irreparable because any so-called progressive solution to increase the fertility of the soil, such as atmospheric nitrogen capture,

relies on the consumption of the vital energy from lands and bodies accumulated through colonial-capital projects. Marx's concern with the coevolution of material interrelations in the process of labor is predicated on the gradual degradation of the conditions for sustainable ecosystems and, as Foster argues, is evidence of Marx's ecological world-view (2000: 20). The embedded ecology of Marx's analysis of material exchanges is revealed in Yi's "granular stories" of the Hŭngnam region that depict how scarcity, soil exhaustion, and (un)sustainable material exchanges affect the local ecological entanglements (Lyons 2020: 62). Yi writes stories about the lived effects of fractured labor-land relations in the process of primitive accumulation, detailing the corporeal degeneration of factory work. At the same time, these stories unearth the "soil's corporeal generosity" and map out sites where organisms join forces to revitalize devastated ecosystems in what Kristina Lyons calls "co-laborations" (Lyons 2020: 65). These sites of "co-laborations" offer the possibility of life-sustaining relationships that flourish in a time-space parallel to the monotonous, destructive time-space of fertilizer production.

NFF: Manufacturing Symbiotic Relations

NFF immerses the reader-as-laborer within the body of the factory where they work in tandem with Mun'gil, the protagonist, in the transport division of ammonium sulfate. The majority of the narrative occurs within the space of the factory itself. The narrative chronicles Mun'gil's efforts to "negotiate life in human-damaged environments" and follows what Anna Tsing refers to as "salvage rhythms" (2015: 132). The sonic chaos and flood of toxins within the space of the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory permeates and deteriorates the laboring bodies.

The division of ammonium sulfate is "always filled with frightful sounds" (Yi 1958: 19). These frightful sounds function as sonic cues that alert the atmospheric miner to imminent dangers posed by the "cyclopean machines" (Marx 1967: 363). At the same time, the soundscape assaults the workers and desensitizes their auditory nerves, depriving them of the very senses they rely upon to stay alive (Morris 2008). The stifling air inside the cold, damp building affects the workers' proprioceptive sense; the atmosphere affects the choreography with the machinery, placing their bodies on the front line.

In a study of Yi's works about the Hŭngnam industrial complex, Ch'a Sŭnggi argues that the factory as fortress functions as ground zero (2014). Ch'a reads Yi's literary depiction of the Hŭngnam factory as a critical site that has the potential to perpetuate or destroy the expansion of colonialism/imperialism (2014: 335). The factory/fortress is the space-time, or the Lefebvrian moment, where the futurity of life is determined. Samuel Perry describes the inside of Yi's factory as an "eponymous machine" that is an assemblage of "aural sensations" that conveys an "authentic sense of shock, rupture, and sheer intensity" (2014: 122).

Expanding on these analyses, I read Yi's factory as a space for the practice of a new modality of listening. It is a mode of listening that functions as an alternative to what Dylan Robinson identifies as the settler-colonial practice of "hungry listening" (2020). This alternative mode of listening "is not predicated on use-value or the drive to accumulate knowledge" but instead is attentive to the "fullest range of sensory experience that connects us to place" (2020: 72). The tremors that pulsate through the ferroconcrete walls resonate in the aural details of the text, telling a story that renders the factory as a porous structure. Listening to the sounds that permeate the thick walls awaken a new perspective.

The architectural design of the factory incorporates concrete and steel, requiring new sites and modes of labor to produce the building materials. It also requires new linguistic elements to describe the material structure of the building and the new cyclopean machines that comprise the new landscape. The steel-enforced concrete structure is a formidable landmark in the farming and fishing region of Hŭngnam.

> 유안 직장은 철근 콘크리트로 땅속 깊이 뿌리를 박고 솟은 완강한 건물이건만 강대한 기계의 힘은 이것을 줄곧 뒤흔든다. 마치 지진 때처럼.
>
> The ammonium sulfate sector is a soaring, sturdy building made of ferroconcrete that roots itself deep within the earth. The power of the humongous machinery incessantly shakes the building, just like an earthquake. (Yi 1958: 19)

The Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory quite literally shakes up everyday material exchanges with the architectonic disharmony it sets in motion. The steel rebar roots itself deep within the earth, stabilizing the towering ferroconcrete walls and demarcating a zone devoted to the monotonous rhythms of nitrogen fertilizer production. The structure itself presents an "air of stability" but the building is, as Lefebvre writes, "an active body" that is "permeated from every direction by streams of energy which run in and out of it by every imaginable route: water, gas, electricity" (1991: 92-93). Despite the steel roots planted deep within the soil, the factory seethes and writhes in tempo to the mechanized gyrations of the factory's machines. This "trans-corporeal" earthquake resonates throughout the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory, destabilizing the material foundation upon which fertilizer production has emerged (Alaimo 2010).

The reader-as-laborer works alongside Mun'gil in the transport division of ammonium sulfate. There, they struggle to get a good grip in their "shiny worn-down *jikatabi* work boots" that slide all over the "asphalt floor drenched in a mixture of water and sulfuric acid" (Yi 1958:

23-4). The continual shower of translucent ammonium sulfate crystals pours down with a *p'ŏngp'ŏng* sound, threatening to submerge the workers if they don't keep time with the "endless" conveyer belt (1958: 24). The cacophony inside the factory reminds the workers that a crisis is always imminent (1958: 53).

> 금시 어떤 불의의 변이라도 생길 것만 같은 우람찬 기계의 소음에서 받는 위압감과 불안감이 노동자들로 하여금 기를 못 펴게 한다. 새로 운전을 개시한 1백 마력 송풍기만 하더라도 그 나래치는 회전음이 어찌나 기승 사나운지 귀청이 터지고 얼을 잃을 지경이다. 시운전 때에 한 운전 견습공의 왼쪽 팔 하나를 통째로 잘라먹었다는 이 기계 곁을 노동자들은 될수록 피하여 다니는 것이었다.
>
> The sound of the blaring machine placed an intense amount of pressure and unease on the workers. It was as though some kind of undue mishap could take place at this very moment, and it caused them to feel on edge. Just the rotations from starting up the 100 horse power blast fan pummeled air down with such ferocity that it was deafening and could cause them to lose their minds. The laborers made certain to avoid working anywhere near the machine that, during its test run, consumed the entire left arm of the apprentice who was manning the machine. (1958: 19)

The sonic territory of the division of ammonium sulfate echoes with otherworldly noises and "gives the impression of being inside a dark, murky cave" (1958: 20). The aural atmosphere disorients the reader-as-laborer and functions to drive out thoughts that do not align with rhythms of accumulation. The daily immersion in this dissonant space, however, equips the laborers with an intimate knowledge of the recurrent cycles of sound. When laborers begin to listen outside the framework of productive sounds, they begin to engage their bodies as metronomes that "listen to the world" (Lefebvre 2013: 29). Engaging the senses in an act of witnessing/listening, they discern an underlying melody imbued with meaning (Robinson 2020).

These seemingly frightful sounds and the in-between murmurs alert the workers to potential possibilities for new collaborations and moments to co-evolve with the "salvage rhythms" (Tsing 2015). An example of the possibility provided by the dissonant sounds of the machines is a scene where Mun'gil draws upon his intimate knowledge of the mechanical cycles

to wash away sulfuric acid. The moment that the sulfuric acid starts to flow into the saturator, Mun'gil grabs an empty kerosene can and, coordinating his subversive act in time with the saturator, collects water to wash away the oil and sulfuric acid that corrodes the workers' skin. It is in the knowledge that Mun'gil has acquired from working alongside the saturator that he is familiar with the productive cycle where a volatile liquid fuses with a gas to produce nitrogen fertilizer. He repurposes this productive cycle as a moment to salvage life among the wreckage, providing the water necessary to alleviate chemical burns on the workers' hands and necks. The factory worker and the machine forge what Eleana Kim calls a "strange kinship" where the collaboration "brings into focus ambiguous and ambivalent relations of hospitality involved in the pragmatics of living and surviving together" (Kim 2017: 214). The same monstrous machinery that deteriorates auditory nerves also provides sonic cues for the worker and becomes an unlikely collaborator in the workers' efforts to survive the daily deluge of chemicals.

The *NFF* introduces the reader-as-laborer to the complex chemical processes involved in atmospheric nitrogen capture. They contend with the "smell of burning machine oil fused with ammonia gas" and "the smell of oxidized iron that mixes with the thick clouds of sulfuric acid cascading out from the saturator" (1958: 20). They bear witness to a chemically engineered winter where "pure white crystals form inside the liquid ammonia tank" (1958: 20). Laborers who work on the bottom floor are marked by the onslaught of chemicals. "Each drop of sulfuric acid bore a hole the size of a coin into the workers' coveralls…the collar of his work jacket had holes burned all over the place, just like a beehive" (1958: 24, 22). The scars remind the reader-as-laborer that the laboring body is, in Silvia Federici's words, "the first machine developed by capitalism" (2014: 146). The coin-sized scars also remind the reader-as-laborer of latent

footprints that fertilizer production leaves on the Hŭngnam soil (Murphy 2017). Bodies are enlisted in the manufacture of toxins that wreck the fundamental conditions necessary for living ecosystems to flourish. The circadian rhythms of laborers in the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory are reprogrammed in order to streamline production and keep the "machines fueled with our blood and sweat" (1958: 75).

In the era of man-made fertilizer, the mine where minerals are extracted is relocated from the subterranean to terra firma. This aboveground mine is where the organic bodies of laborers are coupled with the inorganic corpses of machines. Laborers must follow the lead of the machines in a newly choreographed dance that is particular to the site of nitrogen fertilizer production. In her analysis of the relationship between humans and machines in Yi's works, Sangmi Bae argues that his colonial period stories, the sound of machinery is a kind of "noise pollution" (*soŭm konghae*) that damages the workers' hearing and prevents the colonized from participating in the construction of their own future (Bae 2020: 242). Bae argues that a new relationship between humans and machines emerges in Yi's post-division stories because the machines provide Koreans the opportunity to apply science and technology for an improved future socialist society that they build for themselves (2020: 264). In my reading of Yi's Hŭngnam works, I propose that it is the acoustic space of the factory where laborers learn to listen in new ways, engaging multiple senses in order to resist the deleterious effects of noise pollution. In this new mode of listening, workers attune their ears to subtle sonic cues and hear new possibilities in-between the dissonant noises. These murmurs and silences present moments when human and more-than-human establish a symbiotic relationship that revitalizes life within the toxic wasteland of the factory.

Fields and Paddies

The second line of the folk song in "Factory Girl" turns to the rural farmland where "canals, hollowed out by the irrigation cooperative, are filled to the brim with tears" (1933: 49). If these irrigation channels were routed to the remote fields and paddies of farming villages, the canals would be filled with tears of joy. This line, however, captures the affective state of tenant farmers who have been dispossessed of their fields and paddies and recruited in civil engineering projects to fuel the imperial production of nitrogen fertilizer. They work on the construction of dams and waterways to route, in the words of Richard White, a "geography of energy" down through the Hŭngnam plains and into the heart of the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory (1995: 9). When Nitchitsu surveyed the peninsula in search of an "organic machine" it perceived great untapped potential harbored in the Changjin, Hŏch'ŏn, and Pujŏn Rivers, just northwest of Hŭngnam (White 1995). Nitchitsu negotiated with local Hŭngnam landlords for exclusive water rights, vowing that the company's hydroelectric projects would bring regional prosperity to the area (Yang 2020: 336-341). The draft for regional prosperity, however, completely bypassed local farmers and channeled the mineral wealth from the soil, the rivers, and the dispossessed farmers into the ammonium sulfate crystals shipped out to the archipelago. This second view of Hŭngnam emerges from the stories of farmers and fisherman who cultivated the region's "favorable conditions" and suffered the affective, corporeal, and environmental effects of being chosen as "The City of Japanese Nitrogen" (Yang 2015: 309; Yi 1958: 60).

Yi's Hŭngnam-based stories capture a time-space when material exchanges are interrupted and reassembled in response to the influx of industrial chemicals that characterizes the era of man-made fertilizer. M.M. Bakhtin takes the concept of time-space, used in the study of physics, and applies it to literature, defining it as a chronotope. The chronotope "expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space)…Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (1981: 84). In his study of Korean and Japanese realism, Travis Workman argues that writers experimented with the use of chronotope in order to reveal *particular* human conditions that are obfuscated in modes of storytelling that focus on the *universal* figure of the human. Workman identifies primitive accumulation as the chronotope where stories about the landless rural populace who, once expropriated from their land, perennially wander in search of a site to plant their roots without ever finding a home. The time-space of primitive accumulation, as Workman notes, reveals the corporeal and gendered violence involved in the ongoing process that yields armies of wandering bodies on the peninsula as well as the archipelago. Building upon Workman's analysis, I propose that the chronotope of primitive accumulation is a four-dimensional literary space where the "co-laborations" of human and more-than-human organisms are framed, thus reflecting the potential sustainability (or unsustainability) of a particular ecosystem.

Marx refers to primitive accumulation as an "original sin" that "is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production…And the history of this, their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letter of blood and fire" (1967: 667-669). The "original sin" is not momentary, but a lengthy process that continually reproduces

itself on a larger scale, implementing new strategies for expropriating the masses and dispatching them into the cities to join the industrial reserve army (Federici 2019; Marx 1967: 668). This recurrent process of dispossession is propelled by colonial-capitalist systems and the everyday lived experience of primitive accumulation is shaped by a particular time-space. Bakhtin explains that "The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied… Time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins" (1981: 250). It is the time-space of Hŭngnam that allows for polyvocal storytelling, tying together the disparate experiences of farmers who wandered into the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory. In the following scene, Mun'gil reflects upon his own journey that led him to the factory.

> 문길이의 고향은 H평야의 북녘에 있었다. 허허벌판은 끝에서 끝까지 모두가 기름진 전답이었으나 그에게는 한 줌의 흙도 자기의 것이라고는 없었다. 어려서 아버지를 잃은 그는 소작과 고용노동 속에서 잔뼈가 굵어졌다. 그러나 아무리 손톱이 모지라지게 일을 해도 가난은 독사처럼 그의 몸을 칭칭 감고 놓지 않았다. 이 통에 설상상가상으로 문길이는 소작을 떼이게 되었다. 그는 쌓이고 쌓였던 분풀이로 지주네 낟가리에 물래 불을 지르고 고향을 하직했던 것이다.
>
> 물길이는 지금 일급이 90전잊다. 4년 전에 그가 살 길을 찾아 이 공장에 왔을 때에 비해서 겨우 30일을 곧장 노동해야 27원이 생긴다. 그러나 다달이 이틀은 쉬어야 했고 이외에도 잘리는 돈이 있고 보니 그저22, 3원이 고작이었다. 이돈으로 칠순 고개에 오른 늙은 어머니와 아내, 그리고 어린것 넷을 길러야 했다.
>
> Mun'gil's hometown was in the north of the 'H' plains. From one edge of the vast plains clear to the other was filled with fertile paddies and fields, but Mun'gil didn't own even a handful of that soil. He had lost his father at a young age and had been hardened by working as both a wage laborer and a tenant farmer. But no matter how hard he worked, he didn't break free from hardship. Like a venomous snake, poverty wound its coils around his body….With misfortune atop misfortune, Mun'gil was swindled out of tenant farm shares and in a rage, he set fire to the landowner's stack of grain stalks and bid farewell to his hometown.
>
> Now, Mun'gil's daily wage was 90 chŏn. Four years ago, when he came to this factory seeking a new way to make a living, he had to work thirty days straight to make 27 wŏn. But, every month workers had to rest two days each month and other deductions were made, so he was left with little more than 22 or 23 wŏn a month. With this money he had to support his seventy-year old mother, his wife, and their four children. No matter how he divided it up, he was short every month. (Yi 1958: 40-41)

Mun'gil's experience resonates with the stories of former farmers that are narrated through flashbacks recounting the myriad of paths that lead workers from the fields to the factory.

Farmers live and work with the soil, but because the region has been remapped to channel the mineral riches into the imperial soil, the local inhabitants are prevented from sustaining their lives with the "soil's corporeal generosity" (Lyons 2020: 65). The cycle of debt asphyxiates the tenant farmers "like a venomous snake," threatening their livelihood as it tightens its grip around their exhausted bodies (1958: 40). Mun'gil seeks "a new way to make a living" in the Hŭngnam factory, but this new environment suffocates Mun'gil with ammonium sulfate and the chemicals bore worm-like holes in his lung tissue. The physical problems are compounded by the measly wages, what Mun'gil refers to as a "pocket of worry" (1958: 56). Calculations of daily expenses recur throughout the *NFF* and I read this as an "aesthetic strategy" that refuses the sonic territory of settler-colonial violence to be silenced by the "march of the machine civilization" (Robinson 2020: 23; Yi 1988: 240). The vicious cycle of debt chases the farmer from the field to the factory. Yi's Hŭngnam works attest to the fact that once the region is remapped to maintain the steady rhythm of fertilizer production for empire, neither field nor factory sustains life. These polyvocal stories told by landless farmers gesture towards interstitial spaces as the only sites where "co-laborations" among organisms can engage in a reciprocal relationship and proffer the possibility of future life. In the *NFF*, interstitial sites that foster sustainable material exchanges include a boarding house at the base of the mountain where a mutual aid society is established and the unreclaimed strip of coastline where Mun'gil's mother gathers seaweed to supplement the meals. The farmers' stories bring the sonic territories of remote farms and fields as well as per-urban fields into the time-space of primitive accumulation as experienced in the era of man-made fertilizer.

Littoral Landscapes

The 1933 story "Factory Girl" picks up from where the last line of the folk song breaks off. It locates the reader-as-laborer alongside the male and female laborers working along the Hŭngnam harbor and illustrates what female workers encounter "Within the warehouse—-" (1933: 49). This is the only one of Yi's Hŭngnam stories that renders the muffled sounds of violence engendered by the sexual division of labor. The unfinished line of the folk song gestures towards the gendered violence that female laborers endure in the industrial warehouses along the harbor.[154] Accompanying Chŏnghŭi, the female protagonist, readers encounter the industrial storage space from the standpoint of a single female laborer.

> 넓다란 창고 안에는 가마스가 산가티 싸여 잇고 힌 비료가 대여섯 군데 싸여 잇다. 한 오십 명가튼 것은 어느 모퉁이에 가서 숨어도 좀처럼 찻기 어려울 만하다. 정희는 이 괴물이 나올 듯한 창고 안을 대략 소제하고 무서워서 얼른 벤또를 쥐고 나오랴고 할때다.
>
> Inside the expansive warehouse, there were five or six mounds of white fertilizer. Burlap sacks were piled up as high as mountains. It was so packed that as many as fifty people could hide in a corner somewhere without being easily found. As soon as Chŏnghŭi finished cleaning the warehouse, she quickly grabbed her lunchbox and ran outside, as if frightened by a monster who might jump out at her. (Yi 1933: 56-57)

The lofty mountains of burlap sacks and the mounds of nitrogen fertilizer obstruct Chŏnghŭi's field of vision inside the warehouse. The structure of the warehouse is designed to preserve the cryptic value ascribed to these translucent ammonium sulfate crystals. It is a space where the value of a sole female laborer is overshadowed by the mountains of nitrogen-rich fertilizer. For Chŏnghŭi, the warehouse is a precarious space that sets the stage for what Ruth Barraclough calls a "tale of seduction" where factory girls become "sexual victims of industrialization" and are denied subjectivity and an autonomous political voice (2012: 38). I agree that Chŏnghŭi

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[154] Interestingly, this is absent from NFF and when this folk song is sung, the final line is replaced with the words "arirang, arirang" (1958: 25).

exhibits little political agency in “Factory Girl,” but what compels me about “Factory Girl" is the rendering of the industrial warehouse from the standpoint of the factory girl and the depiction of work along the harbor. Gendered divisions of labor in the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory dispatch female workers to sew up the straw sacks of nitrogen fertilizer and stamp each straw sack with the Nitchitsu’s logo. Each and every time the female workers mark a sack of fertilizer with the stamp “Korea XX Joint Stock Company’s Ammonium Sulfate Fertilizer,” they fortify the mineral interdependence of Japan and Korea (Yi 2010: 49). In doing so, they work as agents of empire who enlist Hŭngnam soils and landless farmers in the technocratic solution to the soil crisis.

In *NFF*, the narrator presents the fertilizer warehouse from the standpoint of the male laborers who escape to the warehouse after lunch to enjoy volleyball matches. Whereas female factory laborers experience the warehouse as a site of potential sexual violence, male factory laborers experience the warehouse as an interstitial space bursting with the possibilities of new “co-laborations.” The expansive warehouse is where factory workers escape after lunch to play volleyball in an effort to step outside the constant sound of production. Inside the warehouse, the banter between teams and the shouts of enthusiasm infect the workers with a contagious enthusiasm that encourages them to creatively imagine co-evolution outside the logic of accumulation.

> 제품(유안)창고는 우리가 보통 생각하고 있는 그런 것과는 달리 여러만 통의 유안 비료라도 저장할 수 있게 지은 넓고 높은 철근 콘크리트 건물이다. 유리창이 있어 채광도 된다. 창고라고 하지만 유안 직장보다 오히려 나은 편이다. 이것만 보아도 회사 측이 노동자보다 제품을 더 귀중히 여긴다는 것을 알 수 있었다…벽, 철주, 바닥 할 것 없이 온통 아스팔트로 포장한 창고의 서쪽에 큼직한 비료산이 드러앉았는데 뾰족한 봉우리가 일곱 개나 솟아 있다. 슬레이트 지붕의 깨여진 구멍으로 새어든 정오의 태양광선이 비료산에 직사하여 유안의 흰빛을 유난히 돋구어준다. 북쪽 출입구에서는 날삯 인부들이 가솔린차에다 결박한 10관들이 비료섬을 메여 나르느라고 땀을 철철 흘리고 있었다.
>
> The warehouse is quite different than what we usually imagine. It is a tall and expansive ferroconcrete building that was built to store tens of thousands of tons of ammonium sulfate fertilizer. It even had glass windows that provided lighting. It was called the product warehouse but it was in much better shape than

> the ammonium sulfate division. Just looking at this place, it was apparent that the company considered the products to be much more valuable than the workers….The walls, the ceiling, and the floor of the warehouse had all been entirely paved in 'asphalt.' On the west side of the warehouse were giant mounds of ammonium sulfate fertilizer, soaring up into seven sharp peaks. The rays from the noontime sunlight seep in through the hole in the 'slate roof' and shine on the mountains of fertilizer. The direct sunlight strangely intensifies the white glimmer of the ammonium sulfate crystals. Over near the north gate of the factory complex, sweat was pouring down from the day laborers who tied up the fertilizer into 37.5 kg straw sacks and carried them over to the 'gasoline' cars. (1958: 30-31)

This passage details the expensive materials and the meticulous care that has been taken into constructing a space to store fertilizer prior to shipping. The ammonium sulfate crystals sparkle in the bright sunlight, hypnotizing the workers; they proclaim the arrival of man-made mountains to the region of Hŭngnam. These synthetic mountain peaks dominate the space inside the warehouse and command an authority that reorients the everyday relations of labor along the coastline. The day laborers are barely discernible as they are overshadowed by the massive burlap sacks of fertilizer they quickly prepare for transport to the archipelago. The narrative focus of this passage is not on the day laborers or the factory workers. Instead, it asks the reader to consider how the glass windows, abundant lighting, and meticulously paved asphalt walls have contributed to the mythic value ascribed to man-made fertilizer; it considers what happens to the corporeality of the laborers, the soil, and the sea when these bodies are recruited for the mass production of nitrogen.

In a later scene taking place just outside the ammonium sulfate warehouse, the reader-as-laborer bears witness to the active recruitment of the soil and transient tenant farmers in Nitchitsu's architectonic project. The reader is joined by Mun'gil, who crouches down along the wall, observing the active construction works designed to streamline the circulation of nitrogen fertilizer throughout the empire.

> 회사 전용의 축항 쪽에서 화물선의 고동이 길게 운다. 여러 데의 '트랜스포터' (기중기의 일종)가 호상 경쟁이나 하듯 용을 쓰면서 화물선에 다 뻔질나게 비료섬을 물어 나르고 있다. 축항에서 분주하

> 게 일하는 인부들이 이속에서는 개미떼처럼 작게 모였다. 일직선으로 하늘과 맞닿은 아득한 수평선상에 점점이 보이는 것은 비료를 만재하고 떠난 화물선들이다. 가슴을 펴고 고함을 치면서 냅다 달리고 싶은 벅찬 의욕이 동하는 가없이 푸른 동해바다의 풍경은 한 폭의 그림처럼 아름답다. 그러나 이것은 누구나 다 같이 느끼는 의욕일 수는 없었다.
>
> The horn of a cargo ship resounds throughout the area of the harbor under construction for the exclusive use of the company. Several 'Transporters' exert themselves, as if in competition with one another, as they continually haul the straw sacks of fertilizer onto the freighter ship.[155] Viewed from here, the laborers busily toiling away on the harbor construction appear quite tiny, like an army of ants. The things that appeared like dots on the faint horizon, where the sky meets the sea, were the freighter ships that had already departed with full loads of fertilizer. The view of the boundless, blue East Sea was so beautiful that it was like a painting. It aroused an overflowing passion that made you want to run at full speed while screaming at the top of your lungs. But not everyone felt that same kind of enthusiasm. (Yi 2010: 39-40)

The reverberation of the cargo ship's horn is a sonic cue that the reader-as-laborer has been relocated within the diegetic space to the site of harbor construction. Anchored in this environment, the reader-as-laborer experiences a moment when the "networks or webs" that comprise the "spatial texture" of the Hŭngnam port present what Henri Lefebvre refers to as a "horizon of meaning" (1991: 222). This is a moment to contemplate the implications of the interrelated movements of cargo ships, cranes, and day laborers. In the framework of this time-space, the vanishing point is somewhere on the pelagic horizon, where the vista is punctuated by cargo ships heavy with nitrogen-rich fertilizer. The spatial ratio of the dockworkers, cargo ships, and straw sacks of fertilizer are recalibrated and alter the ecological hierarchy of these components.

The comings and goings of freighters, the marshaling of colonial troops into construction sites, and the importation of 'Transporters'—in combination, these all generate a kinetic energy that reshapes the coastal soil. In this passage, the bustling activity on the harbor is distinguished as construction work for the "exclusive use of the company" (1958: 39). It is a moment that reflects on the regional repercussions of the rapid privatization of a previously communal space.

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[155] 'Transporter' refers to the 'Temperley Transporter,' later patented as part of Temperley Transporter, Co. London, that was a type of overhead crane invented by John Ridley Temperley in 1892.

The movements of the freighters, day laborers, and 'Transporters' are presented as engineering projects that preclude the possibility of distributing prosperity throughout the region, and instead redirect it towards the vanishing point on the pelagic horizon. Before the horizon of the "boundless, blue East Sea" was interrupted with freighter ships full of nitrogen fertilizer, potential spaces for sustainability along the Hŭngnam coast were in abundance. However, the harbor construction for the "exclusive use of the company" compromises the sustainability of this farming and fishing region, which is why "not everyone felt that same kind of enthusiasm" while observing this seascape (1958: 39-40).

In addition to providing a sonic cue of a new diegetic location, the cargo ship's horn also signals the era of man-made fertilizer as one that warrants the recruitment of foreign technologies, here in the anthropomorphized form of 'Transporters.' Yi uses the Korean transliteration of the English word 'Transporter' and provides a succinct explanation of the 'Transporter' as "a type of crane," implying that this piece of construction equipment was a familiar, though markedly foreign, member of the colonial labor force. These 'Transporters' are personified as part of the human labor force participating in the collective effort to deploy plundered minerals out into the exhausted soils of the archipelago.[156] The continuous motion of the 'Transporters' establishes a new rhythm for the circulation of minerals in the empire. The spatial ratio of the anthropomorphic 'Transporters' who "exerted themselves, as if in competition with one another," to the insect-like dockworkers alludes to the destructive tendencies of this

[156] This soil is drawing from the language of piracy that permeates Marx's discussion of colonial acquisition. I am drawing parallels in the ways that soil, minerals, treasures, and bodies are all claimed and circulated through empire for the (re)production of wealth. "The colonies secured a market for the budding manufactures, and, through the monopoly of the market, an increased accumulation. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother-country and were there turned into capital." (Marx(I) 1967: 535)

new rhythm of mineral circulation (1958: 39). The recruitment of the 'Transporters' establishes a new tempo of mineral mining, one that captures and transports minerals out of the atmosphere faster than their rate of return, gesturing towards an environmental fallout.

While this passage alludes to environmental degradation, it speaks explicitly to the drastic shift in corporeal scale when dock workers appear as mere specks among the tangle of cranes and massive cargo ships. The material presence of the 'Transporters' reduces the human laborer to the size of a terrestrial insect, simultaneously affecting the net worth of each unit of labor-power. Reduced to an "army of ants," these day laborers become genderless, nameless, and nationless insects toiling under the auspices of the automated commander who dictates new rhythms of work. This increased pace of production is aurally marked by the noise of the ships' horns; the nitrogen fertilizer neatly packaged into straw sacks, the region's sole source of wealth, is shipped out faster than it can replenish the local soil and labor force. The noise of the horn destabilizes the region's potential to reproduce. On the other hand, silence alludes to an inadvertent contribution to the colonial reserve of industrial labor. Crouched outside the ammonium sulfate warehouse, Mun'gil calculates the monetary value contained on the freighters that dot the horizon. As he adds up the monetized value per ton of fertilizer, several coworkers converse in whispers next to him; Mun'gil remains silent amidst the noise of horns and murmurs of co-workers. In Mun'gil's silence, I read a sense of unease about his own persistent fertility. His silence on the harbor relates to an earlier moment of silence inside the factory. Sangho, a coworker, teases Mun'gil, "Even though your body is completely spent, you sure are good at making babies! Y'all are just like a sounder of swine" (1958: 27). Despite the derogatory tone of this insult, Mun'gil remains just as silent as he is on the harbor. Mun'gil's silence, I propose is an

acknowledgement of how regional bodies have also been appropriated to perform the unpaid labor in the(re)production of the labor force at home. Moments of silence in *NFF* allude to how the production of man-made fertilizer creates ruptures in the rhythms of fertility in the production site of the factory, the soils in fields and paddies, as well as the comings and goings along the coast. The horizon of the East Sea is where the noises, the murmurs, and the silences converge; it is where the labor involved in atmospheric nitrogen capture, packaging and transport converge. The spatial textures of the littoral landscape expose the unsustainability and brevity of technocratic solutions to the soil crisis and challenge the reader to consider what is at stake when day laborers have been reduced to insects, women likened to swine, and the pelagic horizon has been perforated by a fleet of freighter ships.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Yi's Hŭngnam literature reveals the sonic territory of nitrogen fertilizer production and, as such, captures moments of violent disruptions and productive "co-laborations." The interrelations among organisms lie at the heart of these narratives and, consequently, speak to the corporeal and ecological effects of imperial nitrogen fertilizer production. Author-as-laborer Yi challenges the reader-as-laborer to listen differently, attuning the body to local noises, murmurs, and silences (Lefebvre 2013: 29). This new modality of listening requires the "fullest range of sensory experience that connects us to place" and reveals the "spatial texture" that is imbued with meaning (Lefebvre 1991: 222; Robinson 2020:

72). The spatial texture consists of the human and more-than-human interrelations generated in the process of atmospheric nitrogen capture. It also reveals the sites where organisms seek ways to sustain life outside the monotonous cycles of colonial-capitalism. Yi's Hŭngnam literature is a subversive cartographic rendering of the region because it plots out three critical sites that determine the everyday rhythms of labor in the era of man-made fertilizer production: the Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory, the peri-urban fields, and the coastal regions. The triadic approach to storytelling places the transformative peril and potential emerging from material exchanges at the heart of the narrative.

Conclusion
Displacing the Terrestrial in Fisheries Literature

In the course of this project, I have labored with the land alongside tenant farmers and miners in my literary mapping of how laboring bodies and the soil co-evolve and produce spaces for (un)sustainable ecologies. Extractive labor transforms local ecologies and has lasting corporeal and ecological effects for our present and unforeseen future. Rural proletarian literature engages in ecological storytelling, placing a narrative focus on the interrelations among gender, labor, and the material environment of mining zones that emerge in the process of primitive accumulation. These interrelations, which I refer to as "ecological entanglements," generate a kinetic energy and propels the narrative forward; they reveal sites rife with both peril *and* promise for the sustainability of life.

The central figure in this project is the tenant farmer as proletariat. This is a figure who labors with the soil in cyclical rhythms in order to provide the essential nutrition that sustains lives. The tenant farmer works to extract and replenish Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K) to retain vital soils. As such, in the process of tilling or fertilizing the fields, the tenant farmer is always a miner. Each of the stories I discussed is firmly rooted within the soil. Despite my analytical focus on the terrestrial, however, each of the chapters has inevitably led me into the waters. Tenant farmers' children gather along the riverbed in search of fish to supplement a meager diet of barley gruel. In the case of copper (Cu), I ended up in reservoirs designed as technocratic solutions to mitigate the so-called mine-pollution problem. When embarking on gold mining ventures (Au), the issue of the water table was a persistent problem. The atmospheric mining of nitrogen (N) created a contemporaneous and residual effect on the

coastal fisheries, more commonly known as Minamata disease (Yang 2020). In the spirit of the speculation inherent in extractive labor, I conclude with a bit of speculative thinking about how to de-centralize the terrestrial in the concept of primitive accumulation. In other words, I consider what happens to the embedded ecology of primitive accumulation when we submerge it into the ocean.[157]

(Re)Situated Knowledges: From the Terrestrial to the Pelagic

In *Notes on the Underground*, Rosalind Williams defines the "subterranean conscious" as an understanding that "we do not live *on* the earth but *in* the earth" (Williams 1990: 273). With a critical focus on the axis of verticality, Williams considers real and imagined underground spaces as productive sites for considering the recurring and ongoing processes of enclosure. Throughout her literary explorations of the subterranean, Williams illustrates the entanglements of humans and more-than-humans with the earth that is synonymous with the contemporaneous term the "environmental consciousness" (Williams 1990: 212-213). In *Wild Blue Media*, Melody Jue proposes a "conceptual dislocation" of "terrestrially nurtured thought" and submerges it into the ocean in a practice she refers to as a "milieu-specific analysis" (Jue 2020: 3, 8). Thinking "through seawater rather than take the ocean as a discrete object of analysis" functions as a feminist praxis to de-stabilize assumed knowledges and reassess an ethics of care that is linguistically and ideologically tethered to the land (Jue 2020: 16).

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[157] This idea came from a fall 2020 seminar with Jon Pitt and our class discussion about the blue humanities and builds on an early draft of a chapter on fisheries which was cut from the final draft.

Albeit from distinct vantage points, both Williams and Jue build on the tradition of feminist science studies and their perspectives are not incompatible. In fact, each standpoint enriches the other in what Donna Haraway terms the "partial perspective." Haraway argues for "politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims" (1988: 589). In short, the knowledge acquired in working with the earth is both tested and reinforced by the knowledge acquired in working with the sea. Rather than approach these partial perspectives as incompatible, I broaden the horizon of analysis to explore how the terrestrial and the pelagic both inform the rhythms of comings and goings along the liminal space of the coastline. These comings and goings are shaped by the dynamic dissonance generated when the volumetric encounters the gravitational, and this discord speaks to much more than class struggle, but gestures towards a fundamental (un)sustainability of life *in* the earth, whether it is solid or liquid.

Establishing a Space for Care Time: Maedakō Hiroichirō's 1929 *Semuga* (鮭)

Born in Miyagi Prefecture, Maedakō Hiroichirō moved to Tokyo to study with Tokutomi Roka (1868-1927). Tokutomi financed Maedakō's trip to America, where he lived for thirteen years (from 1907-1920) and worked a number of jobs while becoming acquainted with socialist anarchists in both Chicago and New York. Upon return to Japan, Maedakō joined the circle of *Tane maku hito* (The Sowers) the *Shakaishugi dōmei* (Socialist League), and in 1924 he joined *Bungei sensen* (Literary Front) as an editor. Maedakō's first story *Santō Senkyaku* (Third-class Passengers) was published in 1921 in *Chūgai* (Home and Abroad) and in 1922 it appeared in

Tane maku hito. In 1926, Maedakō published an article in *Bungei sensen* (Literary Front) stating that he wrote *Santō senkyaku* in order "to put into practice Jules Romain's concept of unanimism" (Vassil 2018: 414). Jules Romains (1885-1972) was a French writer and founder of the theory of unanimism (l'unanimisme). Literary critic Aono Suekichi (1890-1961) identifies *Santō senkyaku* and *Semuga* as exemplary works of unanimism. As such, it does not have a plot, per se, but the text moves through several "planes of development" and results in the "emergence of a coherent group consciousness" (Vassil 2018: 415). They are stories without protagonists, novels where the masses (*gunshū*) are provided a space to come into their own being as relevant characters (NPB, v. 11: 416).

My interest in *Semuga* moves away from an analysis of Maedakō's narrative form and technique and considers what Jason W. Moore calls "environment-making" (Moore 2015:78-9). Environment-making is the organization of nature to facilitate the opening of new commodity frontier; it is the re-constitution of environments to facilitate the establishment and expansion of empire vis-a-vis colonial-capital operations. In *Semuga*, the Kamchatka coastline is completely reimagined when 170 Japanese fisherfolk arrive on the shores to establish an empire of salmon canneries. The 1907 agreement between Russia and Japan permitted Japanese companies to establish processing plants along the Russian coast of Kamchatka as well as occupy its offshore territory. By 1927, Japan had constructed an empire of canning factories stretching from the shorelines of Kamchatka, down to Korea, and stretching south down to Taiwan (Winstanley-Chester 2020: 183). *Semuga* maps the co-production of migration patterns through the lens of salmon fisheries.

Telling stories about the relationship between fisherfolk and the ocean engages in storytelling that highlights the (re)making of the coastal environment. The process of primitive accumulation claims gendered bodies, lands, and waters as "occupied territory" to fuel the material expansion of empire (Luxemburg 1923; Mies 1986: 25; Federici 2014). Maria Mies argues that the interaction with nature is a creative and reciprocal process that, when "biologistically infected," transforms into a relationship of "dominance and exploitation" (Mies 1986: 45). María Puig de la Bellacasa proposes the cultivation of "care time" as a practice to disrupt the "biologistically infected" timeline of production (2015: 3508). This temporal disruption provides a space for a meditation on the "ethicality at stake in life-sustaining practices" (2015: 3643). Puig de la Bellacasa raises a contentious, but nonetheless pertinent, issue in care work: how does one ethically commit to life-sustaining practices when it compromises the vitality of a neighboring ecology?

In *Semuga*, the narrator describes the northern extreme of Kamchatka as a desolate land (*sekibaku toshita tōchi*), a plain of dried grass (*karekusa no heigen*) stretching out as far as the eye can see (Maedakō 1929: 125). It is a place that appears to have annihilated any semblance of life and distorted time beyond recognition (Maedakō 1929: 127). No sooner do they arrive than they begin their work as miners, digging for the buried treasure along the shore. This buried treasure, in fact, is more valuable because it is the only means to transform the heaps of raw grains hauled to shore into nutritious meals: the raw materials to start building the salmon cannery. Once unearthed, the 170 fisherfolk were tasked with building a warehouse, a bunkhouse, a machine room, and a cannery. The list of demands and the distortion of the workday in this extreme Northern climate compel the fisherfolk to violently demand a break.

This is a collective demand for "care time," in direct resistance to the "biologistically infected" time of production. "Care time" is attuned to the circadian rhythms that sustain life in the midst of the tundra that echoes with nothing but the cries of wild dogs.

Osmosis in Oceanic Migrations

Hyun Ok Park's notion of a "politics of osmosis" is effective for thinking about the multi-species migrations in the sea that affect the environment along the shorelines (2005: 24). In a survey of female divers in Korea and Japan, An Mijŏng argues that it was the imperial appetite for abalone and seaweed that depleted the resources and pushed female divers to migrate further north along the shore until they eventually reached Vladivostak (An 2008). An maps the sea as a three-dimensional space and interrogates the competing demands for harvests of seaweed and abalone to satisfy the nutritional needs of the increasing populace but also the manufacture of munitions for an expanding empire.

Eleana Kim argues that "fisheries were foundational to its [Japan's] imperial ambitions" and that "ocean life is shot through with the material and cultural effluvia of war" (Kim 2022).[158] In a case study of the industrial sardine (*chŏngŏri*) fisheries in and around Changjŏn, Korea, Kim illustrates how the sudden disappearance of the mass migrations of sardines in 1943 contributed to Japan's ruin (*ilmangch'i*) "suggesting that… some fish can be good for war" (Kim 2022).[159]

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[158] US Catches of sardines and salmon intensified during WWII and sardines in Europe and Asia due to their value as food, fuel, and explosives. Sardines were critical for Japan's empire: "suggesting that not only is war not good for *all* fish but also some fish can be good for war."

[159] 1 million tons of sardines were caught in 1937. This figure dropped to zero in 143. Kim, Eleana J. 2022. "Militarized Fish." Theorizing the Contemporary, *Fieldsights*, January 25.

Seaweed Harvesters and Sardine Fisherfolk: Hyŏn Kyŏngjun's (1909-1950) 1937 "Ch'ulbŏm " (The Launch)

Hyŏn Kyŏngjun, an author discussed in chapter three, produced a body of work that addressed the hardships in the Hamgyŏng coastal factories and deep sea fisheries. Rather than consider them as two distinct themes, I read them as partial perspectives: one from the terrestrial and one from the shoreline. Hyŏn's body of work is critically engaged with the entanglements between the human and the more-than-human that launch migrations over land and through the seas.

Hyŏn's 1937 story "Ch'ulbŏm" is situated around a port city that functions as the heart of the Japanese empire's sardine fishery. The story oscillates between the terrestrial labor in the sardine processing plant and the coastal labor of seaweed harvesters and sardine fisherfolk further at sea. The mountains of sardines are hauled off the boats and loaded into the oil press before the female haulers hang their bodies out to dry in the sun. Mounds of sardines, hoards of cash, and the faces of fisherfolk appear and disappear in a moment. Oil is processed into nitroglycerin and fuels imperial expansion, the dried corpses of the sardines are ground up into meal for use as fertilizer and replenish the exhausted soils of the archipelago. The subsistence of fisherfolk is contingent on the market price of oil and fertilizer, which fluctuates as rapidly as the movements of the rising tides. Scenes along the shore of the sardine processing plant disrupt the narrative with moments where the seaweed harvesters sing out to the fleets of sardine ships still out at sea.

바람에 불여갈까
무결에 믈러갈까

에헤야 물새따라
배타고 XX가지
포구에 살면은…

떠도는 구룸따라
이맘도 오락가락

Will I be blown away by the wind?
Will I be swept away by the waves?
Eheya Follow the waterfowl
Ride the boat until XX
While those that live in the port…

Follow the floating clouds
The heart also comes and goes (1937: 188)

Daily tides, storm cycles, and seasonal migrations of sardines mutually determine the movement of fisherfolk to and from the shore as well as along the coastline. This song functions as a moment of "care time" and pauses to contemplate the osmotic migrations that have led fisherfolk into work that transforms them into settler-colonists, making them agents in the appropriation of liquid ecospheres under empire.

Liquid Ecospheres Under Empire

I end this project with an exercise in speculative thinking about how thinking through the ocean challenges our perspective on empire, the space-time of labor, and seeking a moment for care time. More specifically, I am interested in how reading stories narrated from the standpoint of pelagic cycles, such as *Semuga* and "Ch'ulbŏm," might challenge our assumed knowledges about (un)sustainable ecosystems. The environment-making along the coast involves the construction of bunkhouses for seasonal workers, storehouses, drying rooms, a cannery, and the introduction of new fleets of boats and trawlers that reorganize the movements in and through the

sea. Thinking through fisheries literature complicates terrestrial-based understandings of settler-colonialism and allows for a consideration of the process of primitive accumulation that acquires liquid ecospheres under empire.

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