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Magical Realism, Two Hyper-Consumerisms, and the Diaspora Subject in Karen Tei Yamashita's Through the Arc of the Rain Forest

Identity in Asian-American literature has undergone a thematic transition as the genre has developed, a transition that Fukuko Kobayashi describes as follows: “At first, it [Asian-American literature] focused on the motif of assimilation into the dominant American culture. Its focus then shifted to the choice between assimilation and rejection of that culture, and finally turned to the construction of an ethnic identity mediating between the two” (5). A comparison of John Okada's No-No Boy (1957) and Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club (1989) sheds light on the second and third stages of this transition. Whereas No-No Boy promotes a cultural nationalism premised on the pursuit of an identity independent both of Asia and America, The Joy Luck Club sympathetically portrays the sensibility of Chinese-American women attempting to reconcile their Chinese and American inheritances dialectically.

Contemporary critics have tended to view Asian-American literature as diaspora literature, postulating a floating, divergent “diaspora subject” that discursively subverts the hegemony of America's dominant culture. Yet the
notions of "diaspora" and "subject" are contradictory. That is, "diaspora" connotes a transcending of value-system boundaries, since those in a state diaspora, like nomads, have no settled place or location to which they can return. In contrast, a "subject" is constructed within discourses, and therefore this construction is necessarily accompanied by certain value-creating mechanisms. It may be constructed within the discourses of imperialism and neocolonialism even in the absence of direct political agency on the part of the colonized. It is moreover problematic to presuppose an "Asian" subject since the category ignores differences between constituent ethnic groups and thus leads to discursive overgeneralization. In this regard, simply put, criticism of Asian-American literature (along with that of African-American, Native American, and Chicano literature) has tended to oscillate between generalization/universalization and differentiation/individualization of its subjects' identities.

In this context, critics such as Kobayashi have regarded Karen Tei Yamashita's *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* (1992) as a work of Asian-American literature that is representatively diasporic, arguing that it conveys "an authorial self-consciousness that is extremely open and generous to the centrality of [ethnic] origins, a [perspective that] is well-suited to this age of the borderless" (Kobayashi 5). Such a political view of the bearing of ethnicity and diaspora on Yamashita's text may afford insight, but it is significant that the political awareness of the text was a product of Yamashita's steadfast desire to save the tropical rain forests. That is, it was not an ethnicist awareness, but rather an environmentalist one, that led Yamashita to write *Through the Arc*. I do not intend to further explore the traditional question of authorial intentionality here, but it must be noted that political interpretations of Yamashita's text from the essentialist viewpoint of ethnicity have been one-sided. Although the political implications of literary texts emerge at the crossings of race, ethnicity, gender, class, environment, economics, and culture, among other dimensions, critics have tended to view Yamashita's text more narrowly, especially in the context of the canonization of Asian-American literature.

This paper reconsiders the nature and function of the "diaspora subject" in *Through the Arc*, primarily through an exploration of the use of magical realism and the "hyper-consumerism" motifs in the text.
I Magical Realism and the Diaspora Subject

Through the Arc describes the wanderings of Kazumasa, a man who has emigrated to Brazil after quitting his white-collar job (datsusara) in Japan. The narrative focuses neither on the mental conflicts the protagonist faces in his new country nor on his narcissism vis-à-vis his motherland. It is not the protagonist himself who was most eager to leave his mother country, but rather his mother, who urges her son—despite the associations that might be drawn between “mother” and “mother-land”—to become an exile, thinking that “her son’s possibilities for happiness in Japan had exhausted the limits of those tiny islands” (10). Yet the protagonist, harboring conventional conceptions of neither “mother” nor “motherland,” does not seek some new ideal in Brazil, and in this sense cannot be considered a psychological exile of the sort proper to exile literature. Indeed, Kazumasa does not leave Japan for political or economic reasons, nor does he seek alternative values by which to live in Brazil.3 He simply goes to Brazil. Why he moves is therefore not important; it is his movement itself that is significant, and indeed, his movement is a recurring motif in the narrative.

Many of the main characters in Through the Arc have mental or physical attributes that set them apart, including a beautiful young couple who manage a communication company that uses pigeons, the inventor of a new religious healing practice, a young pilgrim called “Angel,” the three-armed CEO of a multinational corporation, and a French woman who has three breasts. The difference of these characters brings to mind the “cannibal” of colonialist discourse, the description of whom as “savage” and “inferior” served to reinforce colonialism.4 In Yamashita’s text, however, such figures of difference are not unspeakable Others, but are rather agents of Kazumasa’s movement.

The parallel stories that constitute the narrative converge in the end with all of the main characters gathering at an imaginary site called “Matacão” that suddenly appears in the innermost depths of the Amazonian region; “an enormous impenetrable field of some unknown solid substance stretching for millions of acres in all directions. Scientists, supernaturalists and ET enthusiasts, sporting the old Spielberg rubber masks, flooded in from every corner of the world” (16). The narrative speculates variously that this mysterious land is “the creation of a highly sophisticated ancient civilization,” “the result of a hole [caused by a] molten substance within the earth,” “the work of the CIA,”
“a miracle of God,” and “a sort of runway prepared for the arrivals of aliens.” Rachel Lee writes, “Yamashita’s novel emphasizes globalization as a multi-noded cultural intermingling that is not relayed through the merging of two “opposites”—for example, Asia and the United States—but through the compilation of heterogeneous national, racial, and cultural components all in one site, the Matacão” (“Asian” 239). As she discusses, Matacão can be understood as a multicultural space transcending the nation as such, but it would be too simple to conceive of it as a utopian space wherein every difference is tolerated, all values coexist, and the Other is not excluded.

Rather, Matacão may be understood to represent colonialist/imperialist discourse with its apparatus of binary oppositions, such as those of self and other, culture and savage, advanced and progressive, dominant and marginal, and global and local. Yet the apocalyptic collapse of Matacão at the end of the story does not seem to reflect the dialectic product of such discursive pairs, but rather the problematics of colonialist/imperialist discourse, which is based on binarism. Thus, Yamashita’s text can be considered a critique of utopian transnationalism/globalism.

An examination of Yamashita’s narrative technique supports this view. Yamashita’s novel has often been described as a work of magical realism, that is, a work that juxtaposes two modes of representation that normally exist in opposition to complement one another: realism and fantasy. Yet insofar as Through the Arc reflects her life experience in Brazil, Yamashita has commented, “the whole idea of it being any sort of magic[al] realism is really on the edge of making no sense” (Interview 50). Yamashita associates magical realism with hypertext, commenting that hypertext takes hold of the ever-changing condition of the world to make us aware of various realities [co-occurring] at one time” (“Virtual Reality” 183). For Yamashita, magical realism is not just a literary technique, but our contemporary sensibility. In other words, Yamashita suggests that our manner of perceiving the world is magical realism, and hence that literary magical realism is a mimetic narrative technique which represents how we perceive the world.

The political implications of magical realism, however, are not apparent from this contemporary perspective, as a historical view of the genre suggests. The historical origins of magical realism are subject to debate, but can be understood to date at least as early as Christopher Columbus’ discovery of the
New World. Since the early colonial period, the bulk of Spanish and Portuguese colonial literature—including historical chronicles, personal memoirs, confidential reports, and letters—was in some part fictional, even when purported to represent fact or reality. As Emir Rodriguez Monegal points out, “they [the Spanish colonists] were permeated by the sense of wonder felt by the Europeans as they faced for the first time a reality totally unlike anything they had experienced before” (1). Monegal suggests that after Columbus, this “sense of wonder” gave rise to the stereotype of the fabulous New World that in contrast to the “realistic and rational” was “magical and inscrutable.” From this perspective, literary magical realism can be understood to have arisen from the turning of the European gaze towards the New World.

Yet this perspective is premised on a distorted historiography founded in a Eurocentric discourse that decenters the indigenous as the extraordinary Other. This historiography reflects a Eurocentric teleological narrative incorporating its own Latin American history, which Tetsuya Motohashi characterizes as follows: “the advanced West conquered the Non-West. But the latter caught up with the former, overcame colonialism, and gained entry into the group of modern nation-states” (xii). Such a political and historical narrative informs magical realism.

A Eurocentric perspective also informs the idea of the “marvelous real” (lo real maravilloso) formulated by Alejo Carpentier, a founding father of magical realistic fiction. Carpentier esteems “a privileged revelation of reality,” as opposed to the Surrealist’s convention of casting the marvelous as bureaucratic and cheap: “To begin with, the phenomenon of the marvelous presupposes faith” (“Marvelous Real in America” 86). Many critics of Latin American literature subscribe to Carpentier’s argument, including H. D. Oberhelman, for whom “Life in Latin America . . . is surreal by its very nature. Surrealism comes from the very reality of Latin America and is the norm rather than the exception” (32). Carpentier’s magical realism depends upon an external frame of reference and a panoramic view of Latin American “reality.” It is nothing other than Eurocentrism which thus defines “reality” for indigenous peoples as “magical” or “mythic,” displacing them from authentic reality. Carpentier advocates magical realism as a literary form that represents his Latin Americanism, but such Latin Americanism is in essence a disguised Eurocentrism.

In modern European and North American societies defined by the idea of
the nation-state, people were considered as a matter of course to belong to a nation, and immigrants were expected to assimilate to the dominant nation of their new state. In the postmodern age, challenges to such nationalism-based conceptions of identity have opened the way to multiculturalism. In Latin America, however, ethnically and racially plural cultures existed long before postmodernism challenged the idea of the nation-state. In this context, multiculturalism thus had the potential to flourish in Latin America prior to the advent of postmodernism.

Yet in the nineteenth century, after many Latin American countries gained independence with the support of emerging bourgeoisies, wealthy ruling elites conspired with the interests of the United States to maintain the existing discriminatory social orders of their societies, along with their political and economic monopolies. Thus, the potential for multiculturalism was not fully realized in Latin America; rather, a monocultural Latin Americanism emerged. Needless to say, such an ideology is not autonomous, nor does it represent a break with colonial history. Magical realism may be seen as an appropriate literary technique for representing this ambivalent socio-historical aspect of Latin America.7

Yet Yamashita's magical realism is not the magical realism of Carpentier. Yamashita herself acknowledges the influence of García Márquez, whose works she read devotedly while living in Brazil. The contrast between García Márquez and Carpentier, which Fumiaki Noya characterizes as follows in terms of the "perspective of the community," sheds light on this influence:

García Márquez presents both the perspective of the community and another, outside perspective. There is an oscillation between the two in his fiction. . . . [In Carpentier's fiction,] the world of the fantastic is described, and there exists a modern European subject or consciousness that sees the world as fantastic. The reader tends to follow this viewpoint, becoming an onlooker of the world. . . . In the novels of García Márquez, we enter the world, for he takes a pre-modern, indigenous perspective. This encompasses not only Latin America, but also historical Spain including Galicia, and even Africa. In short, García Márquez offers a mixed perspective that surveys the peripheral worlds surrounding Europe. Such a hybrid peripheral perspective is evident in One Hundred Years of Solitude. (89)
In Noya’s view, Carpentier’s crypto-Eurocentric viewpoint is fixed, while that of García Márquez oscillates between the interior and exterior of the “perspective of the community.” That is, the events of the story are “uncanny” and “marvelous” from the external viewpoint, but they are narrated from within the perspective of the community as natural. Presented with this oscillating perspective, the reader understands that the borders the realist draws between life and death, dream and reality, time and space, and the local and the global, disappear, raveling and unraveling to deconstruct themselves. From García Márquez’s shifting viewpoint, the discourse of colonialism is problematized by its binarism, specifically, the differentiation of self and Other whereby governance over the colonized is justified.

The oscillating perspective in One Hundred Years of Solitude is ultimately disrupted by a metafictional turn of the narrative: it is revealed that the entire story is a fiction written on parchments by Melquiades, one of the characters. In a similar manner, the ball that acts as narrator in Yamashita’s text reveals the very fictionality of the narrative at the apocalyptic ending of the story: “But all this happened a long time ago. . . . Now the memory is complete, and I bid you farewell. Whose memory you are asking? Whose indeed” (212). The narrator, conscious of its own fictionality, emphasizes that both the global perspective and the local perspective—each with its own social, cultural, and political values—are textual constructs. This metafictional device problematizes the subjectivity of the reader as well, implying that it too is a fictional construct. In other words, the reader may find himself/herself to be a character in a story/history written by someone he/she does not know. Yamashita’s text thus encourages the reader to be both a critic and a writer of his/her own story/history.

Yamashita’s magical realism suggests that subjectification, in the context of Latin Americanism as described above, is consonant with perspectives in which the Eurocentric subject serves as a universal point of reference. It also foregrounds the “othering” process which subjectification fabricates within itself. Furthermore, it may be read as a critique of the primacy of imperialist globalism from a local perspective.

However, it must not be forgotten in the course of such a reading that it is only when such oppositions are overcome that a discourse for decolonization can emerge. For binarism necessarily entails externalizing the Other, and thus
marginalizing it in the discursive structure. In this sense, the strategy of the "diaspora subject," in the context of post-colonialism, entails a final commingling of self and Other that definitively demarginalizes the Other. Yamashita's magical realism effects such a political narrative strategy.

II Two Hyper-Consumerisms and the Diaspora Subject

As Ryuta Imafuku observes, contemporary discussion of the "diaspora subject" has failed to examine "the inter-relations between free-floating capital, the sense of belonging to a nation, and personal identity, all of which register in the experience of the transnational and cosmopolitan subject" (336). Encouraging such an examination, Yamashita's text is suggestive in regard to the relation between the world-wide flow of capital and the "diaspora subject." Indeed, Yamashita's protagonist is positioned as racially marginalized but economically privileged in the text.

Through the Arc is a story of the post-Cold War, in contrast to which the Cold War is commonly understood to have delineated a comparatively stable political space in the balance between liberal democracy and communism. Yet of the Cold War era, Akira Asada has observed that "from the perspective of the two dominant political discourses, one might imagine that a third party, such as the so-called Third World, might transcend the conflict. The binary structure of the opposing Cold War discourses, transposed into a triad by an imagined third party serving as the space in which they acted, was profoundly stable"(161); the competing hegemonies gauged their respective powers through such Third World political events as national independence movements, the establishment of new political regimes, and (post-)colonial wars. Indeed, the political powers of both sides were conjoined in a zero-sum game, wherein an increase in the power of one side registered as a decrease in that of the other, with the shift becoming visible only through the third party.

Yamashita's text, with its characters "enmeshed in the machine of commodity production, consumption, and environmental destruction" (Murphy 8), presents an analogous contest of competing discourses. Parodying late twentieth-century economic globalization, international financial markets, cosmopolitan enterprises, and information technology, the narrative depicts two types of hyper-consumerism; these correspond to the hyper-consumerisms postulated by Alexandre Kojève, which Asada glosses as "the materialistic
craze of the 1950s and 1960s that coalesced into the “American way of life,” and the Japanese “snobbism” of the 1980s that was preoccupied with the repetition and refinement of meaningless forms. Yamashita’s text can be read as a neo-colonialist story of an imagined cultural collision between this “American way of life” and “Japanese snobbism,” playing out in Brazil as a third party analogous to the Third World during the Cold War.

The hyper-consumerism of the “American way of life” is represented in Through the Arc by an American enterprise called GGG, a company dedicated to the illusory capitalist belief in the limitlessness of natural resources to support technological development and ever-increasing production. For GGG, the resources of Matacão, deep in the rain forest, offer ideal materials for commerce, since they can be used for all of the fundamental needs: clothing, food, and shelter. GGG’s exploitation of these resources simply follows the course of “history” charted by all capitalist companies; in this regard, GGG is a typical denizen of the late-capitalist market described by Fredric Jameson, which, in turn, might reinforce the discourse of Manifest Destiny.

The other type of hyper-consumerism, that of “Japanese snobbism,” is represented in Through the Arc by a karaoke business that Hiroshi, the protagonist’s cousin, starts in Brazil. Karaoke offers a perfect embodiment of postmodern Japanese culture, which developed as “a game of signs” or “simulacra” within a consumer society already permeated with animation and computer games. In Yamashita’s text, the karaoke business proves appealing to the Brazilian psyche, and quickly becomes an indispensable part of people’s lives. One may recall that Jean Baudrillard, situated in France, wrote on the procession of simulacra as a utopian/dystopian narrative; in Japan, however, simulacra have very much been part of actual, experienced reality. The procession of simulacra from Japan represented by Hiroshi’s karaoke business connotes an exertion of control over the psyche of the Brazilian people.

Thus, Yamashita juxtaposes these two types of hyper-consumerism to demonstrate that both the American and Japanese models of consumerism and consumption have infiltrated Brazil: GGG embodies a material global network of hyper-consumerism; karaoke represents a psychological one. They supplement each other, supporting their secure and monologic world.

The narrator, however, asserts the following: “Brazil had once before emptied its wealthy gold mines into the coffers of the Portuguese Crown and
consequently financed the Industrial Revolution in England. This time, if there was any wealth to be had, it had better remain in Brazil” (96). Yet the text describes realistically neither the actual conditions of Brazil, nor Third World resentment. Nor does it accord with Julia Kristeva’s cosmopolitanism of subjective choice. Indeed, Yamashita’s Brazil parodies the imagined third party.

The Brazil of *Through the Arc* is playfully but politically depicted as a *topos* of economic battle between the two hyper-consumerisms, and perhaps, their associated postmodernisms. Yamashita’s text deliberately avoids itself assuming the function of the imagined third party that hosts the contest of the two hegemonic powers, as suggested by the apocalyptic collapse of Matacão, which symbolizes a moment of resistance by the colonized upon whom the colonizers have forced an unwanted identity. The text also presents such self-consciousness and self-reflexivity that its subjectification/subordination as an imagined third party would serve only to strengthen imperialist globalism, to support existing power-relations, and more importantly, to promote self-colonization.

With this in view, *Through the Arc* must also be understood to reject the discourse of the “end of History” theorized by Francis Fukuyama, that is, the view that history, as a conflict of competing ideologies, is no longer possible. As an apology or negative justification for imperialist globalization, of course, this discourse may serve to maintain the imperialist system of control. By exposing the hidden infrastructure of the two hyper-consumerisms, Yamashita’s narrative functions as a counter-discourse which deconstructs this “end of history” discourse.

Yamashita’s playful narrative strategy functions effectively in revealing how the Eurocentric, teleological subject works, as well as how a “diaspora subject” operates. In this regard, it is significant that the entire story is narrated by a little ball that is part of Matacão and that hovers near the protagonist’s head. The ball-narrator is repeatedly described as “peoples’ memories”; missing its referent in the text, this sign may be read as a symbol of the free-floating “diaspora subject.” In other words, it is represented as unrepresentable. The ball reflects incessant subjectification and the rejection of dependency on essentialist notions such as “race,” “nation,” and “ethnicity,” which reproduce the discursive framework of colonialism. As Imafuku argues, “by the fact that
desire and impulse for movement has been organized in people’s consciousness, the diaspora movement works as a social agent which transcends community principles for settlement and belonging to a nation” (320). It is in this context that the protagonist’s movement, a motif throughout Through the Arc, emerges in itself as significant.

Avoiding the subjectification of the narrator in a fixed position, the text deftly sidesteps the pitfall of what Rey Chow calls “sanctifying the subaltern.” Of the discursive trick of representing “the other,” Rey Chow writes,

[The representation of “the other”] produces a way of talking in which notions of lack, subalternity, victimization, and so forth are drawn upon indiscriminately, often with intention of spotlighting the speaker’s own sense of alterity and political righteousness. . . . [S]uch cases of self-dramatization all take the route of self-subalternization, which has increasingly become the assured means to authority and power. What these intellectuals are doing is robbing the terms of oppression of their critical and oppositional import, and thus depriving the oppressed of even the vocabulary of protest and rightful demand. The oppressed, whose voices we seldom hear, are robbed twice—the first time of their economic chances, the second time of their language, which is now no longer distinguishable from those of us who have had our consciousnesses “raised.” (13)

The self-conscious narrator of Yamashita's text reflects its own political implications in representing “the other.” This relates to the aforementioned narrative strategy in which the representation of Brazil avoids the function of the imagined third party, and in so doing, subverts the discourse of self-colonization. The self-reflexivity of the narrator demonstrates that its own discourse is not an immaculate product, and therefore discloses the possibility that the voices of the oppressed might be robbed without any intention of the narration to do so. Yamashita’s narrator, whose appearance in the story is awkward, at least attempts to become conscious of its own complicity in such discursive violence, violence that sustains and reinforces the circuit of colonialist/imperialist discourse. Like the function of the imagined third party, the fixed positioning of the narrator is the other side of the coin of the colonialist/imperialist discourse. The ball=narrator must therefore keep
moving with the protagonist.

III Conclusion

The strategy of the "diaspora subject" has been a frequent topic of critical discussion, but as Azade Seyhan observes, "[n]o idiom has yet emerged to capture the collective interests of many groups in translocal solidarities, cross-border mobilizations, and postnational identities" (9).12 Yamashita’s text illustrates the possibility of a free-floating, multicultural, “diaspora subject,” but simultaneously, articulates the problematics of identity politics, namely, the postcolonial desire for an identity. In this regard, Yamashita’s text may be understood to deconstruct what might be considered an essentialist notion: “identity.” Yamashita’s text not only challenges the primacy of globalization, but also subverts the fixed positioning of the “diaspora subject” by the binary oppositions of global and local, civilization and savage, and center and margin, among others. In other words, Yamashita’s text, at the boundaries of such discourses as Orientalism and transnationalism, searches for a totally new vocabulary for the “diaspora subject,” one that marginalizes even the center as it draws the margins together.

In the context of Asian-American literature, the stereotyped identities that the East-West binary opposition engenders have been strengthened by the theoretical and philosophical endorsement of Orientalism. Yamashita’s text has been examined by many from the essentialist viewpoint that posits the “Japanese-American” as a self-evident cultural norm. This distinct entity is itself the other side of Orientalism, however, corresponding with Naoki Sakai’s discussion of universalism and particularism. Of the supplementary nature of the two, Sakai writes,

Contrary to what has been advertised by both sides, universalism and particularism reinforce and supplement each other; they are never in real conflict; they need each other and have to seek to form a symmetrical, mutually supporting relationship by every means in order to avoid a dialogic encounter which would necessarily jeopardize their reputedly secure and harmonized monologic worlds. Universalism and particularism endorse each other’s defect in order to conceal their own; they are intimately tied to each other in their accomplice [sic]. In this respect, a
particularism such as nationalism can never be a serious critique of universalism, for it is an accomplice thereof. (105)

Sakai’s discussion of the relation between universalism and particularism in history applies as well to the historical structure of Orientalism and counter-Orientalism, indicating that in discussing discursive dualism, the criticism of one necessarily entails that of the other. The colonist and the imperialist subject are not located on either side, but within the binary structure itself.

In this context, Chow also writes, “[t]he notion of ‘coloniality’ (together with the culture criticisms that follow from it), when constructed strictly in terms of the foreignness of race, land, and language, can blind us to political exploitation as easily as it can alert us to it” (9). In this sense, a full understanding of a fabulist text like Through the Arc requires a strategic reading in which “coloniality” is not so foregrounded. Such a reading entails probing for a process of neo-colonialist, neo-imperialist governance, which permeates without actually depriving the human body, the language, and the land. With this process in view, Yamashita’s text cannot be read only from the conventional viewpoint of ethnicity, a viewpoint that may overlook much more than it elucidates.

Yamashita’s text positively dismisses the referent of the signifier, which can be considered to transcend Orientalist and counter-Orientalist discourses and to defy the methodological conventions. As Rachel Lee argues, Through the Arc aims at “divergence from an East-West emphasis—its diminishment of both Asia and America by the presence of a third location, Brazil—requires a rethinking of the Orientalist and counterorientalist dualism undergirding much of Asian American criticism” (“Global-Local” 107). Yamashita’s political use of an oxymoronic genre—that is, magical realism—as well as the motif of the two hyper-consumerisms, reflects a narrative strategy that attempts to invert the recurring structure of colonialism and imperialism within such discourses.

Notes
1 My translation. All translations from Japanese into English are my own.
2 Yamashita’ says, “I would find it hard to write a book without ideas in it, without political content, or without a vision” (Interview 52). As some journal reviews comment, Through the Arc is a black humorist critique of human waste and
stupidity, which says more about the protest than the nonfiction does. See Courrier and Ditsky, for example.

3 As Rachel Lee discusses, Kazumasa is "sufficiently altered from the expected Asian immigrant profile—for example, the plantation worker, gold miner, laborer in the guano pits, war refugee—that his presence does not seem an obvious link to other Asian American literary works" ("Asian" 242). In this sense, Kazumasa might be considered a parody of preceding Asian American characters.

4 In terms of the literary representation of the "cannibal," see Hulme.

5 In the article, Lee details the characters' embodiments of regional, racial, and cultural cross-fertilization, which might suggest "the sense of globalized localities and localized globalization" (240).

6 Carpentier's Latin Americanism is most clearly reflected in the following statements: "the presence and vitality of this marvelous real was not the unique privilege of Haiti but the heritage of all of America, where we have not yet begun to establish an inventory of our cosmogonies. . . . Because of the virginity of the land, our upbringing, our ontology, the Faustian presence of the Indian and the blackman, the revelation constituted by its recent discovery, its fecund racial mixing [mestizado], America is far from using up its wealth of mythologies. After all, what is the entire history of America if not a chronicle of the marvelous real?" ("On the Marvelous Real in America" 87-88).

7 In this context, Stuart Sim defines magical realism as writing that "charts the contradictory responses of a post-colonial culture that is engaged in the process of recovering a lost past, while remaining unable completely to escape the lingering influence of its more recent colonial history" (310).

8 Asada cites Alexandre Kojeve's idea postulated in Introduction to the Reading of Hegel (1947). See Asada 14-15. I also owe my discussion on the two types of hyper-consumerism to Kojeve's discussion: "I was led to conclude from this that the 'American way of life' was the type of life specific to the post-historical period, the actual presence of the United States in the World prefiguring the 'eternal present' future of all humanity. Thus, Man's return to animality appeared no longer as a possibility that was yet to come, but as a certainty that was already present. . . . "Post-historical" Japanese civilization undertook ways diametrically opposed to the 'American way of life.' No doubt, there were no longer in Japan any Religion, Morals, or Politics in the 'European' or 'historical' sense of these words. But Snobbery in its pure form created disciplines negating the 'natural' or 'animal' given
which in effectiveness far surpassed those that arose, in Japan or elsewhere, from ‘historical’ Action. . . [I]n spite of persistent economic and political inequalities, all Japanese without exception are currently in a position to live according to totally formalized values—that is, values completely empty of all ‘human’ content in the ‘historical’ sense. . . [T]he recently begun interaction between Japan and the Western World will finally lead not to a rebarbarization of the Japanese but to a ‘Japanization’ of the Westerners. (Kojève 160–62)

9 See Asada 176.

10 For a similar view, see pp. 247–48 of Lee’s “Asian,” in which she points out “the author’s attempt to resolve the tension between her global and ethnic-specific interests, by making globalization a synonym not for Americanization but for the spread of Japanese culture” (247).

11 Julia Kristeva writes, “when I say that I have chosen cosmopolitanism, this means that I have, against origins and starting from them, chosen a transnational or international position situated at the crossing of boundaries” (16).

12 Seyhan also writes, “Once we accept the loss of stable communities and the inevitability of exile, then the interdependency of linguistic and cultural experiences both at the local and the global level becomes self-evident” (9).

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