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## **Guåhan (Guam), Literary Emergence, and the American Pacific in Homebase and from unincorporated territory**

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# Guåhan (Guam), Literary Emergence, and the American Pacific in *Homebase* and *from unincorporated territory*<sup>1</sup>

Hsuan L. Hsu \*

In 2004, the Association for Asian American Studies indefinitely tabled a ballot regarding a proposed name change to “the Association for Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies” (Kauanui 131). The proposal to “include” Pacific Islanders sparked a lively debate about what anthropologist J. Kehaulani Kauanui calls the “Pacific Question”—the danger that “under the mantle of the AAAS . . . Pacific Islanders and Pacific Islander studies will both be made more invisible than ever” (125). Kauanui opposes this conflation because of the two groups’ disparate histories of pan-ethnic racial formation, explaining that “Pacific Islanders have had to contend more with persistent primitivist discourses describing us, not orientalist ones” (130). While he shares some of Kauanui’s reservations, Vicente M. Diaz—director of the University of Michigan’s Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies program (and the scholar who originally proposed a discussion of a possible name change for AAAS in 2002)—points out “the entangled histories of Asians and Pacific Islanders and versions of America as played out in the islands” and expresses an “interest in comparative work between Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies [that] stems from a hope that their conjunction could very well help dislodge the spatial and discursive orientations that continue to restrict, in my view, current institutional arrangements of [both fields]” (199).

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While language, culture, discourses of racialization, and histories of colonization clearly distinguish the subject matter of Pacific Islander studies and Asian American studies, these fields are linked by their mutual imbrication in the history of US neocolonialism in East Asia. As Colleen Lye has argued, starting in the late nineteenth century, US “geostrategic necessity” led to the “install[ation] of the East as a Western proxy rather than antipode” (Lye 10). Thus, US support for a modernized Japan in the late nineteenth century and for China’s independence in the twentieth century “indicated the ongoing intimacy between Asiatic racial form and the contradictions of U.S. globalism . . .” Arif Dirlik has also conceptualized racialization in geographical terms, noting that the “Asian-American experience . . . shares certain common features with the experiences of Asian and Pacific peoples moving in alternative directions across the Pacific, for all these motions shared a common context in an Asian-Pacific regional formation, of which they were at once a product and an integrative ingredient” (Dirlik 285). Logistically, US economic and military endeavors across the Pacific Ocean—as well as the subsequent discursive production of the “Asian-Pacific” region through capitalist “Rimspeak”—have been supported by US bases on Pacific Islands such as American Samoa, Guam, the Marshall Islands, and Hawai’i.<sup>2</sup> These bases—along with similar installments on islands seized by European powers—have required the displacement and subjection of indigenous peoples. Thus, the history of Pacific Island colonization is inextricable from the history of US neocolonialism in Asia, and the differential racializations of “Asiatics” and “Pacific Islanders” within the US cultural imaginary emerge from the consolidation of US hegemony throughout the “Asia-Pacific” region.<sup>3</sup>

This essay responds to both Diaz’s and Kauanui’s calls for “scholars to engage areas of inquiry concerning Pacific Islanders on a *comparative basis* in relation to Asian Americans”<sup>4</sup> (Kauanui 125) by considering how two texts that thematize the emergence of a marginalized literary tradition—Shawn Wong’s *Homebase* (1979) and Craig Santos Perez’s multibook poem, *from unincorporated territory* (2008, 2010)—represent the island of Guam and, by extension, the spatial dynamics of the “American Pacific.”<sup>5</sup> After presenting an overview of Guam’s geographical role as a militarized “unincorporated territory” underpinning US military dominance across the Pacific Ocean, I will consider *Homebase*’s critical depiction of its protagonist’s blindness to the island’s history and indigenous inhabitants, as well as Perez’s poetic attempts to redress such erasures. By comparing these texts’ approaches to the problems of literary emergence, this essay

historicizes the tensions between Asian American and Pacific Islander racial identity and attends to how US-controlled capital circulation and military dominance across the Asia-Pacific region have disparately influenced the racialization, spatial access, and cultural production of both groups. Throughout, I focus on spatial themes and concepts such as Wong's lyrical descriptions of California's landscape and Perez's development of the ethnographic concept of *préterrain* ("fore-field") to emphasize how US military and economic influence across the Pacific has distributed resources, bodies, mobility, and rights differentially across space—as well as the formal strategies with which the writers I study critique and redress these geographic inequities.

### 1. Where is Guam?

In the preface to his first book, *from unincorporated territory [hacha]* (2008), the Chamorro poet Craig Santos Perez notes how rarely Guam appears in American literature:

The history of Guahån, often submerged in the American consciousness, emerges momentarily in Robert Duncan's "Uprising: Passages 25" (*Bending the Bow*, 1968). The poem begins:

Now Johnson would go up to join the great simulacra of men,  
Hitler and Stalin, to work his fame  
with planes roaring out *from* Guam over Asia . . . .  
(*[hacha]* 10)

This passage encapsulates several of the author's prominent concerns: Guahån's marginality to discourses of US nationalism and Western historiography, the necessity of engaging intertextually with inadequate Anglophone sources, and the question of how a disavowed "unincorporated territory" can *emerge* into a newly configured understanding of geopolitics and literary history. Perez's italicization of the word *from* in Duncan's poem links these quoted lines to the title of *from unincorporated territory*, as well as the titles of many of the poems included in that book (for example, "*from* TA(LA)YA," "*from* ACHIOTE," "*from* AERIAL ROOTS"). What it means to be from Guam, in Duncan's poem and in dominant accounts of the American Pacific, is to provide strategically positioned coaling stations, bases, testing grounds, and garbage dumps for US military power: it is bombers, rather than indigenous voices, that "[roar] out *from* Guam." Like many

other islands in Oceania, Guam has been seized as, and molded into, a “stepping stone” for imperial powers since it was first “claimed” by Spain in 1565 (Lyons 39). By providing an overview of Guam’s colonial history, this section will delineate the interrelated social and spatial factors that inform Wong’s and Perez’s writings about the island.

Explaining Guam’s pivotal situation in the Pacific Ocean, historian Robert F. Rogers writes: “on the great circle axis that crosses 5,000 miles of the Pacific between Hawai’i and the Philippines, Guam is not only the largest but also the only high island with a protected major harbor and sufficient land for several airports. Similarly, on the nearly 3,000-mile north-south axis from Japan to Papua New Guinea, Guam again is the largest and most useful landfall for communications, shipping, and military bases. In fact, Guam alone constitutes 20 percent of the entire dry land area of the 1,045 square miles of all the islands of Micronesia together” (Rogers 1–2). Having long been involved in larger networks of cultural and economic exchange throughout the Mariana Islands and the more than 10,000 Pacific islands of Oceania, Guam’s Chamorro inhabitants were heavily influenced by Catholic missionaries and Spanish-language education after Spain claimed the island in 1565. During the Spanish regime, Guam served as a station for galleons circulating between the Philippines and Panama while disease and the Spanish-Chamorro Wars (1672–1700) reduced the Chamorro population to several thousand—“about five percent of its former size” (Hanlon and White 163). The “reduction” of the indigenous population occurred in the realm of culture, as well: as Perez explains, “‘Reducción’ is the term the Spanish used to name their efforts of subduing, converting, and gathering natives through the establishment of missions and the stationing of soldiers to protect these missions” (*hacha* 11).

For four decades after Guam was ceded to the US in the 1898 Treaty of Paris, the US Navy governed the island as an “unincorporated territory.” Commenting on the Insular Cases (1902–1922) in which the Supreme Court determined the legal status of newly acquired territories, Amy Kaplan argues that “[t]he designation of territory as neither quite foreign nor domestic was inseparable from a view of its inhabitants as neither capable of self-government nor civilized enough for U.S. citizenship” (842). The category of unincorporated territory, she writes, “allowed for a two-tiered, uneven application of the Constitution” (841) in which “due process or the right to criminal and civil juries or full protection under the Fourteenth Amendment” (842) was withheld from unincorporated subjects even as they were treated as US citizens in matters such as discipline and taxation.

The Naval Administration's rule in Guam continued until World War II in spite of persistent indigenous petitions for Chamorro sovereignty or for "normal civil liberties and representative government for the people of Guam within the American federal system" (Rogers 125). According to the geographer R. D. K. Herman, the Navy's acquisition of land imposed both widespread losses of property and homes and the "massive rearrangement of the pre-war village patterns in the central and northern villages, where the majority of Chamorros resided"; furthermore, "threats, coercion, appeals to patriotism, and fears of reprisal from the all-powerful Naval government led many Guamanians to sell or lease land for less than fair compensation" (638).<sup>6</sup> Among the reconfigurations of space that, according to Herman, imposed a "U.S. spatial stamp on the island" were "[n]ew villages planned by the naval government post-war [and] laid out in grids with street names often commemorating the military" (640). Other toponyms include "schools named for Presidents Washington, Truman, Johnson and Kennedy" and the Glass Breakwater, "named after Henry Glass, who seized the island in 1898" (640).

In addition to this "[enormous] spatial reorganization of Guam" (638), the Navy imposed numerous disciplinary measures that targeted cultural and social practices, ranging from a ban on whistling to a prohibition on intermarriage between any white resident and "any person whole or part of Chamorro or Filipino extraction" (Rogers 144–45). In a program of compulsory cultural assimilation, naval authorities also reorganized Guam's public school system, "pattern[ing] the courses of study after the California system," prohibiting the Chamorro language on school grounds, and even ordering "Chamorro-English dictionaries collected and . . . burned" (147). When Japan occupied Guam during World War II, this process of cultural reeducation continued. Within a month of the invasion in December 1941, Japanese officials had established 15 elementary schools on the island; Japanese language instruction for older students as well as a training program for indigenous Temporary Assistant Teachers soon followed (Higuchi 22–23). "[B]esides language instruction, school ceremonies which centered on Japan's Emperor, the nation state, history, and war events were also given great importance" (24). Despite this policy of assimilation, however, Japanese authorities also imposed forced labor, surveillance, forced prostitution, abusive anti-espionage tactics, coerced marches, and concentration camps on a population that they still suspected of harboring US loyalties.

In the years following the US's reconquest of Guam in 1944, political tension—particularly around the inflow of US contractors and Filipino laborers—led to renewed conflicts between Guam's inhabitants and the naval government and, eventually, to the passing of the 1950 Organic Act that established a system of limited self-rule and conferred partial citizenship—without full Constitutional rights—upon all Guamanians (Rogers 217).<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the most nefarious aspect of the Organic Act was a quitclaim deed that Carlton Skinner (Guam's first civilian governor, appointed by President Truman) “was instructed to sign [on] the day before the Organic Act went into effect—whereby GovGuam transferred all condemned properties to the United States of America ‘for its own use.’ Truman issued Executive Order 10178 on 31 October 1950, returning all property in the quitclaim deed to the navy to be divided among the military services by need. These steps were taken without consulting Guamanian officials or owners of leased properties. . . . This left the navy and air force in direct control of about 49,600 acres, or over 36 percent of the island” (230).

Guam's landscape has been ravaged not just by war but by war-making as well. The island has played an important role in US military actions throughout the region: during the US–Philippine War (1899–1902), Philippine nationalist insurgents were detained on Guam; during the Korean War and Vietnam War, Guam served as a staging area for bombing raids, a storage facility for Agent Orange, and a place of refuge for South Vietnamese evacuees; Guam has also been used by the military for environmentally hazardous waste disposal, and the US Air Force conducts live-fire training on the nearby island, Farallon de Mendenilla. With the current plan to transfer Marines from Okinawa (where tens of thousands of protesters have frequently taken to the streets to oppose the social, environmental, and accident-related dangers associated with the Futenma base) to Guam, militarization will only intensify in coming years. Currently, the Defense Department projects that the new, controversial military build-up will bring 41,194 new residents to Guam by 2016—an immense increase considering that the 2000 census reported over 154,000 residents on the island (Kelman). The militarization of Guam's landscape, economy, and culture has made many Chamorros dependent on the military (by far the island's largest employer), and Chamorros rank first by both geographical region and ethnic group in rates of recruitment to the US military.

Today, Guam's economy is overwhelmingly dependent upon the tourist industry, military service, and service sector jobs associated with the military. Because the histories of US colonialism and military aggression in the Pacific contradict exceptionalist



narratives of the US as a nation defined by freedom and democracy, Guam's history of cultural attrition (through assimilative education programs), environmental despoliation, and militarization—like those of other US colonial possessions—are not widely known: ironically, the island's centrality to US geopolitical projects throughout the “Asian Pacific” has led to its liminal status as an “unincorporated territory” and to what Perez calls its “submerg[ence] in the American consciousness” ([*hacha*] 10).

Nevertheless, counterdiscourses have emerged from Guam and the Chamorro diaspora. The Chamorro language has been reintroduced to all public schools, and there has been a resurgence of public interest in traditional Chamorro practices—such as the construction and navigation of the outrigger canoe or *sakman*—which features in Perez's poems. Perez and other Guamanian activists have also participated in organizations such as The Chamoru Nation, WeAreGuahan (weareguahan.com), Famoksaiyan (famoksaiyan.blogspot.com), and Guam's delegation to the UN Special Political and Decolonization Committee, which advocate for decolonization, demilitarization, and indigenous rights. These struggles to enhance the cultural and political voice of Chamorros return us to questions raised by Robert Duncan's line, “with planes roaring out *from* Guam over Asia”: how and where can Guam and its colonial history emerge in the representational system of US literary production, and what effect might Guam's emergence into the cultural scene have upon the system as a whole? The remaining sections of this essay explore two formative literary works in which Guam emerges. Before turning to the first books of poetry published in English by a Chamorro, I will consider how *Homebase*—a novel preoccupied with the problem of Chinese American (and, by extension, Asian American) literary emergence—thematizes the differential relation between Chinese American visibility and the social invisibility of Guam's colonial situation. By showing how its narrator's memory distorts Guam into an idyllic Pacific “stepping stone,” Wong's novel at once enacts and critiques the protocols of the ethnic bildungsroman—a prominent genre of 1970s ethnic fiction that tended to align the maturation processes of individuals and ethnic group formations.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Chinese American Exceptionalism in *Homebase*

When he singles out Robert Duncan's passing mention of Guam, Perez passes over the more extended treatment of the island in a foundational Asian American text. *Homebase* (1979)—which Shawn Wong began writing as a Master's thesis in the same year



that he co-edited the groundbreaking anthology *Aiiieeee!* (1974), and which critic Elaine Kim calls “a triumphant reaffirmation of the Chinese American heritage” (194)—opens with its narrator’s nostalgic memories of growing up with his father on the island of Guam. *Homebase*’s plot—in which the melancholic protagonist and narrator, Rainsford Chan, compulsively drives around California and the western US searching for traces of his Chinese American ancestors—allegorizes an impasse analogous to Perez’s problem of cultural and political emergence. Just as Rainsford’s compulsive driving results from his being named after a town that “doesn’t exist anymore” (3), Perez’s point of departure is the observation that “On some maps, Guam doesn’t exist; I point to an empty space in the Pacific and say, ‘I’m from here.’ On some maps, Guam is a small, unnamed Island; I say, ‘I’m from this unnamed place’” (*hacha* 7). But if Rainsford and Perez begin with similar problems of cultural identity, this essay will show how they resolve those problems in strikingly disparate ways: whereas Wong provides a poignant account of the dynamics of spatial exclusion and the difficult process of laying claim to already existing national landscapes, Perez explores how material and cultural inequities are produced and maintained through the distribution of bodies, objects, and risks across a range of differentiated spaces. In the following reading of *Homebase*, I argue that its narrator’s exceptionalist desire to find and lay claim to Chinese American remains in US landscapes is belied by the formative—yet understated—time that he and his parents spent on Guam, where his father worked on an Air Force base.

Rainsford Chan’s compulsion to drive throughout California and the west can be traced to two originary moments of displacement, which together demonstrate how *Homebase* triangulates Asian American identity, US landscapes, and the colonized islands of Guam and Hawai’i. First, there is his great-grandfather’s town, Rainsford, California: the town he is named after, which vanished from the historical record after early Chinese migrants to the US “were driven out of the west and chased back to San Francisco” (2). The historical “driving out” of Chinese from over 100 western settlements—thoroughly documented by Jean Pfaelzer in *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans* (2007)—informs Rainsford’s compulsion to “drive” among those landscapes in search of his historical and ancestral roots.

The links between Rainsford’s psychological state and the novel’s second instance of displacement are more circuitous, but just as crucial to the novel’s mapping of his quest for a Chinese American identity: “The year before [my father’s] death we moved from Berkeley to Guam. . . . I was six and until we had moved to

Guam I remembered only a few isolated events out of my childhood in Berkeley, where my parents were students” (2). The distinction between Rainsford’s childhood and Shawn Wong’s is worth emphasizing here: the fact that Wong did not move to Guam as a child indicates a considerable critical distance between the author and Rainsford’s blindness to US imperialism. Although his family’s move appears to mark a break from the contiguous US, leaving the mainland paradoxically consolidates Rainsford’s affiliation with the nation: “I knew America by living away from it. I caught glimpses of it from Guam, that tropical, white, sandy piece of America. I lived it every day, every minute of the day. I saw what other boys in America saw, and I saw things they only imagined. The bombers, the fighters, the aircraft carriers, the submarines, and every time a ship or the air base had an open house my father took me” (68). Despite its geographic and social distance, Guam has been legally and materially shaped into an unincorporated “piece of America.” Moreover, as the naval vessels and bombers indicate, in the years between the US invasions of Korea and Vietnam, Guam was a crucial strategic site for waging the Cold War. Thus, the militarization of Guam and other Pacific islands represents an important (and often overlooked) counterpoint to scholarly work linking Asian American cultural production to the geopolitics of the Cold War.<sup>9</sup> Guam’s contiguity with US interests, its centrality to US militarism, and the idyllic imagery that informed popular representations of the island made it an ideal place for Rainsford’s interpellation into US exceptionalist myth: “In 1956 my father taught me to sing ‘Home on the Range’ on that island in the Pacific Ocean. Standing there in the heat of an ocean lagoon, I sang out for my father about our home on the range and my friends the buffalo and antelope” (3). If *Homebase* thematizes gaps in the historical record and collective memory of Chinese in the US West, Guam represents for Rainsford a more secure location where memory and family bonds pose no problems: “On Guam, my world was a boy’s paradise and I remember all of it and its memory is constant” (3). The militaristic overtones of Rainsford’s quest for a “homebase” are evident when he fondly recalls playing “General of the Beach” with his father at Tumon Beach and when he waxes nostalgic for “our house at Orote, Guam” (62). This family home would have been located in or near the US naval base at Orote (a base that produced a massive landfill, in use from 1944 to 1969, which has continued threatening the safety of local fisheries as of 2010).<sup>10</sup> Ironically, the very phrases that name Rainsford’s desire—“homebase” and “home on the range”—become dissonant in the context of an island where “homes” are contiguous with military bases and

firing ranges. Like other zones of imperial violence, Guam's militarized landscape offered to Asian Americans and other minority subjects an opportunity to fall into line with the nationalist imaginary from which they had been historically marginalized by colluding with US military dominance. For a short time in Rainsford's childhood, his family's move to Guam covers over the prior displacement of the Chinese from California's history and landscape. Although the originary, vanished town of Rainsford, California, "no longer exists," Rainsford's family and those of other displaced Asian Americans may claim a "homebase" by supporting overseas bases like Orote.

However, the sense of belonging that Rainsford and his father feel on Guam does not last. While Rainsford provides little detail about his father's death, it transpires while the family is based on Guam: "When we returned to Berkeley in 1957, Father was dead. And I remembered everything" (2). As I argue below, Rainsford's capacity to remember (sometimes by painstakingly reimagining) "everything" about his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather's past in California comes at the cost of overlooking a range of historical displacements and imperial incursions. After returning to the mainland US, Rainsford is troubled by dreams and visions reminding him of the lost history of the Chinese in America. He drives at night to ward off these dreams, to escape from everyday commitments, and most of all to seek out the town for which he is named and the rooted sense of Chinese American collective memory that he associates with it.<sup>11</sup> A comparison with Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957)—which was written during the years when Rainsford's family lived on Guam—suggests that Rainsford's driving is a pathological counterpart to the purportedly liberatory forms of mobility commonly associated with road narratives. In their carefree road trips, Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty freely identify with Chicano migrant farmers, jazz musicians, and "negro" cotton-pickers, "or even a poor overworked Jap" before turning to Mexico "where we would finally learn ourselves among the Fellahin Indians of the world" (Kerouac 280). Whereas Dean's name may invoke the town of Moriarty, located just off Route 66 in New Mexico, Rainsford, California, has been wiped off the map. In *Homebase*, driving is solitary, deracinated, and melancholic. Until the last pages of the novel, Rainsford is unable to find any people or landscapes with which to identify: "I move across America picking up ghosts" (28).

As a narrator, Rainsford deploys the technique of collage to recuperate the ghosts of the past. He assembles family documents ranging from an early and clumsily-worded story by his father to one of his own essays for English class, titled "Heritage Is a

Lonely Place.” The novel incorporates documents of the broader community of American Chinese as well, ranging from an early *English–Chinese Phrase Book* to a line of poetry etched into the walls of the Angel Island barracks. Deprived of a “homebase” on US soil, Rainsford assembles the history of his people by collaging documents and cataloguing the names of places reshaped or previously inhabited by Chinese laborers. The novel concludes by synthesizing these traces into a general identification with western landscapes: “We are buried in every town: Cascade, Tamarack, Cisco, Emigrant Gap, Blue Canyon, China Ranch, Shady Run, Dutch Flat, and Gold Run[;]” “[m]y father is in every canyon I’ve journeyed into in the West” (96, 97). Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong has observed that, in these final scenes, “Each place where Chinese men once lived, toiled, and vanished is redeemed by remembrance, put back on the map: the map of Chinese America” (*Reading* 145). However, *Homebase* also exposes the erasures and gaps that underwrite the “map of Chinese America” that is so crucial to the maturation of Rainsford’s ethnic identity and voice. For, as Lisa Lowe observes, “Even those [US minority] novels that can be said to conform more closely to the formal criteria of the bildungsroman express a contradiction between the demand for a univocal developmental narrative and the historical specificities of racialization, ghettoization, violence, and labor exploitation” (*Immigrant Acts* 100).

*Homebase* concludes with Rainsford’s transition from the compulsion of driving to restorative practices of remembrance and writing. Visiting one of the canyons in which he now imagines his father resides, Rainsford writes: “We are old enough to haunt this land like an Indian who laid down to rest and his body became the outline of the horizon. This is my father’s canyon. See his head reclining! That peak is his nose, that cliff his chin, and his folded arms are summits” (98). This resolution to his search for identity is catalyzed by an earlier encounter on Alcatraz island, where Rainsford met an old man from Acoma Pueblo who claims to be descended from a Chinese grandfather. This prophetic figure—in whose body Native American and Chinese ancestry are mixed—advises Rainsford “to find your own land, you know, where your people have been. Like Angel Island, like Rainsford, California” (86). Ironically, however, this man’s Native American origins—as well as his involvement with the 1969–1971 Native American occupation of Alcatraz Island—are eventually effaced by Rainsford’s epiphanic vision in which the Chinese “haunt this land like an Indian who laid down to rest and his body became the outline of the horizon” (98). The history of Native American genocide and removal is here euphemized as “[laying] down to rest”

and aestheticized as “bec[oming] the outline of the horizon.” Moreover, the indigenous body in the landscape is literally substituted with that of Rainsford’s father in this passage: the phrase “This is my father’s canyon”—which only appears the second time these sentences are presented in the novel—quietly replaces the vanished Indian body with that of the Chinese patriarch. Rainsford thus resolves the problem of Chinese American displacement by projecting it onto Native Americans, claiming the land in a way that reinscribes the myth of the vanishing Indian. A little-known section of the lyrics to “Home on the Range”—the song that Rainsford frequently recalls singing with his father in Guam—reminds us that Wong’s protagonist grew up singing a song about the erasure of indigenous inhabitants:

The red man was pressed from this part of the West,  
He’s unlikely to ever return  
To the banks of Red River where seldom if ever  
Their flickering campfires burn.<sup>12</sup> (qtd. in Wells 128)

If Rainsford’s problem has to do with what he calls the “violence in forgetting” (18), the novel resolves this through recuperations of memory that, ironically, reinscribe violence and forgetting. The aestheticization of physical and structural violence targeting Native Americans is just one instance of this process whereby Rainsford claims the American landscape by eliding other groups.<sup>13</sup> The indigenous inhabitants of Guam—whose militarized and polluted landscape Rainsford remembers as a “boy’s paradise” filled with “real aircraft carriers, destroyers, submarines, bombers, sunken ships, and palm-lined white sandy beaches”—are never mentioned in Rainsford’s account of the time his family spent on the island while his father worked as an engineer on US bases. Citizens of both Korea and Vietnam are also written out of Rainsford’s account: the family’s move “from Berkeley to Guam” signals a move from the site of anticolonial protest (and minority movements in solidarity with colonized Third World groups) to a militarized island possession. Much more cognizant of the US re-conquest of Guam in 1944 than of the island’s role as a support base in the Korean War, Rainsford recalls that “In 1956, World War II was still on for me” as he found bullet casings and imagined “Jap soldiers” hidden away on the island (3). Begun around 1974 and published in 1979 (as thousands of South Vietnamese were arriving in the US, many by way of a refugee camp set up at Guam’s Anderson Air Force Base), *Homebase* is also strikingly silent about the recently ended conflict in Vietnam—in which Guam also played important roles as both a primary staging and

resupply area and a source of recruits.<sup>14</sup> I am not suggesting that Wong turned against the anticolonial energies that helped mobilize minority student movements at UC Berkeley (where Wong went to college and where Rainsford Chan spent his teenage years in the late 1960s); rather, following Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong's insight that "Shawn Wong seems quite aware that [the novel's ending] is inherently problematic" (*Reading* 145), I argue that *Homebase* poignantly and critically dramatizes how the young Rainsford turns from the trauma of being written out of history to the limited strategy of writing himself into an exceptionalist history of the US frontier.

In effect, at the end of *Homebase*, Rainsford learns to become a subject rather than an object of "violence in forgetting." By forgetting his complicities—such as his father's job as a military engineer in Guam, his silence about colonized Chamorros, his smug misogyny (he refers to his 15-year-old wife as "The Body"), his elision of the differences between Chinese migrant workers and dispossessed Native Americans, and even his elision of differences between recent middle-class Chinese immigrants (such as his engineer father) and earlier generations of laborers—Rainsford is able to lay claim to the US West as his "Home on the Range." Ironically, in a period of massive shifts in "Asian American" demographics following the Vietnam War and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which opened doors to new immigrant groups, Rainsford makes an exceptionalist claim to Chinese American belonging based on Chinese workers' long history of involvement with the US landscape: "We are old enough to haunt this land" (98).<sup>15</sup> Desperate to resolve his traumatic sense of homelessness in the US, Rainsford arrives at a doctrine of Chinese American exceptionalism that disavows the complex and divergent connections between Chinese Americans and other Asian American and indigenous groups. But if Rainsford develops a restrictive, complicit, and (as he repeatedly describes himself) "violent" sense of self, Wong's novel is a foundational work of Asian American fiction insofar as it evokes the differently racialized and spatialized hauntings that are written out of his Chinese American exceptionalism. *Homebase's* contribution lies in the tension between Rainsford's manic identification with the mythologized American landscape and his formative, dehistoricized experience of Guam. This foundational novel's critical distance from Rainsford's perspective anticipates Lowe's observation that "'becoming a national citizen' cannot be the exclusive narrative of emancipation for the Asian American subject. Rather, the current social formation entails a subject less narrated by the modern discourse of citizenship and more narrated by the histories of war in



Asia, immigration, and the dynamics of the current global economy” (*Immigrant Acts* 33). Turning from Wong’s novel to Craig Santos Perez’s poetic writings on the history of Guam and its diaspora, the following section will attend to the connections between circumpacific Asian migrations and the militarized sites that support US imperial and neoimperial projects abroad.

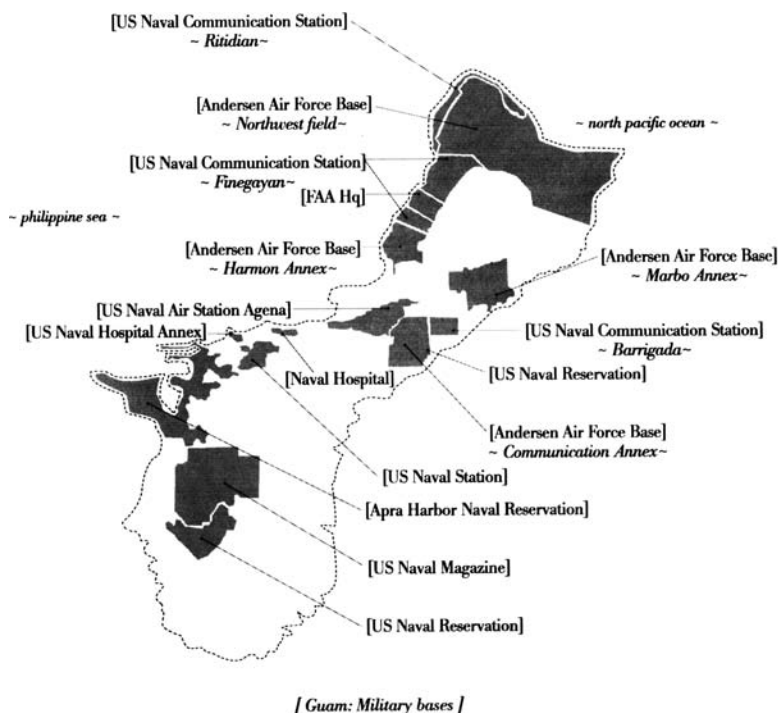
### 3. Shifting *Préterrain*

Perez has published numerous chapbooks and two books of poetry since receiving an MFA in creative writing from the University of San Francisco in 2006. Currently a PhD candidate in Comparative Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley and an assistant professor of English at the University of Hawai’i, he incorporates interdisciplinary research—including concepts from philosophy, literary theory, anthropology, and history—into his poetry books. Perez describes *from unincorporated territory* as a “multi-book project” influenced by his “study of the ‘long poem’: Pound’s *Cantos*, Williams’ *Paterson*, H.D.’s *Trilogy*, Zukovsky’s ‘A,’ and Olson’s *Maximus*.”<sup>16</sup> In addition to canonical Western texts, Perez’s epigraphs also invoke Asian American, African American, and postcolonial poets including Oswald de Andrade, Claude McKay, Aimé Césaire, Robert Sullivan, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, and Myung Mi Kim.<sup>17</sup> The poems in *from unincorporated territory [hacha]* and *from unincorporated territory [saina]* (which received the PEN Center’s Poetry Society of America Award in 2011) are at once fragmentary and expansive. Perez begins each poem’s title with the preposition “*from*,” indicating both the fragmentary status of individual pieces and ongoing processes of emergence and departure. Yet this collage technique also leaves each long poem unbounded: outtakes from any given long poem are distributed through one or both of Perez’s books, emerging, vanishing, and flowing alongside bits of other poems.<sup>18</sup> The preposition “*from*” thematizes the necessary, interminable activity of gathering fragments, even as Perez’s insertion of Chamorro titles and terms in brackets indicates the foreignness—to the diasporic poet—of these interpolated words. Perez’s poem fragments incorporate eclectic discourses including world poetry, travel magazines, maps, oral testimonies, and personal anecdotes drawing on Perez’s own experience as a Chamorro who moved to California in 1995. Rather than attempt to touch on all the discourses addressed by Perez’s books, I focus primarily on how *[saina]* engages with the intersecting themes of geography, language, and Chamorro culture.



In both form and context, Perez's poetry shares key points of departure with *Homebase*. Like Wong, he is concerned with the erasure of ethnic history and collective memory, with the enabling and uprooting effects of mobility, and with written expression and collage as techniques for voicing political claims. We have seen, however, that *Homebase* depicts (and critiques) a limited, exceptionalist resolution in which Rainsford finds his personal and cultural nationalist footing by forgetting the US's imperial entanglements. Such amnesia about military and structural violence is unavailable to Perez, who writes of an island where homes have been crowded, displaced, polluted, and devalued by US naval bases (see Figure 1).<sup>19</sup> To combat the forgetting of US empire, Perez both criticizes attempts to aestheticize Guam and develops a poetics attuned to questions of distributive justice and the configuration of what he calls *préterrain*.

The term *préterrain* was coined by French anthropologist Georges Condominas and popularized by James Clifford, who



- from UNINCORPORATED TERRITORY - [ 85 ]

Fig. 1. Sumet (Ben) Viwatmanitsakul [Guam: Military bases] ([hacha] 85). Used with permission from the author.

deploys it to draw attention to the processes and inequalities that produce the “field” which ethnographers often take for granted:

Localizations of the anthropologist’s objects of study in terms of a “field” tend to marginalize or erase several blurred boundary areas, historical realities that slip out of the ethnographic frame. Here is a partial list. (1) The means of transport is largely erased—the boat, the land rover, the mission airplane. These technologies suggest systematic prior and ongoing contacts and commerce with exterior places and forces which are not part of the field/object. . . . (2) The capital city, the national context, is erased. This is what Georges Condominas has called the *préterrain*, all those places you have to go through and be in relation with just to get to your village or to that place of work you will call your field. (3) Also erased: the university home of the researcher. . . . (4) The sites and relations of *translation* are minimized. (Clifford 22–23)

To transpose this into literary terms, Rainsford Chan in *Homebase* is only able to recall Guam as a “boy’s paradise” to the extent that he overlooks the geopolitical and commercial inequities that have positioned Guam as a site of advanced bases from which the US projects military, commercial, and ideological influence across the Pacific. Differential access to transportation, national sovereignty, cultural capital, language, and increasingly to the environment itself inform the everyday lives of Guam’s inhabitants, both Chamorro and nonindigenous. Perez appropriates the term *préterrain* because it helps make visible the uneven distribution of wealth, power, and vulnerability across space.

The history of Guam outlined above is shot through with racist and inequitable configurations of the *préterrain*: for example, the decimation of indigenous language makes Chamorro–English translation a necessarily hierarchical affair, and the building of naval bases and airstrips has enhanced the mobility of wealthy, cosmopolitan travelers at the cost of Chamorro land rights and life chances.<sup>20</sup> Perez’s poetry thus addresses specifically geographical problems: how to reinsert Guahån into the map and voice its history and struggles using the colonizer’s language and poetic tradition; how to reconnect the land still inhabited by Chamorros to the rest of the island’s hidden dumps, military bases, resort hotels, and underwater environs; how to speak for Guam’s self-determination and decolonization from his own diasporic position as a Chamorro migrant to the US; and how to reconnect Guahån to the larger culture and history of Oceania which has

been decimated and submerged through centuries of colonization? Perez's poems respond to these problems with new configurations of space that emphasize oceanic as well as terrestrial space: "I imagine the blank page as an excerpted ocean filled with vast currents, islands of voices, and profound depths. I imagine the poem forming as a map of this excerpted ocean, tracing the topographies of story, memory, genealogy, and culture. So creating the visual vocabulary of my work is a process of both drafting these word maps and navigating their currents."<sup>21</sup> By weaving personal memories, family narratives, and discourses of political resistance into his collage of Chamorro, imperialist, and tourist discourses, Perez presents an alternate *préterrain* that foregrounds indigenous and hybrid modes of perception and practice. To borrow a concept from Jacques Rancière, Perez's poetics intervenes in the "distribution of the sensible" by making visible *and* reshaping the differential distribution of positions, "spaces, times, and forms of activity" that determine (and often racialize) the limits of social visibility (12). By presenting ironic and unsettling juxtapositions of dominant and subaltern discourses, Perez's poetic collages at once challenge the existing distribution of the sensible and enact the difficult process of reconstructing damaged cultural and geographic resources.

Two poems from [*saina*] exhibit the existing configuration of *préterrain* in (and between) Guam, Asia, and the US (Perez 63). The series of poem fragments titled "*from tidelands*" incorporates the entire transcript of Perez's October 2008 testimony before the UN Special Political and Decolonization Committee. However, Perez places his testimony under erasure, using strikethrough font to indicate Guam's shadowy status as an "unincorporated territory" with no voting rights in Congress and no national standing of its own before the United Nations: "~~the u.s. military occupies a third of the island, and the impending build up has interrupted the return of federal excess lands to original land owners and threatens to claim more lands for live fire training. not only has the u.s. continued to deprive us of our right to land, but they also pollute these lands. eighty contaminated military dumpsites still exist on guam~~" (67). Likewise, the series "*from all with ocean views*" uses the technique of collage to juxtapose "language from various travel magazines" with "a re-mix of language from articles accessed on www.kuam.com, the online site of a guam news network" (131). The result, in these poems, is a discursive dissonance that exposes the pastoral rhetoric of travel magazines as an ideological screen masking Guam's exploitation by the US military and (primarily) East Asian tourists. For example, the Guam Visitors Bureau slogan, "I am Guam"—as well as phrases



navigate between names for Chamorro, Spanish, Japanese, and English languages in order to express the colonial history of linguistic erasure. For example, the Chamorro “ankla” in the first poem is replaced, in the second, with the three terms “remember / ni kaite oku / recordar” (17); other terms—“hasso”/“anchor,” “fanhale”/“return,” and “na’lo”/“root”—open Perez’s second book with the problem of return and reanchoring following a period of linguistic uprootedness (38). Like Perez’s first book (*from unincorporated territory [hacha]*), *from unincorporated territory [saina]* is filled with Chamorro words and phrases, as well as self-conscious acts of translation. For example, the book includes a vignette in which Perez’s grandmother, upon reading his first book, “asked what does ‘hacha’ mean?—i said hacha means ‘one’—she looked surprised, asked in what language?—in chamorro, i said—she replied: i speak chamorro all my life and i never heard that word, one is uno in chamorro . . .” (59). In addition to addressing material configurations of space and environment (dislocation, military bases, dumpsites), then, Perez also engages with linguistic aspects of translation in the *préterrain*. His poems highlight the problem of how the Chamorro language—of which the poet himself has limited knowledge (“i say ‘saina’ and i know . . . i am not between two languages—one language controls me and the other is a lost ocean . . .”) might be reinvested with significance after centuries of colonization have uprooted and invaded it to such an extent that the very word for “one” cannot be fixed (111).<sup>22</sup>

Through formal experimentation in the realm of language and culture, Perez attempts to resolve the inequitable transpacific *préterrain* in which Guam is pivotally situated. In a prose interlude about his sources, Perez connects the concept of *préterrain* to Charles Olson’s theorization of “projective verse” and “FIELD COMPOSITION,” then distinguishes himself from Olson by drawing on the Tongan writer and anthropologist Epeli Hau’ofa’s groundbreaking essay, “Our Sea of Islands” (1994). Perez suggests that the idea of an open “field” cannot adequately convey Guam’s complex position within both capitalism’s pattern of uneven geographical development and the fluid “oceanic *préterrain*” of the Pacific (*[s]* 63). As Hau’ofa writes: “The idea that the countries of Polynesia and Micronesia are too small, too poor, and too isolated to develop any meaningful degree of autonomy is an economic and geographic deterministic view of a very narrow kind that overlooks culture history and the contemporary process of what may be called world enlargement that is carried out by tens of thousands of ordinary Pacific Islanders right across the ocean” (30). In fact, Hau’ofa argues, Oceania was “a large world in which peoples and cultures moved and mingled, unhindered by boundaries of the

kind erected much later by imperial powers” (33). Perez describes this argument as Hau’ofa’s “articulat[ion] of an oceanic préterrain” that “draws our attention to an oceania, préoceania, and transoceania surrounding islands, below the waves, and in the sky—a deeper geography and mythology . . .” (*[s]* 63). By investing Chamorro language and culture with meaning without fetishizing it as an “authentic” object of nostalgia, Perez provides readers with belatedly reconstituted points of entry to the “deeper geography and mythology” of Oceania.

*[saina]* also responds to the uneven regimes of mobility, housing, and environmental well-being imposed upon Guam with the image of “the sakman—an outrigger canoe—once numerous in the waters of the mariana islands . . .” (14). The book’s opening pages explain that “spanish colonists began destroying the sakman and forbade chamorros to sail the ocean”; thus, “by the mid 19th century the knowledge of how to build and sail them was lost” (14). However, the organization Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI) reconstructed a sakman on the basis of surviving drawings and, using the “art of traditional pacific island navigation [which] includes the geographic knowledge of the locations and inter-relationships of islands [and] the physics of wind and wave processes,” sailed the sakman to an island in the Northern Marianas in May 2009. Perez’s account not only highlights Oceanian practices of navigation that were attuned to environmental features such as currents, wind, and island positions, but it also responds to Hau’ofa’s declaration that “We [Oceanians] are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed places” (39). While the title of *from unincorporated territory [saina]* alludes to the US’s official legal designation of Guam, the book’s subtitle refers to the name given to the replicated sakman: “saina” (“parents elders spirits ancestors”) (15). The recently built sakman—echoed by the small-scale model sakman that Perez’s father brought on their flight from Guam to San Francisco—does not signify a return to authenticity so much as a strategically necessary attempt to reinvent the Pacific cultures, practices, and spaces that have been fragmented and eroded by colonial regimes: “sometimes the only weapon is / the shape of the sakman *as it once was*” (129).

Rather than strive to recover an authentic past through ancestral roots, Perez takes inspiration from the banyan tree’s “aerial roots,” which do not converge in one trunk so much as they multiply, spread, and “fuse together to form accessory trunks / —in

time / these trunks become indistinguishable from the main trunk—” (41). The poem “*from aerial roots*” juxtaposes the building and launching of the sakman with Perez’s own memory of canoe paddling as a student at Chief Gadao Academy. The sakman’s sea voyage entails not only an inventive recovery of Chamorro and Oceanian culture, but also the emergence of a language adequate to the “aerial roots” of Guam’s inhabitants and diaspora:

[**tilipas**: when water grips the end of my throat  
 hu sangan “saina”  
 so far away  
 say *we can cross*  
*any body*  
*of water if we believe in*  
*our own breath—* (48)

Whereas *Homebase* resolves the problem of historical erasure by aligning an idealized Chinese body with the national landscape (“That peak is his nose, that cliff his chin, and his folded arms are summits”), “*from aerial roots*” disperses the fragmented Chamorro body across oceanic space: words like “[**tilipas**” (“intestines”), “[**attadok**” (“eye”), and “[**lassas**” (“skin”)—always preceded by an open bracket that indicates the openness of what has been erased—are distributed throughout the poem series in order to align the sea voyage with the Chamorro naming of the human anatomy. The embodied national landscape presented in *Homebase* has its counterpart in Perez’s invocation of a fluid and amorphous body that is “sixty percent water[,]” blood that is “nearly eighty percent water” and “lungs nearly ninety percent water”—a body that approximates the geography of “oceania . . . five parts land to a thousand parts water” (129–30). Echoing the conclusion of “The Waste Land,” “*from aerial roots*” concludes with the mantra *hanom hanom hanom* (“water water water”). Perez interweaves breath, body, and water into poems that traverse and interconnect the militarized and commodified spaces of Oceania.

[*saina*]’s formal deployments of fragmentary, dispersed, and unpredictably recombinant aerial roots open up further connections to locations outside Oceania. Key moments in the poems are set in California and New York, and the speaker of the poems is located near his grandmother’s home in Fremont, California. The poems also draw significant connections across scales, between the poet, his family, the Chamorro nation, Oceania, and other oppressed populations. Perez’s experiments with collage, “re-mix,” multilingualism, and environmental representation (whether this takes the



form of describing flora and fauna, mimicking the banyan tree's root system, or documenting the environmental racism endemic to Guam) point toward potential affiliations based on common forms of exploitation such as the environmental justice, indigenous sovereignty, and antinuclear movements, opposition to hypermilitarization (Guam's bases provided a logistical link to the US base in Diego Garcia during the Gulf War and the Iraq War), anti-imperialism, and antiracism. The achiote plant—described in “*from achiote*”—is a good example of these productive connections and flows enabled by historical empires: indigenous to the Americas, the plant has been transported throughout the Western hemisphere and across the Pacific, where it has been incorporated into local social and ecological fabrics.<sup>23</sup> The title of Perez's books, *from unincorporated territory*, suggests potential coalitions between Guam and other “unincorporated territories” of the US, such as Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and “American” Samoa. The aerial roots sent forth by Perez's poems link the struggles of Chamorros and other Pacific Islanders with multiple political movements, geographic identifications, and literary traditions. Avoiding exceptionalist tendencies to claim a fixed US *or* Chamorro identity, Perez develops a poetics of emergence that is at once rooted in Chamorro needs and practices and nomadic in its capacity to affiliate with—and transform—existing movements. “One hope for my poetry,” he explains, “is to enact an emerging map of ‘Guam’—both as a place and as a signifier—into what Albert Wendt calls ‘new maps, new fusions and interweavings.’”<sup>24</sup> Given the small size of the Chamorro population both on Guam (where Chamorros now comprise less than 40% of residents) and in the US, this coalitional poetics may be a strategic attempt to present a multiplicity of entry points into political issues of demilitarization, decolonization, and Chamorro self-rule. The flexibility of Perez's affiliations makes for both particularist and global connections: to the extent that US unincorporated territories have supported twentieth-century neoimperialism, uneven geographic development, and Cold War culture, we are all “from” unincorporated territory.

To return to the questions with which this essay began, an affiliation between Asian American and Pacific Islander studies should not simply incorporate or “add” Pacific Islanders to existing frameworks—even to the internally fractured and increasingly “transnational” frameworks of Asian American studies. Instead, the example of Guam raises questions about the ways we imagine the mobility of Asian diasporic migrants and culture. To be sure, Asian American writers since the 1970s have turned from the cultural nationalism explored in *Homebase* to more diasporic frameworks, “conceiv[ing] of the making and practice of Asian-

American culture as nomadic, unsettled, taking place in the travel between cultural sites and in the multivocality of heterogeneous and conflicting positions” (Lowe “Heterogeneity” 39). However, even transnational scholarship in Asian American studies often focuses on bodies and texts shuttling between East Asian countries and the US, without giving much thought to the role played by Pacific Island ports and bases in the formation and maintenance of the “Asia-Pacific” region—or to how the Pacific networks in which Asian Americans play an integral role (according to Arif Dirlik) required that Chamorros and other Oceanians be racialized as “primitive” and deprived of land, environmental well-being, political self-determination, and support for cultural and linguistic transmission. If their role as supposed “shock troops in the trade war with Asia . . . is the material basis for certain phenomena that appear, at a casual glance, to be simply an unalloyed enhancement or enlargement of the cultural life of Asian Americans” (Wong “Denationalization” 135), the apparent shrinkage of Chamorro cultural life can likewise be attributed to the expansion of US military and economic influence in Asia. Shawn Wong registers these divergent cultural formations of the “Asia-Pacific,” posing Guam’s relation to the cultural location of an emergent “Asian America” as an originary yet problematically forgotten loose end in his protagonist’s process of ethnic bildung. Craig Santos Perez’s fragmentary epic attempts to counteract the submergence of Chamorro culture and Guam’s history by giving voice to spatial relations that connect the island’s struggles to a range of cultural and political formations. In doing so, he offers a model of literary “emergence” that does not emphasize the formation of an ethnic identity or cultural and economic “flows” between locations assumed to be stable so much as it represents the “Asia-Pacific” and the larger world system as an open field in which bodies, environmental risks, military power, and mobility are unevenly distributed. If Western (and, in particular, US) interventions in the Pacific Ocean have unevenly positioned and racialized different groups while eroding the cultural webs that interconnect Oceania’s islands, these interventions have also created conditions for multiple, emergent lines of affiliation materially grounded in the “aerial roots” of the global economy.

*[E]ven transnational scholarship in Asian American studies often focuses on bodies and texts shuttling between East Asian countries and the US, without giving much thought to the role played by Pacific Island ports and bases in the formation and maintenance of the “Asia-Pacific” region.*

## Notes

1. While I wish to acknowledge that the indigenous name of the island is “Guåhan” and to note that Governor Felix Camacho recently proposed to adapt this as its official name, I will employ the more familiar name, “Guam,” throughout this article because it focuses on the island’s colonial history as an

“unincorporated territory” of the United States. I’m grateful to Mark Jerng, Joseph Jeon, Catherine Fung, Edlie Wong, Kristian Jensen, Cara Shipe, and audience members at Texas Tech University’s 2010 Comparative Literature Symposium for feedback on earlier drafts of this essay.

2. On Pacific Rim Discourse as “a new spatial mythology for U.S. international capital” in the late-Cold War period, see Connery and Wilson, 40.

3. Influential discussions of the Asia-Pacific or the trans-Pacific as a regional formation include *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production* (1995), eds. Arif Dirlik and Rob Wilson; *What Is a Rim?* (1998), ed. Arif Dirlik; Rob Wilson, *Reimagining the American Pacific* (2000); and Gary Okihiro, “Toward a Pacific Civilization,” *Japanese Journal of American Studies* 18 (2007): 73–85.

4. See Diaz 199n1.

5. For an extended analysis of the “American Pacific,” see Wilson.

6. Following World War II, the Navy appropriated or leased 47,355 acres of land in addition to the 28,345 already controlled by the federal government. According to Anne-Perez Hattori, “By 1947, a total of 1350 families had lost their land and homes due to military policy” (qtd. in Herman 638). On President Truman and the Navy’s use of “extraordinary” authority to retain naval control of lands “without consulting Guamanian officials or owners of leased property” and in spite of the 1950 Organic Act’s stipulation that they be transferred to the civil government, see Rogers 230.

7. For a detailed discussion of the political changes precipitated and curtailed by the Organic Act, see Rogers 224–44.

8. On Asian American authors’ attempts to resist or reshape the protocols of the bildungsroman, see Lowe, *Immigrant Acts* (1996); Shelley Sunn Wong, “Unnaming the Same: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *DICTEE*,” *Feminist Measures: Soundings in Poetry and Theory* (1994), eds. Lynn Keller and Cristanne Miller, 43–68; and Patricia Chu, *Assimilating Asians: Gendered Strategies of Authorship in Asian America* (2000).

9. Jodi Kim, for example, argues that Asian American critique offers an “unsettling hermeneutic” that reframes “the mutually constituted gendered racial optics and imperial logics of the Cold War in Asia as a particularly entangled and enduring episode in the history and culture of U.S. empire” (5). See *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War* (2010).

10. The Navy’s studies since 2001 have confirmed that seafood samples from the Orote area contained traces of PCBs, dioxin, and chlorinated pesticides at levels deemed unsafe for the public. See Heather Hauswirth, “Open House Held for Orote Seafood Safety,” *Kuam News* (18 Mar. 2010), 11 Jan. 2012 <<http://www.kuam.com/Global/story.asp?S=12168643>>.

11. On the dialectic of mobility and *immobility* in Asian American fiction, see Wong, *Reading Asian American Literature*, 118–65.

12. These lines allude to the Red River War of 1874–1875 in Texas against members of the Comanche, Kiowa, Arapaho, and Cheyenne nations.

13. For a more positive discussion of the import of “claiming America,” see Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong, “Denationalization Reconsidered,” *Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature* (2000), eds. Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt, 122–48.
14. See G. S. Morrison and Felix Moos, “Halfway to Nowhere: Vietnamese Refugees on Guam,” *Involuntary Migration and Resettlement: The Problems and Responses of Dislocated People* (1982), eds. Art Hansen and Anthony Oliver-Smith, 49–68.
15. Susan Koshy notes: “The arrival of new immigrants after 1965 has transformed the group from a predominantly American-born constituency to a group which is 65% foreign-born” (322). See “The Fiction of Asian American Literature,” *Yale Journal of Criticism* 9.2 (Fall 1996): 315–46.
16. See Craig Santos Perez, interview, *Lantern Review Blog*, 12 Mar. 2010, 26 Jan. 2012 <<http://lanternreview.com/blog/2010/03/12/the-page-transformed-a-conversation-with-craig-santos-perez>>. Tinfoil Press, which published [*hacha*], is a Hawai’i-based press that focuses on experimental writing and that “seek[s] to create alliances between writers whose work crosses national and aesthetic borders.” See <<http://tinfoilpress.com/>>.
17. For a related discussion of how Pound, Myung Mi Kim, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha engage with the tradition of the American long poem, see Josephine Nock-Hee Park, “Composed of Many Lengths of Bone: Myung Mi Kim’s Reimagination of Image and Epic,” *Transnational Asian American Literature: Sites and Transits* (2006), eds. Shirley Lim, John Gamber, Stephen Sohn, and Gina Valentino, 235–56. On Kamau Brathwaite’s poetic responses to the Modernism of T. S. Eliot—and in particular his development of “Sycorax video style” which, like Perez’s poetry, draws on the typographic and iconic possibilities offered by composing on a word processor—see Charles Pollard, *New World Modernisms: T.S. Eliot, Derek Walcott, and Kamau Brathwaite* (2004), 79–138.
18. In his more detailed description of the structure of Perez’s books, Paul Lai explains: “The poem ‘from Tidelands’ appears in a three-page sequence at the end of the first section of the book; reappears in the third section, alternating pages with ‘from Aerial Roots’; surfaces in section four in between stanzas six and seven of ‘from Stations of Crossing’ as an interlude; and then again emerges at the end of the volume on alternating pages with ‘from Descending Plumeria.’ Thus, ‘from Tidelands’ at points mimics the ebb and flow of the tide in tidelands . . .” (9).
19. Compare with Herman’s observation that the Navy, “despite the civilian government afforded by the Organic Act, maintains much of Guam as a military base ringed by civilians” (640).
20. Although his books include words and phrases in the Chamorro language, Perez explains in [*hacha*] that “The colonial school system on Guam, when I grew up there, did not teach written Chamorro[,] a consequence of Americanization and a sustained desire to eradicate the native language. In the ocean of English words, the Chamorro words in this collection remain insular” (12).

21. Craig Santos Perez, interview, *Lantern Review Blog*, 12 Mar. 2010, 26 Jan. 2012 <<http://lanternreview.com/blog/2010/03/12/the-page-transformed-a-conversation-with-craig-santos-perez>>. In this interview, Perez comments extensively on *[saina]*'s "strategic typography, diagrams, maps, illustrations, and other aspects of its visual design."
22. Perez also deploys brackets to indicate previously omitted subjects and utterances: the subtitles to both his books, *[hacha]* and *[saina]*, as well as several instances of the words "[we]" and "[us]," are qualified and, visually, set apart or islanded by brackets.
23. For an extended account of Perez's discussion of the achiote, see Lai.
24. See Craig Santos Perez, interview.

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