Sexual Colonialism in a Postcolonial Era in Lois-Ann Yamanaka's Novels: 
*Wild Meat and the Bully Burger, Blu's Hanging, Name Me Nobody, Heads by Harry, and Father of the Four Passages*

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I. Introduction

Lois-Ann Yamanaka has been pursuing the theme of sexual colonialism in a postcolonial era by presenting her Pidgin-written works set primarily in local Hawai‘i from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. Yamanaka’s prolific career as a writer is proven in her successful production of novels after her collection of poetry, *Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre*, was published in 1993. Though her first book was published by Bamboo Ridge Press, a small yet locally-celebrated press in Hawai‘i, all of the other novels were published in the major publishing companies in New York: *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers* by Harvest in 1996, *Blu’s Hanging* by Farrar in 1997, *Heads by Harry* by Farrar in 1999, *Name Me Nobody* by Hyperion in 1999, and *Father of the Four Passages* by Farrar in 2001. Throughout these productions, Yamanaka’s challenge to retrieve and reveal the neglected voices of sexually and psychologically violated victims has been constructing the unique space in the postcolonial era.

Yamanaka’s hard path, however, began when her first book, *Saturday Night*, was published, and reached the steepest cliff when she was nominated for the winner of the Association of Asian American Studies award for *Blu’s Hanging* in 1997.¹ In both works, Yamanaka’s portrayal of Filipino men as sexual abusers and rapists was criticized, especially by Asian American scholars including Japanese Americans such as Jonathan Okamura and Candace Fujikane of the University of Hawai‘i,
to say nothing of Filipino Americans. In spite of her strong shared sense with Yamanaka who, Fujikane herself believes, reminds the local people that “Pidgin is a language of great power, beauty, and pain, and in that language, she [Yamanaka] records the textures of our lives as locals,” Fujikane makes her straightforward and consistent criticism on Yamanaka’s stereotypical portrayal of Filipino man in *Blu’s Hanging* (“‘Blu’s Hanging’” A-9). In addition to her critical comment on Yamanaka’s perpetuation of “racist stereotypes of Filipinos and Hawaiians” in *Saturday Night*, Fujikane repeatedly emphasizes in her argument on *Blu’s Hanging* that it is read “in the historical context of the persistent stereotype of sexually predatory immigrant Filipino men, a stereotype that dates from the plantations in Hawai’i and the farms on the Mainland.” Fujikane further points out that “reinforcing stereotypes of Filipino sexual violence” leads to “the disempowerment of real Filipino communities” (“‘Blu’s Hanging’” A-10). Even though the novel’s theme is the disempowerment of a Japanese family, the Ogata, Fujikane insists that Uncle Paulo’s anger over disempowerment caused by Japanese racism to Filipino and the Filipino characters’ lack of escaping their disempowerment should be considered more carefully and compassionately (“‘Blu’s Hanging’” A10-A11).

Against those negative or even hostile comments, there are compassionate opinions to Yamanaka who is “the victim of her own success” because her book was published by a major publishing house in New York and she received quite favorable reviews nationwide. As for the theme of *Blu’s Hanging*, Yamanaka remarks that childhood is “such a scary and dangerous time” that it reveals “issues of hypocrisy in religion, blood relations and human intentions” (Kam “So Many Stories”). As for the controversy over her work, she was “pierced by the conflict” (Oi “Novelist”) and only “objects to the notion that because she has such a
prominent voice in Hawaii literature that she should be a spokesperson for all” and insists that “the complainers should be convincing others to write their own stories” (Kam “Writer’s Blu’s”). Instead of reacting to the critics’ reaction to her work, Yamanaka decided “to act,” that means, “to write” (Tanner), and with her enormous yet painful efforts, she has been continuing to write and has the other three novels published successfully in 1999 and 2001. In other words, Yamanaka’s hardships drove her to establish the solid and consistent view of her creative works.

Yamanaka’s success and struggle as a local/national/transnational writer represents a passage from the literary colonialism to the canon-breaking postcolonialism. The theme of her works, moreover, embodies a colonial passage in a postcolonial era and it implies a sexual politics in the postcolonial Hawai‘i: for example, the violated landscape filled with widespread brutal and cruel treatment of all the oppressed inhabitants, the absence of mother as the fortress, the children’s hetero/homo sexual abuse in the lower-income and racially/ethnically diverse yet poor neighborhood, and the neglect of and discrimination against local children at the American-oriented educational institution. Yamanaka’s sexual colonialism in the postcolonial era should be examined and evaluated as it represents not only Hawai‘i but also other societies, whether local or national, in the contemporary era.

II. Hawai‘i as the Violated Landscape

Hawai‘i is a symbol of the violated islands against superficial and ideal image of the paradise from the colonial to the postcolonial era. The sacred native land is invaded not only by the different races but also by their political, economical, social, and legal powers. The destiny of Hawai‘i has been controlled and determined by the outside force during some transformation steps from the self-governed and self-contained
islands to the kingdom and to the Christianization by the missionaries from Europe, the sugarcane and coffee plantations founded and run by the American capitalists and occupied by the immigrant laborers from European and mostly Asian countries, the decline of the Hawaii’s Kingdom and Americanization, the 1959 statehood of the US, the rushing tourism by the American Big Five, the establishment of military base as the economic source, and the rise and fall in the globalization and Japanese economy’s influence. Hawai’i as the inviolated islands is the unknown and even hidden side of Hawai’i that should be explored and examined through a set of ideological embodiments.

Hawaii’s natural environment that has been violated by the industrialization, air and water pollution, and the land development has a paradoxical element in its foundation and evolution in Hawai’i islands. In Yamanaka’s works, there appear the scenes and episodes of killing wild and tamed animals. As its title, *Wild Meat and Bully Burger*, connotes, to kill and eat wild and tamed animals is regarded as the natural act for local people. In *Heads by Harry*, more interestingly, pig hunting in the rain forest in the Big Island is the central motif of Toni Yagyu’s going through struggle, self-awareness, and resolution. Hunting and taxidermy, which is also described as an important means to earn money in *Wild Meat*, seems the violent action to kill wild animals and destroy nature, and must be misinterpreted only as “a metaphor for the art of the novelist” who ignores Hawaii’s native culture (Pennybacker). There is, however, a paradox that the feral pig is the worst example of dozens of introduced animals and plants that destroy Hawaii’s natural heritage so that hunting those destructive animals is “somehow part of Hawaiian cultural heritage” because Hawaiian heritage can be preserved by excluding them from the important and diminishing native ecosystems (Smith 262). Since Hawai’i is geographically isolated and never connect-
ed to any continent, Hawai‘i was blessed with a rich ecosystem: "the few hundred animals and plants that arrive during the first 70 million years were free to evolve rapidly to fit into the extensive range of ecosystem niches available" in Hawai‘i till the first Polynesians migrated in Hawai‘i in A.D. 400 and foreign species were brought by humans over the past 1,600 years (Smith 261-62). Hunting wild pigs developed into a sport, and then its purpose became to slaughter them as they were quite destructive to forests (Crawford 108-109). It was at the middle of the nineteenth century when the better breeds for food were introduced by Europeans and Americans and hunting wild boars began to disappear by the mid-twentieth century (Crawford 108-109). Before the industrialization and land development, Hawai‘i's native land had been violated and threatened by the animals and plants introduced by humans.

Along with animals' invasions to the native soil, Europe and America are the second intruders to the self-governed Polynesian community, and their economic power transforms Hawai‘i into the plantation-based society that is the core of Yamanaka's works. Hawai‘i as well as Asia are placed in the same position of being the feminized victims by the masculine power of the West in the nineteenth century. Gary Okihiro, quoting from Ronald Takaki's statement in Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th-Century America that Orientalism "supports Europe's and America's masculine thrust toward a feminized Asia – their invasion, conquest, and colonization of Asia," concludes that America's westward march did not end "inward-bound," but continued to Hawaii and Asia (Common 18). Throughout Hawaii's Westernization, Christianization, and Americanization, the introduction and establishment of the sugarcane plantation transforms Hawaii's landscape into the multi-racial and multi-cultural society as the foundation of contemporary Hawai‘i. As Takaki remarks, modern and contemporary Hawai‘i is founded upon the
social changes that resulted from the newly-established communities in the plantation camps. The landscape in Yamanaka's works originates from this plantation heritage which is blessed with racial and cultural diversity, yet which is trapped in violations of human rights, equal opportunities, healthy living conditions, and privacy. The plantation laborers were confronted with dual conflicts, both a conflict among laborers of different racial backgrounds and a conflict between the planters and laborers. Due to the unbalanced sex ratio and the prejudice and discrimination among different races, the camp laborers would often face violent incidents. The racial and sexual harassment and abuse or even kidnapping was common in the uncivilized camp, and the plantation rules and the prolonged customs to punish the strikers contained physical abuse (Okihiro, Cane 32-35). As Yamanaka frequently remarks that Hawaii's local people, especially those in local islands such as the Big Island, lived in 'colonialism' even in the 1960's, the plantation heritage is deeply rooted in Hawaii's local people's lives that are always violated, wounded, silenced, and forgotten.

The hidden violating act of Hawaii's colonialism that affects Hawaiian native and immigrants' inhabitants is the widespread of Hansen's disease as the outcome of Chinese immigrants' bringing the disease to Hawai'i in mid-nineteenth century and in 1865 inhuman life imprisonment was finally founded in colonies on the Kalaupapa Peninsula, Molokai. Even after the sulfone therapy was introduced in the 1940's and the isolation in Kalaupapa was legally abolished by the Committee on Leprosy in 1969, the patients and former patients had to go through the most difficult transitional years in the 1970's and 1980's (Law npn). Never seriously discussed, this dark side of Hawaii's history is the backbone of Yamanaka's Blu's Hanging. In this novel, Poppy Ogata and his dead wife, Eleanor Ogata, as children before and after World War II, suf-
ferred both Hansen's disease and discrimination that result in their unfor-
gettable agony and consequently the family tragedy. Poppy's confession
symbolizes the unfortunate family history: "Ivah, this hard for me say 'cause been one secret for so long from you – me and your madda, us had leprosy. I like your promise that you neva call us lepers" (Blu's Hanging 41). Eleanor's death from her obsession of taking the sulfone drug even after she was declared negative and damaging her kidneys proves that her childhood experience to be separated from her own parents and imprisoned at Kalihi Receiving Station in Honolulu, Oahu and eventually in Kalaupapa in Molokai, was intolerable and unforgettable. The family history of Hansen's disease is so deeply rooted in the Ogata family that Poppy cannot return to his hometown, cannot have any stable and respectable job, and cannot escape from the invisible discrimination and prejudice against his past.

The beautiful native island of Molokai is transformed into the dreadful land to imprison the Hansen's disease patients when the Act to Prevent the Spread of Leprosy was passed in 1865 and King Kamehameha V issued an order to remove indigenous people in 1865 and 1895, and the forced isolation of patients to Molokai was carried out from 1866 till 1969. Molokai as a land of Hansen's disease colony is already portrayed in Molokai by Hawaii's celebrated writer O. A. Bushnell, and Father Damien as the founder of the colony is not only studied by historians and biographers but also dramatized in Damien by Aldyth Morris. Yamanaka's Blu's Handing examines the former patients who were separated from their parents and sent to Molokai's Kalaupapa colony in their infancy before World War II and left the colony to live an independent and married life in the 1960's. In 1930, however, an Advisory Committee on Leprosy in Hawai'i carried an innovative plan that there will "be no further involuntary transfer of patients to Kalaupapa, but that patients
be hospitalized at an improved hospital in Kalihi" (Judd 329). It was, however, still scary for worsened patients to be sent to Kalaupapa as the last destination; Poppy and Elenoar, the patients who were first hospitalized in Kalihi Receiving Station were actually sent to Kalaupapa during the war because Kalihi was close to Pearl Harbor and they had to avoid bombardment by Imperial Japan’s Army (Monson). Both Poppy and Elenoar experience the dreadful imprisonment at Kalaupapa and cannot leave there even after they are cured because of the introduction of the sulfones in 1946. According to Dr. Edwin Chung-Hoon in his 1956 report, among 271 new cases treated with sulfoned during 1946 and 1956, 92.5% improved and 60% could be discharged home after the two-year treatment (Judd 333-34). Even after such an improvement, the settlement had physical barriers between patients and nonpatients and “the patients’ mail was fumigated well into the 1960’s” (Law and Wisniewski 63). It was not until 1969 that the isolation policy was completely abolished and the imprisoned patients were legally liberated. The prolonged strife after the liberation from imprisonment continued till 1988 when the patients can regain their home at the old Hale Mohalu site by the Coalition for Specialized Housing Project (Law npn). The former colonies of Kalaupapa and Kalawao had been transfigured into Kalaupapa National Historical Park in 1980 and even there is the mule tour to the cliffs of Kalaupapa Peninsula. Even in this new era of Kalaupapa, its community is still now “home for many surviving Hansen’s disease patients, whose memories and experiences are cherished values” (“Kalaupapa”). Yamanaka challenges this long-neglected and gradually-recognized history and untold personal stories embedded in the landscape of Molokai as one of Hawaii’s most beautiful yet most tragic spaces.

Hawaii as the violated landscape connotes the environmental, historical, and personal meanings and messages that Yamanaka explores by
her creative force and deep insight. Hawai‘i is the significant background for Yamanaka to examine, revive, illustrate, and debate, and the once-violated landscape encounters the healings and cures in Yamanaka’s acquiring her voice of sexual colonianism.

III. The Absence of Mother as the Fortress

In Yamanaka’s novels, the absence of mother as the frequently-employed scheme embodies the most crucial lack of love, care, and protection that children desperately need both inside and outside the home as the fortress. The absence of mother influences the children’s lives from infancy to teenage years and leaves the trauma because of the lack of the most important source of love. Mother’s death in *Blu’s Hanging*, for example, means the death of home for three children, Maisie Tsuneko, Blu or Presley Vernon, and Ivah Harriet Ogata. Mother’s abandonment and neglect of Emi-lou Kaya in *Name Me Nobody* deprives Emi-lou of possessing the healthy mother-daughter relationship and, instead, leads her to a strong relationship with her grandmother and a sisterhood relationship with her half-Portuguese cousin, Yvonne Vierras. The absence of mother also engraves inside the child the ideal image of mother as Billy Harper, a hapa teenager born of a Caucasian father and an Indian mother, in *Heads by Harry*, is obsessed with the beautiful image of his dead mother. In *Father of the Four Passages*, Sonia Kurisu suffers her internal agony by being neglected and abandoned by her mother, Grace Kurisu, after her father, Joseph Kurisu, left home as a rootless traveler. Because of those complicated emotions, actually or symbolically motherless children are confronted with the difficulty of expressing and controlling themselves and are not led to the right path in their important steps of healthy and appropriate growth.

Children’s loss or even immaturity of expressing themselves orally or
in writing is the most crucial result from the lack of the closest beloved person, the mother. In *Blu's Hanging*, Maisie's loss of speaking ability and its related problem in reading and writing abilities is caused by her shock due to her mother's death. Her late speech acquisition that started at four and a half embodies the first humiliating experience. It is again described in *Father of the Four Passages* that Sonia's learning disability that she did not talk until she was four and a half was "a psychological scar" because of Joseph's frequent absences (41). Maisie's complete inarticulation after her mother's death results from her innermost struggle as a preschool child who still needs a special care and attention from her mother. Her helpless longing for her mother is transformed into her entire loss of verbal communication ability. Her difficulty in communicating with others also influences her learning ability of writing at school where she is overthrown into the harsh criticism and judgement on her disability and put into a special education class. Emi-lou without mother in *Name Me Nobody* is also confronted with the lack of a communicative and healthy relationship with the others both within and without home. The lack of communication between Emi-lou and her mother, Roxanne Kaya, illuminates the lack of care, respect, and understanding between them. The lack of mother's love and care influences the children's inarticulation as the embodiment of their uncured wound.

In addition to the lack of self-expression, that of self-control deprives the motherless children of having an appropriate life with the right habits because of the lack of the right trainings and knowledge. The inappropriate habits range from eating, passing urine to going through menstruation. Blu's gain of weight by his bad eating habit is caused by the loss of mother's cooking and knowledge of nutrition, and, moreover, by his psychological agony over mother's death: "Poor Blu, eating away all the sadness until he's so full that he feels numb and sleepy. . . . Just
so he doesn’t feel Mama gone so far away” (Blu’s Hanging 105). Blu’s unusual eating habits are caused by his unstable emotions because of the absence of his mother who cooks, feeds, and cares for him. Emi-lou’s gain of weight, similar to Blu’s, symbolizes the lack of self-control, her psychological unstableness, and loneliness as an abandoned illegitimate child of a single mother.

Related with the lack of communication ability, the lack of toilet training as one of the most fundamental trainings is another serious problem for preschool children. Both Masie in Blu’s Hanging and Sonia in Father of the Four Passages share the humiliating and embarrassing experiences of lacking toilet training as well as that of communication abilities. Both Masie and Sonia cannot control toilet habits because of the inappropriate domestic environments: one is mother’s absence and the other is mother’s unstable psychological conditions in the almost single parent household.

In a conversation among Ivah, Masie, and Blu, Maisie’s silenced self is interpreted and the true story behind the failure of toilet training is revealed and finally understood.

“... You not taking off your panty ‘cause you hot, hah?”
Nod yes.
“See you, Blu. Go on. You take um off ‘cause get dirty?”
Nod yes.
“Dirty from playing outside?”
Nod no.
“Dirty from, dirty from – Maisie, you pissing in your panty?”
Nod yes.
“Every day?”
“What you doing with your wet panty? How come you get panty every day?”
She lowers her head.
“You using dirty panty?”
“Cannot be, you stupid Blu. You washing your own panty? No won-
der I no see too many of your panty in the wash."

"Why you neva tell us, Maisie? We not going scold you."

Sad, so sad.

I'm not stupid. Blu's not stupid. She cannot talk, so she cannot ask like this haole wants the kindergartners to ask, "Teacher, may I please use the lavatory?" (Blu's Hanging 47-48)

Masie's silenced and inarticulate conditions in kindergarten lead to her failure in going to the bathroom, her pissing in panties and staying without underwear at school, and ultimately exposing ignorantly her vagina and buttocks to the boys. Her loneliness, isolation, and anxiety at home is enlarged at school, that is, the most cruel outside society for her.

Children's sexual awareness and their trials from childhood to adulthood such as menstruation cannot be undergone in a healthy and knowledgeable way due to the lack of the beloved. Menstruation is employed quite frequently in Yamanaka's works as the first difficult, scary, anxious, and untold experience. The girls who suddenly have menstruation cannot understand what it means and are only scared by the blood. Their trials as teenagers who are doomed experiencing the passage to adulthood are also expressed only in their inward voice in their first experience of menstruation. Ivah in Blu's Hanging and Sonia in Father of the Four Passages, especially, blame themselves and hurt their bodies because they cannot tell the fact to anybody so that they cannot find the right way to deal with the blood. The lack of their knowledge before having menstruation means the absence of the mother who educates and trains their daughters. The precaution is also necessary for the women who have to be careful for their unexpected pregnancy because of the lack of the right knowledge of sex. The absence of mother for a growing daughter signifies the absence of knowledge and information about womanhood:

"How alone I feel. / No Mama for me. / Nobody to help me with this blood."
/ Blood. / Nothing in the house” (*Wild Meat* 93).

As the most subtle consequence, the motherless children's hardships are also observed in their unhealthy and unbalanced families with substitute mothers/fathers. From the irresponsible and loveless mother, Roxanne Kaya, and the constantly critical aunt and Yvonne's mother, Aunty Etsuko, Emi-lou is protected and understood only by her adoptive mother – her supportive and giving grandmother, Leatrice Reiko Kaya – and the sister-like Yvonne, within home. As a more tragic example, the younger children have their elder sister as mother. Ivah's inward voice is the most accurate and intense embodiment of struggling with a lost fortress, mother, since Ivah at thirteen has to be another mother for Maisie and Blu, and even for their father, Poppy. Ivah's increased and forced responsibility in housework and care for Masie and Blu both during daytime and nighttime while Poppy leaves home for two jobs becomes a burden as an unsolved strife against herself. Ivah's inward voice to ask her dead mother to tell her how to cook as well as “how to be a Mama too” is deeply buried and never conveyed to anyone, even her favorite supporter and cousin, Big Sis (*Blu's Hanging* 65).

“You gotta cook all the meals?” she [Big Sis] asks.

“Yeah.” I don't want to go on. I feel it all rising in my throat, what I want to say, I want to say it to Big Sis. It's harder than I can ever explain, holding it all in. No Mama, no Ziplocs. No Mama, no vitamins. No Mama, no Pledge. No Mama, no wonder. (*Blu’s Hanging* 82)

In contrast to a compassionate perspective to Ivah as the eldest who is obliged to play a substituted mother role, there is an opposite view against the sister/mother situation from the younger children. Sonia's strong hatred to her sister, Celeste Kurisu, is based on Celeste's overwhelming care, control, and even domination due to her immaturity.
It was Celeste who walked me to school every day, fed me canned goods and rice for breakfast, and told me what to say when the CPS social worker came looking for us. She got me on the sampan bus after school, down the icy corridors of the hospital, and into the room where Grace spent the next six nights. Every night, we were deposited at Aunty Effie’s. And every night by twelve, Celeste made sure we slept in our own beds.

Sister/Mother, it all sounds so loving.
But she of the iron-fisted mommydom became the Sadist.
And I of the get-the-sit/mind/soul-beaten-out-of-me-or-else became the Mesochist.

So your word, Celeste Kurisu-Infantino, twenty years later, I still fucking hate you, wife of Sicilian not Portagee, Michael Onfantino; mother of Tiffany, fat and full of acne, and Heather who draws cat’s claws in God’s eyes, keep it for me, my: Sister/sadist.

(Father of the Four Passages 6)

The stories from both sides – the elder sister/mother and the younger sister/baby – embody the tragic consequence of the reconstructed family frame by the unharmonized members whose roles are forced to be played and recognized.

The absence of mother that embodies the lack of love, care, and protection results in the children’s hardships of establishing self-expression, self-control, and self-confidence in the psychologically stable and well-balanced conditions.

IV. The Hetero/Homo Sexual Abuse as a Crucial Injury and Trauma

In a colonial scheme of local islands of Hawai‘i, the children are confronted with the hetero/homo sexual abuse and neglect that leaves them a crucial psychological injury and trauma. In the low-income local family, the children are laborers, caretakers for the younger children and housekeepers, and often become the victims of domestic violence and sexual
abuse. The loss of the beloved’s protection, especially, causes the danger of children’s becoming the victims of sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. The intolerable and tragic case of abuse is that the reliable friends or close people betray the psychologically immature teenagers, and the familiar yet malicious adults sexually abuse and molest the children without the correct knowledge of sex and embrace of love.

The psychologically immature teenagers and adolescents fall into being victims of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and worst of all, of pregnancy and abortion or unwanted birth of babies. In *Name Me Nobody*, Emi-lou’s immaturity and misjudgement results in the possible rape incident by a good-looking yet brainless hapa, Kyle Kiyabu, and even in the betrayal by her and her family’s favorite and respected boy, Sterling Jardine, as described it is “full of the anguish of adolescence: the fierce face of peer pressure, the need to belong and the confusion of love and blooming sexuality” (Oi, “Nobody”). More tragically, Emi-lou was born even not as “an option” to abortion when her mother became pregnant. A set of pregnancy and abortion is the consequence of the immature teenagers’ and adolescents’ thoughtless and careless behaviors. In *Wild Meat*, Crystal Kawasaki, a local highschool student, has love affairs with her boyfriend, Larry, while babysitting Lovey and Calhoon, becomes pregnant, and is consequently sent to Japan for abortion: “Gunfunnit, thass why, you get girls, you get the prize. Boys, they no take home the prize. Ai, pua ting her. She neva going forget this one in her whole life. Ass all she going have is regrets, regrets, regrets. And plenty shame, no, Hubert?” (*Wild Meat* 208). More intriguingly, Sonia’s letters to her three whom she “killed” imply her passage from having irresponsible relationships with men, being addicted to drug and alcohol, going through the physical and psychological hardships in abortion, being hunted by those children named Number One, Number Two, and Jar, and searching for
the way to redemption.

As an alternative to abortion, bearing the unwanted babies leaves the single mothers the ground of facing hardships of children’s care, being possibly involved in children’s abuse, suffering the self-hate, yet it ultimately creates the room to resolve their agony and anxiety after a series of complicated emotions such as regret, joy, anger, and pain. Toni, who suppresses her platonic love to Billy, yet who discovers an ecstasy in her affairs with both Santos brothers goes through a process of those complicated emotions. Sonia’s initial regret and hatred to her fourth and born baby Sonny Boy is revealed in a form of physical abuse and in an internal voice of apology:

I am screaming inside:
Shut the fuck up. Shut up, fucking rotten little shit. You better shut up right now or I will fucking kill you.
My teeth grit, my hands fold into fists, and I hit his face, squeeze his cheeks inside my closing palms.

Sorry. I'm sorry, baby. Mommy loves her little boy.

(Father of the Four Passages 26)

Sonia’s failure as a student, a woman, and eventually a mother makes her suffer. Sonia’s psychological stability is, however, regained in a process of taking care of Sonny Boy as her agony over the children’s unknown fathers is overlapped with her father’s search for himself. In an interview, Yamanaka believes that the truth exists in the darkness that is so “tantalizing” and “comforting” that darkness feels “almost as warm as light” and insists that her own motherhood is a healing to herself as it is “an incredible moment of relief and joy” (Garber). In her portrayal of the young woman who is generally criticized for irresponsibility, insensitivity, and ignorance, Yamanaka attempts to evaluate the woman’s
growth in her awakening to maternal instincts and love.

The children without the correct knowledge of sex fall into being victims of sexual abuse and molestation. Blu at eight becomes a victim of sexual abuse by male neighbors, Mr. Iwasaki and Uncle Paulo. Mother’s repeated warning before her death never to walk past Mr. Iwasaki’s house because he is recognized as a sexual pervert cannot prevent Blu from being involved in Iwasaki’s sexual abuse and presumably a prostitution by getting “Violet Crumbles, a $100,000 bar, and a box of Milk Duds. Dollar bills” (Blu’s Hanging 20). Blu’s sexual inclination is strengthened by the sucking game by half-Japanese and half-Filipino Blendaine, one of Reyes’ sisters who are constantly sexually abused by their twenty-year-old uncle, Uncle Paulo during his babysitting. Blu’s sexual crisis which is repeatedly forewarned reaches the final point when he is sexually molested, physically injured, and psychologically tormented. Billy at sixteen in Heads by Harry as a sexually awakening teenager is described as a possible victim of molestation. In Billy’s case, his six-year-old sister-like beloved Toni is aware of the danger of sexually attracting an inexperienced teenager. Actually attracted by Billy, Toni, however, blames herself for becoming an “Emerald Hiramoto, a pseudo-child-molester sicko” and refrain from having a sexual relationship with Billy (Heads by Harry 243). Toni’s consistent attentions to Billy, different from Uncle Paulo’s and Mr. Iwasaki’s cruel and selfish desire for powerless children, prevent her from being inclined to have sex with Billy. The lack of love and attentions alters the children into the attention-seeking personalities whose weakness and powerlessness are used in abuse and molestation.

The closely-knitted family and extensive family/community tie without the appropriate attention and the correct knowledge of sex endangers the children and young people as the most powerless members in the
enclosed domestic and local spheres. The hetero/home sexual abuse and neglect of local children and young people embody the crucial factor to encode the violated land and its people's lives.

V. The Caucasian Educators and American-Oriented Educational Institution as the Foreground of Battlefield

The neglect of and racial discrimination against pidgin-speaking local children is housed within the educational institution whose policies are established, supported, and protected by white-oriented educators. In Yamanaka's novels, white teachers' discrimination against local children and their families is caused by their strong sense of superiority over the locals' racial background, lower economical status, and lower educational background. There is especially a great gap between Hawaii's private schools and public schools whose operations are too hard to do.\(^8\) Their crucial target of discrimination is pidgin English that they are convinced should be reformed into standard English. Since American educational system was introduced in the 1880's, Standard English has been encouraged to learn and use in Hawaii (Kau A3). Caucasian teachers who despise pidgin English as well as local people's life-styles have no understanding of, no respect to, and no care for local children. Opposed to Caucasian teachers most of whom are from the Mainland, local teachers, especially Japanese local women teachers, intend to save the local children: and at the same time, to receive higher education and have such a profession as a teacher becomes the local children's ideal and most respectable dream.

In *Wild Meat*, the white-oriented and American legislature's educational policy that focuses on the reformation of pidgin English is represented by Mr. Harvey who repeatedly insists on the importance of acquiring standard English.
“No one will want to give you a job. You sound uneducated. You will be looked down upon. You’re speaking a low-class form of good Standard English. Continue, and you’ll go nowhere in life. Listen, students, I’m telling you the truth like no one else will. Because they don’t know how to say it to you. I do. Speak Standard English. DO NOT speak pidgin. You will only be hurting yourselves.” (Wild Meat 9)

The Caucasian-centered discrimination against pidgin brings out the local children’s loss of sense of pride in and respect of their ethnic and cultural heritage and immigration history including their houses, their foods, their manners, their customs, and ultimately their families.

Education is, however, an important key in the sexual colonianism, especially for powerless children and women who suffer their unfortunate domestic and social conditions. In the local education, the minority teachers’ influence is intense enough for the local children to have the idealized life and the possible future profession. The minority teachers, especially Japanese local teachers, play a very important role to care and save the powerless local children who struggle with domestic, financial, and social difficulties. Against the Caucasian, called “haole,” teachers or Americanized local teachers, the minority-oriented Japanese teachers possess a compassionate attitude toward and profound understanding of the local children because they share the same background in the former plantation community and the same experiences of poverty, racial discrimination, and local values. Miss Sandra Ito, a kindergarten’s Special Ed teacher, in Blu’s Hanging is a savior for the Ogata children whose mother passed away and whose father is too busy to look after his children. Miss Ito raises a brave and challenging rebellion against an insensible haole teacher, Miss Tammy Owens, who is originally from the Midwest, had a dream of coming to Hawai‘i as a paradise, yet has already become disillusioned, and hates both “the heat and the children”
The local teachers’ embrace of and affection for their students, as shown to Lovey and Emi-lou as well as the Ogatas, represents an important source of local children’s awakening and establishing their own sense of self-esteem and identity.

The local teacher who plays a role model motivates their students to have a positive attitude to study and pursue a career in the future. Encouraged by Miss Ito, Ivah’s anxiety over womanhood and her loneliness are turned into her anxiety over her future and transformed into her will to have a well-established life and to fulfill herself by receiving a higher education in Honolulu. Ivah’s struggle with her decision-making is also described in her inward communication with her dead mother, a spirit who is wandering around. Ivah’s departure to Honolulu which enables the mother’s spirit to “find her way to heaven” (Wild Meat 26) is a resolution of the once-lost and unprotected home without mother. The life as the battlefield for Ivah as the eldest child without anyone on whom she can depend becomes the ground for the self-search in a possibly acquired new space that is opened for her. Similar to Ivah, Emi-lou’s inferiority complex as a fat girl without baseball skills for the Hilo Astros is contrasted with her superiority as an excellent ninth grader with advanced writing skills enough to become an intern at high school. Seemingly opposed to Ivah and Emi-lou’s success at school, Toni and Sonia who are given a chance of receiving college education fail in completing it, yet can be engaged in the vocation succeeded by their fathers/teachers, hunting/taxidermy for Toni and music for Sonia.

Caucasian teachers’ lack of understanding and right judgement of local children and American education’s institutionalized discrimination against local children that cause the trauma in local children and even parents are rescued and reconstructed by local teachers who share the same experience, social and historical background, and the complicated
emotions. Education whose purpose is not only to show the academic achievements but also to lead to finding the professions and establishing self-esteem is evaluated as the essential element for women whose selves and voices have been ignored in a context of sexual colonianism.

V. Conclusion

Yamanaka’s sexual colonianism as the most crucial tragic element in her works is what characters, especially local children and teenagers, have to undergo: some are fallen as victims and the others overcome the wounds and resolve their hardships. The physically and psychologically violated and wounded Hawaii’s landscape reminds the readers of the long-neglected and misinterpreted history of Hawai‘i. The contemporary local people’s hardships, both in domestic and social spheres rooted in the violated landscape of Hawai‘i, are delineated under such crucial conditions as the actual and metaphorical absence of mother, the physical / psychological / sexual abuse of children, and the Caucasian teachers’ lack of understanding of and respect to the local people’s poverty, life-styles, values, and pidgin English.

Notes

For putting my idea in this paper, I would like to express the deepest gratitude to The American Studies Foundation for the travel grand to attend the 22nd Annual American Studies Forum by the Center for Asia-Pacific Exchange, in summer, 2002, to all the participants of the Forum, especially President of CAPE Jai-Ho Yoo for his support, and its keynote speaker, Professor Dana D. Nelson, for a long friendship since our graduate school days. I also would like to thank Juliet S. Kono, Joy Kobayashi-Cintron, Joan Hori, Gayle Sato, Harry Wong, and John Watt for their support and assistance. Last of all, I thank Lois-Ann Yamanaka and her son John who shared with me a production of Heads by Harry at Kumu Kahua Theatre on March 23, 2003 during my research stay in Hawai‘i.
My research on Hawaii's local literature was supported by the 1997-2000 Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C)(2) on Hawaii's local literature in a postcolonial view and the 2002-2005 Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C)(2) on Hawaii's local theatres and plays, by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

*  I preserved all the original spellings of Pidgin English without marking [sic].

1  As for the detailed chronology of the controversy of Yamanaka’s portrayal of Filipino by Association for Asian American Studies, see Pisares.

2  See Fujikane (“Book’s” B4), Cordero, et al. (A-6), and Fujikane (“Reimagining” 48).

3  See James.

4  See Wilson and Dissanayake 1-18.

5  According to Law, the “most widely accepted theory is that leprosy was introduced by Chinese immigrants who were brought to Hawai‘i to work as indentured laborers. The disease came to be known by two names, ma‘i pake (the Chinese sickness) and ma‘i ali‘i (the royal sickness), the latter term indicating its incidence among and association with the Hawaiian royalty (npn).

6  According to Law and Wisniewski, Kahili “evolved from a receiving station where patients were simply ‘stored’ until they could be ‘shipped’ to Kalaupapa into a hospital where people were medically treated. An act passed in 1909 that a person could not be sent to the settlement until he had been treated for six months, unless at least three licensed physicians stated that he could not be materially benefited by further treatment. By 1910, four new buildings, capable of accommodating up to 96 patients, had been completed at Kalihi” (59-60).

7  In Yamanaka’s Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers, there is a chapter entitled “Rags” where Lovey’s embarrassment and inarticulation of menstruation is vividly and closely described (118-24).

8  Even in 1990’s, “about one-third of Hawai‘i’s preschool children are already headed for failure because of poverty, sickness, and other handicapping conditions, coupled with a lack of adult protection and nurturance” (McPhee 29).
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