Theory and Critical Practice

—John Stephens

Do critical practices always need (or ever really achieve) a break with the past? The idea that the theoretical turn of the last thirty or forty years has come to an end, and that something else as yet undefined will emerge as the new way of reading (we can never simply go back, of course) was often announced by way of a strategic foray in the long, guerilla war fought against poststructuralism and postmodernism. It seems we now inhabit some limbo zone, awaiting the announcement of the new, although our addiction to the new will inevitably prompt some premature announcements: *New Voices in Children's Literature Criticism*;[1] *Children's Literature: New Approaches*.[2] The selling-point in these titles is presumably "new," but, since neither volume breaks new theoretical ground, we might well ask whether "new" signifies "innovative," "not previously published," or a belated application of one of those theories now apparently deemed defunct. I was myself recently identified as an example of the old, in contrast to the possibility of something new,[3] and while there is an inevitability in such identifications, it prompts me to speculate about the nature of innovation. At this time scholars at large are more apt to cite Deleuze and Guattari or Slavoj Žižek or Judith Butler than Derrida or Eagleton or (even) Lacan (the relatively new versus the relatively old), and more apt to discuss ethics than indeterminacy, but, perhaps more important than the actual names is a readiness to be eclectic. The well-known remark attributed over a decade ago to Stanley Fish—"Deconstruction is dead in the same way that Freudianism is dead. . . . It is everywhere" (Fish *The New York Times Magazine*)—points to the way presuppositions and methodologies inhabit culture after the grand theories appear to have had their day. Critical practice can thereby evolve not simply by overthrowing its predecessors (which

is probably never entirely achieved) but also by interrogating and building on them. I would like to argue that a critical approach which balances top-down and bottom-up processes, remains self-reflective about its orientation toward cultural and ideological practices, such as local and global shifts in political forms and cultural and literary theory, and is grounded in a discourse analysis with a strong explanatory capacity, offers a substantial basis for the eclectic criticism of the immediate future.

The relationship of children's literature scholarship to literary/cultural theory has been a contentious issue for a couple of decades, and the disagreements at the Winnipeg ChLA conference that Perry Nodelman alludes to are merely one example. Such disagreements have been aired, often in an acerbic manner, at almost every IRSCL congress I have attended. (Concepts such as semiotics, indeterminacy and postmodernism were sparking controversy at my first congress in 1991.) Differences are perhaps more deeply inscribed in IRSCL because of the participants' greater variety of academic cultures, most with established interpretive traditions. But while "theory" has often been cited as the ground of difference, foregrounded by the attempt of various IRSCL Boards to encourage conceptually framed presentations, I think that "theory" is not really the issue. Critical practices in children's literature are second-order activities which may be influenced by higher-order theories, but such influence is a unidirectional flow into a domain already shaped by multiple disciplines and ideologies. Arguments in children's literature scholarship have been primarily about the functions of scholarship and reading methodologies (these in turn underpinned by relatively weakly theorized assumptions). If scholarship in the humanities has indeed entered a "post-theory" era, it might not be too impertinent to suggest that very little difference will be seen in critical practices within children's literature. A study of children's literature journals I conducted in 1999,[4] some years after the putative end of theory, indicated that the general theories of culture (especially deconstruction, semiotics, feminism, postcolonialism, and New Historicism) that had dominated analysis in the humanities for a quarter-century had made only a small impact on analysis of children's literature. Six years later, I would say that is still the case, and the social theories that did penetrate children's literature scholarship have not kept pace with developments in the source theory. Feminism would be a good example to point to: the foregrounding of gender inequality by the women's movement of the 1970s prompted studies of gender relations in children's literature, initially resulting in a consciousness that gender-based stereotypes needed to be challenged and the relative representations of female and male characters should be monitored. This is basically what we know as second-wave

feminism, and that is where most thinking in the field has remained. The Winnipeg ChLA Conference sought to address this issue by offering performativity as the overarching theme, but I don't think speakers at the conference got very far into the more complex conceptions of gender and subjectivity or into the connections between gender studies and queer studies which pervade Judith Butler's conception of the performative. A second example is offered by multiculturalism, which has been mostly deployed as an unquestioned good, but only rarely in a theorized way capable of finding a position vis-à-vis, say, the ideas advanced by the contributors to Lawrence Harrison's and Samuel Huntington's *Culture Matters* (2001).

Back to my 1999 survey. Not surprisingly, there was little interest in genres other than fiction, and even here little interest in the now porous boundary between literary and nonliterary texts. (Studies of non-literary texts are still apt to be a special venture, not a systemic part of practice, as developed in New Historicism, for example.) What was evident is that practices which preceded the age of theory—empiricism[5] and reader-response criticism in the United Kingdom, thematically nuanced description and historicism in North America—remained dominant. Some second-order concepts, especially (then) intertextuality, had been adopted, but were often used loosely without signifying new insights. In short, most discourses about children's fiction were critically oriented towards a text-immanent practice which had existed prior to structuralism and its offspring, narratology, and focused on plot analysis with some reference to the familiar categories of character, setting, theme, and, sometimes, point of view. The only substantial changes since then, I think, have been a wider understanding and use of the concept of subjectivity (whether from psychoanalytic or sociological discourses) and a more sophisticated grasp of point of view through a more general use of the concept of focalization. Both concepts entered children's literature scholarship in the early 1990s.

What use might new theories have been to children's literature? Early narratology, born from a structuralist desire to construct a grammar of narrative, had failed to concern itself with how such a grammar would engage with important historical and ideological issues, and seemed just another text-immanent practice with its own particular and difficult jargon. That a reliable model for narrative analysis might be put to the service of other concerns—the race/gender/class concerns of cultural studies, for example—was a point not taken, and any excellent demonstrations of this potential, such as Mieke Bal's *Lethal Love: Literary-Feminist Reading of Biblical Love-Stories* (1987), had little impact on theory and none on children's literature scholarship.

Cultural Studies seemed alluring, but children's

literature scholarship, in its concern with the growth of children to adults within social formations and the rites of passage through family and school into the wider community, and in its child-centric concern with what children did with books, was already practising a form of "cultural studies" before the advent of the age of theory, although its practice was not, of course, determined by the cultural materialism which became inextricable from upper-case Cultural Studies. Nevertheless, one could claim to be doing cultural studies by proceeding as usual while incorporating contemporary social concerns with racial, sexual, and political equity. The fiction itself led the way by overtly addressing these social issues as key themes, and thereby lent itself to a content analysis nuanced by the social concerns of Cultural Studies. Such analysis broadly reflects a tendency in Cultural Studies praxis to invoke the socio-cultural discourses of ethnicity/race, gender, and class as a means for discussing a text's content without reference to textuality. I readily admit belonging to that class of people who have continued to lament this tendency, and who have rather advocated a methodology grounded in a narratologically nuanced critical discourse analysis. More of this below.

A sense that "theory" might be more or less tangential to children's literature scholarship may well be a product of the multidisciplinary locations of children's literature in the academy, although I don't find this very persuasive: children's literature in an English Department, for example, would in principle be exposed to most modern theories, and children's literature in an Education Department would meet them under the aegis of Critical Literacy. A more likely cause is that children's literature is the only area of literary study named exclusively for its audience—Canadian Literature is written *by* Canadians; Canadian Children's literature is written for children—and much of its scholarship is, or purports to be, child-centric. It is a literature apart, and should elicit its own specific critical approaches: its most common theme is maturation, which supports a "reader-response" frame of reading; its common subject matter is social issues, which it handles, implicitly, in an interventionary or even didactic manner; a substantial part of its market is school libraries and book rooms, which link it to practical pedagogy and the teaching of literacy. Children's fiction doesn't appear in general literary canons, is largely written by women, and its dominant modes are social realism (a mode dismissed by Catherine Belsey,[6] for example, as tainted by the teleologies of liberal humanism) and fantasy (a lesser mode, linked with popular culture).

The particular nature of children's literature no doubt has implications for Perry Nodelman's questions: "Where should we be? What kind of goals

should we have for our work as scholars? What kind of work should we be doing?"[7] Given the dominance of fiction that aspires to educate its readers in some aspects of thought and behavior pertinent to social life, what are our goals in analysing such fiction? Feminism, and subsequently gender studies, were grounded in the assumption that a change in cultural values was essential for the well-being of society. Liberal ideas about race and class shared that aspiration, and the drift of scholarship in children's literature affirmed those positions. Will we be able to affirm so readily the message of *Culture Matters* that a change in cultural values is indispensable to future progress both in underdeveloped countries and for ethnic minorities in developed countries such as the USA?

Any discussion of social issues will incorporate an element of ideology critique, and a self-consciousness about one's own positionality. Hence the analysis of narratives of maturation in the "post-theory" era will need to be grounded in a rigorous theorizing of the ground of those cultural values which are represented as subject to change, as catalyst for or evidence of maturation. Subjective agency presupposes a growth in understanding of the choices to be made and the impact on self and world of acting on these choices, and the critical analyst must ask, with Belsey, "Is it possible to perceive the world independently of the conventional ways in which it is represented? To what extent is experience contained by language, society, history?" To begin to answer such questions, a critic needs to be skilled in text analysis.

Perry Nodelman characterizes a desire to focus on "reading texts more closely" as a nostalgia for what once was, but also observes that the practice didn't suddenly disappear but mutated into different forms, a point well illustrated by *Close Reading* (2003), an anthology compiled by Frank Lentricchia and Andrew Dubois which reprints examples from 1938 (John Crowe Ransom) to 2000 (Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher). "Close reading" can be a rather loose concept, and, when used to denote the careful reading of a text's content or an exclusive focus on elements of style, may suggest a nostalgia for the idea of "literature itself" and concomitant empiricist, text-immanent reading. When it designates the careful reading of a text in its contexts so as to bring out historically conditioned significance, or, in other words, to identify a work's historical or ideological subtext, it performs one of the central functions of criticism. The basis for such reading in the theory era was what is generally referred to as "the linguistic turn," as neatly encapsulated by Paul de Man:

> The advent of theory . . . occurs with the introduction of linguistic terminology in the metalanguage about literature. By linguistic terminology is meant a terminology that designates

> reference prior to designating the referent and takes into account, in the consideration of the world, the referential function of language or . . . that considers reference as a function of language and not necessarily as an intuition. (8)

As a discursive construct, the most resolutely realist text produces its meanings through referentiality, not reproduction or an effect of the actual. In other words, it is not an account of something that might happen, but an account of someone telling someone else that something happened. Hence to enable an intelligent dialogue about the nature of understanding and the evolution of subjectivity, critical analysis will pay attention to how a work communicates its complex of meanings through aspects such as structure, point of view, voice and focalization, character interactions, figurative meanings, and other referential functions. Hence criticism will be informed by theories of narrative, and analysis will incorporate the meaning-making function of text structure and how that foregrounds and hence enables discrimination between more and less significant elements. It will be aware of generic features and the possible conclusions to be drawn from them. It will recognize discourses of femininity and masculinity. As Stanley Fish remarks, social, political, and economic concerns find their way into fiction and should be treated seriously as "components in an aesthetic structure" (2004).

An effective analysis of a novel will find a way to move between top-down processes (cultural and ideological practices; cultural and literary theory; a sense of historical situatedness; awareness of genres) and bottom-up processes (structural organization; orientation to audience through narration and focalization; discourse modes such as description and conversation; details of vocabulary, grammar, figurative language; and aspects of coherence and cohesion). Such an analysis will be deeply informed by the ideas and theories advanced over the past few decades, and, once we read beyond story/content, we will find that a modern historical novel such as Korean-American Linda Sue Park's *When My Name Was Keoko* (2002) invokes numerous top-down frames, which we might consider versions of "applied" theory. It is a rich text, accessible through a range of theoretical perspectives, as long as a reader is engaged in thinking about *culture* and practising the activity of *analysis*.

As the novel's title immediately indicates, concepts of subjectivity are its pivotal theme, and we can see that the narrative reflects (albeit in a non-citational way) the debates about subjectivity that occurred in the second half of the twentieth century. The Althusserian theory of interpellation can be adduced to explain the role played by Japanese-imposed state ideological apparatuses to replace

"Korean" subjectivities with a colonized mentality (coercion in the form of imposition of Japanese personal names in place of Korean names, the banning of Korean language, and, in written form, its alphabet; forbidding of Korean dress; and so on). On the other side, cultivation of a Korean subjectivity, beyond a mere nationalism, constitutes a form of resistance to occupation and colonization. Park locates the tradition which constitutes and affirms this subjectivity in the expressive power of language:

> How could an alphabet—letters that didn't even mean anything by themselves—be important?
>
> But it was important. Our stories, our names, our alphabet. . . .
>
> It was all about words.
>
> If words weren't important, they wouldn't try so hard to take them away. (107)

Whereas World War II had already emerged as a spatio-temporal setting for historical fiction in, for example, 1960s British children's literature, in which the local and near past had immediacy, its significance for diasporic communities appears much later. *When My Name Was Keoko* was published over half a century after the events it imagines (although some aspects of those events had only come to public attention in the early 1970s), and implicitly affirms the significance for English-language speakers of fiction dealing with the Asia-Pacific war zone. The novel contributes to the growing area of Asian-American children's literature (more specifically, Korean-American children's literature, which only emerged in any substantial way in the 1990s), and hence might be framed within the growing body of Asian American literary and cultural studies,[8] but an informed reader might also find it pertinent to draw upon at least gender studies, postcolonial studies, and performativity in relation to gender, ethnicity, and concepts of subjectivity. Unlike novels dealing with the experiences of migration and diaspora, by, for example, Marie G. Lee, An Na, or John Son,[9] *When My Name Was Keoko* looks back to two of the primary causes of the Korean diaspora: the Japanese occupation of Korea and its attempt to eradicate Korean language and culture, and the further dispersal of people during and following World War II. The novel also looks forward to the de facto occupations by America and Russia, the division of Korea into North and South, and the consequent civil war. The primary audiences for this representation of the history and context of diaspora are USA-born Korean-Americans and wider American society, and its socio-political function is to inform both audiences about the cultural and political history of a significant diasporic community. Such writing challenges American children's literature (and its scholarship) to reconceptualize its internal focus and

its assumptions about its "Self" and "Others," so that concepts of difference are approached from multiple cultural perspectives. To read the novel deeply, then, a critic would do well to engage with the theoretical literature on postcoloniality, multiculturalism, and hybridity. In effect, the novel demands the theory.

When My Name Was Keoko is a polyphonic novel, its chapters narrated alternately by Sun-hee (a.k.a. Keoko) and her older brother, Tae-yul. As Robyn McCallum points out, such a strategy "facilitates the construction of speakers in independent subject positions and the representation of a plurality of voices and consciousnesses" (30).[10] While both narrators speak from a fractured subjectivity, their disempowerments are different within traditional Korean family structure in that, as a girl, Sun-hee is expected to be quiet and excluded from "men's business," whereas Tae-yul, as the oldest son of the family, is included much more. When their different perspectives and bodies of knowledge converge, however, the novel effectively asserts a very high truth claim. Thus the issues of fact and knowledge raised in the representations of the incident alluded to in the following extracts—one of the most horrific dispersals of people during World War II, the recruitment of "comfort women" by the Japanese military—implicitly attest to the truth of the testimonies given by some of the survivors almost half a century later:[11]

[Early 1944, Sun-hee's narrative] One afternoon as we were building rock piles in the schoolyard, Buntaro-san [military attaché at the school] took up the megaphone. "All girls sixteen years and older, report to the northeast corner. All girls sixteen and older. The rest of you, continue your work."

I was working with Jung-shin; she brought the rocks to me and I arranged them in neat piles. We were in the south-east corner of the yard and could hear everything.

When the older girls had lined up, the principal began speaking to them. "His Divine Majesty the Emperor is giving you girls a wonderful opportunity. There is great need for workers in Japan, in the textile factories making uniforms for the honorable members of the Imperial forces. You will be given a place to stay and ample food to eat. And a salary will be paid to your families here in Korea. It is a chance to help both the Empire and your own family! Who among you would like to volunteer for this noble cause?"

The job sounded too good to be true. We were all accustomed to figuring out the real meaning behind what the Japanese said or wrote. But I couldn't begin to guess what this announcement was truly about. Teenage girls could hardly be recruited as soldiers. Perhaps it was as the principal said; surely, it was true that Japan needed more

> factory workers.
>
> I watched as a few of the older girls raised their hands. . . .
>
> No one else volunteered beyond that first half dozen girls. Buntaro-san was getting angry. "If there are no more volunteers, I will choose them myself," he announced. He marched down the line and began pulling girls out one by one. "You and you—and you—" (96–97)

The immediate wider context for this incident is the irreversible decline of the resources to sustain the Japanese army as the war moves ever closer to Japan itself. The characters in the novel can only deduce this from the demands made upon them, since they have no access to information (ironically, leaflets dropped by an American plane a little earlier in the narrative were written in the Korean *hangul* alphabet, although after forty years of occupation and colonizer-controlled education most literate Koreans could only read Japanese kanji). The incident is framed by the activity of Sun-hee and her classmate: the rocks they are collecting into piles are intended to be used in the event of an American invasion—as missiles thrown at soldiers by schoolgirls! At this point, an activity registering irrational desperation is left unremarked—it lends plausibility to the offer of factory work, but at the same time underpins Sun-hee's reflection that the colonizer's discourse rarely communicates at face value, and so foregrounds her role as a fallible narrator. The two strands to the appeal—helping "both the Empire and your own family"—constitute an overtly colonial discourse, although it is characteristic of military recruitment drives generally. The language of the (Japanese) principal dwells on honour, nobility, patriotism and pride to the point of overwording, as is emphasized by Sun-hee's surprise that he bows to the volunteers (who, as teen-aged, female subjects of an occupying power, lack the smallest shred of agency). The action is subsequently negated when Buntaro beats one of the unwilling conscripts.

Sun-hee cannot know that the girls are being appropriated as sexual slaves, and readers can only deduce this by linking the suspect discourse with historical knowledge. Tae-yul's later reporting of the episode expresses stronger doubt:

> Later I heard that those girls weren't even allowed to go home and say goodbye to their families. They were taken by truck straight to the train station. After that probably a train to the coast, and a boat to Japan.
>
> And then what? A factory somewhere, sewing uniforms?
>
> Maybe. (100)

The immediate separation from family points both to

coerciveness and the hollowness of the family-benefit argument advanced by the principal. The action described then impacts on belief, as Tae-yun modifies the principal's presentation by inflecting it with interrogatives and modals ("probably," "somewhere," "maybe"), so that the original proposition has become less probable than its negation. What neither narrator is permitted to know here is described by Jok Gan Bae, one of the historical victims of this practice, as follows:

> [My mother] was able to get a place of her own for a business, a small eating place. She sold meals and rice wine. It was from that place that they took me. . . . There was this Japanese cop who frequented the place. It was because of him that I was taken.
>
> They took every virgin in sight, you know. One day, he came and forced me to leave home while my mother was out. "Come, you will get lots of money. You will be working in a factory." I cried and wanted to wait for my mother, but no use. He forced me to go. I didn't know where I was going but when we arrived at some designated place, there were other women. Later, I found out that the place was an inn in Pusan. They kept bringing more girls. We got on a ship in Pusan and went to a small harbor somewhere in China, then to Shanghai.
>
> When we arrived in Shanghai, I saw Japanese policemen everywhere. Then, all the girls were lined up and we were sent to different cities and places. . . . Everyone cried, wailed, and sobbed. Still, we didn't know what was really waiting for us. . . .
>
> I knew no Japanese. I had no idea what year it was. Remember, I was literally a mountain girl. So you can imagine what it was like when the soldiers showed up in my room. (Kim-Gibson 65, ellipses mine)

Park's narrative not only picks up the factual elements of deception and coercion, but also enacts the element of low modality which renders Jok Gan Bae's confusion about what was happening to her. In the novel, however, this modality is an aspect of the narrators' perspectives rather than the victims' experiences, which are left undocumented. I find this strategy particularly interesting: the novel doesn't simply assume that readers may fill the very large gap in the text by accessing accounts of actual experiences,[12] but constructs a discourse which validates those experiences by implicitly negating the assertions of the occupying power which conceals or denies them. As Charles Shepherdson suggests, "The function of art is to incite its viewer to ask what is beyond. Art is the essence of truth: it leads us not to see, as Lacan would put it, but to look" (15). In other

words, Park's discursive strategy induces readers to look beyond the story and to consider its wider significances: the partial truth grasped by Sun-hee and Tae-yul, embedded within a historical perspective, discloses what was previously hidden, even as the text enacts a process of hermeneutic analysis. This is also a potent political move: the text's silence about the outcome reprises the silence and "duplicity" (Yoshiaki 35) still largely maintained by the Japanese and Korean governments. The novel exemplifies how political concerns may enter fiction as "components in an aesthetic structure" (Fish 378), and hence how discourse and the values it entails may communicate significance more subtle than either paraphrasable content or extractable ideology.

A novel like *When My Name Was Keoko*, about a time and place unfamiliar to the majority of its potential audience, encourages readers to think outside their usual frame of reference. In the same way, a critical practice informed by dynamic theories of subjectivity, postcolonial and multicultural studies, gender studies, and historiography enables critical readers to think outside the frame of the text and comfortable practice of immanent reading. In this respect, children's literature studies is in the same place as scholarship generally, to address another of Perry's questions. Children's literature still needs a critical practice informed by a model of subjectivity that conceives spaces in the human psyche that are resistant to ideology and imagines how resistance is initiated, for example, and the impact of the theoretical work of the twentieth century on second-order critical practice will be to continue to offer possibilities and explanations. Our sense of historical situatedness must now include where we stand at present between the cultural theories spawned in the twentieth century and the critical practices that have evolved in tandem with them.

Notes

[1] Sebastien Chapleau (Ed), *New Voices in Children's Literature Criticism*. Pied Piper Publishing Ltd: Lichfield, UK, 2004.

[2] Karin Lesnik-Oberstein (Ed), *Children's Literature: New Approaches*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2004.

[3] In her review of *New Voices in Children's Literature Criticism* (*ChLAQ* 30.2 (2005), Claudia Nelson adduces as evidence of the volume's lack of newness the excessive citing of work by Peter Hunt, John Stephens, Perry Nodelman and Jacqueline Rose (232-233). I hope, however, that this is only bean-counting. *The Case of Peter Pan* (1984) has probably been the most often cited book about children's literature over the past twenty years, and it is perhaps evidence of the failure of children's literature

scholarship to engage with "theory" that the book's wrong-headed assumptions, grounded in standard poststructuralist clichés concerning indeterminacy of reference and in Althusserian conceptions of subjectivity, have been left uninterrogated. With the "end of theory" we may yet see the end of knee-jerk citations of Rose.

[4] "Children's Literature, Text and Theory: What are we interested in now?", *Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature*, 10,2(2000): 12-21. Contemporary theory had been discussed in several monographs at the beginning of the 1990s, but these seem to have had limited impact on the criticism practised in journal articles, in the sense that theory might be used systemically rather than tangentially.

[5] The idea that we know the world by observing it objectively, and that ideas and concepts are built up by combining and abstracting from sense-data.

[6] Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (New York: Methuen, 1980). In challenging the efficacy of "expressive realism" in representing experience, Belsey raised such questions as: "In what sense is fiction 'true', and what constitutes evidence of that truth? What is the relationship between a text (a discursive construct) and the world? To what extent is it possible to perceive the world independently of the conventional ways in which it is represented? To what extent is experience contained by language, society, history?" (14).

[7] The next remarks draw on the entry on "Critical Approaches to Children's Literature" written (in consultation with Rod McGillis) for the forthcoming *Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*.

[8] For example: Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Durhan and London: Duke Univerity Press, 2003), and Sheng-mei Ma, *Immigrant Subjectivities in Asian American and Asian Diaspora Literatures* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1998

[9] Marie G. Lee, *Finding My Voice* (1992), *If It Hadn't Been for Yoon Jun* (1993), *Saying Goodbye* (1994), *Necessary Roughness* (1996), *Night of the Chucacabras* (1998), *F is for Fabuloso* (1999); An Na, *A Step from Heaven* (2001); John Son, *Finding My Hat* (2003).

[10] McCallum's *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction* is exemplary in its ability to move seamlessly between top-down theory and bottom-up analysis.

[11] The an allusion is given its historical context in an "Author's Note" appended to the novel (along with a Bibliography including further references). An earlier and more explicit account in Korean American children's literature of girls forced to become "comfort woman" appears in Sook Nyul Choi's *Year of Impossible Goodbyes* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1991), Ch.4. For discussion of adult literature, see Kandice Chuh, "Discomforting Knowledge, Or, Korean "Comfort Women" and Asian Americanist Critical Practice," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 6.1 (2003): 5-23 and Lisa Yoneyama, "Traveling Memories, Contagious Justice: Americanization of Japanese War Crimes at the End of the Post-Cold War," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 6.1 (2003): 57-93.

[12] That the taken girls are not mentioned again in the novel may prompt readers to seek other sources and to speculate about the girls' fate: did they survive, or did they die of disease, of botched abortions, of brutality? If they survived, were they stranded in a foreign country at the end of the war, or too frightened or

ashamed to attempt to return home? If they returned home, were they despised and abused? Were they forced into the same role to service the occupying American forces? See the life-histories recorded in Kim-Gibson and Yoshimi.

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