

# The Localization of Young Adult Fiction in Contemporary Hawai'i

In this article, I draw on the work of selected contemporary young adult and Hawai'i-based authors to explore the ways in which local Hawaiian adolescent identities are contextualized in young adult fiction. The literature reflects the diversity of Hawai'i's youth, spanning multiple ethnicities, languages and dialects. These are important spaces often glossed over or simply ignored in depictions of Hawai'i as an idyllic paradise. In contrast, Wilson's (2000) cultural analysis of local Hawaiian literature as a site of resistance to utopian discourse underpins the need to explore the social construction of adolescence in a Hawai'i context with an eye toward local funds of knowledge, pride, and struggle.

Two young adult novels were selected that represent continuing work by acclaimed local authors, Lois-Ann Yamanaka and Graham Salisbury. Both authors have achieved recognition for their unblemished portrayal of youth in Hawai'i. Yamanaka's (1999) novel, *Name Me Nobody*, and Salisbury's (2005) *Eyes of the Emperor* both feature characters coming-of-age in turbulent times.

Thirteen-year old Emi-Lou in Yamanaka's novel lives in rainy Hilo town on the Big Island. She is overweight and struggling to cling to her childhood friend, Von, a star baseball player. As the novel progresses, Von embraces a lesbian relationship with Babes, one of her teammates on the Hilo Astros baseball team. Emi-Lou is jealous of the time Von spends with Babes, doing everything she can to delay the inevitable loss that goes with growing up.

Sixteen-year old Eddy Okubo in Salisbury's account of Japanese-American families at the onset of

World War II and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor deals with racism and resistance, as well as coming-of-age issues framed within the masculine world of the soldier. Both novels feature characters representative of Hawai'i's isolated, multiethnic setting.

Before moving into the theoretical lens guiding my reading and analysis of how adolescence is constructed in both novels, I want to examine some of the distinctive features that make Hawai'i both unique and similar to other communities distant from mainstream cities (e.g., Inuit people in the high arctic, aboriginal groups in northern Ontario, Canada). In addition, I will allude to recent postcolonial critiques of how Hawai'i is depicted in the popular mythology of capitalist consumption and escape (e.g., Wilson, 2000).

## Hawai'i and a Sense of Place

Demographically, Hawai'i is predominantly Asian (53%), European-American (33%), Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders (10%), and Other (4%) (Davis, Bazzi, & Cho, 2005). Given its diversity and distance from the mainland United States, "Hawai'i represents the range of possible heritage language and cultural configurations present in the United States and other multilingual societies and, as such, is a microcosm of educational conditions for linguistic minorities" (Davis et al., 2005, p. 191). Languages in Hawai'i now include: Illokano, Samoan, Korean, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Tongan, Laotian, Spanish, Thai, Marshallese, Yapese, Chuukese, Ponapean, and Kosrean (from Micronesia), among others (Davis, et

al.). In addition, Hawaiian language immersion now extends through high school and into university study, revitalizing Hawaiian identity and pride.

In addition, there is a growing literary movement in Hawaiian Creole English or pidgin. According to Davis et al., the growing number of novels, poems, short stories and essays featuring pidgin “has transformed this language from one disdained to one with a place of acceptance within many classrooms and communities” (193). Indeed, both Lois-Ann Yamanaka and Graham Salisbury infuse their writing with the day-to-day language of pidgin, an integral part of their adolescent characters’ make-up and inner speech. Much of this movement toward embracing the expressive richness of pidgin was fostered by Eric Chock and Darrell Lum, founders of *Bamboo Ridge: Journal of Hawai’i Literature and Arts* in 1978. Indeed, Lois-Ann Yamanaka credits *Bamboo Ridge* with offering her writing an outlet in its early stages, including her hard-edged poetry collection, *Saturday Night at the Pahala Theater* (Yamanaka, 1993) about small town sugar plantation life in Pahala on the Big Island. In addition, Bamboo Ridge Press books and collections like *Growing Up Local: An Anthology of Poetry and Prose from Hawai’i* (Chock, Harstad, Lum, & Teter, 1998) have captured the interest of high school teachers and their students in the islands. More recently, grass-roots Hawaiian literary journals, including *Oiwi* ([www.Hawai’i.edu/vice-versa](http://www.Hawai'i.edu/vice-versa)) and a quarterly e-zine sponsored by the University of Hawai’i at Manoa’s Department of English, add to the early and ongoing efforts of *Bamboo Ridge* by expanding the outlets for local authors.

Throughout contemporary works by Hawai’i authors, pidgin figures prominently and serves to demarcate insiders from outsiders. Indeed, Wilson (2000) notes that the King’s English is seen as “ka olelo haole” (the outsider’s tongue). The mainland is both a far-away place, 2,397 miles across the ocean to Los Angeles, and a regular presence in the form of the Internet and a constant flow of visitors. As a kind of cultural backlash to Hawai’i as a commodity, postcolonial Hawai’i features literary works and

responses to literature that serve as a counter discourse to colonial positioning of Hawaiians and Hawai’i people as “primitive, exotic, lazy, ignorant, and sexually promiscuous heathens in need of protection and enlightenment from the Christians (Grace & Lum, 2001, 446).” McCallum (1999) argues that:

Realistic young adult literature, until recently, has been rooted in the liberal humanist tradition of the individual as actor, overcoming obstacles in the world (McCallum, 1999). The influence of poststructuralist thinking dismantles this tradition, begging the question: “What images of selfhood do these fictions offer their readers?” (4)

In this view, the individual as actor is located firmly in a social, intersubjective world where social forces and power differentials render action dialogic and relational (McCallum, 1999). That is, the construction of the self is always undertaken in relation to others and within normative pressures surrounding gender, status, and power.

The increasing array of young adult literature featuring indigenous people and the Other serves as a counterpoint to essentialist views and offers an alternative for adolescents to read beyond the traditional literary canon (Bean, 2004). This renaissance of silenced local voices rings loudly in the poetry, short stories, and novels of contemporary Hawai’i authors, often writing in pidgin and disrupting the notion of who really is an outsider (Kaomea, 2003). Indeed, from a Bakhtinian standpoint: “Thought is virtually impossible outside language and the formation of consciousness and subjectivity is thus inextricable from the acquisition of language” (McCallum, 1999, 11).

Contemporary Hawai’i is a mix of contradictions, isolated geographically yet intimately linked to Las Vegas and other mainland cities where significant numbers of former Hawai’i residents live. Wilson (2000) notes that insider Hawai’i authors like Yamanaka and others struggle with Hawai’i’s contradictions, seeing their homeland as “A riddle and a maze, a rim and a charm, a struggle and a curse, both dream and slime, an ocean with ancient contents and cyborgian

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futures all cast into one strange regional poetic” (48). This is in marked contrast to early efforts, prior to World War II, to market the islands to wealthy tourists, portraying Hawai'i as a colonial fair maiden to be rescued from the primitives or as a vast resource to be plundered (Wilson, 2000). Some researchers would argue that this trend simply continues in the tourist-marketing arena. For example, University of Hawai'i scholar, Julie Kaomea (2000, 335) notes that: “Today, this familiar trope of the superior Caucasian and the subservient native functions as an essential selling point for Hawaii's tourist industry.” I would argue that young adult literature situated in Hawai'i and other aboriginal settings offers a rich site for critical literacy and the examination of the balance of power.

Today, contemporary Hawai'i authors are carving out alternative spaces that embrace distance from the mainland and localization of the arts. Core values in this postcolonial movement include hybrid indigenous cultures, multicultural and polyethnic community, and a local literary scene that affirms ethnic heritage and culture (Wilson, 2000). Indeed, Wilson sees this movement as a counterpoint to utopian discourse aimed at marketing a new Asia-Pacific defined by fusion elements in cuisine and culture, or what Wilson terms “Rimspeak” (47). Instead of this sanitized, pseudo-cultural experience, Hawai'i authors foreground the Other and openly resist a pastoral care form of governance. In this fashion, the haunted, blues-like quality of the postcolonial Hawai'i literary scene forms a counter discourse to ongoing efforts to co-opt and market an idealized version of the islands (Wilson, 2000). They challenge grand narratives designed to market the islands and offer what Wilson aptly calls: “scrappy outlets for Hawaiian writing . . . a literary heteroglossia of mixed voices and local tongues that might otherwise be starved or go unrecognized (151).”

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Hawai'i's isolation and relatively small size with semi-rural Hilo, the second largest city after Honolulu, renders local happenings hugely important. This feature of particularity figures heavily in Yamanaka and Salisbury's writing and in the construction of adolescence depicted in their novels. Jamaica Kincaid (1998) writing about her childhood home in Antigua said:

In a small place, people cultivate small events. The small event is isolated, blown up, turned over and over, and then absorbed into the everyday, so that at any moment it can and will roll off the inhabitants of the small places' tongues. (52)

Similarly, literary theorist McCallum (1999) notes that: “The image of the landscape as text, which both writes and is written upon by the people who occupy it, implies a sense of the past of places and cultures as radically textualized and intertextual (190).” As an island community, isolated from the

mainland, surrounded by rough Pacific ocean channels, and regionalized through pidgin and other languages, Hawai'i's contemporary young adult literature treats linguistic difference and marginalization as valuable traits, turning normative categories of standard English and status on their heads.

As we examine the lives of Emi-Lou Kaya in *Name Me Nobody* (Yamanaka, 1999), and Eddy Okubo in *Eyes of the Emperor*, (Salisbury, 2005), the dual elements of pidgin language and isolation play out in how these two youths construct the self, and, in how we as readers experience this construction of adolescence. In addition, the power elements of neocolonial Hawai'i are ever-present in both novels where a sense of self is always measured against some external ideal of body and being.

The central questions guiding my reading of both novels comes from an enduring interest in young adult literature and adolescence as a social construct

(Bean, 2004; Bean, in press; Lesko, 2001; McDonald, 1999). I also find myself revisiting some of the places, flavors, and textures of my youth in the novels. I was raised in Honolulu, Hawai'i, graduated from the University of Hawai'i in English, spent many years on the Big Island in Hilo, speak and appreciate pidgin as a rule-governed, yet resistant language, and resonate with the characters' strong sense of Hawai'i as the place of my youth. Surfing has always been a driving force in my life and a long-standing connection with the islands and other surfers.

## The Construction of Adolescence in Two Hawai'i Young Adult Novels

Both novels were written for adolescents by adults, relying on research, memory, and their own island experiences, as well as composites of adolescents known and invented. Thus, we can explore the characters as constructions of adolescence by considering the following questions based on a critical literacy framework (Stevens & Bean, 2007):

- How do they see themselves in the world?
- How do they balance this inner sense of self with that offered by the larger society of peers, teachers, parents, and others in positions of power?
- How do these fictional adolescents compare to real world adolescents?

This sociocultural lens departs from various stereotypes commonly associated with discussions of adolescents. Often viewed as clueless, dangerous bundles of raging hormones, and homogenized in their likes and dislikes, current thinking about adolescents debunks many of these essentialist labels (Lesko, 2001). For example, older views of adolescence portrayed youth as waiting in limbo to be adults. In contrast, Lesko (2001) argues for a sociocultural theory of adolescence that sees time as

complex and shifting rather than simply biologically determined. She notes: "Theorizing adolescence as a simultaneity of contradictions may be necessary to allow it to escape the temporal trap of linear, cumulative development (197)." In addition, contemporary notions of identity challenge essentialist categories (e.g., skater, geek). Multiple identities in varying contexts including fluid, global Internet communities are more representative of adolescents' experiences.

### Name Me Nobody

Lois Yamanaka's works include her early poetry collection, *Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre* (Yamanaka, 1993), embracing pidgin throughout and exposing the at once raw and rich textures of life in the small sugar cane plantation town of Pahala on the Big Island. Her young adult novels include the one considered in this paper, *Name Me Nobody* (Yamanaka, 1999) set in Hilo and *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers* (Yamanaka, 1996), as well as contemporary novels like *Father of the Four Passages* (Yamanaka,

2001) and others. There is no question that Yamanaka's life in the islands informs her work and her strong sense of localization. She was born on Molokai and raised in Hilo, Ka'u, and Kona on the Big Island. In one of her interviews, Yamanaka notes: "Linguistic identity and cultural identity are skin and flesh. When you sever one from the other, you make it not OK to be who you are" (Takahama, 1996, 1). Because she was put down by her teachers for speaking pidgin, she experienced first-hand being positioned as the Other. Yamanaka's realistic young adult novels move pidgin to the forefront in a way that anyone raised in Hawai'i will recognize as authentic. This is no small achievement given the negative stigma often attached to creoles in various cultures.

The two novels considered in this paper were selected because they fit the category of young adult literature intended to be read by 12

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to 20 year old students (Nilsen & Donelson, 2005), as well as representing well-established Hawai'i young adult authors. Both Lois-Ann Yamanaka and Graham Salisbury have written young adult novels intended for this age group.

In *Name Me Nobody*, Emi-Lou Kaya, a ninth-grader, goes to Hilo Intermediate School across from Hilo High and survives constant racist ridicule as an overweight, Japanese teen by hanging out with her childhood friend, Yvonne Vierra. Von is confident, athletic, and outgoing. She's everything Emi-Lou is not and Von carves a path for her friend through the cruelty of adolescent life where an idealized Hollywood version of beauty prevails. Von gets Emi-Lou onto the Hilo Astros baseball team. In small town rainy Hilo, the social action revolves around island-wide baseball competition. But Von is in love with Babes Hinano, another player on the girls' team, and the novel chronicles themes of change and loss as Emi-Lou struggles to find her own pathway as she comes to understand her best friend in a new light. Emi-Lou, or Louie as Von calls her, sees herself as fat, unattractive, not athletic, not cool, and certainly not sought after by the Hawaiian boys who socialize with the team. When they go to Hapuna beach while staying at Coach Kaaina's beach house in Puako, the boys ridicule her. "I feel so humiliated. My thighs feel like two tons of flabby butter melting into the sand" (32). Von convinces Louie to go on a crash, diet-pill driven plan to lose weight. The pills disrupt her sleep, but more importantly Louie feels like she no longer has an excuse to stay disengaged from the social whirlwind of adolescent life. "So-and-so hates me because I'm fat. I suck at softball because I'm fat. I have no boyfriend because I'm fat. Now what? I'm not fat. So it must be me (49)." She goes on a crash course to change her appearance, even adopting blondish hair. "Eh, Viva, how you got your hair all ehu like that? And she tell, I put Sun-In and lemon juice before I go down Four Miles. Come all orange like this" (54). Louie has a crush on Kyle Kiyabu, a hot baseball player at Hilo High who largely ignores her until he realizes she has something he needs. Louie is smart, excelling in English while Kyle is in danger of losing his spot on the baseball team if his grade point average falls too low. Femininity and masculinity play out in fairly typical ways as Louie acquiesces, helping Kyle by writing his articles in

news writing class. In essence, Louie trades her intellectual prowess for a few, fleeting moments next to Kyle, adopting a familiar, feminine positioning as caregiver:

I'm not stupid. I know what was going on the couple of weeks before our first deadline. Kyle Kiyabu's body so close to mine in newswriting class, I could feel the hairs on my arm stand up and make static with his every time he gave me the information I needed to write his articles. (79)

Unfortunately, they are found out and Kyle gets an F in the class and drops below the 2.00 GPA he needs to stay eligible for boy's volleyball. On the sly, Louie continues to write Kyle's articles in a style that is simple and undistinguishable as hers. Later, Kyle asks her to write a paper for social studies on the overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy so he won't flunk the course. She is nearly raped in Kyle's car but rescued by Von with a baseball bat to the window. The next day Louie and Von go to Four Mile beach together, close friends again:

We sit on the craggy lava rocks at Leleiwi, sea grass moving stiff arms, the pull and swirl of water in a small tidal pool beside us. Nobody speaks for a long time. It's like what happened to me happened to all of us. I feel dirty and used. (135)

Von tells Emi-Lou:

"Me and you, we blood. You my number one girl, always. But you gotta take Babes in as part of me. You can? (137)."

By the end of the novel, Louie comes out of all the turmoil and self-doubt okay, content with herself, her friends, and reconciling Von and Babes relationship. Yamanaka closes one of the last chapters in the novel with a kind of concrete poem containing Louie's thoughts:

Good is summer and night ball games, green neon field at  
Carvalho Park.  
Good is swimming at Four Miles.  
Good is Von and I talking story.  
Good is a name. My name.  
Not Jerry Rapoza's name.  
Not Roxanne Kaya's altered name.  
My name.  
Name me: Emi-Lou Kaya. (217)

This small place, familiar, wet, and rainy, just down the hill from Boiling Pots and the rushing waters of the Wailuku river, is where Emi-Lou Kaya feels at home, surrounded by close friends, a familiar language, and the palpable feeling that things will get better.

### Eyes of the Emperor

The second novel, *Eyes of the Emperor* (Salisbury, 2005) is a more recent work by award-winning Hawai'i author Graham Salisbury based on his historical research into the experiences of a small group of Hawai'i Japanese-American soldiers during World War II (Blasingame, 2006a). Salisbury is a local haole writer and a descendant of missionaries. His historical fiction often features male characters and coming of age themes under difficult circumstances. His own relation to the ocean was forged as a surfer growing up in Kona on the Big Island and the vast and omnipresent Pacific features prominently in his early books, including *Blue Skin of the Sea* (Salisbury, 1992) and his more recent writing.

In researching the lives of Hawai'i Japanese-American soldiers assigned to the 100th Battalion at

Schofield Barracks on Oahu, Salisbury unearthed the stories of these adolescent soldiers through detailed descriptions gleaned from interviews with surviving soldiers over 60 years after World War II (Blasingame, 2006b). He interviewed 8 of the 26 soldiers who were sent to remote Cat Island off coastal Gulfport, Mississippi to become enemy bait for K-9 Corps dogs trained to hunt down enemy Japanese soldiers. In Graham Salisbury's words: "That mission was to honor the men who participated in it by telling their story, the story of men from my home state, men from my neighborhood" (Blasingame, 352). Like Lois-Ann Yamanaka, Graham Salisbury's Hawai'i adolescent characters speak pidgin, retaining their local identities even in the face

of a wrenching journey to the mainland and their bizarre orders to serve as enemy dog bait. Salisbury noted that: "Pidgin English is Hawai'i's language. It was then, and is now, how we communicate on the most enjoyable level" (Blasingame, 2006b, 354).

*Eyes of the Emperor* (Salisbury, 2005) revolves around issues of honor and what he calls a male "silent code of conduct" (Benton, 1997). This code of conduct goes to the heart of what it means to be courageous in the face of danger, stoic and calm rather than rattled under pressure. In many ways, this is a fairly traditional view of masculinity now challenged by newer work in masculine theory designed to broaden narrow, essentialist conceptions of masculinity (Bean, in press). But in the *Eyes of the Emperor*, this silent code of conduct is intertwined with the long-standing Japanese belief in honor.

Eddy Okubo and his brother help their Dad, a Sampan boat builder in the Honolulu Harbor area. As the story unfolds, Eddy is 16 years old and yearning to join his slightly older buddies in the Army. Although Eddy's Dad is a Japanese citizen, adhering to traditional values of deep respect for Emperor Hirohito, Eddy's hybrid identity as a Hawaii Japanese-American renders his view of self quite different from his Dad. "I wasn't a *Japan* Japanese. I was an American" (Salisbury, 2005, 4). Eddy lives in Kaka'ako not far from his Dad's boatyard and he hangs out with his buddies there. "We all stuck together by our races. We had Hawaiian camp, Japanese camp, Portuguese camp down by Waikiki, and some Chinese and Filipino" (7).

Eddy and his fellow soldiers must report to Schofield Barracks following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. An ongoing series of racist comments and hazing begins when Eddy and his pals report for duty. Lieutenant Sweet, their platoon leader, orders them to dig trenches near the barracks at Schofield. "You Japs look cross-eyed at anything but those trenches and you'll be taking up where they left off" (Salisbury, 54). Eddy can't believe what he's heard, telling Chik, his friend: "You call me a Jap, I muttered to Chik, I going laugh and shove you, because you a Jap too, ah? But when somebody like him says it. . . ." (55). Their disequilibrium as both Hawaiian born Japanese and American soldiers treated as the enemy begins early in the novel and persists throughout their assignment on the mainland, far from their island home. But Eddy and his buddies never stop thinking of themselves as

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American soldiers from Hawai'i, remaining proud and, at times, defiant in the face of racist comments and undue harassment. Early in the novel they are assigned to guard the beaches of Waimanolo from enemy submarines. Their fox holes are set up in front of haole soldiers and Lieutenant Sweet issues orders for Eddy and his pals to be shot if they do anything to aid the enemy. In the course of this guard duty, one of Eddy's compatriots rescues a Japanese soldier from the outside reef when his small one-man submarine runs aground. The Japanese soldier's loss-of-face is profound and he asks them to shoot him. Eddy's friend Cobra tells him not to expect any battle assignment: "You not even a grunt no more. You a prisoner now. The army ain't going say it, but when they look at us they don't see soldiers. What they see is Japs. What they see is enemies" (64).

Pidgin permeates the novel and Salisbury includes a brief glossary of Hawaiian, Pidgin and Japanese terms used in telling Eddy's story (227). Salisbury's use of pidgin serves to further distance Eddy and his pals from the haole Sweet who berates them at every turn. In that sense, the familiar local lilt of pidgin offers a refuge from their haole abusers. But Salisbury also offers a counterpoint character in the form of Captain Parrish, their mechanical drawing teacher from McKinley High School who was in the National Guard and called to active duty following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Major Parrish is a local haole with an affinity for his former students and a deep sense of their worth. He intervenes and countermands Sweet's racist orders.

But even without the help of Captain Parrish, Eddy remains a strong, self-contained and honorable character, resisting Sweet's racist attitude whenever he can. "You wrong to call us Japs. Japs are the ones who bombed Pearl Harbor—the enemy, not us. We're Americans" (97). But whenever Eddy fights back, he is given more pushups and more harassment. By the time Eddy is 17, the 100th Infantry Battalion is flown on a DC-3 to boot camp. They have never been off the island of Oahu and Eddy thinks: "All around me guys had menpachi eyes, big and bugged-out like that fish" (p. 110). Following boot camp, 26 of the soldiers including Eddy are sent to the coast of Mississippi to tiny Cat Island where they are ordered to serve as K-9 Corps enemy bait for the dogs in training.

Eddy and his friends survive the humiliation of

serving as dog bait under the mistaken belief that they smell distinctly different from other American soldiers. "The army is not going to crush me. I'll never give up" (173). And, he manages to maintain his pride and self-respect even while running and hiding from a large German shepherd and its handler who orders the dog to find and subdue Eddy. In the course of this training, the dog wounds Eddy but he never loses sight of who he is as a Hawaii born Japanese-American soldier proudly serving his country. Eddy also respects Kooch the German shepherd assigned to work with him.

He going find me okay, I said. Because he's prob'ly the best dog you got on this island. But it ain't going be Jap blood he smells, no. What he going smell is just me, just my scent. Human scent. Because we don't smell no diff'rent from you or anybody else. (192)

In the end, the Army's experiment is a dismal failure, as the dogs simply cannot distinguish Eddy and his buddies from any other man hiding out in the dense underbrush of Cat Island. Washington calls off their assignment and they are shipped out to Europe to fight with other United States soldiers. By then, Captain Parrish is a Major and he praises Eddy and the others hard work and loyalty. Eddy thinks, "All I ever wanted from this army, or even from this country—everything was in that look. Respect. All the rot I had to go through before that moment was worth it, just for that one thing. Now we were equals" (221).

In terms of how Eddy and his peers are constructed as adolescents in the world, *Eyes of the Emperor* traces their struggle to survive with dignity and honor amidst a time in our nation's history when Japanese-Americans were marginalized and placed in internment camps. In many ways, this young adult historical novel runs against the grain of liberal humanist boy novels featuring heroic characters (McCallum, 1999). Rather, Eddy's subject position as a lowly grunt soldier assigned to the potentially humiliating task of serving as dog bait, offers a context for resistance. Indeed, Eddy does resist racist comments but he elects to excel at his assignment, no matter how absurd, in essence defusing the power of his commanding officers and Smith, the haole dog handler. A kind of counter hegemonic discourse (Wilson, 2000) operates throughout the novel where Eddy confronts racist comments head-on.

Historically, adolescent boys have been viewed as needing to be controlled and protected (Lesko, 2001).

For example, the Boy Scouts were created to provide discipline and instruction for each stage of boyhood and adolescence with structured regimens designed to lessen the potential for moral anarchy (Lesko, 2001). In many ways, the Army attempts to serve a similar function for Eddy and his friends with hierarchical race and class divisions. But with the onset of World War II and their assignment to function as bait for K-9 Corps dogs in training, Eddy and the other young soldiers see themselves outside biologically determined notions of adolescence. Lesko's (2001) contemporary theories of adolescence suggest that we need to think of the possibilities of being simultaneously mature and immature or old and young. Eddy and his buddies choose to see themselves as competent soldiers, even in the face of racist verbal abuse by their commanding officer, Sweet. Indeed, they see Sweet as the Other and privately view him as the outsider haole while they fondly think of Major Parrish as an insider, a local haole who appreciates their skill and competence as soldiers. In many ways, their stories parallel those of adolescent boys who, in detailed interviews reveal diverse interests and skills often largely ignored by their teachers in traditional school settings (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002).

## Concluding Thoughts

Both novels can be seen as counterpoints to simplistic conceptions of adolescents and equally vacuous notions of Hawai'i as a commodity to be marketed through Asia-Pacific advertising discourse that erases localization (Wilson, 2000). Wilson calls this discourse, "social fantasy" and "semiotic fiction" (p. 33), arguing that:

Asia Pacific is, in truth, culturally and politically naïve, ignoring, bypassing, or suppressing the cultural complexity, historical issues, and symbolic profusion of the region in order to form this regional identity. (47)

Wilson calls this marketing ploy, "Rimspeak" (47) and argues that cultural criticism is crucial to locate these misconceptions within the historical and political terrain in order to bring the Other to the foreground. Thus, novels like *Name Me Nobody* (Yamanaka, 1999) and *Eyes of the Emperor* (Salisbury, 2005) are infused with pidgin and rich local contexts, disrupting the simplistic grand narratives and more recent fusion notions that serve to domesticate the local. Wilson (2000) notes that:

Cultural literatures can help provide different mappings of the Asia-Pacific region and, as such, can help to circulate alternative mappings and subjugated knowledge of modernity and the space/times and future directions (capitalist telos) of postmodern history inside the Pacific. (211)

Contemporary young adult literature by local authors, as well as the rich collection of poetry, essays, and short stories by Hawai'i authors, stay close to the grain of local experience and language. Most importantly, these authentic constructions of adolescence offer glimpses of the multiple ways in which Hawai'i youth contradict older stereotypical notions of the adolescent. Throughout the two novels profiled here, adolescent identity was portrayed as a socially constructed practice that is multilayered and dynamic, constructed in the varying social contexts of contemporary Hawai'i and Hawai'i at the onset of World War II. As Kaomea (2003) notes: "Art and literature . . . force us to slow down our perception, to linger, and to notice" (15).

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## Gallo Grants

The Gallo Grants were established in 2003 by former ALAN Award and Hipple Award recipient Don Gallo to encourage educators in their early years of teaching to attend the ALAN Workshop for the first time. The grants provide funding—up to \$500 each—for two classroom teachers in middle school or high school each year to attend the ALAN Workshop. (The amount of a grant may be less than \$500 if the applicant lives within commuting distance of the convention location where airfare and housing would not be necessary.)

The Workshop is held at the annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English on the Monday and Tuesday prior to Thanksgiving Day. Applicants must be teaching full-time; must have been classroom teachers for less than five years prior to the year in which they are applying; and must not have attended an ALAN Workshop previously. Membership in ALAN is not required for consideration, though applicants are expected to become ALAN members if they receive this grant.

Each applicant must fill out the grant application form and submit an essay of no more than 750 words explaining their interest in Young Adult Literature, what they hope to gain by attending this year's ALAN Workshop, and how they hope to use the experience in their classrooms in the future. A letter of support must also come from the applicant's school system. The deadline for submission is September 1. Applicants will be judged on their ability to articulate their understanding of the value of Young Adult Literature as well as their explanation of how they intend to use YA books and the information they gather at the Workshop in their own classrooms.

For further information about this grant, contact ALAN Executive Secretary Gary Salvner at [gsalvner@ysu.edu](mailto:gsalvner@ysu.edu) or 330-941-3414. Information about the ALAN Workshop may be obtained from the ALAN Website—[www.alan-ya.org](http://www.alan-ya.org). Information about the NCTE Convention may be obtained on the NCTE Website—[www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)—or by writing to NCTE Headquarters at 1111 West Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.