

CONTAINERS, CURRENTS, AND COMPOSITION:
AN ANALYSIS OF PLACE-BASED RHETORIC AND WRITING PRACTICES
IN RELATION TO THE REGIONS OF
YAP, KOSRAE, POHNPEI, PALAU, CHUUK AND THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

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To the children and families of Kaka‘ako Park

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ABSTRACT

Analyzing texts written by Micronesian politicians and writers from 1979 to the present, the work of this dissertation is to illustrate the role of place values, rhetoric, and writing in constructing a Micronesian counter-narrative that differs sharply from U.S. rhetoric that constructs the regions as isolated, small, dependent, and non-writing. Previously, work conducted in the Micronesian regions of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Palau, Yap, and the Marshall islands has focused primarily on health care, public policy, anthropology, and primary education. Little to no attention has been paid to the role of U.S. rhetoric upon the region and the justification of policies that work against indigenous values of writing and learning. However, this dissertation works against this research gap as it pays particular attention both to the function and form of U.S. rhetoric toward Micronesia and, more importantly, to Micronesian writing and Micronesian perspectives about rhetoric and composition.

This project specifically examines Micronesian place-based rhetoric within several writing forms and genres that have been relatively unexamined in the past. Starting in Micronesia itself, this dissertation looks at the rhetoric emerging from the political and public writing of Yapese politician John Mangefel. This political writing illustrates a legacy of *rhetorical sovereignty* in Micronesian writing that contradicts historical rhetoric painting the regions as dependent upon U.S. economic control. Additionally, this study traces the history of this counter-narrative through to the present, and looks at how survival and resistance are articulated in diverse ways in Micronesian online writings written from O‘ahu and across the Pacific. Ultimately, in establishing this rhetorical genealogy from past to present, this dissertation works to identify how this rhetorical legacy can influence and shape the writing classroom. In interviews with Micronesian college students studying in O‘ahu and writing

teachers working closely with Micronesian students, the final chapters of this project propose pedagogical and institutional reforms in the ways that rhetoric is framed and taught at the university level for Micronesian students.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It was four years ago that I first walked through the expansive grassy field that rests along the ocean walkway of Kaka‘ako park in downtown O‘ahu. Four years ago the field was home to only a handful of people from the regions of Micronesia, men and women seeking shelter under the arms of an expansive tree at one corner of the park. Today, the field is home to a growing community of people. Children abound here, mothers gather on blankets to nurse babies and talk story, and many fathers work long days to try and help their families move to more permanent shelter. Each member of the community lives and works in the context of daily newspaper headlines and political speeches that label Micronesian migrant families (like those in the park) as a “burden” upon the State of Hawai‘i.

After four years of spending time with the families in the park—initially as part of a church outreach and now on my own time as well—I became increasingly saddened by the stories I heard almost weekly of individuals being denigrated and made to feel burdensome simply because they are “Micronesian” and they are here (in O‘ahu). I remember one day in particular when my husband and I were coloring with some of the children in the park. One little girl had colored a house and then a picture of herself floating above the house in the clouds. My husband turned to her and asked her what her picture meant. She looked up at him with tear-filled eyes, and said, “That’s me [pointing to herself in the clouds]. This is not my house [pointing to the house] because I am home-less.”

From the very young to the very old, this feeling of not belonging, not being welcome (both in O‘ahu and in their own home regions) is a common one for many indigenous migrants to O‘ahu from the geographical area called Micronesia — and not just for those who literally do

not have traditional housing. For example, in a 2012 online discussion on the Micronesian forum website (a general discussion blog for discussing Micronesian issues of politics and religion), several Micronesian migrants to O‘ahu responded to a rhetoric of “not belonging” propagated in state political speeches that served to justify unfair housing practices for Micronesians. One poster who goes by *reefwalker* commented:

when they [migrants] apply for rentals, they are being discriminated out of the housing rights all because of the fact that our own custom...I think maybe something have to be worked out, between both governments [U.S. and those of the Micronesian regions] in order to eliminate this issue, and to allow the people the rights to fair housing policies while still allow live the custom and culture the island way. (www.micronesiaforum.org)

In his post, *reefwalker* comments upon the ways in which U.S. rhetoric about the “undesirability” of Micronesian cultural practices of extended community and local sustainability justifies the implementation of real life practices that serve to leave Micronesian migrants without a “home” — both literally and socially, as well.

With public, political rhetoric serving to justify policies that work against providing indigenous Micronesian migrants with homes and a sense of social value, the questions present themselves: where does this rhetoric come from and how can it be changed? Ultimately, this dissertation project wrestles with and tries to answer these questions. Specifically, this project works to discuss and analyze the ways in which rhetoric and discursive practices — both those of the U.S. toward Micronesia and those of the individual Micronesian regions toward the U.S. and each other —function to justify specific (and often opposing) political actions and educational practices. And when I refer to rhetoric here, and throughout this project, I am drawing upon Aristotle’s definition in *Rhetoric Book I*, which defines rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in

any given case the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle 1365). It is key to keep in mind that rhetoric is often used to justify and move individuals to specific actions or policies but it is necessarily (except in specific cases of rhetorical action) action or policy in and of itself. Furthermore, it is essential to this project to stress that rhetorical forms that U.S. politicians, writers, and speakers use — the means of persuasion used to construct arguments and justify policies about Micronesian peoples— do not look like Micronesian forms of rhetoric and cannot be used as the standard by which to define them. Micronesian values of place and culture must be used as the standard for understanding and measuring the persuasive potential and power of Micronesian rhetorical forms. Ultimately, it is my hope that through the work of this project, the powerful, resistant work and value of Micronesian place-based rhetoric, discursive practice, and writing production will be celebrated and will serve as a vital counter-narrative to the oppressive rhetoric the U.S. has produced (and is producing) in relation to the Micronesian regions and their peoples.

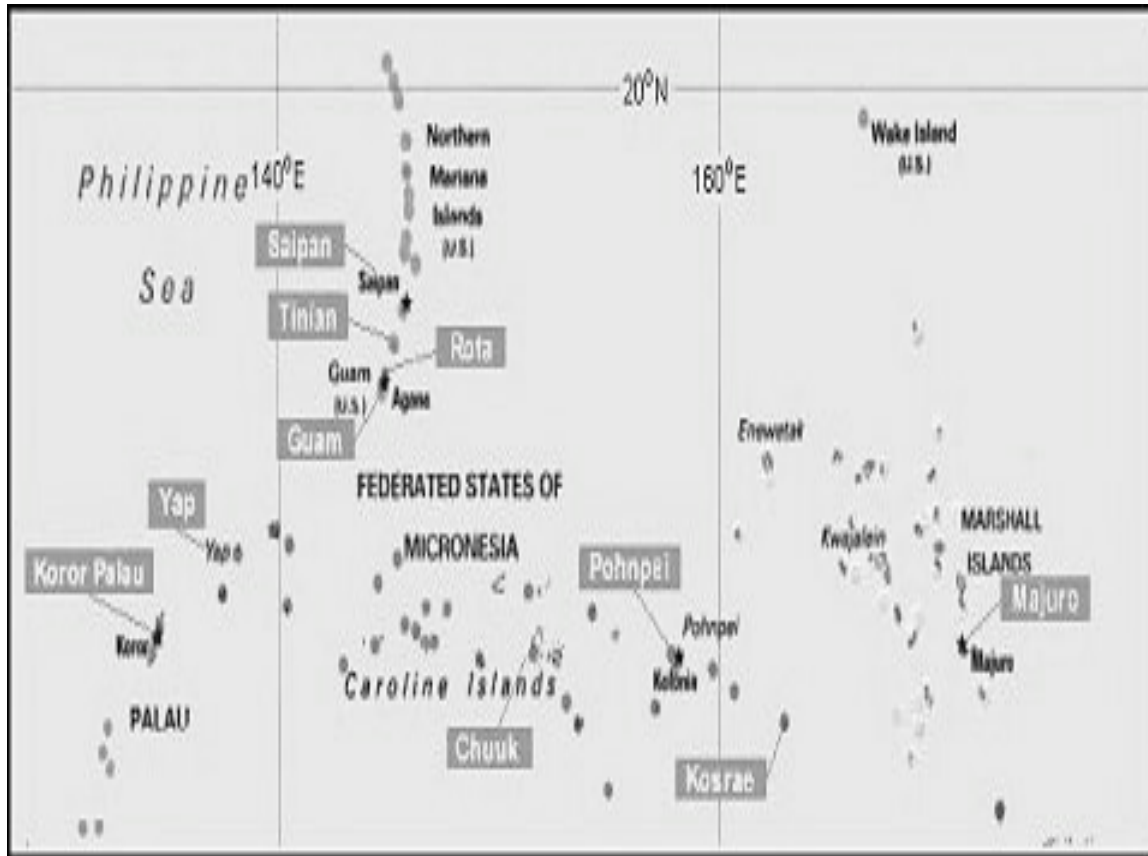
HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

However, before moving across the Pacific to O‘ahu, the place where U.S. rhetoric is now functioning in the context of an increased Micronesian migrant movement, this project must start by tracing this rhetoric back to its source, the Micronesian states themselves. In fact, this rhetoric can be traced back to before U.S. occupation of the islands. In 1831, the French re-named the region “Micronesia,” literally meaning “tiny islands,” a term meant to categorize the islands and their peoples as small, isolated, and scattered (Hanlon, *Remaking* 1).¹

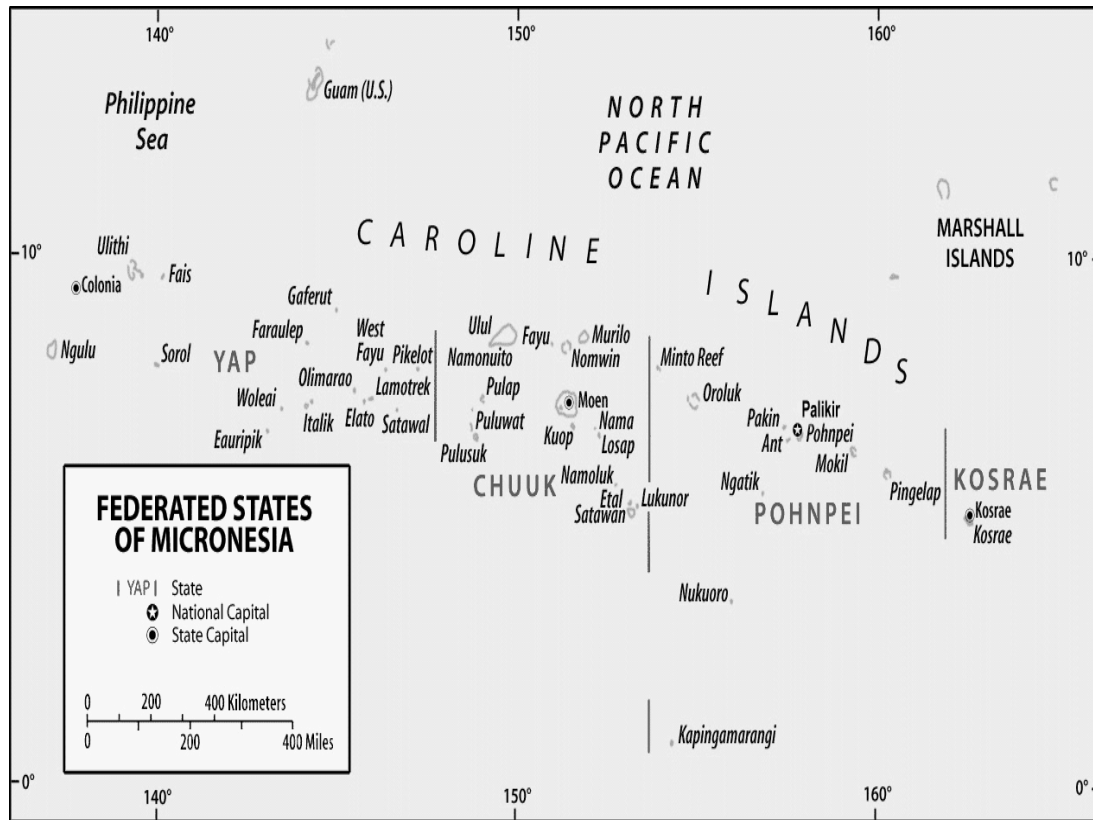
This de-valuation of the region and its people through naming practices continued with the American take-over of the region in 1947. Following World War II, when the U.S. acquired

¹ It is not my intention here to affirm this rhetoric of devaluation by utilizing the term “Micronesia” myself. Instead, like other scholars who have written about the region — including David Hanlon, Kimberley Kay Au, Mark Skinner, and Margarita Cholymay — I use the term because it is very difficult to perform a critical analysis of American colonial rhetoric in the region and within the Pacific without employing it. Furthermore, I use the term critically with the understanding that it has not always functioned as an oppressive one.

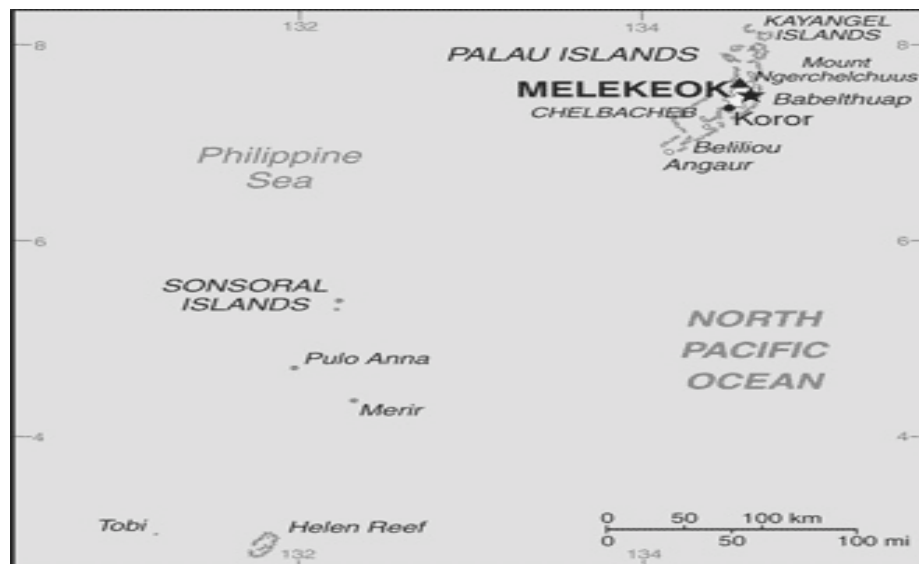
the islands within the South Pacific from Japan, the new political holdings, consisting of 2,000 diverse islands, were termed “The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.” Even at this early point, the rhetoric of the U.S. towards the regions becomes clear as the regions are defined not according to their own realities and terms, but as one political unit (a Trust Territory) that the U.S. works to control and define. Furthermore, classification of the region as simply a conglomerate of Pacific islands simply makes the region an amorphous American collective erased of all markers of distinct island names, cultures, and geographies. This erasure ultimately works to hide the complexity and magnitude of the region (Figure 1). It also hides the names and details of the specific states within the region like Chuuk (formerly Truk), composed of 16 main islands, an extensive outer reef of coral atolls, and 300 outer islands; Kosrae (formerly Uulan island), a single volcanic island and Pohnpei (formerly Ponape), where a chiefly system rules over the central high island and seven coral atolls (all with their own languages); Yap made up of main islands and a group of coral atolls each with their own distinct cultural and language groups (see Figure 2); Palau (or Belau) the largest land mass in Micronesia expansively ranging from larger mountainous islands to numerous low-lying islands (see Figure 3); the Marshall Islands consisting of two chains of coral atolls and hundreds of smaller islands; and the Marianas Islands which encompass multiple islands including Saipan, Tinian, and Rota (see Figure 1) (Hazel *Making Sense* 7-10).



(Figure 1. Map of the larger Micronesian region
U.S. National Weather Service)

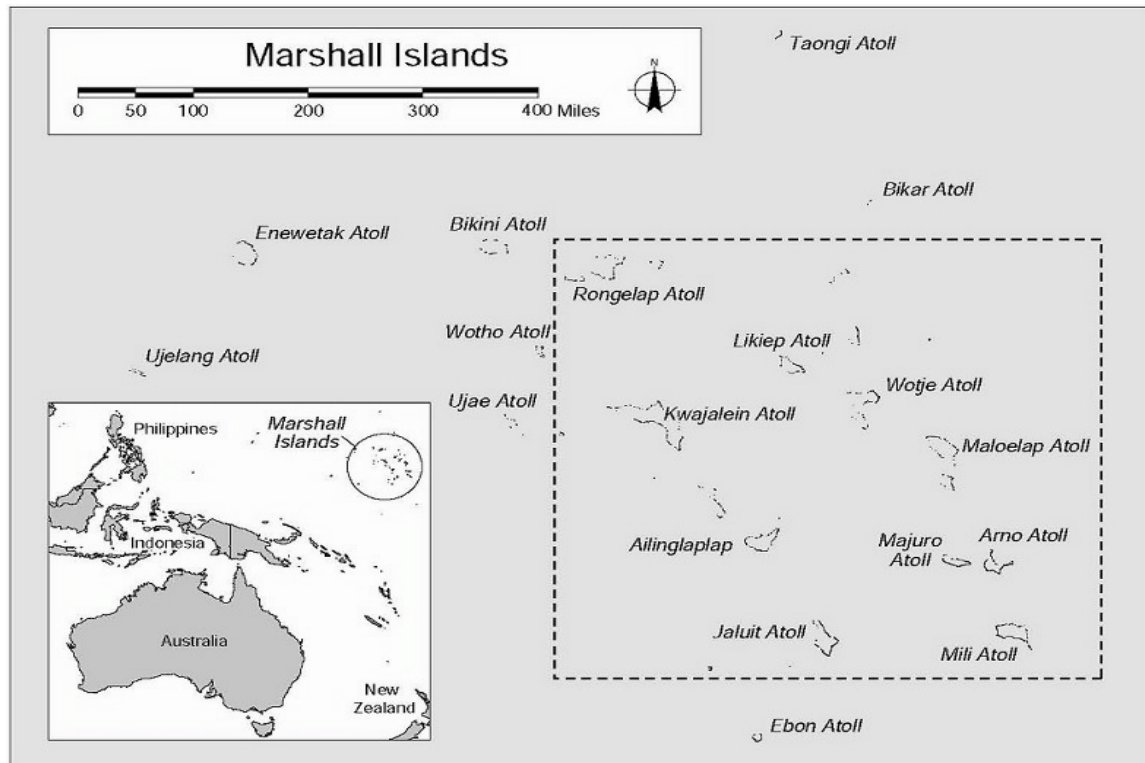


(Figure 2. Map of the Federated States of Micronesia
Government of the Federated States of Micronesia)



(Figure 3. Map of the Republic of Palau

University of Texas at Austin: Perry Castañeda Library Map Collection)



(Figure 4. Map of the Marshall Islands

U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service)

Having hidden these individual lands and their indigenous place names and cultures through the process of re-naming the region, representatives of the U.S. employed additional forms of rhetoric that not only applied to the actual islands but also to their residents. Famously, Henry Kissinger is remarked as saying, in reference to the Marshall islands: ““There are only 90,000 people out there. Who gives a damn?”” (Ferguson and Turnbull 210). This rhetorical construction of Micronesia as insignificant object vs. active agent was originally established through official U.S. imperial acts and documents that re-named the region and its peoples. Since this time, this rhetoric has shifted to become a part of public discourse (often disconnected from the original imperial context from which it originated. It has also been replicated in many different spaces and forms, from political speeches to newspaper articles. As Roger Gale

comments in his 1979 report, *The Americanization of Micronesia: A Study of the Consolidation of U.S. Rule in the Pacific*, the people of the Micronesian regions have been represented within individual political speeches and research studies as “continually being acted upon; that Micronesians are not actors either in the restricted social science sense of that term or in a more dramatic sense” (viii). According to Gale’s report, rhetoric from the U.S. has consistently represented indigenous Micronesian residents as acted upon while representing the U.S. as chief actor.

And act the U.S. certainly has. In the 1960s, the U.S. (under official government rhetoric that declared Micronesia as an essential “military outpost” in the Pacific) increased its military activities and worked heavily to secure the islands for U.S. “military” purposes (Ferguson and Turnbull 73). Initially, the U.S. hoped to use some of these military land grabs for commercial farming; however, this plan proved increasingly unsuccessful since much of the land was scattered over multiple islands, and it was difficult to create a cohesive mass farming industry. In 1961, when commercial industry proved less economically viable in the region, President Kennedy supported increased government funding in order to increase the production of human resources within the islands (Hezel *Making Sense* 9). In order to justify this influx of funding for labor and resource production, official U.S. government rhetoric often worked to create an economic “need” in Micronesia that did not exist in reality. As Yapese Congressman, John Mangefel remarked about feeding programs proposed in the region in the 1970s: “the most recent figures I have seen show that some 41,000 people in Truk are eligible for the feeding programs. That might not sound like much in the United States, unless you know that the population of Truk is only about 35,000 people. How they manage to feed 6,000 people who do not exist is beyond me” (*COM Journal of the Senate 7th Congress* 101). With this rhetoric, the

U.S. created a false economic “need” or demand in Micronesia for government jobs and overall economic survival. And through this creation of a “need,” the U.S. justified a take-over of the job market and an increase in welfare programs within the region (Hezel *Making Sense* 13).

Despite the destructive power of this rhetoric, the people of Micronesia resisted. In an attempt to negotiate power in their own lands, the pro-independence Congress of Micronesia (a local body of indigenous representatives from the diverse islands) worked to establish a unified Federated States of Micronesia with its own draft constitution and political authority. Along with the establishment of the FSM the Congress also worked to negotiate the establishment of a “free association” arrangement with the U.S in 1969 (Mihaly 849). By proposing this agreement, the representatives envisioned a mutual, reciprocal arrangement with the U.S. government, one in which the U.S. valued the practices and values of the individual states within the region. Under this “free association” arrangement, independence would not be immediately granted, but the arrangement would allow the flexibility in the future for the states in Micronesia to potentially establish their own independent forms of government (*COM Journal of the Senate 7th Congress*100).

However, the U.S. was not quite on the same page with this definition of “free association.” Fearing a loss of control in the region, U.S. representatives proposed numerous revisions to the compact of “free association” arrangement (Mihaly 845). According to these revisions to the Compact, the U.S. was to be given continued military control over the region because (as noted earlier) previous rhetoric had established that U.S. military outposts in Micronesia were essential. Furthermore, the new Compact would also give the U.S. control over the political and economic future of the islands, as the regions could not separate from the U.S. unless by agreement between both parties (Smith 3). Ultimately, this arrangement was covertly

aligned with the term “free association” which seemed to connote freedom and partnership. “Free association” was originally a term derived from an earlier arrangement established between New Zealand and the Cook islands, and it was then adopted and proposed by the Congress of Micronesia. It was a term used to define a proposed political arrangement that was to mean reciprocity and flexibility in future political decisions. However, by co-opting the term, the U.S. employed a rhetorical move that on its surface seemed to imply indigenous support and agency — after all it was an indigenous proposal initially. Nonetheless, the persuasive surface rhetoric of the Compact of Free Association did not signify what was in the proposal itself. Instead, it worked to draw attention away from the fact that the new Compact arrangement was really only “free” for primarily one party as the U.S. was to benefit largely from its arrangements.

Under a great deal of pressure to maintain some support from the U.S. while also potentially securing sovereignty in the future, several of the regions known as the Federated States of Micronesia (Kosrae, Yap, Pohnpei, and Chuuk) signed the Compact of Free Association in 1986. Other regions like the Republic of Palau and the Marshall islands signed their own agreements with the U.S. as they had greater resources and the U.S. worked to negotiate with them individually. Ultimately, this signing of separate agreements is significant because it points to an underlying multiplicity and diversity that defines how people within the region view themselves. In fact, throughout its long history (leading up to the signing of the Compacts) the Congress of Micronesia was both striving for sovereignty and greater political rights for the region as a whole but also imbedded within very tense tribal and island-based divisions. For the indigenous people of Micronesia, being part of a larger political push for sovereignty across the region did not preclude place-based differences. Rather an active

acknowledgement of difference was and is a key Micronesian rhetorical form, as gaining support from a Micronesian audience often involves equal parts place-based appeals and distinctions *and* an appeal to collective unity.

This multiplicity can be seen quite predominantly even today in the employment of the designation “Micronesian” among individuals from the region. At times the term “Micronesian” is used very purposefully as a collective call to action among indigenous people from multiple regions and islands. For example, in a recent email thread sent out to its subscribers, the O‘ahu organization of Micronesian migrants called COFACAN (which advocates for healthcare and other rights for Compact of Free Association migrants in Hawai‘i) employed the term “Micronesian” repeatedly. Specifically, the email thread called for a collective response from individuals against a public media event that could potentially position Micronesian migrants as powerless rather than active agents for change in O‘ahu. As one email respondent put it:

I would like to idea of giving more attention and exposure to the many good things that Micronesians do in this beautiful Aloha State. Indeed, most Micronesians are responsible, working hard and law-abiding just like many of the settlers settling Hawaii and calling it their home...The negative media exposure of Micronesians tend to fuel unwelcomed negative images about us, and the general public pick it up in the form of generalizations and assumptions about who we are and sometimes stubbornly holding onto these assumptions and beliefs without substantiation. (Elieisar “Emergency Humanitarian Aid Event to help the Micronesians”)

Here, the writer employs the term “Micronesian” purposefully in order to emphasize the need for a larger narrative about Micronesian agency and collective action rather than disempowerment. It

is important to note here that the author also actively acknowledges the role of damaging “generalizations and assumptions.”

This acknowledgement is significant because it is these very generalizations that have moved many writers to purposefully reject the use of the term “Micronesian.” Prominent poets like Pohnpeian writer Emelihter Kihleng have written texts explicitly critiquing the use of the term “Micronesian” because of the role it has played and often still plays in U.S. politics of essentializing the diverse Micronesian islands and cultures and erasing distinct differences: “MICRONESIANS don’t identify as MICRONESIANS...WE ARE: Pohnpeians, Palauans, Chuukese, Chamorros, Kosraeans, Nauruans, Yapese, Gilbertese, Marshallese, and More” (Kihleng “The Micronesian Question”). Ultimately, what the simultaneous rejection and employment of the term “Micronesian” serves to illustrate here is that rhetoric that encourages empowerment of an indigenous audience (across very distinct island regions) involves a complicated interplay and balance between speaking together and acknowledging distinct place-based differences and political identifications. This distinct multiplicity and the complicated and sometimes tense co-existence of collaboration and specific difference is a key marker of Micronesian rhetorical practice and social collectivity. Nonetheless, this is a distinctive multiplicity that has been and continues to be completely overlooked and in many cases rejected in the U.S., particularly in spaces like Kaka’ako park (mentioned at the very beginning of this introduction) where Micronesian migrants are often stereotyped and cultural differences ignored with very real and damaging results.

Before addressing this cultural essentializing though, it is first key to understand what brings individuals from the region across the ocean to O’ahu and other parts of the Pacific and the continental U.S. Under the Compact of Free Association agreement, Micronesian residents

are promised the ability to travel to the U.S. at any time to dwell as legal aliens with access to federally funded health care and social services (*Compact of Free Association*). These services were promised for several reasons. First and foremost, economics were a major impetus. The promises would serve as a useful fallback plan if and when job development provisions within the Micronesian regions fell through. Furthermore, the promises would also enable the development of a cheap labor pool in the U.S. (*Micronesians on the Move* Hezel 20).

In addition to these key economic factors, the promises were also made necessary through prior U.S. influence in the Micronesian home regions:

Most of the Pacific islands are poor — not ‘naturally’ so but because repeated colonization has disrupted their indigenous means of subsistence, diet, social relations, and relations to the land. The introduction of a money-based economy was accompanied by a dependence on expensive imported goods, a decline in health and living standards, and a horrendous shock to indigenous ways of life. (Ferguson and Turnbull 68)

Through U.S. introduction of foreign, imported foods and goods the residents of Micronesia were, ultimately, introduced to health issues like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer in increasing numbers. Furthermore, with over 66 nuclear tests to the Bikini Atoll and other islands in the Marshall islands between 1946-1958 the Marshall islands experienced the decimation of several islands, forcing many residents to flee to island regions far away from family networks and ways of life (Pobutsky 63). This forced removal has resulted in several psychological consequences as residents now suffer from increased rates of depression and anxiety. These trends were evidenced in the 1970s with Micronesian newspaper headlines like “Micronesian Hanging Spree” and “Suicide Beckons Micronesia” and are further traced in contemporary studies, like those of Dr. Mary Spencer, looking at the specific psychological impact of forced removal upon

Micronesians (*Micronesian Independent and Pacific Daily News*). Furthermore, the effect of the bombing has also been physical as well, as regions both near the bombing sites and far removed are now experiencing the after-effects of radiation poisoning (Pobutsky 63). Thus, the Compacts' promises were not just built on U.S. economic possibility but also on an increasing health necessity. The numbers of residents with long-term health impacts resulting from U.S. occupation and military action within the region — i.e. radiation poisoning, birth issues, cancer, diabetes, and mental health needs — has risen drastically; however, health care facilities to care for these issues have simply not been made available within the region itself.

However, upon coming to U.S. locations like O'ahu, Micronesian migrants face continued U.S. rhetoric that actually works to over-turn what had been promised. With rhetoric that generalizes and labels migrants as a “burden” to the state, as welfare abusers, and as culturally and economically unviable, the Hawai'i state government has successfully cut health care and QUEST funding for migrants entering the state from Micronesia (*Broken Promises, Shattered Lives* 3). Furthermore, these policies, coupled with the reality that migrants are “legal aliens” rather than U.S. citizens, has resulted in a situation in which Micronesian migrants feel culturally and socially “home-less” as they cannot easily go back to their home regions (due to a lack of available financial resources both in the U.S. and back in their home islands, in most cases) nor do they have a “home” place in the U.S. context. In addition, this less visible homelessness has also been coupled with an increasingly visible one as 15% of the current sheltered homeless population in O'ahu is made up of Micronesian migrants (*Micronesians on the Move* Hezel 31).

WRITING WITH HOPE (LITERATURE OVERVIEW)

This current situation is heartbreaking and at first glance it appears rather hopeless. However, the purpose of this dissertation is not to perpetuate a message of hopelessness at all. In fact, the purpose of this project is ultimately to illustrate that a powerful hope exists because the people of the Micronesian regions are *not* powerless. This illustration of the power and hope of the Micronesian regions has been the focus of scholarship for quite some time, so it is important to note here that it is not entirely new ground that this dissertation is treading. In fact, this dissertation is built upon the foundational work by Roger Gale, Francis Hezel, Vicente Diaz, Robert Kiste, and David Hanlon in the areas of anthropology and history, in particular. Furthermore, this dissertation can trace much of its influence to current scholarship that educational scholars, Hilda Heine, Katherine Ratliffe, Margarita Cholymay, and Mary Spencer have published. These influential scholars have helped to make possible the creation of a field called Micronesian Studies, which now has programs at the undergraduate level at the College of Micronesia and at the graduate level at the University of Guam. These programs work to equip indigenous Micronesian scholars with knowledge about their own regions in terms of research approaches, politics, and education especially). This knowledge will ultimately serve to stimulate new research and teaching practices within the region (“Objectives” www.oug.edu).

Sadly though, as a sharp limitation to the powerful work being produced within the field of Micronesian Studies, most of the scholarship has not been widely circulated or acknowledged nor has it ventured across disciplines to fields like Pacific studies. As David Hanlon, a former editor for the journal *The Contemporary Pacific* points out in his article “The ‘Sea of Little Lands’: Examining Micronesia’s Place in ‘Our Sea of Islands,’” “[I] would characterize Micronesia’s current place within the field of Pacific Studies as one of relative absence or, at

best, minimal inclusion” (91). This absence of work from and about Micronesia within the literature of Pacific Studies is evidence of a serious research gap. Ultimately, this dissertation project works against these silences in scholarship. Therefore, in this project, I link Micronesian rhetoric and composition practices with not only their function within particular island spaces, but also the value that they have across spaces and across the Pacific.

In particular, I illustrate that the rhetoric produced by the people of Kosrae, Yap, Chuuk, Palau, Pohnpei, and the Marshall islands is full of radical agency as it builds upon key values of those individual states. In the chapters of this dissertation, I look specifically at the ways in which specific indigenous values of *reciprocity*, *responsibility*, *literacy (including speaking and writing) and learning* intricately shape rhetorical practice. In writing about Micronesian indigenous rhetoric my work engages intimately with foundational scholarship in the field of composition and rhetoric concerning the connections between writing and literacy and place.

In the 1970s and 1980s, composition and rhetoric scholars like Linda Flower, David Bartholomae, and Patricia Bizzell began to encourage other scholars in the field to move away from previous models of composition pedagogy and rhetorical study set forth by scholars of earlier decades. The work of earlier scholars had previously focused upon writing as a compilation of discrete units (words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs) and cognitive processes to be studied individually and apart from social context. In her essay, “Cognition, Convention, and Certainty: What We Need to Know About Writing” (1982) Patricia Bizzell highlights the fact that composing is a process that must not focus exclusively on form and individual student cognition. Rather it must take into account both cognitive interactions within the writing process *and* larger social and cultural environments: “We need to explain the cognitive and social factors in writing development, and even more the relationship between them” (392). This movement

toward studying writing and rhetoric in relation to social and cultural frameworks is a shift that Brian Street also writes about in his essay, “The New Literacy Studies.” According to Street, in more recent scholarship writers have started to look at rhetoric and literacy, reading and composing not as discrete, isolated practices but primarily as the “*social* practices and conceptions of reading and writing” (*emphasis added* Street 430). Thus, rhetoric was not to be considered as a set of discrete skills or mental processes but rather as a wide collection of multiple oral, written, and performative practices rooted in varied social contexts and value systems.

This focus on rhetoric and writing as social constructs is fundamental to the work of writers like Nedra Reynolds, Peter Vandenburg, and Ellen Cushman who would write many of the earliest texts concerned with *place-based* rhetorical study. As Nedra Reynolds defines it in her essay, “Who’s Going to Cross this Border? Travel Metaphors, Material Conditions, and Contested Places,” place-based studies of rhetoric are primarily concerned with the ways in which “Places-whether textual, material, or imaginary-are constructed and reproduced not simply by boundaries but also by practices...Theories of writing, therefore, should reflect this deeper understanding of place” (Reynolds 560). Reynolds indicates here that writing and the values and practices associated with specific places (textual, material, and imaginary) are indivisible, and, therefore, study of one should not preclude study of the other. In the introduction to their work, *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook*, Mike Rose, Barry Kroll, Eugene Kintgen, and Ellen Cushman situate this specific focus on place and community context in terms of its outcomes. That is, studying rhetorical forms in relation to the values of the places from which they emerge and the values of the audiences those forms encounter is essential to understanding how writing is linked with power: “particular styles and forms of written language

carry more, or less, authority in different social and institutional contexts—for example, schools or college vs. one’s community—and [there are]...implications those differences have for political influence, access to resources, and opportunity” (Rose, Kroll, Kintgen, and Cushman 11).

With place-based forms of rhetoric and literacy linked intimately to negotiations of power and authority, composition and rhetoric scholars have worked to articulate the specific ways in which place has functioned in determining *ethos* and access to power for particular groups of people writing in specific spaces. Specifically, scholars like Jacqueline Jones Royster and Joy Ritchie have investigated the role that values of place related to subjectivity and performing authority operate within works by women. Furthermore, writers like Min-Zhan Lu and Beverley Moss have investigated how *ethos* and values of audience response that are imbedded within the spaces of communities of color can shed light upon the ways in which scholars define literacy. In her work, Moss writes about the ways in which literacy practices are shaped by multiple speakers and multiple sites of authority in an African-American church community. In her essay, “Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone,” Min-Zhan Lu interrogates how definitions of effective style and *ethos* in the writing classroom change according to the ways non-native speakers view language and rhetorical values differently. In addition to these works looking at rhetorical contexts in physical spaces inside and outside of the classroom, scholars like Cynthia Selfe and Gail E. Hawisher have also investigated writing politics online. Self and Hawisher’s works have looked at the ways in which the values associated with corporate American office spaces have been linked to constructing the political framework of digital writing spaces and the power of diverse writers within them, from the desktop to the online writing classroom.

Ultimately, in the context of these foundational texts investigating the specific links between rhetoric, place, and power, a very specific subfield of work emerged in the early 1990s: indigenous rhetoric scholarship. Ernest Stromberg defines the study of American Indian indigenous rhetoric in the introduction to his collection *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance: Word Medicine, Word Magic* this way:

While individual American Indian communities each have their own rich and complex rhetorical traditions developed for numerous ceremonial and decision-making purposes, the majority of the contributors to this collection have focused their attention on the post-contact rhetoric of American Indian orators and speakers who have bridged the communication gap between their own traditions and cultural traditions of the European and American colonizers. While tribally specific rhetorical traditions call for attention in their own right, this project seeks to enrich our understanding of what might be considered Pan-Indian rhetorical traditions developed over five hundred years of ongoing struggle. (5-6)

As Stromberg indicates, the study of indigenous American Indian rhetoric involves paying attention to both the rhetorical practices developed solely in indigenous places and for indigenous audiences and also the rhetorical practices developed in response to an outside colonial audience.

Scholars like Gerald Vizenor, Malea Powell, and Leslie Marmon Silko have all explored the ways in which American Indian short stories, letters, and novels operate in the various contexts Stromberg outlines. Furthermore, these writers have also explored how indigenous rhetoric in various locations, both near and far removed from tribal homelands, works to secure and maintain what Scott Richard Lyons calls “rhetorical sovereignty” for American Indian

writers. According to Lyons in his essay “Rhetorical Sovereignty: What Do American Indians Want from Writing?,”

Attacks on sovereignty are attacks on what it enables us [American Indians] to pursue; the pursuit of sovereignty is an attempt to revive not our past, but our possibilities.

Rhetorical sovereignty is the inherent right and ability of peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse. (449)

In Lyon’s framework, indigenous rhetoric carries the potential to take back and control meaning. It can, therefore, serve as powerful direct response to U.S. colonial practices that have actively worked to erase American Indian people, their tribal histories, their testimonies, their stories, and their writings.

Much of indigenous rhetoric scholarship similarly shares Lyon’s concern with linking indigenous rhetoric and writing with political resistance (in its many forms). For rhetorician Daniel Cole in his essay “Writing Removal and Resistance: Native American Rhetoric in the Composition Classroom,” teaching American Indian texts in the composition classroom is a means of re-writing critical reading practices so that texts are read “not through the analytical lens of the Western tradition, but in a way that makes that tradition an object of study” (Cole 142). Additionally, Scott Richard Lyons argues that “rhetorical sovereignty requires of writing teachers more than a renewed commitment to listening and learning; it also requires a radical rethinking of how and what we teach as the written word at all levels of schooling, from the preschool to graduate curricula and beyond” (450). Thus, the study of indigenous rhetoric requires a resistance to current Western understandings and approaches to defining what writing and rhetoric are, how they are read, and how they are taught.

Significantly, this resistant work of indigenous rhetoric scholarship isn't just limited to American Indian writing and teaching practices (although much of the scholarship has focused on the rich rhetorical history of this indigenous body of writers). Composition and rhetoric scholars in the Pacific have now started writing about the ways in which indigenous Pacific writing also works to resist U.S. settler colonial practices that work to eliminate indigenous histories and voices. For example, scholars Georganne Nordstrom and Brandy Nālani McDougall in their essay "Ma ka Hana ka 'Ike (In the Work is the Knowledge): Kaona as Rhetorical Action" write about the way in which the Native Hawaiian rhetorical strategy of kaona (hidden meaning) functions as a means of resisting U.S. colonial rule in Hawai'i in the works of Queen Lilioukalani and Native Hawaiian activist Haunani Kay Trask. As Nordstrom and McDougall argue, both Trask and Lilioukalani imbed hidden references to the traditional Native Hawaiian mo'olelo or story of Pele-Hi'iaka within their writings. These hidden meanings work rhetorically to resist U.S. control and cultural erasure as the Pele-Hi'iaka story in particular offers "potent models for various means of warranted resistance in the face of unjust rule" (Nordstrom and McDougall 117).

Building from these specific claims about the resistant potential of Native Hawaiian writing, Nordstrom has since compiled an anthology (alongside co-editors Jeffrey Carroll and Brandy Nālani McDougall) called *Huihui: navigating art and literature in the Pacific*. This is the first anthology to ever compile works specifically about rhetoric from across the Pacific. As the introduction to the collection states, "The goal of this book is to encourage reading, writing, and seeing through a Pacific or Oceanic lens. These processes counter the framing of rhetorical and aesthetic practices as always and only in response to a colonizing West or East, which inhibits rhetorical and aesthetic sovereignty" (6). Rather than reading Pacific indigenous rhetoric as a

response to the colonial West, the collection calls for a reading of indigenous rhetoric on its own terms and through the lens of specific Pacific values—rooted in particular island spaces and cultures. Subsequently, essays within this collection like rhetorician Lisa King’s “Sovereignty Out From Under Glass: Native Hawaiian Rhetorics at the Bishop Museum” focus upon work by indigenous authors and the ways those works function to rhetorically construct a history that maintains indigenous people and indigenous ways of knowing and communicating at the center.

For example, in her essay, King analyzes the rhetorical construction of a Native Hawaiian narrative and history within the recent renovation of the Native Hawaiian history building (Hawaiian Hall) of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. The conclusion of King’s work specifically focuses on the resistant potential of the exhibits on the third floor of the building, the Wao Lani—Realm of Gods floor. On this floor, there is a detailed timeline of the illegal overthrow and annexation of the Hawaiian kingdom and Native Hawaiian protests in light of U.S. colonialism. This detailed outline of Native Hawaiian resistance to U.S. settler colonial control was a component of Native Hawaiian history that had been previously overlooked altogether in the Hawaiian Hall exhibits. However, Native Hawaiian scholars had worked to make it the centerpiece of the new Hawaiian Hall’s ending exhibit. Furthermore, in one of the exhibits on the floor, a display called Ho‘oulu Hou (“to cause to grow again”), interviews with present-day Native Hawaiian activists and artists were projected on a screen. The interviewees were recorded talking about their interpretations of a Native Hawaiian prophecy of “overturning and overthrowing” (138). Even though couched within a Western museum structure and enclosed in glass, the voices of activists like Hinaleimoana Halemei ring out throughout the exhibit with a message (in Hawaiian no less) that centers not on U.S. sovereignty and control but a new interpretation of “overthrow” altogether: “That which is in power now, will be brought

down tomorrow...we, the native people of these lands shall prevail” (King 138). In her analysis of the Hawaiian Hall renovation, King illustrates that Native Hawaiian language and rhetoric can operate to construct an entirely indigenous and resistant counter-narrative even when placed within an entirely Western rhetorical situation (the glass-encased museum exhibit). Thus, indigenous place-based rhetoric can move across and challenge rhetorical boundaries and limitations in order to bring “histories and relationships out of the archives and affirm the life that was in them all along, no longer reduced to mere objects under glass” (King 140).

In a similar vein, rather than fitting into a U.S. or Western tradition of rhetoric that often disrupts the links between specific places and their histories and stories, rhetoric from the regions of Micronesia often maintains the distinct identity of the home region from which it originates, while also working toward a larger resistance to U.S. colonialism as it operates across the Pacific. It is this empowered rhetoric that I strive to highlight in this dissertation, for it illustrates how Micronesian writers have written and are writing a powerful counter-narrative in response to the oppression of U.S. dominant discourses. Within this project, I will be analyzing a public letter by John Mangefel presented to the body of Micronesian indigenous representatives in the 1970s. Then, I will be analyzing blogs and websites like the *Fourth Branch* and *We Are Oceania* composed by Micronesian migrants to O‘ahu in the 2000s. Furthermore, I will be looking at poetry and online interviews with Micronesian activists and writers like Joakim Peters, Innocenta Sound-Kikku, and Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner. Finally, my project explores critical pedagogy presented within Pacific scholarship and the responses of Micronesian migrant students and teachers in O‘ahu. I analyze the rhetoric presented within this diverse array of texts because it works to fill a detrimental absence. Up until my project works that attempt to look at the history of Micronesia and Micronesian migrant movements within the Pacific have primarily appeared in militarization

studies, historical studies, small economic and legal publications or reports, and occasionally in op-ed pieces within local newspapers. What is most strikingly missing from this list are any sources that engage with the issues specifically in relation to a rhetorical framework. It is, ultimately, the goal of this dissertation to work against this absence because understanding and celebrating the values and production of the rhetoric of Micronesian residents and migrants is essential for resisting U.S. dominant discourses and rhetoric concerning Micronesian people. This dissertation works to illustrate the counter-narrative woven throughout Micronesian rhetoric forms: that Micronesians do not speak as rhetorical wards of the U.S. state but as powerful representatives of their own specific places and genealogies articulating a message of indigenous agency and resistance that extends deep roots into the land and across the ocean, as well.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW:

Chapter 2

Starting in this chapter, I look at the essential connection between rhetoric, place, and politics in relation to the political rhetorical situation within Micronesia in the 1970s and 1980s. The chapter starts by placing indigenous language metaphors in relation to prominent arguments within Western constructions of place-based rhetoric, specifically arguments in relation to the spatial metaphor of the container. Initially, the chapter looks at how prominent rhetorical scholars like Nedra Reynolds and Patricia Bizzell critique the container metaphor in relation to understanding rhetoric in terms of place. Both Reynolds and Bizzell argue that the container metaphor has come to serve as a limiting way to talk about language in relation to place because it represents language and rhetoric as too firmly fixed or “sedimented” in place — a term that is referring back to Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of the *habitus*. Positively, both Reynolds and Bizzell are calling into question long-established conceptualizations of language

that can work to overlook how rhetoric relates to movement *and* place. The conclusion that both authors come to is that the container metaphor is not a particularly useful lens for reading rhetoric in terms of place because it “treat[s] written English as a set of containers into which we pour meaning, regardless of how meaning exists before the pouring” (Bizzell 345).

However, I argue that moving away from this metaphor altogether is not an entirely beneficial move, as it serves as a powerful means of reading and understanding indigenous texts from the Micronesian regions of the Pacific. Within the Micronesian regions, containers are not isolating units (as they are in most Western contexts). Baskets have been used for centuries to transport goods between islands, and their modern-day counterpart, plastic Rubbermaid containers, are currently used for a similar purpose. Furthermore, even the Matson shipping containers that have been used to maintain U.S. trade in the region, are now being re-purposed to serve as community networking tools and even a viable housing option for Micronesian migrants in O‘ahu (Pang). Consequently, to employ the container metaphor as a spatial metaphor for rhetoric and language in Micronesia would actually serve to illustrate a simultaneous investment in specific places and a larger investment in movement across spaces in the Pacific. If the metaphor of the container is used to describe and define the rhetoric within the regions of Micronesia it actually serves as an illuminating place-based reading lens rather than an isolating and limiting one.

Looking at specific discursive acts by prominent indigenous representatives within the local governing body within the Micronesian regions in the 1970s and 1980s serves to illustrate the ways that Micronesian rhetorical practices move beyond the Western limitations of the container metaphor that Reynolds and Bizzell point out in their work. These speech acts highlight the necessity for evaluating indigenous discursive practices coming out of the diverse

Micronesian regions through the lens of indigenous Pacific values of place. Ultimately, as Scott Richard Lyons asserts, defining and evaluating indigenous discourse through its own value terms exemplifies “rhetorical sovereignty” (Lyons 2). Kanaka Maoli scholar Brandy McDougall and rhetoric scholar Georganne Nordstrom build upon Lyons’ claims in their article, “Ma ka Hana ka ‘Ike (In the Work Is the Knowledge): Kaona is Rhetorical Action,” as they argue that evaluating indigenous rhetoric through place-based values and models (like kaona in Native Hawaiian literature) serves a vital function. That is, it works to illustrate the value and agency enacted through indigenous rhetoric that often remains undiscovered through imposed Western reading and composing frameworks (McDougall and Nordstrom 99).

Chapter 3

Building from the foundation of Yapese rhetorical sovereignty and agency laid out in chapter two, chapter three looks at how an evaluation of Micronesian discursive practices on the basis of their simultaneous rootedness and routedness operates within a specific context of displacement. One central question that this chapter works to explore is: How can Micronesian writers write as indigenous authors when writing in a place that they are not indigenous to?

In attempting to answer this question, it is first essential to understand that Micronesians moving away from their home regions to places across the U.S. occupy very specific social and political positions. In the 1990s as more and more Micronesian individuals began to settle in the U.S., Guam, and Hawai‘i, the U.S. Department of the Interior agreed that the moving trend was substantial enough to require promised federal funding to be enacted and for “Compact Impact” surveys to be conducted (Spencer 8). By 2000, it was estimated that over 22,000 Micronesians lived in the U.S., and by 2007 it was estimated that about 10-20,000 lived in Hawai‘i alone (Spencer 7). According to The Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

“Micronesian migrants, unlike other newcomers, are not technically ‘immigrants’ residing in the U.S. under Immigration and Nationality Act restrictions” (6). What this report indicates is that Micronesian migrants occupy a unique position as a migrant group living within the U.S. as “legal aliens.” This unique position is one that Lorenzo Veracini describes as “exogenous other” (110). Within this position, Micronesian migrants are neither a part of the dominant settler colonial power structure (particularly in places like Hawai‘i and Guam) nor a part of the population that is indigenous to the land. Micronesian migrants lie somewhere in between, within a space that produces rhetoric of both survival and indigenous responsibility.

Writing in this particular context, Micronesian migrants have constructed a survivance rhetoric that on the one hand works toward survival in the face of indigenous elimination at the hands of a settler polity and on the other works toward creating responsible, sustainable networks of survival with other indigenous residents in their new home spaces. My analysis of survivance rhetoric in this chapter draws upon the work of Gerald Vizenor who writes about the complex positioning of the indigenous individual who must live, identify, and write within the space of the “displaced native” (Vizenor 2). Furthermore, Malea Powell asserts that from within this space, indigenous people construct a “rhetorics of survivance” which both draws upon the rhetoric of specific places and a distancing from those places and forms of rhetoric (adaptation) (1). Drawing upon the work of both of these scholars and analyzing websites like *The Fourth Branch* and *We Are Oceania* as primary texts, I analyze how writing in online spaces simultaneously enacts connections to specific places while also adapting to new forms of rhetoric in order to create a narrative that enables survival among the Micronesian migrant community in O‘ahu and across the Pacific.

In addition to this rhetorical survival, Micronesian migrant writing also works to construct multiple networks of indigenous responsibility and mutual care online. Although Micronesian migrants are not an official part of a settler colonial regime, Veracini indicates that they can unintentionally benefit from settler colonial practices of exploitation aimed at native indigenous populations (114). In response to this particular political outcome, several host indigenous groups (in Hawai‘i and Guam especially) have expressed that Micronesian migrants are responsible for taking much needed resources from host indigenous groups. In response, Micronesian rhetoric on websites like *We Are Oceania* (WOA) has acknowledged an overarching responsibility to alleviate any financial burdens placed upon the Native Hawaiian population due to migration and to ally with and protect the rights of not just Micronesian migrants but the host cultures that share an indigenous ancestry with them. Thus, the new space of rhetorical survivance that Micronesian migrants have created online is both one of migrant political survival and a larger indigenous survival and responsibility, as well.

Rather than reading individual survival and collective responsibility as inexplicably contradictory, an indigenous reading lens enables a reading of these rhetorical moves as actively navigating connections to individual island languages and cultural histories while also resisting U.S. colonial narratives and practices that seek to disrupt these connections. Using Chuukese scholar Joakim Peter’s arguments concerning the Chuukese navigational concept of *etak* as a means of envisioning Micronesian migration as both survival and mutually beneficial indigenous networking, I argue in this chapter that the online spaces constructed by Micronesian migrants create a network in which individual indigenous survival and collective care among diverse indigenous groups are mutually supportive goals. Thus, Micronesian migrant online writing comes to function as a new in-between “third space” which functions as a site of active

indigenous resistance built equally upon rootedness (individual survival) and rootedness (i.e. shared responsibility).

Chapter 4

In chapter four of this project, this simultaneous grounding and networking in relation to place is analyzed further in a new set of texts. Having analyzed the rhetorical framework of Micronesian written texts, I now shift in this chapter to looking at how this rhetorical framework plays out in the college writing classroom in O‘ahu. This chapter serves as a case study, as it presents the performances and verbal responses of several students who have moved from the Micronesian regions and are currently enrolled in college courses at Chaminade University in O‘ahu. The case study involves three college students who, under written consent and IRB approval, were asked to answer the following research questions:²

- Where are you and your family from?
- When did you and your family first come to O‘ahu?
- Could you briefly describe your home town/ homeland for anyone who has never been to it/is unfamiliar with it?
- Are there connections between where you are from and your upbringing and how you write/what you choose or want to write about? Can you describe those connections?
- What did you learn about writing in elementary school?
- Are there things you learned about writing in elementary school that you are still applying in your college classes? Are those things working well or not?
- What topics would you like to or want to write about in comparison to what you are told to write about?

² Ultimately, these questions were simply the initial working framework for these interviews. In the course of the interviews themselves, as students brought up additional points and questions of their own, new questions were asked and conversational points explored. Full transcripts of the interviews can be found in the appendices of this dissertation.

- If you were teaching a college-level writing class what would you do? In other words are there any specific activities you would use or explanations about writing that you would give to help students with their writing?

In conducting these interviews, I draw upon several foundational methodological approaches to ethnographic research. The first is Linda Tuhiwai Smith's methodological approach to conducting research with indigenous populations in the Pacific. As Smith argues, indigenous research needs to be research that ultimately serves to benefit and build the indigenous communities it analyzes (in contrast to some outside research agenda)(3). This approach to conducting ethnographic research with indigenous populations is echoed in the field of composition and rhetoric in relation to a "politics of location." In their essay, "Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research," Joy Richie and Gesa Kirsch argue that, "If our research is centered on a politics of location it demands an extra measure of responsibility and accountability on our part. It requires using research as 'praxis' to help those who participate with us in research to understand and change their situation, to help those who have been marginalized to speak for themselves" (503). Through the data collected within the interviews explored in this chapter, I write an additional chapter devoted to constructing a new pedagogical approach to teaching writing in the beginning writing classroom. This approach will build directly on the needs and expectations that students from the region articulate in relation to how they see and understand the relationship between place and writing.

Another foundational methodological approach that the interviews within this chapter build upon is the approach to ethnographic data collection established within the fields of performance and anthropology. As performance studies scholar Dwight Conquergood argues, performance and culture do not merely play a marginal role in ethnographic research, but rather

they make up the center of what ethnographic research — specifically the research of writing and “texts” — should be (2). With this methodology in mind, I not only record interview responses through a recorder and through handwritten notes, but I also record what is performed during the course of an interview — what forms of language are used, non-verbal cues and gestures, and redirections and questions regarding clarification. These performances offer valuable insights into the cultural and performative frameworks of the interviewees and work to distinguish the specific ways students approach the tasks of thinking and talking about themselves as writers.

Chapter 5

Taking the verbal and performative insights regarding the writing process gathered and presented in chapter four, the final chapter of my project proposes a new pedagogical approach to teaching writing in the beginning writing classroom. Ultimately, this pedagogical framework builds from the responses of students and from composition and rhetoric scholarship to offer a teaching map for future composition instructors within the university system in O‘ahu.

Ultimately, as there is no current resource available that specifically addresses Micronesian students, tertiary education, and writing, it is my hope that this chapter can work to fill that gap and provide a teaching resource that addresses the specific writing needs of incoming students from Micronesia while also proving beneficial and supportive for other indigenous and non-indigenous students, as well.

According to a recent report on Micronesian movement funded by the University of Hawai‘i East West Center, migrants from Micronesia living in Hawai‘i, compose about 1% of the state’s population (9). However, movement is steadily on the rise, and with this increasing population more young people of college age are entering the state from the region. Currently, most migrants above the age of 15 work entry-level jobs and only 5% of the total population

have bachelor's degrees (38-39). One way to potentially reverse the continuation of this trend toward service work over education, is to offer students who are coming to O'ahu from the regions of Micronesia classes at the university level that offer a more welcoming and supportive learning environment. I propose in this fourth chapter of my work just one possible way to create this environment within the beginning writing classroom.

First and foremost I build my approach to indigenous pedagogy by situating it in relation to a specific "politics of location" in the Pacific. Then, I draw upon works by composition and rhetoric scholars Lisa King and Ellen Cushman. I look to King's model of teaching indigenous texts in the first year writing classroom in order to propose a pedagogical approach that enables students to actively dialogue and talk through place-based differences within the writing classroom. Furthermore, in order to address how students can more effectively connect their own writing to a purpose rooted in their own sense of place, I look to Cushman's model of the "struggle and the tools" and her emphasis upon both the difficulties and the potential power of writing for and with one's community (Cushman 2). Cushman ultimately advocates for a service learning approach to writing instruction that couples student writing assignments with practical, community-based applications — how writing can serve a larger community group (442). What this looks like in terms of writing instruction in O'ahu, is pedagogy that connects the student's relationship to the audiences and purposes of specific places with building community across the Pacific. Additionally, at the University of Hawai'i in Hilo, director and Chuukese scholar Vid Raaitor has worked to provide mentors and community partnerships that work to connect incoming students from the Micronesian regions with academic role models serving and teaching and learning within Hawai'i (personal interview). Thus, students are encouraged to couple their

own work as scholars with its role in serving a larger Micronesian community both within Hawai'i and in the island nations back home.

Within the pedagogical model that I present in this chapter, I ultimately strive to connect this larger commitment to community service and action with an appreciation of and more critical engagement with specific politics and values associated with place. It is this model of simultaneous grounding and movement derived from the models set forth in the texts and interviews with students presented in my previous chapters, that serves as the impetus for my own approach to writing instruction and the pedagogical framework presented at the end of my project. It is in this pedagogical approach that I hope to present a model that is beneficial for young students from the regions of Micronesia who will shortly be entering a time in their lives in which they must decide if they will become future scholars or not.

Conclusion

And with this educational future in mind, the conclusion for this project ends with a bit of looking forward. Talking with college professors in writing and literature from Micronesia, I end my project asking teachers to offer a new rhetorical framework from which to write a future for Micronesian students and future writers. These responses serve to provide insight into forms of rhetoric at the larger institutional and departmental levels that are currently justifying limiting practices within the writing classroom for Micronesian students. Specifically, the conclusion ends with a call for institutional reform in relation to rhetorics of “academic discourse” and “progress” as well as “Micronesian literature” within the academy. By ending with this call for institutional reform, this dissertation concludes with a request to make new spaces within the academy in which to celebrate and acknowledge and value the rich legacy of counter-narrative

writing in Micronesia, the powerful work of Micronesian authors, students, and teachers in the present, and a vision for a brighter rhetorical future moving forward.

CHAPTER 2

Re-purposing the Container: an Analysis of the “Container Metaphor” in Terms of Indigenous Rhetoric from Micronesia

In writing about the Western rhetoric used to define the island states of Micronesia, historian David Hanlon argues that written histories have served as a “discursive dimension to the colonizing process; the rendering of difference in terms that were familiar, and thus knowable and controllable, proved every bit as much an act of taking possession as planting a pennant on an island shore in the name of some distant sovereign” (Hanlon, *Remaking* 21). What Hanlon is particularly concerned with in this supplanting of Micronesian rhetoric with Western rhetoric and Western values for evaluating rhetoric, is the erasure of an indigenous history and the specific forms and values aligned with that history. For example, Western histories of the Micronesian regions have tended to focus solely upon events following colonial arrival—specifically those texts produced by Western anthropologists and settlers (Hanlon, *Remaking* 20-22). These histories impose a rhetorical lens upon the Micronesian regions that often serves to miss or in some cases erase the specific localized contexts and values that shape what texts produced by the indigenous peoples in those regions actually say and do. Furthermore, these histories also tend to overlook the ways in which rhetoric in these regions is located contextually in various sites of expression—speeches, poetry, tattooing, and writing—that often work simultaneously to persuade or move an audience to a particular course of action.

Working against the rhetorical erasure outlined above, this chapter attempts to explore how contemporary studies concerning place-based rhetoric might serve to either reify the trends

that Hanlon writes about or work to resist them. Some of the basic questions seeking answers in this exploration include: who is currently defining “place” and what does that concept of “place” look like? In answering these questions, this chapter ultimately seeks to understand how indigenous texts from Micronesia can be better read and evaluated according to their own rhetorical frameworks, including specific Yapese values concerning *reciprocity* that underlie rhetorical practices and forms. Within this essay, I use the writing of Yapese politician and prolific writer, John Mangefel, of the Congress of Micronesia as a case study to facilitate a re-reading of the place-based container metaphor through an indigenous lens. This re-reading argues that the “container” ought to function as a positive metaphor, rather than just a limiting one, for analyzing and understanding the complex negotiations between roots (“dwelling” in place) and movement (or “travel”) within Micronesian discursive practices.

HISTORICAL & POLITICAL CONTEXT

In order to illustrate the significance of reading texts, like John Mangefel’s, through an indigenous place-based framework, it is essential to start with a bit of historical and political groundwork here. Following World War II, in 1947, the United Nations wrested control of the following islands from Japan: Ponape, Truk, Yap, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Northern Mariana islands (www.fsmgov.org). At this time, the region became known as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). As primary Trustee of the TTPI, the U.S. was to “promote the economic advancement and self-sufficiency of the inhabitants” (www.fsmgov.org).

This goal of economic “advancement and self-sufficiency” was initially worked toward through U.S. loans that sought to build up economic production and trade industry within the islands (Hezel, *Reflections* 63). In the early 1960s, following the Kennedy administration’s survey of the region, funding was increased from 7 million to 35 million annually so as to

promote self-reliance through the development of human resources (through education and social services) (Hezel, *Reflections* 9). By the 1970s, with a reliance upon U.S. imported goods, the influx of an increasingly educated population to the urban areas, the loss of subsistence farming to U.S. land control and industrialization, and an increasing shortage of jobs, the entire economy of Micronesia was heavily “dependent on the presence and continued backing of the United States” (Hezel, *Reflections* 13). Even after the establishment of the official Congress of Micronesia in 1961³, a powerful act of self-determination, in which Kusaie (Kosrae), Truk (Chuuk), Ponape (Pohnpei), Yap, Palau, the Marshalls, and the Northern Marianas established their own operational political body, U.S. economic policies still held sway within the region.

Furthermore, the “dependence” of the Micronesian regions upon the U.S. was also fostered within the rhetoric widely used and published to a U.S. audience in reference to the islands. As David Hanlon indicates in the early sections of his book, *Remaking Micronesia: Discourses Over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982*, development came to function as a “Discourse of Domination” within U.S. representations of the region (8). Hanlon goes on to argue that a discourse of development functioned as a form of Orientalism, in that writing about “underdeveloped nations” was used to define them in contrast to developed nations (where the authors of these texts usually came from) (Hanlon 12). It is important to note here that rhetoric and discourse are not one and the same, although they often appear together. Michel Foucault, who is most often connected to the term, used “discourse” to describe an ideology that is linked with the preservation of institutional power (Hall 49). For those within composition and rhetoric, the term discourse is often used to describe, “the full text, oral or written, delivered at a specific time and place or delivered at several instances” (Kinneavy 129). A basic working definition of

³ The group had originally convened in 1956 and operated under the name Inter-District Advisory Committee to the High Commissioner. The name Congress of Micronesia was simply adopted as a new title in 1961.

discourse that takes into account Foucault and composition and rhetoric scholarship might look something like this: discourse is a specific language act within a particular context linked to an ideology that is working to maintain a specific source of power. In the case of Micronesia, that Hanlon describes, the ideology that was linked to the preservation of U.S. power and control in the region was the ideology that the U.S. was caretaker of the world. As a result of this ideology, the idea that Micronesia was a nation *in need of* U.S. assistance and help became commonplace. As Hanlon goes on to point out, this discourse was often maintained and preserved through the use of rhetoric or “writings” about the “underdeveloped nation” of Micronesia (both rhetoric produced within U.S. official government documents and rhetoric produced outside of the political sphere) (Hanlon 12). Thus, in relation to writing and speaking about Micronesia, authors and speakers within the U.S. often employed rhetoric that served to maintain and perpetuate a particularly powerful “discourse of domination” (Micronesia *in need of* U.S. help) in relation to the particular people and places of the region.

Ultimately, the form of rhetoric that constructed Micronesia as a nation “in need” of economic aid and gifts from more “advanced” nations like the U.S. served to justify institutional intervention or development to a U.S. political audience. What it completely left out though, was any representation of what indigenous members of the Congress of Micronesia’s political body were actually saying and how they might be saying it. Thereby, leaving any opposition or agency on the part of indigenous speakers absent from the pages of print media, history books, and rhetorical analyses. An analysis of the political rhetoric produced within the COM’s proceedings (and in the speeches of John Mangefel in particular) through an indigenous rhetorical lens serves to work against this erasure, and to highlight the work of Micronesian rhetorical practices in the context of U.S. colonial rhetoric and control.

THE RHETORIC OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA

The Congress of Micronesia was officially established in 1961 and chartered under U.S. Secretarial Order # 2882 in 1964. According to David Hanlon in his biography of first FSM president Tosiwo Nakayama, the COM was originally “to serve as a body of advice and consent with only a small portion of the territory’s funding to allocate and little or no governing power. Any legislation passed by the Congress of Micronesia was subject to final veto by the high commissioner” (Hanlon, *Making Micronesia* 98). However, even though the COM was not initially invested with a great deal of self-governing power from the United States government it served to exert a tremendous amount of political resistance and authority within the Micronesian region. Specifically, this resistance and authority could be seen in the way representatives within the body engaged in specific political actions like issuing joint resolutions (meant to critique TTPI policies) and refusing to act upon TTPI legislation that it did not agree with. Furthermore, resistance was manifest in the very ways that representatives utilized rhetoric within official COM proceedings. Hanlon remarks upon this rhetorical resistance and the historical legacy of the COM when he writes:

To skeptics, the creation of the Congress of Micronesia looked to be part of a larger agenda of a Micronesia being remade yet again by its colonial overlord. It is, perhaps, a more accurate assessment to view the Congress as a body attempting to co-opt the language and institutions of colonial dominance for more local purposes and objectives...The localized cultures and histories that informed its operations created critical distinctions and crucial differences that made it exasperating for those who expected an eminently manageable mock legislative body that would serve the dominant

interests of the larger political system that had created it. (Hanlon, *Making Micronesia* 103)

As Hanlon points out, even when the COM was utilizing political forms like a bicameral legislative structure modeled after that of the U.S. House and Senate or political and rhetorical expressions that were Western in nature, the body of representatives was not merely mimicking or acquiescing to U.S. control. Rather, it was using these forms to achieve local purposes and to meet the demands of values associated with specific home places. Thus, the COM was constructing a complex counter-narrative of agency and resistance rather than a monolithic narrative of submission rooted in U.S. control.

The operation of the counter-narrative legacy of the COM can be clearly seen in several speeches presented to the COM body over the course of the 1970s (leading up the 1979 John Mangefel speech to be covered later in this chapter). Many of these speeches utilize Western terms and concepts in order to critique U.S. power and control in the region. Take for example the following excerpt from a speech that Senator Ataji Balos from the Marshalls delivered before the COM House in 1977. In response to the US's recent proposal to use the UN's Nations Development Programme as a means of reporting and researching Micronesian economic development, Balos remarks,

Under the keepership of the Department of the Interior, Micronesia has for decades continued to suffer so-called advisers, consultants, and 'experts' whether we want them or not. Many have good intentions. However, in most cases, they are inept and useless. Others have actually done great harm to the present and future course of Micronesian development... Therefore, I believe it is time we recognize that the 'zoo theory' is still being applied to Micronesia. It is time that we break out of this zoo. It is time that we cast

aside the bridle, the harness, and the saddle of the Department of the Interior, which is traditionally a conservative keeper and the caretaker of Indian reservations and government land. (*COM Journal of the House of Representatives* 7th Congress 138)

In this speech, Balos is referring to a structure (the Western zoo) that is not found within Micronesia, itself. Zoos in Balos' speech are, therefore, given qualities and associations that Americans may not typically attribute to them. In the speech, zoos are linked with horse-breaking, even though wild horses are not usually kept within U.S. zoos. Furthermore, zoos are connected with bridling and controlling, terms usually associated with breaking wild animals rather than the work that American zoos often declare that they are doing (preserving wild animals and educating the public about their significance). However, despite what might on the surface seem like an ironic and uninformed reference to the concept of U.S. zoo-keeping, is actually an insightful critique of how U.S. systems involving economic *use* work more broadly. According to the speech, the U.S. is working to rhetorically define the Micronesian region through official reports and research studies that declare themselves as helpful in terms of preserving the region and educating the indigenous Micronesian residents with "expert" insights regarding their own significance (goals that U.S. zoos often promote in the rhetoric they employ regarding animal care).

However, as Balos points out what these reports and consultations have actually done is produce "great harm to the present and future course of Micronesian development" (138). This harm has come about as a result of research that does not understand the actual values and realities of the diverse islands within Micronesia, including values regarding economic self-sufficiency and the utilization of natural resources like land and animal life. That is, the U.S. has tried to capture and constrain Micronesia within a definitional box (official reports) in which it

does not belong for the purpose of its own use—whether spectacle or economic function. Balos defines this work of capture and control as “zoo theory” (a term he himself coins). This “zoo theory” not only refers to American zoos in particular, but also to a larger system of practices and its underlying theoretical framework concerning economic control and *use* more broadly: from capturing and controlling wild resources (i.e. horses) to constraining indigenous self-governance and development in Micronesia. Consequently, in his use of “zoo theory” Balos constructs a form of rhetoric that both utilizes a Western concept and completely redefines it—bringing to light the underlying values of economic use that American zoos represent and the ways those values serve as a direct threat to Micronesian local values regarding self-definition.

Balos presented his call for a resistance to “zoo theory” in early 1977. Nonetheless, his mode of re-writing Western concepts for the purpose of critique was not new to the COM. A few years earlier, President of the COM Senate, Chuukese Senator Tosiwo Nakayama, had memorably employed a similar approach in his opening speech to the Senate:

It is time for America to stop trying to put its ways upon Micronesia. It is like making a person wear clothes which do not fit him... We must start changing American patterns to fit our own. We must stop changing ourselves and our ways to fit American patterns. Now we must do things ourselves... Sometime ago a former member of the Congress spoke his idea in some very good words, His idea was something like this: It is time for Micronesia to roll up its sleeves and shape its destiny. Micronesians, wherever you are, it is time to stop sleeping. It is time to stop dreaming. Let us roll up our sleeves and build a proud and self-reliant nation. Wake up! Let's sleep and dream no more! (*COM Journal of the Senate* 5th Congress 97)

Here in his speech, Nakayama employs the metaphor of clothing, specifically Western “patterns” and forms like shirts with sleeves, to reflect upon Micronesian self-reliance. Initially, Nakayama indicates that it is time for America to stop trying to impose its own forms of self-definition upon Micronesia. Clothing and clothing patterns are analogous to modes of self-definition here. Nakayama’s opening remarks closely mirror statements made by John Mangefel, another member of the COM, who once wrote a critique of ties and formal suits worn within the COM, since they proved extremely uncomfortable within the humid climate of the region and also served to obscure the indigenous identities of the representatives themselves—the clothing did not represent who they were and where they were (Hanlon *Making Micronesia* 167).

However, rather than moving away from American forms altogether, as Mangefel’s remarks on clothing implied, Nakayama instead argues for a re-writing, a re-making of American forms in the light of the diverse and localized patterns offered by the various islands represented in the Micronesian region. This re-writing is fully captured in the way that Nakayama reiterates a Western expression, “rolling up your sleeves” and yet refers to its origin as another Micronesian speaker (and not an American). This reattribution of speaking authority creates a rhetorical move in which Micronesian speakers are the active agents in charge of defining their own self-reliance, even when that self-reliance also incorporates American forms, whether clothing or rhetoric. As the expression Nakayama quotes is also an economic one used to refer to the value of hard work, it can also be understood to refer more specifically to a re-writing of economic self-sufficiency. However, even in his use of the expression Nakayama continues a resistant re-writing since he transforms an expression usually used to refer to American values of individual hard work leading to individual success to refer to *collective* work and nation-building. Thus, a previously Western expression of individualism is re-written to serve as a rallying call for national unity and

action: “Let us roll up *our* sleeves and build a proud and self-reliant nation” (emphasis added 97).

Although not referring to specific values of specific places, Nakayama’s speech highlights the ways in which U.S. concepts and forms could be re-written to become part of a Micronesian narrative of political resistance and localized self-sufficiency. Taking place one year earlier in 1972, a speech by Pohnpeian chief Nanmwarki Hadley, more explicitly linked the act of re-writing Western forms and concepts with a specific Micronesian place and its cultural and political values. In a meeting of the special session of the COM (being held on Pohnpei) the chief magistrate, Nanmwarki Hadley of one of the two ruling clans in the region made this speech before the Congress in relation to the COM’s on-going deliberations regarding Micronesia’s status in relation to the U.S.:

I will give a brief description of the foundation of our traditional Ponapean customs, so that while you are deliberating on the status question, you may remember that although you may introduce something good from others who are foreigners to us, you should be careful to retain our good customs. We have prepared some Ponapean things which we want to offer you as a gift to signify our desire for cooperation and unity among us, the people of Micronesia. These things are what we use in the preparation of Ponapean sakua or kava, a custom which is highly respected by all Ponapeans. Two flat stones are our gift to you. According to our custom, these two stones have their specific function and names. One is called ‘Pelen Koadu’ and the other is called ‘Pelen Mwahu.’ The stone called Pelen Koadu is used to prepare kava for the Nahnmwarki, and the other one called Pelen Mwahu is used for the Nahnken. In our custom, the line of nobles headed by the Nahnmwarki is somewhat similar to the Senate in the Congress of Micronesia, in that it

represents the State, while in the same way line of Nobles headed by the Nahnken is similar to the House of Representatives in that it represents the people. Sakau is customarily prepared in this kind of stone. Sakau is a plant that is highly valued by the people of Ponape. It is the foundation of our Ponapean customs. When hostility arises, sakua is used to bring peace and harmony between the people involved. It is also used in the recognition of outstanding service, as in the presentation of local titles. It is used to promote unity among those people who are brought together in the sakau ceremony, and we know that the laws that the Congress created are the sakaus of our Micronesian people, and will bring us the same peace and harmony. (*COM Journal of the Senate* 4th Congress 10-11)

In his presentation, Nanmwarki Hadley illustrates to the Congress the very framework for political self-definition in Micronesia—i.e. grounding a re-writing of American concepts and forms in the specific values of specific island states represented in Micronesia. In Nanmwarki Hadley's speech the specific location is Pohnpei and the values are those of the specific chiefly political structure encompassing its various islands. The political proceedings of the COM, which are modeled after "foreign" American political protocols, are re-written according to the specific chiefly practices of the Pohnpeian Nanmwarki and Nahnken, the two chiefly ruling clans of the state. Within the clan structure, political decisions are made in terms of both familial networks and obligations and obligations to ruling leaders: the people and the state. Thus, in political actions ruling bodies are careful to weigh the price of peace with the price of valuing and preserving customs and honoring lines of authority. This approach calls for a fine balance and it is this authorial balance and decision-making that Nanmwarki Hadley places upon the Congress. This is a concept of balance not derived from American politics but rather, according

to the speech, modeled specifically upon a Pohnpeian system that values both obligations toward specific villages and values and the collective power of a larger ruling system.

As a symbol of this grounding of foreign political forms in specific indigenous places and practices, Nanmwarki Hadley presents the Congress with two sacred stones with specific Pohnpeian names. This very tangible connection to the land, the language, the names, and the practices of Pohnpei serves as a powerful call to the Congress to ground their political practices in the specific indigenous needs and values of the places represented within the body. And if this call wasn't clear from the symbolism of the stones Nanmwarki makes it even more explicit in his closing line when he states that the laws of the Congress are to serve as the *sakuas* of the Micronesian people, a sacred custom meant to produce political peace and protection. Politics are not to be removed from specific places but rather imbedded within them, attune to the values of reciprocity and sacred obligation that tie indigenous individuals to their own lands, to their own families, to their own clans and leaders, to their states, and to the larger region. It is this grounding in specific places and specific values of reciprocity that serves as the foundation for much of the narrative of political resistance and agency that speakers before the COM (including Balos, Nakayama, and Hadley) constructed throughout its operation. Furthermore, it is this grounding in place and reciprocity and its consequent impact upon Micronesian political and rhetorical resistance that I hope to highlight in the next sections of this chapter, as I explore in detail the rhetoric of Yapese Senator John Mangefel's speech before the COM in 1979.

JOHN MANGEFEL AND HIS LETTER

John Mangefel was born in Yap into a high position of chiefly status within his clan. He was both an orator and a writer, and he graduated with a degree in English from the University of Hawai'i in 1963 (Jaynes). Mangefel served as the Superintendent of Elementary Schools in Yap

before being asked to serve as representative to the Congress of Micronesia (COM). In the COM, Mangefel was an out-spoken orator, and he is well known today for speeches like his famous “Lord’s Prayer” in which he satirically employed the form of the Lord’s Prayer to criticize the increasing power of U.S. economic intervention within the islands (Jaynes). Mangefel is also known for a series of letters, often read in Congress, and written to his fictional cousin, Ngabchai (Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia* 144). About these letters, David Hanlon remarks,

Mangefel read the first in this extended series of letters on 26 February 1976. The now senator from Yap introduced Ngabchai as a young Yapese man in his early twenties who was majoring in anthropology and psychology at a university ‘somewhere between the east and west coasts of the continental United States.’ He explained his cousin’s decision of a major as motivated by the recognition of the need for an indigenous anthropologist to explain some of the strange, often unnatural habits and behaviors of Americans. A strong, poignant counterethnography thus wove its way through Mangefel’s humorous, seemingly benign narrative. (*Remaking Micronesia* 144)

As Hanlon points out, Mangefel’s letters are particularly striking because they take a Western genre, ethnographic writing, typically employed in marking Micronesian residents as “strange,” “unnatural,” and “other,” and reverse its meaning and purpose. Often in Mangefel’s work Western genres and rhetorical forms are employed in a critical reversal—to mark U.S. practices and to critique and resist U.S. colonial forms of rhetoric operating destructively in Micronesia.

Mangefel’s use of Western form and U.S. rhetoric in complex counter-narrative ways is a key component of each of the Ngabchai letters. The one that I will be analyzing throughout the rest of this chapter specifically employs the genre of Western idioms and U.S. economic rhetoric to respond to and critique proposed U.S. welfare legislation within the Micronesian regions. The

letter that will be highlighted in this chapter was written in 1978, and I selected it because it serves as one of the prime examples of the mix of rhetorical forms and functions that characterize Mangefel's writing. When the letter was first read, the regions of Micronesia were still under U.S. government control, although they also had their own self-appointed governing body made up of representatives from the various islands within the region (the Congress of Micronesia). Mangefel initially published his letter as a public mode of discourse in response to U.S. proposals to implement the 1978 Needy Family Feeding Program upon the islands of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Within this letter, Mangefel employs rhetoric like the traditional Western idiom "Never look a gift horse in the mouth" to respond to U.S. provisional measures being enacted in Micronesia (Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia* 157). According to tradition, the idiom "Never look a gift horse in the mouth" has two common interpretations: 1. Do not be ungrateful for a gift, or 2. Do not investigate a gift as this could have dangerous consequences. The first interpretation comes from an old custom of giving livestock as gifts. To ask questions about a gift, like a horse, would be read as a sign of disrespect or ingratitude in Western cultures. However, the second interpretation comes from the story of the Greek ambush on the city of Troy using the Trojan horse to conceal troops. To look in the mouth of that horse, could mean certain death (although it could also be argued that more lives could actually have been saved by looking in the horse's mouth in the first place) (Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia* 57). In his letter, Mangefel remarks upon this second interpretation as he states, "I guess the man who made up the saying 'Don't look a gift horse in the mouth' never heard of the Trojan horse" (Mangefel102). Pointing out that the idiom being employed has dual meanings—meanings that in fact operate contradictorily—Mangefel's letter hints at the multiple layers of meaning at work within the text, itself. On the

one hand, the letter appears to be highlighting Western forms and Western values of exchange. However, as will be illustrated in the following sections of this chapter, the letter is simultaneously pointing to the danger of these rhetorical forms and urging an indigenous audience to re-write and resist them.

SPATIAL METAPHORS AND PLACE-BASED RHETORIC

When reading work like Mangefel's letter, it is essential to identify the context of the writing in order to fully understand the text's utilization of specific discursive forms. Currently, in works written in a Western context, writing and place have often been connected with the concept of spatial metaphors. These metaphors, according to Nedra Reynolds, not only represent place, but also the values and ideologies specific cultures and societies invest in relating writing with place (Reynolds *Geographies of Writing* 12). Now, with this definition in mind, it might be read as an ethical and pedagogical imperative that each culture should be in charge of defining its own set of spatial metaphors. However, that is not always the case. In fact, as Pacific scholar and writer Vilsoni Hereniko writes in his essay "Representations of Cultural Identity," indigenous cultures within the Pacific (and the spatial metaphors they use to define language) are often in conflict as, "our views of who we are may or may not coincide with other people's views of us. Our cultural identities are therefore always in a state of becoming, a journey in which we never arrive" (138). As Hereniko points out, indigenous people within the Pacific often operate in a situation of double-consciousness, in which an internalized sense of self differs from outward definitions and forms of identification. Within this context, the spatial metaphors one identifies with (internally vs. externally) may not belong to just one culturally specific set of meanings. Instead spatial metaphors, specifically within the Pacific and within regions like Micronesia,

often operate along a complex continuum made up of conceptualizations of language and place and the self that are taken from multiple spaces and hold multiple meanings.

Understanding how spatial metaphors operate along a continuum within indigenous Pacific regions like Micronesia is ultimately something that is not as readily acknowledged and understood in a Western rhetorical context. Ultimately, this failure to understand and evaluate indigenous rhetoric from Micronesia on its own terms is perhaps exemplified more concretely here by a spatial metaphor itself: the container metaphor. Scholar Michael Reddy initially introduced the container metaphor as a linguistic concept, to describe language as discrete “contained” units of speech, which are then passed back and forth between speaker and audience (Reddy 5). As Philip Eubanks explains, the container metaphor is an embodied means of conceptualizing language use, a means of representing the ways language functions across space (93).

In a Western context, the container as a metaphor for language use has recently undergone much critique. For example, Patricia Bizzell writes in her essay “Arguing About Literacy” that the metaphor is too limiting because it “treat[s] written English as a set of containers into which we pour meaning, regardless of how meaning exists before the pouring” (Bizzell 345). One might think of Bizzell’s critical remarks more carefully here in terms of a specific example. An idiom is a language form that often remains unchanged over time, and its meanings reduced to pieces of wisdom that symbolize key values and ideas within the discourse community to which it belongs. Consequently, the idiom as a language form does not readily move or function between and among discourse communities and is often utilized more as a marker or gateway defining who is within and without a particular discourse group. The idiom when placed within Bizzell’s critique of the container metaphor is highly limited in its function.

It is a form into which meaning is discretely “poured,” transmitted and then unpacked by members of a particular discourse community.

Bizzell’s critique of the container as a model for visualizing discursive practices is not the only opposition the metaphor has received within the field of composition and rhetoric. Nedra Reynolds, takes a step away from just semantics and argues that the container also functions to limit an understanding of movement in and among discourse communities, thus, the focus becomes rules and refinement of the writer rather than upon the dynamic interactions between place, the writer, society, and the audience (Reynolds 14). In her re-evaluation of the container metaphor, Reynolds concludes that by conceptualizing language within a static dwelling mode alone vs. a model that allows it to travel, container metaphors for language use serve to limit the connections that can be made between multiple places, discourse communities, and rhetorical practices (13). Specifically, In *Geographies of Writing*, Reynolds is concerned that the container metaphor is overly concerned with the subjective and constructs a *habitus*: Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “sedimented” ways of knowing enacted within embodied practices (544). Bourdieu’s *habitus* is not open to changes in meaning and is limited as Henry Giroux points out because it “disregards the assumption that reflexive thought may result in social practices that qualitatively restructure one’s disposition or structure of needs, one’s habitus” (90). Thus, conceptualizing language as bounded and “sedimented” in only one set of place-based values leaves no room for resistant thought and a “restructuring” of discursive forms according to a different set of values or needs.

On the one hand, Reynolds’ and Bizzell’s evaluation of the container as limiting and isolating does hold true in part when applied to Micronesia. When defined externally, through U.S. rhetoric and values of place, the Micronesian regions and their rhetoric appear rooted

primarily in ties to U.S. forms of identification and power. For example, as David Hanlon has pointed out the “discursive dimension to the colonizing process...[has] proved every bit as much an act of taking possession as planting a pennant on an island shore in the name of some distant sovereign” (*Remaking* 18). Thus, in writing for Micronesians and about them, U.S. rhetoric has tended to place Micronesian writing and expression in a language box (a spatial container) bounded by U.S. rules and forms and modes of identification. This constraint of language is echoed through the actual use of containers within much of the Micronesian regions, as well. Micronesia is currently one of the few regions to experience a rising increase every year in imports and shipping. Last year, although sales in Hawai‘i and Guam were down, the U.S. company, Matson shipping, reported an increase in container volume and shipping to the Micronesian regions (Gomes). Thus, with the shipping container literally functioning to maintain U.S. economic control in the Micronesian regions, and the container as a spatial metaphor operating in a way that constrains language use, it is clear that the container does embody some of the very limiting and isolating properties that Nedra Reynolds mentions.

Nonetheless, the way the container functions as a spatial metaphor is also a bit more complex than the critical arguments indicate. It is more complex because it can have multiple meanings just as containers have multiple uses and values within the Micronesian regions and across the Pacific. Many of the regions of Micronesia have a very different set of values surrounding the container. For individuals in these regions, containers are multi-purpose objects that combine equal parts travel and grounding, community and self-expression. As Marshallese poet, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner points out in her poem, “Tell Them,” containers, traditionally in the form of baskets, have long been used in the Micronesian regions to conduct trade between various islands (Jetnil-Kijiner). Today, this form of trade continues across even broader spaces,

as plastic containers are used to ship food and other place-specific items across the Pacific, thus establishing relationships and maintaining close ties across the shared space of the ocean (Spencer 19). As they pass back and forth across the Pacific, these containers are often labeled by hand, names and addresses inscribed on the lids, thus, embodying self-expression and identity as they travel.

Additionally, even in terms of the large Matson containers used to maintain U.S. trade in the Micronesian regions, there is a growing movement to re-purpose these containers for new uses. For example, within spaces where Micronesians are now settling across the Pacific (specifically O‘ahu) there are talks to re-purpose Matson containers into housing communities for low-income families—an increasing number of whom are Micronesian migrant families (Pang). In this way, containers will actually function as a powerful means of connecting the Micronesian migrant community to each other by creating a new housing space where they can live in family networks together. Thus, containers, in a Micronesian context, may not always function as a negative representation of language stuck in place. Rather, the container can serve as a complex spatial metaphor for language that is grounded in place while also able to travel wide spaces, language that is both self-expressive and communal, and language that is multi-purpose and multi-formed, holding diverse meanings (some of which Westerners are not familiar with at all).

Understanding spatial metaphors (like the container) in terms of the actual place-based politics and practices within Micronesia itself enables a reading of indigenous texts from that region that models what Linda Tuhiwai Smith refers to as a practice of “de-colonizing indigenous methodologies” (Smith 3). That is, approaching the defining of the Pacific and its discursive practices through the very lens of indigenous values and ways of life. Understanding

the container as a spatial metaphor not just defined by U.S. practices but also by indigenous community networks and values of place allows for a resistant re-reading of the container's contents and a new understanding of the diverse meanings that it can hold. And as I will illustrate in the rest of this chapter, this understanding makes possible alternative readings of indigenous texts, like the political writings of famous Yapese spokesman John Mangefel.

THE CONTAINER METAPHOR & READING JOHN MANGEFEL'S LETTER

When reading Mangefel's letter with an understanding of the "container metaphor" as merely negative, one can come to an evaluation of the text that overlooks the complexities of how place actually functions in the rhetoric of the letter. For example, initially, one might read the use of a Western idiom like, "Never look a gift horse in the mouth" as a call to an American audience's understanding of cultural gift-giving practices. Reading the idiom as a static and contained language form leads to an understanding of Mangefel's employment of this phrase as a reification of accepted and valued American cultural practices. His expression is thus confined to supporting a mode of gift receipt without questions, since these questions are coded as a form of ingratitude. This use of a traditional idiom about being grateful and non-questioning regarding gifts primarily builds *ethos* with an American audience, since it establishes credibility based upon its knowledge and evocation of values rooted in U.S. place and culture. It also appeals to Western *pathos* as it reifies the Western position of benevolent caretaker in relation to Pacific island nations. This benevolent caretaker message is one that the U.S. often tells itself, as Mary Louise Pratt writes in her work *Imperial Eyes*. In fact, Pratt argues that benevolent reciprocity "has always been capitalism's ideology of itself... capitalism retains it as one of the stories it tells about itself" (84). Thus, employing an idiom that communicates these Western values of caring and compassionate exchange, Mangefel's letter might be read as merely echoing a

message that the U.S. promotes about its own capitalistic endeavors within the Micronesian regions.

Furthermore, reading Mangefel's rhetoric according to just one version of the container metaphor also serves to limit resistant readings of his work. Even though Mangefel continues within his letter to actually re-write the idiom to "Always look a gift horse in the mouth" by adding "and the stomach too," this act of re-writing could be ultimately connected back to Western cultural values, as well. Since the idiom does not travel, neither does its re-written counter-part. The re-write of "Always look a gift horse in the mouth and in the stomach too" simply translates to an act of receiving U.S. gifts as a prime source of food to fill the stomach. This reading, it could be claimed, would support a reading of further lines in the letter as an overly-simplistic request for U.S. money in order to support Micronesian subsistence farming: "For myself, I would rather they simply give us the \$35 million, and let us do what we want. Just think how much taro, breadfruit, tapioca, vegetables and so on you could grow with \$35 million. With \$35 million you could build a fleet of fishing boats, and some reefer plants. With \$35 million you could grow a lot of pigs and chickens, and get lots of eggs" (*COM Journal of the Senate 7th Congress*100). Rather than functioning as a powerful call for food sovereignty, the letter's possible meaning is constrained by the limitations of a container metaphor only rooted in U.S. values of place. Thus, the letter's audience is left with a disparaging and disempowering message that encapsulates Micronesian dependence upon and gratefulness toward a U.S. system of financial and nutritional control rather than resistance to it.

This reading of Mangefel's writing through the lens of a prominent Western understanding of the container model of discourse is largely dissatisfying because it leaves writing from Micronesia subordinated under the privilege of U.S. colonial interests and values.

However, I argue that if the reading lens is switched for an indigenous one from a specific region of Micronesia (Yap) a deeper, more resistant reading comes to light.

Although Mangefel's evocation of an idiom may seem to build *ethos* with a Western value system initially, the evocation moves beyond Western values when read through a lens that focuses on an indigenous place. Understanding the indigenous place-based values that Mangefel himself draws from highlights the fact that Mangefel's letter is actually a challenge to the discourse that would seek to relegate Micronesia to a position of submissive reception to U.S. government gifts. By reproducing the idiom, Mangefel is calling attention to the cultural values the U.S. is attempting to impose upon Micronesian responses (discursive and otherwise) to U.S. government aid. In fact, programs packaged as gifts from the U.S. to Micronesian nations often functioned to benefit the U.S. and not the indigenous communities who were often forced to become dependent upon them. For example, the 1978 Needy Family Feeding Program to which Mangefel is responding, is presented under the guise of "helping" the indigenous peoples of Micronesia who "need" U.S. provision and protection. However, as Mangefel points out in his letter, the "need" that the U.S. has created in the Micronesian regions is rooted in rhetoric and not reality as the numbers that the U.S. projects for its feeding programs are not even matched in the population numbers of the individual regions (*COM Journal of the Senate 7th Congress*101). Thus, the act is not designed to meet the real needs of the indigenous residents but rather to function as a welfare act, that strengthens Micronesian economic dependence upon U.S. government aid, rather than fostering independence and sustainability within the islands.

In addition to this increased economic dependence, welfare acts like the Needy Family Feeding Program also work on a deeper psychological level, as well. As Pacific writer and scholar Albert Wendt points out in his article "Towards a New Oceania," economic and

educational policies that distribute wealth and information in such a way as to keep the masses of indigenous peoples dependent upon colonial “aid” operate in the making of imitators (i.e. “mimic men”) in the Pacific (Wendt 5). That is, individuals in the Pacific come to internalize the rhetoric that says that they are indeed dependent and need American or foreign colonial education and economic assistance. Additionally, as Hereniko has pointed out, this internalization can also result in a “split consciousness” in which the individual feels divided between external representations of the self and internal ones (Hereniko 138). As a result of this psychological internalization of the rhetoric of dependence, individuals within areas of the Pacific like Micronesia can begin to feel torn between forms of identification and even at times reify actions that support the belief that “only the foreign is right, or proper, or worthwhile” (Wendt 5). Thus, through policies like the Needy Family Feeding Program the U.S. works to build systems of dependence within Micronesia, which operate both economically and psychologically. This dependence is, ultimately, based upon a form of rhetoric that privileges the giver (the U.S.) over the gift’s recipients (the individual island regions themselves).

Alternately, in response to a conceptualization of gift-giving that privileges the giver over the recipients, Mangefel posits an indigenous value system that actually highlights the privilege and position of the *receivers*. In Yap, gift-giving is a practice nurtured especially between specific villages and between the central island (Yap proper) and the outlying islands. Within the context of these villages and islands, gifts are given along established hierarchical lines, according to certain kinship relationships established within particular villages and along a “father-son” line of relationship between Yap proper and the outer islands (Aoyama 2).

In these gift-giving practices, the emphasis is upon an act of exchange, which reinforces particular kinship ties and social hierarchies occupied by both the gift-giver and receiver. Acts of

ceremonial exchange in Yap are referred to as *mitmit*, and they often involve very detailed protocols through which communal gifts may be given and received. In order for a *mitmit* to take place, either between villages or between an outer island and Yap proper, permission must be asked of appropriate village leaders and high chiefs. The high chiefs of both the giving village and the receiving village must be consulted, and only once the proper authority has been granted may giving proceed (Lingenfelter 162). This process of asking for authority indicates a particular *ethos* associated with gift giving within Yap. That is, the credibility and authority of a gift-giver is based upon how well they have respected the indigenous community's orders of exchange. These orders of exchange are set in place to verify that a gift is meant to positively affect the indigenous communities involved, rather than focusing on the individual giver. Gifts in these cases, then, are not just about the people giving them but more importantly about all the communities implicated in the whole giving process.

Returning back to Mangefel's letter with Yap's indigenous model of gift-giving in mind, one can see that what starts out as an initial address to an American audience becomes a resistant act of critique. That is, Mangefel's altering of the idiom "Never look a gift horse in the mouth" to "*Always* look a gift horse in the mouth" serves not as a mode of agreement but rather a means of pointing out a system of gift-giving that lacks proper *ethos* within the context of Pacific place, particularly Yap. U.S. leaders have not obeyed the protocols of giving necessary to lend them the authority to impose a system of welfare (government "giving") within Yap. Reading Mangefel's text in this way highlights indigenous resistance through a language grounded within Yap and Yapese values of authority and reciprocity. This is a reading that emphasizes indigenous agency tied to place, rather than a willing acceptance of U.S. government intervention and dependence.

Furthermore, this is a reading that highlights the politics embedded within acts of exchanging gifts, as well. In the very delivery of the line, “I guess the man who made up the saying ‘Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth’ never heard of the Trojan horse” Mangefel’s tone is sarcastic and ironic indicating the way in which he is pointing to an underlying meaning behind the benevolent gift-giving values associated with the dominant understanding of the U.S. idiom he is employing. For Mangefel, it is not just the medium, the form, that is in question, but its meaning.⁴ Ultimately, if form is linked inextricably with content then the critique of the Western idiom in Mangefel’s speech works to also critique the intricate politics and dangers behind U.S. acts of gift-giving and receiving (the meaning behind the idiom).

Although his critique of form and meaning is firmly grounded in Yapese place-based values, Mangefel’s rhetoric also embodies movement in the way that its grounding in place does not limit its ability to also travel across discursive boundaries and space (a formulation that Reynolds and Bizzell’s reading of the container metaphor argues against). The continual movement of Mangefel’s rhetoric is evidenced in his emphasis upon always looking a gift horse in the “mouth.” Looking a horse in the mouth implies looking very carefully at the “words” and “discursive practices” that the U.S. employs in its policies in relation to Micronesia in order to determine their actual authority and meaning. This rhetoric builds initially upon the foundation of Yapese gift-giving values described in the previous paragraphs. That is, looking at U.S. discourse in the light of specific place-based values undermines the *ethos* and power of U.S. colonial rhetoric.

Mangefel now moves from this specific grounding in place to make an argument for the larger region, as well. That is, one form of indigenous place-based rhetoric comes to function as

⁴ The phrase “the medium is the message” that forms the underlying foundation of my analysis of Mangefel’s argument here comes from a school of thought called the Prague Linguistics school of communication. According to Roman Jakobson, a primary member of the school, in writing and speech, “the contents are part of the form, just as the form is part of the contents” (Jakobson 60).

a model for reading that can be employed in a larger context of the Pacific—throughout the Micronesian network of islands linked intimately through a connection to the ocean. This connection to ocean as a means of mobilizing rhetoric rooted in particular values of place, is further evidenced as Mangefel’s re-writing of the idiom continues. Mangefel goes on to state that one should not only look at a gift horse’s mouth but at its “stomach” too. According to Yapese traditional models of family, power and identity are traced through a connection to the “stomach.” Biological siblings with the same mother, even if they have different fathers, are classified as *beyal i wolag* or “siblings of one belly” (Lingenfelter 51). The family tree is traced through these siblings, whereas siblings with the same father but different mothers lie outside of it (they are not considered the “real” siblings) (Lingenfelter 49). Mutual kinship ties and responsibilities are highest for “real” siblings or the “siblings of one belly” (51). In order to be considered a “sibling of one belly” one must share an affiliation to the same matrilineal line. Reading this through a rhetorical lens, one’s responsibility and identity as a speaker or writer within the context of Yap is rooted in one’s connection to specific land and birthright—i.e. indigenous ties to Yap and the Yapese community. The U.S. government is, therefore, to be questioned and resisted because it is not a “real” sibling to the Yap community, but rather an imposter at best.

In her dissertation, *Imagining the Marshalls: Chiefs, Tradition, and the State on the Fringes of U.S. Empire* anthropologist Julie Walsh connects this imposter status on an even deeper level to the role of a chief within a Micronesian community, the highest position within the family unit. In an interview with a prominent politician and member of a Marshallese chiefly lineage, Walsh discovers that the U.S. is often referred to as an improper chief. As the politician puts it, U.S. officials claim power without proper authority: “It’s people from the lower lineages

who are bad because they don't have the *joji* they have very little chiefly blood in them. Because here we say that the chief blood is the thing that make you be kind, be generous, be understanding, but when you mix that with – like the people are always out for themselves. You watch them, you'll see them, different from the higher ranking ones" (Walsh 272). Like this high-ranking senator, Mangefel himself was a member of a chiefly clan. Thus, Mangefel may have been linking the "stomach" not just to one's position in relation to a given family unit but one's relationship to the way in which a family unit can and should be ruled. Since the U.S. did not possess the blood ties necessary to function as a proper chief, it was merely an imposter who was out for its own interests and not the welfare of the whole community. Thus, U.S. claims that Yap is "needy" or requires assistance from a U.S. patriarchal benefactor are undermined because they are ultimately based on claims of a false mutual obligation toward the Yapese community—not claims grounded in essential kinship ties, chiefly lineage, and familial identity.

In the context of Yapese values, looking at the stomach implies not just looking at individual identity *but also* caring for a larger communal structure. This communal structure often consists of the people that make up families and chiefly clan structures (like those mentioned in the previous paragraph). Additionally though, community also consists of one's connection to ancestral land. As land is passed down through a family, often through the matrilineal line, caring for the land becomes a way of caring for the home or caring for the family (Hezel 35). Thus, subsistence farming isn't just a base form of survival, it is an act, as Mangefel points out, that is critical for familial "self-respect," and "self-governance" (*COM Journal of the Senate 7th Congress* 102). Thus, Mangefel's suggestion that the U.S. ought to fund Micronesian indigenous farming practices rather than feeding programs built on imported goods, is not a simplistic call for U.S. money to support non-advanced growing practices, but

rather an insistence upon maintaining the integral link between caring for the land and caring for one's family—the link between the stomach as the site for food but also the site for the land and family identity.

Additionally, the stomach also serves to represent an even larger community identity and care, as well. Becoming a “sibling of one belly” is not only achieved biologically in Yap culture, but also through adoption. That is, if a child “gives up the sib affiliation of his biological mother and assumes the sib of his adoptive mother, he becomes ‘of one belly’ (Lingenfelter 49). In many of the Micronesian regions (including Yap) families often consist of multiple “fathers” and “mothers” that are shared through adoption and inter-marriage and spread across multiple island regions. This principle of adoption can be viewed as a reflection of the role of ocean within the larger Micronesian region. One can be grounded within a specific place (like Yap) but through a shared connection to the ocean, one can also be simultaneously connected to other indigenous peoples throughout the Pacific.

This reference to the ocean as a source of genealogy (both a specific one and one spanning the ocean) is not foreign within Pacific indigenous literature. As rhetoric in the Pacific is often multi-formed, combining multiple genres to communicate an argument, I cite an example from poetry here to illustrate how the rhetoric of a shared ocean space functions across discursive communal spaces. The genealogical link through the ocean is one that Marshallese poet Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner explicitly mentions in her poem “Dear Matafele Peinam,” in which she refers to the ocean as a “mother.” Drawing upon the way in which the ocean functions as an ancestral, genealogical frame of reference within the Pacific, reading and responding to U.S. rhetoric through indigenous values becomes a practice not just encouraged in Yap, but throughout the Micronesian region and the larger Pacific, as well. This type of reading ultimately

builds upon the practice that Philip Eubanks initially writes about when he emphasizes that the container or conduit metaphor is a promising one in that it highlights the “space-between-people” involved in communication (108). The “space-between-people” in the Pacific is a powerful connection to the ocean, which allows individuals to employ very specific place-based discursive practices (containers) while simultaneously appealing to diverse indigenous audiences through an appeal to a shared ocean space and oceanic networks of travel.

CONCLUSION

In Mangefel’s short but profound re-writing of “Never look a gift horse in the mouth” with “always look a gift horse in the mouth and the stomach too” one sees how specific Yapese values concerning reciprocity and response can reveal the promise and potential embodied in the container metaphor. Close analysis of this phrase illustrates how a metaphor critiqued within a Western context as too constraining and encapsulating actually becomes a metaphor that highlights the network of roots and routes in indigenous discursive practices. It is this re-reading of indigenous texts from Micronesia that makes all the difference. Reading them through a Western lens leaves the texts and the Micronesian individuals who have authored them stuck in place — stuck in either a sense of indigenous place that won’t allow them to effectively fight for themselves or others or stuck in a place that is defined primarily according to U.S. colonial values and rules. Reading texts like John Mangefel’s through an indigenous lens allows them to speak for themselves. It also allows these texts to move, as Yapese values are used to speak on behalf of all members of the community and by extension on behalf of all parts of the Pacific that are being contained, isolated, and exploited under U.S. colonial programs and policies. Employing an indigenous model of the container metaphor enables rhetoric within the Pacific,

specifically places like Micronesia, to be set free from the discursive boundaries, histories, and politics that have worked to contain them for so long.

CHAPTER 3

Writing “Home”: The Construction of an Online Third Space of Rhetorical Survivance in Micronesian Migrant Writings

According to a recent study conducted by the University of Hawai‘i’s East West Center of Asia-Pacific research, the rate of movement from regions of Micronesia to the United States is on the rise, as migrant numbers have increased from 700 annually (from 1995-2000) to approximately 1,200 annually (Hezel, *Micronesians on the Move* 1). Approximately one-third of people born within the Federated States of Micronesia now live outside of their home nations (Hezel, *Micronesians on the Move* 1). Migrants move to the United States as “legal aliens,” a designation granted to them under the Compact of Free Association (COFA) agreement signed between the U.S. and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in 1986.

This chapter is chiefly concerned with Micronesian rhetoric when it ventures away from indigenous home spaces. This is a bit of a departure from the previous chapter, which primarily explored Micronesian rhetoric within Micronesia itself. Nonetheless, in analyzing examples of online rhetoric like online interviews, poems, and the *Fourth Branch* and *We Are Oceania* websites, I explore how rhetoric from Micronesian migrant writers can still create indigenous works of resistance even when far removed from Micronesia. In looking at the online writing of Micronesian migrants, I explore how rhetoric adapts and transforms when placed into the context of actual movement and displacement. And in each of the sections of this chapter I explore the following question: How do Micronesian writers continue to write as indigenous authors when writing in a context that they are not indigenous to? Working to answer this central question, the rest of this chapter will chronicle the key contextual events behind the geographical and political

ruptures in which many Micronesian migrants (particularly to Hawai‘i) now find themselves situated. Furthermore, the chapter will explore what rhetorical resistance and agency look like when home place is so far removed. With an eye toward this resistance, the latter portions of this chapter will explore the concept of rhetorical *survivance* as scholars like Gerald Vizenor and Malea Powell have defined it. Additionally, this chapter will also employ the concept of *third space*, as defined through the theories of Homi Bhaba, Edward Soja, and others, in order to better understand how online writing and online writing communities currently operate as a productive, new rhetorical space of networking and responsibility for Micronesian migrants in O‘ahu.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Before looking at the ways in which Micronesian migrant rhetoric currently adapts and transforms, it is important to set up a bit of context regarding the current trends that are bringing Micronesian migrants across the Pacific to places like Hawai‘i. To fully understand the context for current migrant trends, one must first look back to the 1980s. In 1986, the U.S. signed a series of new agreements, called the Compact of Free Association, with many of the island states of Micronesia. According to the Compact, the islands of Micronesia (specifically Yap, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Chuuk) would be granted status as “independent nations” while also still “freely associating” themselves with continued U.S. trade regulations and economic intervention.⁵ Furthermore, under the agreement, the U.S. would allow Micronesian residents the ability to reside in the U.S. as “legal aliens,” with promised access to health care. Ironically, this health care provision was included in the agreement because many of the health complications in the islands stem from U.S. intervention in the first place. These health issues include complications like radioactive poisoning (due to atomic bomb testing) and diabetes (due to the introduction of

⁵ The regions of Palau and the Marshall islands negotiated their own separate treaties with the U.S. because they were seen as more valuable regions, due to their strategic military locations (Hezel *Reflections* 115).

U.S. processed foods and goods) (Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice 9). Tragically, though, many of these health care benefits have not actually been administered or funded as promised. And, as “legal aliens,” in a special category created by the Compact, Micronesian migrants do not have full “citizenship” status in the U.S., and, therefore, have little legal protection and little means of accessing this health care on their own once they actually move to the U.S. (“IRS Immigration Terms”).

Under the proffered protection of health care benefits and educational support (the provisions promised through the Compact), Micronesian men, women, and children began to move in increasing numbers from their home regions to the United States. In the 1990s as more and more Micronesian individuals began to settle in the U.S., Guam, and Hawai‘i, the U.S. Department of the Interior agreed that the moving trend was substantial enough to require promised federal funding to be enacted and for “Compact Impact” surveys to be conducted (Spencer 8). By 2000, it was estimated that over 22,000 Micronesians lived in the U.S., and by 2013 it was estimated that about 10-12,000 lived in Hawai‘i alone (Spencer 7).

THE POLITICS OF MIGRATION

Taking up residence in the U.S. in these increasing numbers, COFA migrants come to occupy a very complex position in relation to the U.S. government and the indigenous populations of the regions they now live in. As “legal aliens” COFA migrants often move to the U.S. and settle for long periods of time—rather than continually migrating back and forth. This form of long-term residence often defines *settler* groups more so than migrants. As a potential settler population, therefore, Micronesian migrants could be subject to the sharp critiques associated with settler colonialism. In the case of Hawai‘i and other colonized locations within the Pacific these critiques are specifically

concerned with the ways in which settler groups erode or attack the rights and protections of native indigenous groups. Patrick Wolfe, in writing about settler colonialism, positions the native indigenous population of a region and all other groups along a binary of indigenous vs. settler. Thus, any group that is not of the native indigenous group is part of a “structure” of settler colonialism that works to “eliminate” the native population (390). In writing about Hawai‘i and the practices of Asian settlers to the region, Candice Fujikane also places indigenous and settler along a binary as she argues that all non-natives within a region partake in the advantages of a particular regime of colonial power (4).

Now although Wolfe and Fujikane have been foundational in studying the impact of migration and settler colonialism within specific regions in the Pacific (Aotearoa and Hawai‘i) their work does not quite capture the complexity of the position currently occupied by *indigenous* migrant groups like those from Micronesia. Writers like Lorenzo Veracini and Jodi Byrd have worked to capture this complexity by imagining the position of migrants (like those from Micronesia) as a triangular relationship rather than a binary. According to Veracini, groups “who are in place but cannot belong to the settler body politic (i.e. variously defined as racialized Others in each settler context)” are to be defined not as settlers but as “exogenous Others” (110-111). In her book, *Transit of Empire*, Jodi Byrd refers to this group as “arrivants” (Byrd xix). As exogenous Others or arrivants, migrants are positioned in a sort of third space (a triangulation) between the settler colonial power and the native indigenous population. In this position, Veracini argues that exogenous Others can benefit from the “dispossession of indigenous peoples”; however, their “position vis a vis settler normativity remains distinctive” (Veracini 103). In other words,

although Micronesian migrants could stand to benefit from the dispossession of other indigenous population groups, they are not ultimately a part of the settler structure that systemically works toward this dispossession or elimination as they remain distinctive from it. Also, in this unique position Micronesian migrants are not exempt from dispossession themselves as the settler polity often works to eliminate *all* indigenous others in its work to maintain ultimate control within a region (Veracini 113).

This third space of exogenous otherness (both within and without the sphere of the settler colonial dispossession of indigenous groups) brings with it specific political concerns and moves of rhetorical adaptation. On the one hand it brings with it a struggle for survival and the consequent necessity of adaptation. This struggle for survival becomes essential within a context that works toward indigenous elimination as “a successful settler society manages the orderly and progressive emptying of the indigenous and exogenous Others segments of the population economy” (Veracini 113). In response to very real forces of elimination, Micronesian migrants must work to produce forms of writing and rhetoric that allow them to adapt to and survive within their current situation.

Additionally, though, since survival in the third space of exogenous otherness can also be accompanied by dispossession of *other* Pacific indigenous groups it can also simultaneously be joined by a second impulse—responsibility. Chuukese scholar, Joakim Peter, writes about the dual political impulses of survival and responsibility in his essay “Chuukese travellers and the idea of horizon.” Peter argues that Micronesian migration needs to be understood as an extension of indigenous home spaces and Chuukese values of exchange—specifically in terms of resources and mutual care. Thus, Chuukese

concepts of navigating and travelling are a way of moving oceans of islands into

one's personal boundaries for the purposes of healing individual illnesses. The concept of *etak*, the navigational technique of moving islands past a stationary reference point, brings us to the point of considering how navigators, in their travelling, manipulate metaphorical and physical landscapes and boundaries.

(265)

In Peter's definition, migration is an act of Chuukese survival in that it "locally guided" from the home island or "muir" as a starting point (255). From this starting point, navigation or *etak* is a means of creating a network, a life-line, for bringing much needed resources into Chuukese communities in order to provide "individual healing" (265). However, this means of securing individual Chuukese healing and survival is not a one-way process. As Peter describes earlier in his essay, Chuukese migration to Guam is a means of not only extending the range of Chuukese trade in order to secure necessary resources for Chuukese survival *but also* a means of providing Chuukese resources to the indigenous population in Guam (i.e. labor, goods, and knowledge) (264). Survival in this configuration becomes a means of uniting and joining indigenous peoples and spaces together wherever the navigator moves in the construction of a multi-directional (Peter calls it "circular") extended "landscape" of healing and exchange. This definition transforms the political survival of the Micronesian migrant into a larger concern with political responsibility and "waa" for all indigenous people (life to *all* bodies in need) (Peter 264). As will be discussed later in this chapter the dual concerns with political survival and political responsibility are essential to the forms of online rhetoric that Micronesian migrants are currently producing, particularly in relation to Hawai'i and the Native Hawaiian population.

SURVIVAL & ADAPTATION

When writing in political contexts, like Hawai‘i, indigenous Micronesian authors must work against rhetoric that can be defined primarily in terms of what David Hanlon calls a “discourse of development” and “domination” (Hanlon, *Remaking* 8). This form of rhetoric is one that Scott Richard Lyons, writing about Native American rhetorical sovereignty, terms “rhetorical imperialism: the ability of dominant powers to assert control of others by setting the terms of debate” (452). Although it is speaking specifically in terms of U.S. and Native American relations here, the term “rhetorical imperialism” also serves to highlight the power of rhetoric within other indigenous groups and U.S. relationships as well. For example, public figures currently employ a discourse of development to position the U.S. as a great paternal savior and the Micronesian regions are described in terms of “helplessness” and a financial “burden” (Hanlon, *Remaking* 8) In these terms, the Micronesian regions “need” the assistance of the U.S.

This type of rhetoric can be widely found in news sources most readily in areas of the U.S. currently experiencing the heaviest influx of migrants. For example, in 2011 Hawai‘i governor Neil Abercrombie lamented that the state simply couldn’t afford to support the growing tide of immigrants from the Micronesian regions (DePledge). Senator Daniel Inouye went a step further and commented to a reporter that “it is not fair for Hawaii to pick up the load because most citizens of those islands stop over in Hawaii because of ethnic similarities, language similarities, and they feel at home climatically” (Blair). And just recently on November 10, 2014, the *Honolulu Star Advertiser* implicitly echoed this political rhetoric as it asked its readers whether or not the state should entirely cut medical funding for “noncitizens, such as the COFA Pacific migrants” from the Micronesian regions (“The Big Q”). This rhetoric frames Micronesian

migrants in terms of a financial burden, a competition for state and federal funding that simply should not be carried any longer.

Ultimately, the types of rhetoric that the U.S. has used in order to control and eliminate the Micronesian migrant population have not gone unacknowledged by many indigenous Micronesian writers, who have and continue to actively resist it. These writers have constructed a rhetoric of *survivance*. As indigenous scholar Gerald Vizenor has defined it, *survivance* in the midst of displacement is often defined by a complex negotiation of place-based rhetoric and values. In his work, Vizenor writes that North American Indian texts, or “survivance stories” serve as a powerful means of survival in the face of U.S. policies that work toward erasure and domination. To be more precise, Vizenor indicates that, “Survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry” (1). Indigenous survivance stories, thus, serve as a powerful means of asserting an indigenous presence and history and agency in the face of U.S. rhetoric that would work to frame indigenous peoples as “victims” or non-agents. This conceptualization of survivance texts can be readily applied to the case of Micronesian texts like the one explored in the previous chapter. John Mangefel’s writing and rhetoric, imbued with values specifically rooted in Yap, worked to resist a U.S. colonial rhetoric of dependence by asserting Micronesian agency on its own terms—terms both rooted in place and able to unify a diverse group of islands and spaces. Mangefel’s rhetoric, therefore, served as a powerful resistant counter-narrative and history that U.S. rhetoric often works to cover up and erase.

Although Mangefel’s work provides a prime example of Vizenor’s concept of *survivance*, the concept becomes complicated when survival must take place outside of the home regions in the context of displacement at great distances. As Vizenor goes on to point out, the

form of survivance stories must change for the “displaced native” (4). More specifically, Malea Powell argues, in her essay, “Rhetorics of Survivance.: How American Indians Use Writing,” that survival rhetorics in the context of displacement often reflect a complex negotiation of a new “Indian-ness” that emerges from a simultaneous cultural connection to place and a distancing from it (428). For example, in the survivance story of Sioux writer Charles Alexander Eastman, who chronicles his journey away from home in *From the Deep Woods into Civilization*, a new textual identity is built as both an American and an Indian. According to Powell, Eastman’s “use of linkage and affiliation with this [EuroAmerican] elite society, combined with his textually displayed knowledge of Indian-ness, are the central components of...tactical authentication” (422). Eastman *used* U.S. rhetorical forms carefully to gain access to authentication as a Native American authority with a primarily Euro-American readership. And, although he still remained critical of the cultural values that undergirded the rhetorical forms he used—values that often served to erase and destroy Native American peoples—Eastman had to navigate between surviving and appealing to his (primarily) American readers while also writing about the specific places and indigenous cultural values in his texts (423).

Eastman’s form of rhetorical resistance is one that rhetorician Damian Baca writes of when he states that “Particularly in colonized locations, the kinds of resistance recognized in Western epistemological frames, the essay or physical protest for example, can be impossible either because of the fear of violent repercussions or because cultures operating within ideological frames other than the dominant traditionally negotiate resistance differently” (Baca 9). Writing a narrative of rhetorical survivance can often entail a complex movement away from one’s own rhetorical forms and identity due to the very context of displacement which can make it dangerous or nearly impossible to write certain works of explicit resistance, like the protest

essay. Furthermore, the ways in which survivance rhetoric can simultaneously employ multiple rhetorical forms can be tied to the ways in which indigenous writers and speakers “negotiate resistance differently” through diverse ideological frames in a context of survival and displacement (Baca 9).

The simultaneous return to and movement away from specific place-based values and rhetorics that Powell and Baca mention is also evident in some of the writings produced by Micronesian authors currently composing in their own context of survival in the U.S. For example, in a 2013 interview with *Al Jazeera* news magazine, Joakim Peter, a Chuukese Micronesian community advocate in Honolulu, initially points to the specific indigenous values and practices such as language, navigation and trade, and culture that mark the regions of Micronesia as unique from one another and from the United States. In the interview, Peter specifically celebrates Micronesian cultural practices, such as ocean navigation, for the specific values they hold for the indigenous people in the regions. However, later in the interview, Peter also employs a rhetoric associated with U.S. ideals of economic exchange and labor in order to authenticate specific Micronesian indigenous practices for a larger American readership. The specific Micronesian practices of ocean-navigation are, thus, framed in terms of American scholarship and economic advancement: “Peter, who encourages sharing traditional knowledge with outside cultures, adds that Micronesian celestial-based ocean navigation has been studied for decades by scholars in the US, including scientists at NASA” (*Al Jazeera*). Here, a larger call for U.S. recognition and appreciation of indigenous Micronesian cultural practices is imbedded within a readily familiar U.S. rhetoric of economic exchange and viability. Thus, in exchange for the economic and intellectual contributions of Micronesian indigenous place-based values and practices to U.S. institutions like NASA, Peter ultimately argues for access to “the American

Dream”: “[We] want to participate in the American dream no more, no less, than anyone else” (*Al Jazeera*). In essence, what this call to the “American dream” does here is link survival and authentication of specific Micronesian place-based values and forms with an American economic narrative form—a form that privileges a fair trade of certain rights and privileges in exchange for hard work and economic contribution.

On the one hand this rhetorical move could be read as a rejection of indigenous rhetoric and indigenous forms of exchange in favor of more Western ideals. However, when read in light of Peter’s writings about Chuukese navigation as a means of shifting boundary lines and working to “deal with, appropriate, and understand space” in order to maintain the home island as a valued grounding point, this rhetorical move can be read quite differently (Peter 255).

Navigation, understood in Peter’s work as both physical and metaphorical (i.e. as a metaphor for writing), works to re-write spaces and boundary lines rather than simply adopt them. Therefore, Peter’s use of Western forms here can be read as an act of asserting indigenous control and “appropriating” Western and indigenous rhetorical boundary lines for the purpose of protecting and bringing healing to those at home. This appropriation, ultimately, works to ground the writing within the speaker’s own authority allowing him to navigate in such a way that his home values and authority remain at the centre (Peter 261). Rhetorician Rebecca Leonard refers to the form of rhetorical adaptation that Peter employs as a type of “generative...attunement” (229). This rhetorical attunement is the ability that migrant writers often acquire and develop to “call on or create literate resources in the process of making do, asserting themselves...within specific rhetorical situations” (Leonard 229). Through this rhetorical attunement, Micronesian migrants like Joakim Peter can write in ways that enable them to “assert themselves” within multiple rhetorical contexts, even those actively working toward indigenous elimination and erasure.

Peter is not the only Micronesian migrant author to employ Western forms and indigenous ones together in constructing a narrative of survival within the space of migration. In the early days of social networks like Myspace, writers like Pohnpeian poet Emelihter Kihleng envisioned the ways in which the Internet could be used to construct very geographically and culturally-specific networks of settlers who could write and act in resistance to oppressive U.S. national rhetoric. In her poem, “Pohnpei Outer Space,” Kihleng references Myspace, a social networking site connecting individuals from all around the world. As the poem points out, one can compile a friends list consisting of people from “GA, SC, Kansas City, Hilo, and Honolulu [all U.S. or Pacific locations].” In order to communicate within this vast online space the Pohnpeian individuals who utilize Myspace in the poem use a mix of their own indigenous languages and Black vernacular expressions like “holla back” and “peace out” (8). Thus, the means of establishing connection online are often mediated as Pacific writers seek to relate their own experiences and ideas and identities in the more readily familiar and definable terms of African-Americans in the U.S. Scholars Vershawn Young and Suresh Canagarajah refer to this form of rhetoric and language use as “code-meshing,” the “rhetorical choice” that employs a “multilingual’s rhetorical awareness and communicative proficiency” (Canagarajah 404). Rather than pointing to a rhetorical deficiency, code-meshing points to a specific rhetorical awareness and proficiency at work. Ultimately, through the act of code-meshing Pohnpeian individuals in Kihleng’s poem are able to enter more readily enter into and identify with the political and cultural environment of a larger space—an “Outer Space”—outside of the Pacific.

Although code-meshing can be a powerful rhetorical tool for survival, the speaker in Kihleng’s poem goes on to point out that it must be employed carefully. By using African-American expressions and writings as a means of translating a Pacific self for a Western or U.S.

audience the speaker points out that the Pohnpeian or Pacific individual can work to contribute to the erasure of her own unique identity, language, and positionality. Kihleng therefore expresses caution about the creation of online rhetoric to represent a Micronesian community spread out across the Pacific. This caution is one that digital media scholar Guy Merchant expresses, as well, in relation to social networking in particular. In his essay, “Unraveling the social network: theory and research,” Merchant warns against allowing the potential of online rhetoric to overshadow its potential dangers, specifically because “it seems unlikely that increased engagement in online social networking will serve to transform or ‘bridge’ social capital; perhaps at best it will augment it” (12). As Kihleng’s poem points out, creating online rhetorical spaces can work to “augment” rhetoric that essentializes groups of Micronesian settlers and overlooks their specific place-based rhetorics and identities.

In order to resist this essentialization and erasure websites like *The Fourth Branch* work to highlight the ways in which code-meshing, rhetorical attunement, and the construction of diverse survivance narratives are purposeful moves that enable migrant writers to survive and adapt outside of U.S. national categories and constraints. The title of the website, *The Fourth Branch*, is itself a re-writing of the three U.S. branches of government, executive, judicial, and legislative. In its very title, the website employs rhetoric familiar to a U.S. audience, and at once unfamiliar as well. Although referencing the familiar tri-part U.S. government system, the website works to redefine the responsibility of the U.S. political system, itself. The fourth branch of government, according to the website, is the people, in particular, the Micronesian migrants who have taken up residence in the United States and across the globe. This rhetorical move shifts the focus away from national boundary lines, representative districts, hierarchies,

and even rules of legal citizenship and voting rights, and instead places the focus upon the transnational rhetorical space that the website itself has set up.

On the website, Micronesian migrants who serve as business owners, teachers, athletes and policy-makers speak about the issues that affect their daily lives in the U.S., thus working to “target” social issues and people relevant to the Micronesian migrant community that either require change or are producing it already (*The Fourth Branch*). It is in these acts of testifying that the website declares the greatest check on U.S. political exploitation of Micronesian peoples—it is the fourth arm of regulating government power and control. *The Fourth Branch* comes to function as a space in which U.S. national rhetorical control is resisted through the construction of an international, trans-national space. In this space, the collective power of Micronesian migrants speaking out about both their agency in the United States and the very real oppression that they are working to resist provides the counter-narrative to U.S. narratives of control and domination.

Furthermore, in relation to Micronesian struggles for self-representation the website reconstructs the U.S. not as the dominant rhetoric and policy-maker, but rather as responsible *to* Micronesia. The U.S., as a democratic and balanced nation (hence the reference to the three branches of government), has the responsibility to listen and acknowledge and respond to the international network of voices constructed by Micronesian migrants. As the website, itself, states, it is designed to influence “the populace to infer collected information with the hopes of informing and involving citizens in their respective states” (*The Fourth Branch*). Thus, the website works to draw indigenous readers to see themselves as active participants in their own states—seeing themselves as active agents in the rhetoric and politics of their own spaces back home and their new home “states,” regardless of their current positioning. Within this space, a

rhetoric of survivance therefore becomes what Malea Powell terms a “*rhetoric of allegiance*” (“Down by the River” 57). That is, it resists the framework of a “prime narrative” of sameness and shared beliefs and instead functions as a “gathering of narratives designed to help... [indigenous writers and displaced migrants] adapt and change as is necessary for...survival” (57-58). Ultimately, *The Fourth Branch* online space builds upon the “gathering of narratives” for adaptation and survival that characterizes a “*rhetoric of allegiance*” to move the reader to view displacement in terms of opportunities, including opportunities for learning from collective political research (contained in the “News” and “People’s Report” sections) and indigenous Micronesian role models presented on the website itself. Thus, displacement is re-framed not as disconnect and political ineffectualness but as the potential for allegiance and greater political change in the regions of Micronesia and abroad.

A THIRD SPACE OF RHETORICAL RESPONSIBILITY

In addition to creating rhetoric that facilitates survival and adaptation, Micronesian migrants are also writing online in such a way as to construct a larger network of shared responsibility among themselves and the indigenous residents of their new migrant homes. Ultimately, these forms of rhetoric directly contradict the forms of rhetoric that are often produced in public and political writings in terms of the relationships between Micronesian migrants and the indigenous residents who occupy new migrant home sites. For example, in 2011 in Guam, Chamorro Mayor Ben Gumataotao stated that in order to make sure that indigenous residents of his state received adequate U.S. financial support, “FSM citizens should be kicked out of Guam” (Partido). Rather than aligning with Micronesians here (since Guam is often considered a part of Micronesia geographically), the indigenous mayor replicates the very

argument being made across the Pacific in places like O‘ahu—that FSM citizens should return to their own islands in order to protect U.S. economic values and interests.

This reification of colonial rhetoric among indigenous groups is not unique to just Micronesia, as scholars have also analyzed its occurrence throughout the indigenous Pacific. Writing in terms of the relationships between indigenous populations (from the continental U.S. to Hawai‘i), Jodi Byrd has argued that U.S. colonialism works to elide culpability for a history of multi-layered inequalities “underlying settler colonialism” through “cacophony” (xvii). This colonial construction of “cacophony” builds upon rhetoric that constructs the intersections between race, class, gender, and indigenous identity as dissonant and chaotic.

As composition and rhetoric scholar Lisa King points out in her essay . “Competition, Complicity, and (Potential Alliance: Hawaiian and Asian Immigrant Narratives at the Bishop Museum,” this process of internalization and replication not only affects indigenous residents of a particular space in the Pacific, but also the relationships between those residents and other dispossessed groups (particularly migrants). For example, in describing the interplay between exhibits that Native Hawaiian scholars have worked to construct regarding Asian settlers and Native Hawaiian indigenous residents at the Bishop Museum in O‘ahu, King indicates that the narratives that are created between the two groups do not acknowledge the role or space of the other at all. Thus, in trying to assert a distinct indigenous voice and history for Native Hawaiians (to establish rhetorical sovereignty) what has resulted instead is the following: “their conclusions [those of the exhibit], while tidy, are problematic because of how they can reify colonialism and settler colonialism even as they work to disrupt it” (51). The rhetoric of these exhibits, thus, serves to enact an erasure of interwoven histories that ultimately mirrors the erasure of U.S.

colonial narratives—i.e. the privileging of competition over a more detailed and collective historical narrative.

Nonetheless, even in this most difficult context of indigenous tension, there is a new space of online writing that has started to develop in response. Online communities of Micronesian migrants are developing a form of rhetoric that uses diverse place-based values as a means of constructing a collective network between indigenous groups with a specific emphasis upon responsibility. This construction of a new online community operates as a sort of third space of rhetoric. I use the term “third space” here because it offers up a productive way of conceptualizing a rhetorical space between spaces. More specifically, it is a term often used in both globalization studies and rhetorical scholarship to refer to the ways in which language moves between vast spaces and diverse audiences.

In terms of globalization studies, third space tends to stand for a transnational space of political interaction and linguistic production between the global and the local. Scholar Homi Bhabha initially proposed the term “third space” in his 1994 book, *The Location of Culture*. For Bhabha, “third space” was a term used to roughly describe the complication of global-local interactions in the wake of post-colonialism. Branching out from Bhabha’s foundational work, Edward Soja looks at how “third space” works as a critique of dualized notions of the global-local, thereby positioning the construction of space as a dynamic process rather than a set of fixed places (Soja 57). Thus, within the frame of globalization studies, “third space” functions as a useful term for complicating over-simplified binaries of here-there and global-local, instead focusing on the ways in which spaces are dynamic and overlapping and networked together.

Linked with this conceptualization of “third space” as an in-between, in-flux network of places and politics, rhetorician Nedra Reynolds connects the term “third space” with a space in

between very rooted place-based values and audiences in diverse discourse communities (Reynolds 15). It is the space through which language that is rooted travels and moves in order to be received by a larger range of audiences. In this third space, language often takes on new forms in order to facilitate reception. This form could be a mixture of counter-narratives and dominant discourses (as was seen earlier in this essay). Additionally, it could also be a form that employs specific indigenous values in order to construct an entirely new transnational rhetoric that enables both migrants and indigenous residents of particular regions to construct a “survival story” outside of national rhetorical frames.

This type of transnational “survival story” would not only embody the “third space” definitions offered up by cultural studies and composition scholars but also the definitions of “third space” imbedded already in many indigenous concepts of space within Micronesia. This indigenous conceptualization of “third space” is specifically reflected in a recent on-air interview with Hawai‘i Public Radio, in which Innocenta Sound-Kikku, a migrant to O‘ahu from Chuuk illustrates an important lesson that she teaches her daughter: “I wanted her to know she’s part of a greater call...that we learn from our sky, our ocean, our land and environment—that keeps us strong” (*HPR* interview). Here, in response to U.S. rhetoric that constructs the Micronesian migrant as small and unimportant, Sound-Kikku references a counter-narrative that roots resistance and value in an indigenous connection to land *and* the larger Pacific ocean. The power of place is not linked to both a specific space (Chuuk), but also to a shared connection to the sky and the ocean that exceeds imposed national boundaries and limitations. Thus, a new sense of home and resistance—a larger call to power—is connected to the “third space” of the ocean and sky. In her recent poem/essay, “Tell Them, that she composed for *The Value of Hawai‘i 2* collection of essays, Marshallese author Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner framed a transnational connection

to the ocean in terms of a central image of sending packages back and forth across the Pacific. Within the essay, a package is sent from Hawai‘i to the continental U.S. and shared between migrant relatives. Inside this package lies a basket, a basket woven in traditional Marshallese fashion. This basket serves as a vessel for carrying and sharing specific indigenous knowledge about the Marshall islands past and present. The knowledge carried in this basket powerfully resists U.S. rhetorics that work to minimize or silence Marshallese narratives; rhetorics that promote the U.S. as a necessary savior to an un-advanced peoples. As the poem/essay makes clear it is Marshallese navigators who have discovered and explored hidden ocean channels and passageways, after all, not the U.S. (Jetnil-Kijiner 70). And it is through these networks that span ocean space that Marshallese migrants are able to share indigenous place-based values while constructing a powerful space of collective sharing that exceeds U.S. national rhetorics and policies.

This model of combining regional specificity with transnational resistance and mutual care is one that the website *We Are Oceania (WAO)* put into practice in 2014. The website is a collaborative effort on the part of a team of Micronesian leaders in Hawai‘i and the Partners in Development Foundation, a “non-profit public charity serving disadvantaged Native Hawaiian communities throughout the State” (“About” www.weareoceania.com). The website declares that one of its central goals is to centralize “the support system for all Micronesian communities, families and individuals in Hawaii” (“About”). One of the main reasons given for centralizing support for the migrant population is to lessen the amount of state resources being directed away from Native Hawaiian needs (as evidenced in the websites “Affect on Hawai‘i” section). Thus, as the rhetoric on the website implies providing specific cultural support for migrants will allow the migrant population to function more responsibly toward its indigenous host culture. Instead

of positioning migrant survival as a task requiring competition for resources among indigenous populations (as Guam's mayor contended earlier in this chapter), *We Are Oceania* instead insists that survival is a collective effort weaving together equally a balance between diverse Micronesian migrant cultures and Native Hawaiian knowledge and needs ("About").

This combination of specific regional difference and responsibility across indigenous cultures can be seen in the rhetoric used to construct the website's very name. On one level, the website is named *We Are Oceania* as a specific reference to indigenous scholar Epeli Hau'ofa's foundational text, *A New Oceania*. Across its "About" page, the website presents this quote from Hau'ofa's text as a mission statement of its own goals: "Whatever we produce must not be a version of our existing reality, which is largely a creation of imperialism; it must be different, and of our own making. We should not forget that human reality is human creation. If we fail to create our own, someone else will do it for us by default." This vision is very much in line with Adela Lieona arguments about third space rhetoric in her essay "(B)orderlands' Rhetorics and Representations: The Transformative Potential of Feminist Third-Space Scholarship and Zines." Lieona argues that third space rhetoric often represents "the histories of those...previously obscured from historical sight and significance" (106). Hau'ofa's statement reflects this commitment to constructing a form of rhetoric that reflects indigenous histories and voices that have been previously obscured or erased. In defining what he terms the "new Oceania," Hau'ofa, is arguing for a movement away from colonial forms of government toward indigenous forms of self-government across the Pacific. By using Hau'ofa's statement as a foundation for the name *We Are Oceania*, the website's writers employ a form of rhetoric that first and foremost connects the political needs of a larger, more expansive Oceania with the specific political needs of Micronesian migrants. Furthermore, in addressing the larger Pacific's need for political

sovereignty and protection, Hau‘ofa, and the website in turn, look toward a larger “we” as the primary political agent. Thus, the political independence and self-reliance of each region within the Pacific is not solely the responsibility of that region only, it is the collective responsibility of a larger body – all other indigenous regions and peoples.

The website continues to define the political responsibility of a larger Pacific body in greater detail as it links its naming to the political responsibility incumbent upon migration. As rhetoric scholars Guiseppe Getto, Ellen Cushman, and Shreelina Ghosh write it is essential to understand “how new media can work as a bridge to and from specific socio-cultural contexts...[especially] as communities are developing digital identities in order to sustain their everyday struggles for self-representation and learning” (162). The naming of the *WAO* website indicates the construction of an online space that uniquely affords Micronesian migrants a space to bridge diverse cultures in order to develop “digital identities’ that sustain multiple “everyday struggles for self-representation and learning” (162)

Specifically, the site’s naming focuses on the everyday struggles for self-representation that define Micronesia and Hawai‘i in particular. In describing its naming, the website’s “About” page utilizes ocean voyaging as a means of linking the website’s online space with the multiple indigenous groups and struggles it is working to represent (both Micronesian migrant and Native Hawaiian). The website initially uses the Hawaiian term “wa‘a” to describe the outrigger canoes used both in Hawai‘i *and* throughout Micronesia to navigate and move among islands. The wa‘a has traditionally served as the vehicle for sharing knowledge and resources among indigenous groups throughout the Pacific. However, the outrigger canoe is not defined initially as a Pacific or even Micronesian vehicle for survival but rather as an honored and integral part of Native Hawaiian culture.

Only when the canoe is named with its Hawaiian name and described in terms of Native Hawaiian uses first is it then linked more specifically to Micronesia. The website specifically mentions that WAO (the website's acronym) means "the canoe" in Chuukese. Furthermore, the canoe paddler Papa Mau Piailug from the Micronesian island of Satawal in Yap State, FSM, is mentioned by name as a pivotal historical figure, honored in both Yap and Hawai'i. By selecting nodes of connection that are both rooted in regional specifics and yet also serve as links between diverse regions and groups, the website constructs a purpose that is grounded in both difference *and* shared responsibility. That is, Micronesian political authority is responsible for protecting and valuing Native Hawaiian political authority. And consequently, both Micronesian and Native Hawaiian political authority are responsible for protecting and valuing the political sovereignty and power of the entire Pacific region.

Thus, what the rhetoric of the WAO website powerfully models is a transnational political space in which specific, local differences and mutual indigenous care are not positioned as mutually exclusive but rather as joint forces in the creation of self-sustaining indigenous communities. In this way, the website builds a Micronesian rhetorical space that functions like a web with fixed nodes and moving connections. As mentioned earlier in this essay, this type of network enables both individual survival (the authentication of specific island places and people) and mutual indigenous care and exchange. Digital and indigenous rhetoric specialist Angela Haas refers to this type of space as a reflection of the type of "webbed, non-linear informational exchange" that indigenous peoples have been practicing in different forms for centuries—from the very first Native American wampum exchanges to current web forums like websites and hypertext narratives (61). It is within these spaces with multiple nodes and networks of informational exchange that indigenous Micronesian migrants can communicate in ways that

digital network scholar, Jeff Rice, in his essay “*Digital Detroit: Rhetoric and Space in the Age of the Network*,” writes of when he says, “meanings come together, break apart, form hubs, connect and disconnect. Identity is not fixed; it is moving” (Rice 6). In this online space, Micronesian self-expression and rhetoric are not fixed but fluid and mobile—equally rooted in place and responsibly routed in the rest of the Pacific.

CONCLUSION

Rhetorical survivance for Micronesian migrants (like for many indigenous migrant groups) is a complicated web. Within the diverse narratives explored in this chapter, there are some examples in which details about specific indigenous spaces are expressed at a distance and imbedded within a linked appeal to U.S. and economic political rhetoric. And yet, within other examples there is the construction of a third space rhetoric online. Within this online space, specific regional difference and diversity is embraced while forming the basis for the construction of a trans-national collective of speakers who work to break the frame of U.S. national rhetoric and form a network of shared responsibility and care. In both the online and offline spaces, indigenous Micronesian resistance to U.S. colonial rhetoric is present in diverse forms and it serves to illustrate the complex and varied lineage of Micronesian writing (from John Mangefel to the present). It is this diversity of narratives that calls for an expansion of what indigenous rhetoric (and in particular a rhetoric of resistance and empowerment) across spaces looks like. It is this very diversity that will be addressed in greater detail in relation to its impact upon indigenous Micronesian students in the college writing classroom within the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Student Teachers from Micronesia:
Reflections on Performance and Place
in the Writing Classroom

“[T]here were opportunities that I had to free-write and the teacher would reply. And I feel like that’s a great way because some things are really easy to write about but it’s not so easy to talk about. You know what I mean? So, that’s definitely something. It’s a lot of interaction. Um sometimes it’s affirmation. Sometimes it’s opening up my mind to different things that I didn’t realize, because sometimes I’ll just take my pen, and I’ll just write.” ~ Mark

What does it mean to perform as a writer? Furthermore, what does it mean to perform as a writer *talking* about the way one performs as a writer? When I asked Palauan student and international relations major, Mark in an interview in 2013 how he would teach college level writing to better meet the needs of others, his response was directly linked back to how he, himself, performs as a writer, speaker, composer. In his response, highlighted above, Mark remarks that writing allows him to share ideas that he simply will not or cannot as a speaker — even a speaker talking about his writing. If silence is read here as a “specific rhetorical art,” as Cheryl Glenn’s *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence* would have us read it, then Mark is specifically reserving for writing what is purposefully left out of acts of speech (2). Writing is, therefore, rhetorically situated as a safer activity more suited for the deepest levels of personal self-expression. One might think of writing in terms of a performance of place here as Mark draws

upon deep roots of place-based values concerning literacy (oral and written) as he performs rhetorical acts of speaking and writing in the U.S. classroom.

Mark's response is not only insightful in its emphasis upon specific rhetorical silences and writing choices, but also in its simultaneous emphasis upon the communal and interactive nature of even the deepest self-expressive elements of writing. That is, the intimacy and rootedness of writing is placed within the larger framework of a shared journal, one that the teacher actively responds to, providing dialogue—from affirmation to critique to an expansion of ideas through difference. Thus, the performative framework for teaching writing that Mark talks about is one that values both the rootedness of writing (in one's sense of self) and also its routenedness in the Pacific, the way in which it works to build knowledge between reader and writer, student and teacher.

PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of putting this chapter together was ultimately to arrive at a deeper understanding of the complex ways in which writing and performances of and about writing from the Micronesian regions work to influence how students from these regions perform writing in the college level writing classroom. The initial step toward arriving at this deeper understanding was to interview Mark and two other college students from the Micronesian region currently attending university classes at O'ahu's Chaminade University. Additionally, the impetus for this chapter also derives from a continuation of the exploration begun in the previous chapter—an exploration of the rhetorics of *survivance* and the enactment of rhetorical sovereignty for Micronesian individuals living outside of their home regions. Specifically, the interviews presented in this chapter highlight the ways writing performances by students from the regions of Palau and Chuuk navigate how Micronesian student writing encounters and works

across boundary lines (like the ones Mark points out) that separate public and private, self-expression and collaborative writing.

Investigating the dynamic relationship between performance, writing, and place becomes an increasing necessity for Micronesian students, as the number of Micronesians moving outward from their home regions is on the rise. This rise in the Micronesian migrant population was the focus of the previous chapter. In looking at the migrant population in O‘ahu specifically the previous chapter highlighted the way in which the rhetoric and discursive practices of Micronesian migrants employ specific values concerning survival and responsibility to resist oppressive U.S. rhetoric in complex and multiple ways. Building off of these findings, this chapter explores the rhetorical potential of performing and writing in the focused context of the writing classroom. What does it mean for Micronesian migrant students to try and write and speak within a writing classroom space while also navigating multiple “home” spaces at once (their original geographic origins and the places where they are now living and working and learning)? As is illustrated in this chapter, speaking and writing can be a point of struggle, as it is for many of the authors mentioned in the previous chapter as well. However, it can also be the very site for empowerment and critical engagement within writing and the writing classroom.

In analyzing the rhetorical potential within student interviews, this chapter ultimately follows the research models set forth in previous performative studies scholarship. Dwight Conquergood in his 2003 article “Performing as a Moral Act: Ethical Dimensions of the Ethnography of Performance” writes about some of the standards for a contemporary approach to research in looking at performance. Now although Conquergood worked as an advocate for minority populations in Chicago prior to publishing this essay, his work is a bit dated in terms of

its approach to indigenous subjects and research⁶. Nonetheless, Conquergood's essay is still regarded as foundational in terms of looking at the intersection between performance and rhetoric as he writes that the writing practices of a group of people are best understood through a study of oral performance as "a performer attempts to engage ethnic and intercultural texts, particularly those texts outside the canon and derived from fieldwork research" (2). As Conquergood points out in order to critically evaluate the "ethnic and cultural dimensions" of texts (especially from regions previously undervalued in literary studies) it is first the work of research to reveal these dimensions as they appear in oral performances. In his writings, then, Conquergood paved the way for studying rhetoric not just in terms of written works, but also in terms of performances—how individuals perform writing processes and forms and how those performances connect to the "ethnic and cultural" values of the places they call home.

As of today, this commitment to performance in composition and rhetoric has not yet extended to a study of Micronesian rhetoric, although it has become integral within many other areas within the field. For example, in the introduction to the recent 2012 CCC online journal on *The Turn to Performance* Jenn Fishman, one of the special editors, emphasizes a commitment to pieces that "call attention to the classroom as a stage...[and as] a site for exploring the parameters of students' and teachers' performances of authority" ("Editor's Introduction"). Ultimately, this chapter works to extend this ethnographic concern to "explore the parameters" of Micronesian student performances within the writing classroom (work that has not yet been done in the field). Looking specifically to Micronesian student rhetoric places authority within the performances of the students themselves in order to set the writing classroom "stage" for more effective teaching and student expression through writing and speaking in the future.

⁶ In his essay, Conquergood refers to indigenous subjects as "natives," a term that has now been heavily critiqued in terms of its role in ethnographic and literary works to infantilize, degrade, and at times justify great violence toward indigenous populations.

MY POSITION AS NON-INDIGENOUS RESEARCHER

Nevertheless, before moving into the actual interviews that form the foundation of this chapter, it is essential to set the stage by explaining my own position in relation to those I interviewed and the research that I conducted. I am a non-indigenous woman originally from a place far outside of the Pacific—Northern California. It has only been in the last five years that I have moved to O‘ahu and met men and women who have migrated from the various states of Micronesia including Chuuk, Yap, Pohnpei, Kosrae, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I met these individuals as part of a weekly community outreach program that my church has organized in Kaka‘ako park for the last five years. I am continually aware of my own position as an outsider within this group. Although I have come to know the stories of many Micronesian community members well, there are vast fields of knowledge and culture that I have yet to even begin to access. For example, although I am trying to learn Chuukese, the process is quite slow and my entrance (on any given week) into even basic communal conversations in the mother language with the indigenous Chuukese women that I have come to know is extremely limited.

Not only have my weekly conversations reminded me of my outsider status, but so have the research imperatives that indigenous researchers have stressed regarding non-indigenous and indigenous work. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes in the latest edition of *Decolonizing Methodologies*, non-indigenous scholars in the past have often simply evaded fundamental questions of their own position altogether; subsequently, they have produced research that really stands to benefit only the scholar and the academy and not the indigenous communities themselves. In fact, as Smith writes this approach to research works to “endanger [indigenous] lives” as research “projects are designed and carried out with little recognition accorded to the

people who participated—the ‘researched’ (289). As a privileged, non-indigenous academic I have an even greater responsibility to be extremely critical and self-aware in my approach to conducting any indigenous community research because failing to do so could result in very real destruction. Therefore, at least weekly, while working on this chapter alone, I asked myself: Who is this research for and who really stands to benefit? Sometimes, the answers to these questions made me painfully aware of my own privilege as I realized that some of my research methods could result in academic benefits that only I might access—i.e. a completed dissertation project or answers to questions that I wanted to know. Therefore, I would have to start anew and re-formulate questions and ways of asking questions and seeking research partnerships with those I interviewed. It was a continual process of learning and re-learning and re-learning some more.

Ultimately, in my continual self-evaluation, I was working to align myself with a research model that would most benefit the community of indigenous students that I would be interviewing. As Smith indicates in her work, there are really only four possible research models to choose from when attempting to engage in non-destructive research with Pacific indigenous groups:

- 1 the strategy of avoidance, whereby the researcher avoids dealing with the issues...
- 2 the strategy of ‘personal development’ whereby the researchers prepare themselves by learning Maori language, attending *hui* and becoming more knowledgeable about Maori concerns;
- 3 the strategy of consultation...where efforts are made to seek support and consent;
- 4 organizations have recognized and attempted to bring more Maori researchers and ‘voices’ into their own organization.

In addition there is the strategy of partnership. (Smith 291)

My own research approach most closely worked to model the strategy of consultation, as I worked to send my interviewees questions beforehand and to ask for feedback in each stage of the research process—pre-interview, mid-interview, and post-interview. Before each interview, I encouraged the students to send me questions or to write out any responses that they might have in relation to a question, as writing can be a less intimidating form of communication and even critique. Mark actually responded to one of my questions in written form, with a bit of personal narrative, before our interview even took place. Additionally, during each interview itself I worked to adapt and leave room for the students to ask me questions or to steer the direction of the interview as they saw fit. This approach is one that oral historian Valerie Yow has referred to as a means of leaving room for reciprocity. Yow asserts that, “Sometimes in the midst of answering questions, the narrator turns the tables and asks the interviewer a question. This may be a request for information about the interviewer or advice” (Yow 161). In this new situation of role-reversal the interviewer is moved to take on a different sort of role, a more reciprocal and dialogical one. This reciprocal research dynamic is very similar to Smith’s non-indigenous research model of consultation as it values and makes space for the indigenous interviewee to act as a co-equal agent and partner in the research relationship. Ultimately, building off of this mid-interview relational work, I worked to follow-up each interview with an email or series of emails in which I sent each of the students initial drafts of my chapter and invitations to comment upon what I had written.

In these various approaches my final goal was not to achieve the status of an “insider” to the indigenous experience or to speak for a group of indigenous students. Instead, to borrow a term that Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (two non-indigenous scholars writing with indigenous communities) have used, I was striving to work as an “allied other” (Denzin and

Lincoln 6). As Lincoln and Denzin further describe this position, it entails becoming a “fellow traveler,” one who wishes to “[to support] research practices that are reflexively consequential, ethical, critical, respectful, and humble. The practices require that scholars live with the consequences of their research actions” (Denzin and Lincoln 6). This research position highlights the role of the non-indigenous scholar as both an outsider (an “other”) and also a partner or “ally” in practicing responsible, constructive, ethical, and reflexive research in collaboration with indigenous scholars and writers. Ultimately, it is my hope that some of the insights that I have shared in this section have served to shed some light on my own dual position as both an outsider and as a potential research ally. On a very practical level, I also hope that these insights will help to further illuminate the more detailed research approach that will be highlighted in the next section of this chapter.

THE RESEARCH APPROACH

Ethnography in Micronesia

Sociologist Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes that in the Pacific, ethnographic research, or any performances under the guise of this type of research, is often viewed with a mixture of trepidation, cynicism, and at times, downright hostility by indigenous people in particular (Smith 3). And with very good reason, for ethnographic research in much of the Pacific has had an embattled history. In Micronesia specifically, before World War II, much of the anthropology in the region was focused on the traditional model of “preservation” and was sponsored by the Bishop museum and other entities concerned with recording and archiving cultures in the region (Kiste 12). This type of anthropology often resulted in case studies and books that acknowledged Micronesian indigenous values and self-sufficiency and actively sought to engage in productive cross-cultural work. However, as an adverse effect of outside funding through museums and

universities with their own research agendas, many of these studies were actually employed in ways that worked to construct the Micronesian regions as simply an object of study (to be encapsulated in books and museum collections for an outside, academic audience) rather than as active nations.

Following WWII and the U.S. takeover of the islands from Japan, anthropology began to be funded more and more by federal sources making Micronesia the focus of the “largest research initiative in the history of American anthropology” (Kiste 2). Under the Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology (CIMA) project sponsored by the U.S. Navy in 1947, anthropologists were encouraged to shift their focus to primarily look at the practices integral to U.S. takeover of the islands—i.e. production of goods (Kiste 28). Ultimately, this pressure to perform according to organizational and institutional demands often produced ethnographic work that according to historian David Hanlon, erased an “awareness or acknowledgment of Micronesians as agents, negotiators, appropriators, or manipulators” (“Magellan’s Chroniclers?” 71). Thus, as Hanlon and others point out research within the Micronesian regions has had a fraught history, one that clearly illustrates the struggle and the ethical demands of performing ethnographic work alongside of the indigenous people of the regions.

The ethnography of interviewing Micronesian students

I started the venture into my research for this chapter with this context of past ethnographic work in Micronesia at the forefront of my mind. This heightened sense of the past tensions within the field, ultimately, moved me, a non-indigenous scholar, to an even stronger critical self-awareness of where I was positioned in relation to the work I would be doing. As I prepared draft after draft of interview questions and read through historical narratives that outlined the ethnographic work that had served to exploit the Micronesian regions in the past, I

became increasingly aware of the ethical imperative marked out by Smith. As she argues, research must be performed carefully, and should only be done if its end goal is to return back to the individuals and communities in the Pacific who actually serve to create the body of research itself (Smith 16).

In addition to being influenced by Smith's research imperative to perform ethnography that returns back to the community from which it flows, my particular approach to ethnographic work was also shaped by the work of Mary Sheridan, Gesa Kirsch, and Joy Ritchie. These authors have written several works outlining the specific transformations and ethical imperatives of performing ethnographic work in the field of writing studies. As Sheridan writes, research practices within the field of ethnography can be fruitfully adopted within the field of writing studies research, but only if they are also adapted to the specific needs of the students and teachers involved in the research. Sheridan specifically terms this shift "redefining a core [ethnographic] research practice" in relation to writing studies (75). This re-shaping of ethnographic practice within the field of writing studies transforms the ways in which research groups are identified as researchers study both individual writing practices and those that make up larger collectives of writers, as well. Subsequently, research groups vary widely from individual student case studies—like the ones presented in Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie's essay "Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research"—to studies of large writing bodies like the inner-city youth classes represented in works like Ellen Cushman's *The Struggle and the Tools*.

Furthermore, in addition to redefining the ways research groups are identified, writing studies research also takes on new shapes in terms of how research methodology is defined. As Kirsch and Ritchie argue, students who are interviewed and encouraged to talk about their

writing should not be viewed merely as research “subjects” but rather as the center or “praxis” of ethnographic research about writing (503). That is, student voices and responses should be at the forefront of the work. As student voices are centered as the “praxis” of ethnographic methodology within the field of writing studies, they serve to “enable emic perspectives that support, challenge, or most likely complicate public pedagogies about language and culture in telling ways” (Sheridan 82). Ultimately, by maintaining the indigenous regions of Micronesia and the students as the “praxis” of this chapter’s focused case study I hope to shed light upon the ways in which student performances and perspectives are also intricately bound with complicating, challenging, and shaping writing pedagogy.

A brief introduction to the student “praxis”

Students who were interviewed for this project were initially identified and contacted through a network of teacher and student relationships established months before the interviews actually took place. Initially, I chose to work with students who are attending writing courses at Chaminade University in O‘ahu because the school works very closely with students from the Micronesian regions, both in O‘ahu and at their satellite campus on Chuuk. The school maintains a Micronesian club on campus, and I worked with the Dean of the Humanities department, David Coleman, an instructor, Koreen Nakahodo, and the president of the club, Mark, to identify potential interviewees. Mark, himself, became the first student I interviewed, and he later helped to introduce me to the two other students, Jennifer and Zara, who took part in shaping this chapter.

Mark

Mark was born on the island of Saipan to an American father and a Palaun mother. He grew up in Pottstown, Pennsylvania (his father’s hometown), which he described as a very small

“pretty typical suburban town” (Mark). When he was in 8th grade, Mark and his mother moved back to Palau to be with her family. Mark indicates that life on Palau largely involved getting to know his large extended family on his mother’s side and to engage in a cultural life that was very “communal” with everyone “working to build each other up” (Mark). Upon completing middle school in Palau, Mark attended a Catholic boarding high school in Chuuk under a great deal of pressure and encouragement from his aunties and relatives. Although expressing an appreciation for the pedagogical support and creative teaching approaches utilized in the Chuukese writing classroom, Mark indicates that the adjustment to a lack of basic resources like reliable electricity and Internet was quite a culture shock. Upon graduation from high school, Mark’s mother moved back to Pennsylvania and Mark decided to move to Honolulu on his own (no other family members currently live in Hawai‘i). Currently, Mark is majoring in business with a specific interest in international business. He is also the leader of the Micronesian Club on Chaminade University’s O‘ahu campus.

Jennifer

Jennifer was born in Weno, the capital of Chuuk. Jennifer is the second oldest of a family of four (three girls and one boy). She describes her island as a mixture of development and disrepair. Weno, Jennifer indicates, is full of urban buildings like those in Honolulu but also characterized by an infrastructure – roads, houses, and resources – in need of repair. Jennifer describes her family in Chuuk in terms of a large immediate and extended family. Often her school years consisted of balancing school time and homework with watching her younger brother and working to help her family.

She describes her writing experiences throughout middle school and high school as foundational to both developing basic writing forms and her creativity through writing

assignments (poems and drawings) and oral presentations in class. Jennifer defines herself as an “average student” and indicates that her other sisters often received more support from their parents in their academic endeavors. However, after successfully completing high school and a two-year degree at the College of Micronesia, Jennifer indicates that her family believed in her enough to “let” her to go to Hawai‘i to finish her bachelor’s degree at Chaminade University (Jennifer). She is currently living with her aunt in Honolulu and is interested in studying Pacific and Micronesian literature.

Zara

Zara was born into a family of four on the island of Babeldaob in the Republic of Palau. She describes her home island as full of natural beauty consisting of trees and rock islands. Her island also consists of a very tight-knit population in which “everybody knows each other and is related to each other” (Zara). Attending elementary school in Babeldaob, Zara indicates that “writing courses” consisted of very little writing but a heavy emphasis on structure (how many sentences go in a paragraph) and English parts of speech like nouns, adjectives, and pronouns. Upon entering high school, the curriculum focused more on reflective writing (free-writing) and writing in different academic forms like essays and critical analyses of poems and pieces of literature. In 2007, Zara moved to Honolulu with all three of her siblings to attend college courses. She is currently a business major studying at Chaminade University.

Conducting interviews and performances of building trust

Ultimately, the dynamics involved in setting up and conducting interviews with Zara, Jennifer, and Mark varied widely. Mark and I communicated through email on several occasions before the actual interview, exchanging introductory information, project details, and questions. With Mark, the relationship of trust was built through these initial emails, and through our

triangulated networks of connection, as he worked closely with Koreen and the Micronesian club as well as with me to set up potential future interviews for my project. With nearly a month of online communication and partnership on this project having taken place beforehand, my actual interview with Mark, in the conference room of Chaminade's English department, proved very relaxed and conversational. In between interview questions, we chatted about his work with the club, the classes he had taken with Koreen, his future academic and career goals, and his hobbies.

Ultimately, through Mark's assistance following our interview, I was able to contact two additional students for this chapter, Jennifer and Zara, who were selected primarily because they were willing to take part in an interview. With both of these participants, the initial communication was minimal as most of the information about the project and the questions to be asked were relayed through Martin and Koreen. Therefore, most of the trust and transparency was established within the interviews themselves. Sometimes building trust proved challenging as the rhetoric of silence that Mark pointed out (as mentioned at the very beginning of this chapter) often proved to be at work in my interview with Zara, a student from Palau, who seemed hesitant, at times, to answer questions about how she actually felt about writing teachers or classroom experiences, the more personal topics.

At other times, I realized that in the midst of an interview the performance involved in earning trust was being taught to me. For example, in the midst of my interview with Jennifer, she halted in the middle of answering a question to explain the cultural dynamic of her family life to me: "sorry, I need to say it out so you understand" (Jennifer Personal Interview). In this manner, Jennifer indicated to me an essential component of building trust through performance that I had not carefully spent more time attending to in the initial minutes of the interview—the

component of explaining who I was and what my position was in relation to Jennifer and her community. Within this moment in our interview, I was forced to encounter my own positionality and assumptions as a researcher and to take a step back. It was a moment of self-reflection and learning that Kirsch and Ritchie define as an essential component of ethnographic research: in research the researcher should also be “gaining knowledge about his or her own life or at least reexamining her cultural and gender biases” (493). In Jennifer’s response, I immediately recognized that in my failure to introduce myself more thoroughly I had privileged my own expectations for conducting a formal interview and opened up a space for disconnect that could serve to “unnaturally close study down, obscuring the integrity of the other” (Conquergood 10). Therefore, at this point in the interview and in the minutes that followed the end of my questions, I spent time addressing and talking about the issues that Jennifer stressed as most important: family, cultural values of learning, and my role as a researcher and teacher. These last several minutes of conversation flowed freely, as Jennifer guided the questions and responses. Consequently, at the close of our time together Jennifer and I talked about potential opportunities to study Pacific literature and politics and to work on upcoming drafts of this chapter together—topics that pointed to a reciprocity in learning and research that was contingent upon establishing mutual trust and proper “praxis.”

Ultimately, through the trust-building dynamics experienced within all three of my interviews, I was taught first hand the *ethos*-establishing performance necessary for becoming a part of a critical conversation about writing and writing practices among Micronesian students. This performance is something that Francis Hezel summarizes in part in his recent work, *Making Sense of Micronesia: the Logic of Pacific Island Culture*. Although not a rhetorician, Hezel highlights the rhetorical practice of *ethos*-building within phone conversations in much of

Micronesia. In phone interactions in the Micronesian regions, Hezel remarks that it is a common performative practice to answer the phone by asking, “Who are you?” (10). Rather than being considered a rude or intrusive practice, this rhetorical action marks a key gate-keeping function in conversations. That is, before one can engage in dialogue one has to establish authority in relation to the speaker and explain how he or she is connected to the speaker and the speaker’s community. Until this performance of naming a mutual relationship and establishing one’s *ethos* is undertaken, trust to enter into the intimacy of engaging in a phone conversation is not readily granted.

Ultimately, setting up and conducting interviews with Mark, Zara, and Jennifer pointed to the way this practice of naming community *ethos* and connection also works itself out in face-to-face meetings and conversations as well. With Mark it took the form of establishing a network of mutual connections with teachers and stating my purpose and position clearly over email before our interview even took place. However, in the case of Zara, and more explicitly Jennifer, the lack of establishing a proper mutual connection and community understanding beforehand clearly produced interview performances that were at least initially more guarded or expressly concerned with community knowledge and relationships. Ultimately, this practice of building trust and establishing community authority is an integral part of understanding how Micronesian students approach the act of dialoguing about writing, of understanding silences and questions particularly. It also forms the core of how Mark, Jennifer, and Zara approach writing itself as will now be illustrated in the following sections that look at how the student interview responses themselves defined writing and writing performance in the beginning writing classroom.

THE INTERVIEWS & INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Defining “place” in the writing classroom

In each of the interviews, I started with the following question: Could you briefly describe your hometown or your homeland for anyone who has never been to it or is unfamiliar with it? The responses to this question indicated that “home” is complicated, specifically when situated in a context of dis-placement. On the one hand home-place can serve as a limitation, a staying “in place” as it were. As Nedra Reynolds writes in *Geographies of Writing* certain place-based practices and values and even geographies can serve to limit how one interacts with the world, where one goes, and how one is able to move and travel among discourse communities (Reynolds 12). When placed in a new environment, specifically in the context of migrant movement, it can be very difficult to reconcile the values of home with the values of a new place, new discourse communities, and new ways of writing and performing.

These reconciliations and movements among ways of understanding places, writing, and the self take place along a spectrum, as illustrated in my interviews with Zara and Mark. Initially, when asked about her home place Zara responded in a way that reflects a struggle to connect her specific island with her new location in O‘ahu.

Zara: It’s basically...well, it doesn’t have like a lot of buildings like Hawai‘i has. It’s a really beautiful island, yeah. And what else? It’s just like here, like it has a lot of trees, and we have a lot of rock islands...We don’t have like movie theatres, stuff like that, or the malls and stuff. So we cannot go out or go watch movies and stuff so I basically stay home or we go to the rock islands or we have a lot of barbeques. Yeah.

When Zara mentioned the “rock islands” I knew that she was drawing upon a place reference that she was familiar with; however, for someone like myself, an outsider to the place that she

was describing, the reference was indistinct. The rock islands of Palau are large, forested limestone formations jutting out from the sea surrounding the central island of Palau, itself (UNESCO.org “Rock Islands Southern Lagoon”). Referencing the “rock islands” in particular, Zara’s definition is grounded and rooted in very specific geographies located in Palau. Furthermore, place is defined mostly in contrast to O‘ahu rather than in relation to it. Although interestingly, trees and rock islands are drawn as links between the two places, as it turns out rock islands serve more as a means of contrast rather than association for those individuals only familiar with O‘ahu. In Zara’s interview, therefore, there is a complicated attempt to link Palau as a place with O‘ahu; however, in this attempt there is a distinct return to a sense of place firmly grounded in Palau, itself.

In contrast to the more disparate links between specific place and the new geographies and spaces of movement offered in Zara’s response, Mark offered a definition of “home” and “place” in terms of multiple locations on an extensive geographical map.

Mark: I was born in the island of Saipan. I was born in Saipan and lived there for two years, and then we moved to suburban Pennsylvania, specifically Pottstown. It’s a very small town, of about five miles long... we lived there for about 10 years. Granted, my father’s from there, but my mother is from Palau, it’s another Pacific island. So I basically attended all my elementary years there in Pennsylvania, and then in 2007 we moved to Palau, and I finished up 8th grade there. (long pause). So that would be where me and my family are from. I attended high school on another island called Chuuk, which is also in Micronesia. A lot of people ask me where home is. Home is wherever my mom is.

Mark's definition of place clearly draws upon a sense of movement and travel. In fact, Mark's last line serves to bring into question the idea that travel and connection preclude grounding in specific place. Mark says that, "Home is wherever my mom is." Mark's mother, as was indicated throughout the interview, is from Palau and represents his own connection to that region and place. Thus, the fact that home resides with his mother and her connection to Palau, indicates that Mark's sense of place simultaneously remains rooted in Palau while it also moves across the continental U.S. and the Pacific. Thus, place is defined in terms of a very specific ancestral and cultural connection to Micronesia, in this case Palau, while also being defined in terms of connections within and without the Pacific, as well.

As both Mark and Zara's interviews make clear, reconciliation between spaces (home place and new spaces across the Pacific) can at times be a struggle, and at other times this reconciliation and movement can be much more advanced and fluid—an ability to move between a connection to a specific place and among other places simultaneously. It is key to acknowledge that these various stages of movement and travel exist, specifically within the college writing classroom, because not all students from the Micronesian regions come into the writing process able to reconcile multiple place values within their writing performances. Moving students to a place where they can be empowered by the place they call home while also acknowledging that home can move and travel with them across vast spaces and discourse communities is a complex and gradual process that deserves adequate time and attention in the writing classroom.

Performance of place in the writing classroom

Student interviews, along with displaying an attention to the ways in which conceptualizations of "home" and writing performance interact in terms of grounding and movement among discourse communities, also offer valuable insight into how writing as a

performance is itself defined. In my interview with Jennifer, it became clear that writing is an act more akin to “composing,” as it involves not just the physical act of writing words on a page but just as integrally the act of speaking out ideas. Thus, writing or literacy in the classroom is an act of “speaking out” and embodying thoughts and ideas and relationships, rather than an individualized act (as embodied in the writings of Peter Elbow, Linda Flower and others) of putting ideas into words and onto the page.

This employment of physical movement and oral speech in the composition process is something that Beverley Moss in her text, *A Community Text Arises: A Literate Text and A Literacy Tradition in African-American Churches*, refers to as “intertextual relationships.” This is a term that Moss derives from earlier work by Bloome and Bailey (8). As Moss remarks “intertextuality” occurs within an event “when participants recognize and acknowledge the intertextuality and when the intertextuality has social significance within the event” (Moss 147). According to the following excerpt taken from my interview with Jennifer, composing critically involves speech, movement and motion (intertextual relationships), as ideas are not just spoken out, but also connected together through embodied, spatial activity.

***Me:** Do you feel like a lot of students that you know or even teachers that you know don't know a lot about Chuuk? Or do most seem to know a little bit?*

***Jennifer:** [Shakes head] Cuz I'm a quiet person, yeah I don't think they know much about me. I kept a journal but that's where I share that. I don't, I'm not those kind who talk a lot. Yeah, I do talk, but I don't express what's within me to anyone, just my friends, yeah.*

***Me:** Would you say in Chuuk that that's pretty common that expressing yourself takes some time and you kind of have to take time to do that?*

Jennifer: To some people. To those who are shy, like me, quiet. Yeah. I would say that cuz in my family, **sorry, I need to say it out so you understand**, in my family, cuz I have like two sisters, they're smart, like they know things, yeah in a fast pace, but I do know things, but it's like I'm just an average student, k? But yeah, just cuz they kinda underestimate me, my parents, that's what makes me scared yeah to like express my feelings. I don't know. I just feel weird. But then they saw me graduate high school, elementary, then high school, and then college, a two year. Then, now they let me come out here.

Jennifer used non-verbal cues and embodied language to communicate in response to my questions. Specifically, Jennifer shook her head and motioned with her hands and her head to indicate changes in ideas or topics or to construct causal relationships—i.e. reticence to speak stemmed from parental dynamics. Thus, the performance of talking about writing was an act imbued with motion and movement, and working through ideas about writing took the form of working out ideas in the air with the entire body. Writing and literacy in Jennifer's response was, subsequently, couched in a rhetorical framework that included not just the written word itself but also movement and speaking.

Coupled with this bodily performance, Jennifer's response was also filled with additional rhetorical layers, as well. When talking about writing, and specifically talking about place in relation to writing, Jennifer emphasizes her own rhetorical choice of silence: "Cuz I'm a quiet person, yeah I don't think they [her teachers and classmates] know much about me" (Jennifer). Specifically when talking about and writing about Chuuk, Jennifer chooses her audience members carefully, either her private journal or her close friends, as she indicates when she says, "I kept a journal but that's where I share that. I don't, I'm not those kind who talk a lot. Yeah, I

do talk, but I don't express what's within me to anyone, just my friends" (Jennifer). This rhetorical performance is not by accident, nor simply attributed to a propensity for shyness (although Jennifer calls herself a "quiet person"). Instead, Jennifer makes another performative turn and moves into an explanation of her choice to perform silence in the writing classroom.

At a transitional point in the interview response, Jennifer declares, "sorry I need to say it out so that you understand." The statement starts with an apology which signals Jennifer's awareness of crossing multiple discursive lines. The apology signals perhaps an awareness about crossing the boundaries of "proper" or expected interview protocols; for example, answering interview questions directly and at a more professional distance of interviewer and interviewee. Furthermore, the apologetic response also signals a crossing of the very boundaries that Jennifer, herself, has just outlined surrounding performances involved in talking about place and performing a sense of place for others. However, in presenting the information to follow the apology, Jennifer exhibits a willingness, a boldness even, as indicated in her declarative phrasing to "say it out," to cross boundaries in order to promote greater "understanding" of her own relationship to specific place-based values concerning familial obligations and speaking (Jennifer). As Jennifer's response indicates, learning and writing and speaking are not individual acts, but rather acts that are bound by considerations of one's place and authority within a specific community structure made up of her parents and her two sisters, in particular. Thus, in the interview space, in which she is asked directly about her choices as a writer, Jennifer responds with performances that link her choices as a speaker and writer directly to her position within her own community. Jennifer's rhetorical performances of silence and speaking ultimately point to the ways in which communication in much of Micronesia, as Francis Hezel writes, is socially mandated and proscribed: speaking or not speaking take place in relation to a "social

map” and in order to speak with someone else one must be properly “identified, perhaps not by name but certainly as to whether they are kin or non-kin, whether they are older or younger than oneself, what their social status is” (*Making Sense of Micronesia* 13). Ultimately, then, one’s roots within a specific place-based community structure can both determine rhetorical choices of silence or in contrast, motivate a speaking out across discourse boundaries to establish authority in relation to a specific place, its people, and its values.

Through her interview responses Jennifer indicates that rhetorical choices and performances of place in the writing classroom are imbedded in specific *intertextual* relationships. Speech is actively acknowledged as a means of establishing speaking authority (*ethos*) and mutual understanding. It is the rhetorical tool required for movement from privately written thoughts to publically expressed ones. Subsequently, for Jennifer, the distinction between writing down her thoughts about Chuuk in a private journal and sharing those writings about place to a larger audience (a listener like me) involved a verbal exchange, an act of “saying it out” in speech (Jennifer). Physical movements and forms of self-expression are also positioned as a socially significant part of building this mutual understanding as spatial connections between ideas serve to embody the relationships between speaker and audience and their mutual engagement with the ideas being discussed. Ultimately, this understanding of literacy and writing performance as an act that involves movement, speech, and writing is integral to shaping a writing pedagogy in the beginning writing classroom that better meets the rhetorical framework presented by individual students from the Micronesian regions entering the classroom.

Constructing a place-based pedagogy in the writing classroom

Now having explored the ways in which the interviews have illustrated how writing and literacy are rooted in complex politics of negotiating performance in the writing classroom (and

the interview space as well), this last section explores what can be learned from students from Chuuk and Palau about creating a place-based writing pedagogy in the early composition classroom. In terms of constructing writing pedagogy, all three student collaborators, Mark, Jennifer, and Zara, indicate the importance of *trust*. Mark states that establishing a relationship of trust between student and teacher facilitates deeper and more meaningful writing, overcoming the rhetoric of silence that works to safeguard who is given the authority and privilege of becoming audience members to one's writing performances.

Me: So if you were teaching a writing class at college, you know, college-level, um what activities do you think you would use to help other students express themselves or feel more comfortable?

Mark: I think it's because I know that drafting is a great idea, but I don't feel like it's the best avenue to reaching the points. So, what I would definitely do is go over VENN diagrams and web diagrams to get their creative juices flowing. Um because in all honesty if I were writing a college-level, if I was doing for a college-level writing course for students it would be a creative writing class, something that they can express themselves, a safe place for them to express themselves.

In order to encourage students to feel safe and confident as writers and performers, Mark proposes a movement away from linear, isolated drafts and writing processes, toward the adoption of creative mapping strategies. Mark specifically emphasizes the use of VENN diagrams in the beginning writing classroom. Mark indicates that using VENN diagrams in the writing process was a practice that he learned in his high school English classroom in Palau. Interestingly, not only does this choice of form illustrate a collaborative writing across the curriculum (as VENN diagrams are used heavily in math and the sciences) but it also illustrates a

unique combination of grounding and movement, as well. VENN diagrams are centered around a few fixed or central categories which are then linked together in as many relationships as possible (www.cs.uni.edu). Drawing upon the VENN diagram as a powerful tool in the composing process, Mark links writing about specific place and identity to writing across spaces and discursive communities—creating multiple networks of connection between ideas rather than limiting the writing of specific place to one audience, one purpose, and one rhetorical situation.

Mark's balance of specifics with collaborative expression in terms of the writing process is further echoed in Jennifer's response in which she emphasizes the role of speaking in a beginning writing classroom.

Jennifer: K. Well, I would say I would have them [students] talk more instead of writing. Cuz that's when all, the whole class will know what everyone is thinking, yeah? So, that's like, I would have most of the activities with some talking, like, interacting with one another.

In Jennifer's definition, moving students to write about what is most important to them starts with moving them to talk about it with one another. Thus, Jennifer's vision of an improved writing classroom is grounded in the importance of hearing other students speak. Self-expression and writing are, thus, directly linked to collective oral performance in the classroom.

Zara connects this oral performance, this speaking out and participating, to a specific writing purpose. In order to foster more productive writing and speaking performances in the classroom, teachers in O'ahu, according to Zara, should encourage students to write about who they are and where they are from (in her case, Palau).

Zara: So, I, I express myself more I guess when I'm just free-writing, like saying whatever I want... I would like to write more about you know stuff that I know of, like, yeah, like where I'm from and my culture, cuz I can write a lot when I'm talking about those kinds of things. Like I know a lot about it, so. So, I like to write more about those. When I'm writing more about something that I'm not interested in it takes a long time and I'm just not into it so I don't do a good job when I'm doing it, yeah.

Zara indicates in her response that the teachers must work to openly collaborate with students to better understand where they are from and who they are as writers. Consequently then, a position of authority and privilege in the classroom is not just given freely it is earned, as teachers work to become active listeners, students, and co-composers themselves within the classroom. This approach to writing pedagogy extends the collaborative aspect of writing within the classroom as well as outside of the classroom walls, linking writing performance with specific places across the regions of Micronesia and the rest of the Pacific.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, Mark, Zara, and Jennifer's responses propose a methodology or performance strategy for teaching beginning writing that is built upon negotiating specific values concerning what constitutes literacy and writing purpose. Acknowledging the complex ways that home-place functions as a distancing mechanism *and* as a tool for building new connections between places within the Pacific, instructors can work to walk individual students through rhetorical silences in order to navigate between and among home spaces and new migrant spaces. Additionally, acknowledging the specific ways in which Micronesian students perform literacy in the classroom (speaking, moving, and writing) teachers can build networks of vital intertextual relationships in the classroom. And finally, valuing Micronesian community engagement and co-

creation in the writing process, writing instructors across O‘ahu and the Pacific can work to maintain a balance between self-expression and collaborative expression in the classroom.

One hears a distinct call from the student-teachers in this chapter for linking specific place with writing, linking various discourse communities (within the classroom and back in Palau and Chuuk) with self-expression, and linking teachers with students in acts of sharing and building trust and understanding. In order to ensure that the writing pedagogy proposed in this chapter does not become relegated to silence, I end here requesting a new perspective. With this perspective writing instructors and researchers will work to privilege the student performances and voices presented here in such a way, that what they have to say forms the foundation of scholarship and knowledge-building regarding composition pedagogy for Micronesian and non-Micronesian students moving forward. This body of scholarship ultimately charts a dual course, one that is both distinctively new (as interviews with Micronesian college students concerning writing have not yet been gathered and recorded until this project) and one that follows in the footsteps of performance studies experts like Thomas Newkirk and place-based rhetoric scholars like Peter Vandenberg. As Newkirk writes concerning the study of first-year writing students and their performances of the self: “It can be unsettling to penetrate the habitual, to disturb the ‘normal.’ But I hope to show that it can be freeing as well. Reading against the grain of our own (or *my own*) preferences can illuminate the roots of those preferences” (10). As Newkirk points out, reading and understanding the performances of student writers according to their own definitions and values involves a “reading against the grain” (10). This form of reading serves to position students (like Mark, Zara, and Jennifer) as *student teachers* rather than merely reading and writing subjects. Subsequently, as Peter Vandenberg points out in the introduction to *Relations, Locations and Positions: Composition Theory for Writing Teachers* these multi-vocal,

place-based performances of students are essential for working against a universalized standard of “good writing” and “good writing” pedagogy that detrimentally:

“(1) promotes a universal response to infinitely disparate rhetorical circumstances, allowing students to infer that a standard procedure should yield uniformly positive results independent of an immediate context or the expectations of readers in a given context; and (2) can erase a broad range of differences that students bring to the writing classroom, diminishing alternative ways of thinking, acting, and communicating in the world.” (Vandenberg 3)

The insights of student teachers like Mark, Jennifer, and Zara, therefore, serve to disrupt a “standard procedure” that disconnects writing performance from the context of the “infinitely disparate rhetorical circumstances” that students from diverse spaces bring with them into the writing classroom. Thus, these student insights work to re-conceptualize the cross-cultural interactions between place, writing, and audience that can take place in the first-year classroom (to the benefit of indigenous and non-indigenous students alike).

Building off of the promising foundation of student responses offered here, the next chapter in this project will focus on how the pedagogical models presented by the student-teachers in this chapter are situated within the larger political and rhetorical context of tertiary education for Micronesian students currently migrating across the Pacific. Often this larger context can work against many of the pedagogical insights offered in this chapter. Therefore, it is essential to address the details of this underlying contextual framework in order to explain how the pedagogical models of student-teachers can actually be positively implemented within the classroom.

CHAPTER 5

Fostering Educational *Movement*: Connecting the College Writing Classroom in O‘ahu with Micronesian Values of Place and Community Learning

For four years now, I have spent my weekends in Kaka‘ako park, a large grassy field surrounded by sidewalks in downtown Honolulu. This park is home to anywhere between 30-40 Micronesian families at a given time. Taking shelter in tents lined up along the sidewalks, these families work hard to adjust to life in O‘ahu—a life radically different from the one experienced in many of the small outer islands in Micronesia. The children in these families have to work against harsh material conditions to attend school every day. These conditions include inclement weather, cramped living spaces, lack of resources, and struggles against the local authorities.

These obstacles often mirror the very real struggles that these children often face within the educational system, itself. Over the years, I have been told innumerable stories of how students have been denigrated and labeled within their classes, both by other students and by their teachers. In too many cases to count, these students have expressed that to be Chuukese, to be Yapese, to identify as being from Kosrae and Pohnpei means to be excluded, stereotyped, and even labeled as “special education” students. As Steven Talmy found in a study conducted in Hawai‘i in 2004, even long term “1.5 generation” Micronesian ESL students often encountered “deficit-oriented” instruction in the classroom in which both instructors and fellow students played an active role in discriminating against them, through exclusion from classroom activities and overtly racist comments (Talmy 150)⁷. Furthermore, according to a 2007 study in which Iding, Cholymay, and Kaneshiro interviewed nine adolescent Micronesian students in O‘ahu,

⁷ The “1.5 generation” refers to individuals who have arrived in the U.S. as young children and have had more experience living in the U.S. and adapting to U.S. language and cultural practices.

common educational barriers in the classroom were found to consist primarily of negative learning expectations. Kaneshiro expands on these findings in her dissertation *Micronesian Students' School in Hawai'i: A Case Study of Ecological Systems* in which she remarks upon a trend within the Hawai'i Department of Education system of classifying Micronesian students as special education students rather than “culturally distinct” (24). Therefore, sadly, as much of the research indicates, the “deficit” educational model that ignores the role of culture in learning isn't just limited to the experiences of the children in Kaka'ako park. Tragically, this approach to primary education exists as a very real discouragement to students from these regions interested in attending college, to stay in college once there, and to see collegiate studies not just as a pragmatic means to achieving a career, but as a means of empowering, building, and improving Micronesian communities.

In this chapter, I outline some of the ways in which the current educational systems in Micronesia and O'ahu undermine the movement toward building student empowerment and enabling connections among tertiary education, specific places, and community learning values for students from Micronesia. After emphasizing where specific educational gaps exist, I build directly from the interview responses offered in the previous chapter as well as a history of critical composition pedagogy to propose an alternative pedagogical framework that works to address specific educational gaps at the beginning college composition level.

TERTIARY EDUCATION IN MICRONESIA

Since the late 1990s, composition and rhetoric scholars like Ellen Cushman and others have written on the importance of addressing the connection between writing and community. Specifically, Ellen Cushman addresses writing in the context of inner-city African American communities in New York in her 1998 book *The Struggle and the Tools*. Furthermore, in her

2003 study of African-American church communities and literacy, Beverly Moss writes, “If community is to be part of the educational process, and it must be, then schools must understand the role of community”(4). This connection between learning, writing, and cultural community is also a foundational tenet of language immersion pedagogy among indigenous populations as Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua writes in her essay, “Teaching Amid U.S. Occupation: Sovereignty, Survival, and Social Studies in a Native Hawaiian Charter School.” Writing about the pedagogy of Hālau Kū Māna New Century Public Charter School in Hawai‘i Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua argues that, “a community-based and place-based social studies education will lead to a stronger Hawaiian social body” (157). As these diverse writings indicate the acknowledgment of the crucial role of connecting writing with an understanding of communities and community writing practices is nothing new.

Although these insights are not new, they have not yet been readily applied to looking at writing in the context of instruction in the Micronesian regions of the Pacific or in the DOE elementary schools in O‘ahu. In work that has been done recently in the field of education the significance of connecting Micronesian community values with learning has been emphasized. For example, in addressing education more broadly in her dissertation *Way Finding: Envisioning a Culturally Responsive Educational System for Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia*, Chuukese scholar Margaret Cholymay highlights the necessity of constructing educational systems for Micronesian students based upon an understanding of indigenous values of the family and family learning. According to Cholymay, in Chuuk, as in many of the Micronesian regions, there are no single words to define family and family members as they are understood in a Western context. “Father” refers both to the biological father and the men who are in both the father’s and mother’s lineages. The same applies to the words “mother,” “brother” and “sister.”

This illustrates the extraordinarily close ties among the people (Cholymay 34). Scholar Francis Hezel in his 2013 book *Making Sense of Micronesia: the Logic of Pacific Island Culture*, further details this conceptualization of the family community in much of Micronesia when he writes:

The “family” that strikes the deepest roots, the meaning that explains the grounding of an islander’s identity, is not the western-style nuclear family consisting of mother, father, and children....In just about all Micronesian societies, the lineage is the fundamental family unit...the nebulous “extended family” group with whom a person most closely associates is a mixed group— some belonging to that person’s own lineage and some with other ties even though they are not members of one’s lineage. (Hezel 26-27)

Thus, as Hezel points out “family” and community in much of Micronesia consists of those who share in one’s lineage, both biologically and through extended family networks formed through marriage and adoption. In this definition of “family,” one’s connection to the family structure, the community, is both linked to a specific place and ancestral link (as lineage is traced through the mother and the mother’s connection to the land) and also spread out over multiple spaces as extended family networks can be found throughout different islands within Micronesia and beyond.

Education is positioned and understood in relation to this specific community construction as an act that involves learning from and giving back to the family, including members that live next door and those who live thousands of miles away. Cholymay defines the value of indigenous Micronesian education through the term “tumuneoch” which means “caring for the home” (83). She goes on to say that, “It is very important to understand that ‘caring for the home’ relates to caring for the people. People are central to this value” (83). This reciprocal relationship with family members, those within one’s home island and extended family network,

is therefore vital to understanding and constructing an indigenous educational model. However, as will be shown in the following section, primary and tertiary education in terms of the writing classroom within the Micronesian regions has operated upon Western models and has typically functioned in a way that serves to disrupt the integral role of family in the educational process.

In the 1960s, U.S. funding for education in the Micronesian regions of Chuuk, Kosrae, Yap, Palau, and the Marshall Islands experienced a massive increase. According to Francis Hezel, funds from the U.S. government were poured into education in particular in order to generate human resources, a more skilled labor source in the islands (*Reflections* 13). Schools were primarily founded then for utilitarian purposes with curriculum that reflected colonial value systems rather than the value systems relevant to the students' daily lives. Thus, the education system in the islands was primarily built up after WWII to serve the following U.S. political agenda:

For efficient employment of the manpower tool, most people would have to be relocated near the 'industrial' centers. Such a policy would require that they [indigenous peoples] subordinate traditional values associated with their family lands and their clan ties to the economic growth of the territory. It is unlikely that this change of attitude could be carried out in a short period of time. (Hezel, *Reflections* 17)

Education served to geographically move indigenous students farther and farther away from their own communities over time. Many of the larger high schools were established on the central islands, forcing students from outer island regions to leave their homes and lands and take up residence at boarding schools in the urban areas. Communal disconnect was consequently established first and foremost by geographical distancing.

This disconnect, which still continues today, is further augmented in the present-day educational system itself, through the privileging of Western (rather than indigenous) texts in writing courses and through the imposition of values which associate learning primarily with utilitarianism. As Margarita Cholymay indicates, students in Chuuk and the FSM today carry the effects of a curriculum designed for building skills but not building indigenous empowerment. Although there have been recent, isolated moves in Micronesia and in Hawai'i to provide students with instruction in their mother tongues, according to Cholymay, English and language arts classes still rarely take place in the student's own native language but rather "when we first started learning English it was mostly grammar, writing, symbols...very isolated" (Cholymay)⁸. Students in the second and third grades are forced to write and read in very formalized, grammar-oriented English modes using Western texts and concepts since native-language resources are often limited and native-language teaching strategies are not an integral part of teacher training courses (Cholymay). Furthermore, the educational system also often overlooks the value of using oral texts from the individual states as a part of the language arts curriculum. These texts value familial ways of knowing "passed down by ancestors who were wise and knowledgeable in order to bring and strengthen peace and harmony among the people" (*Way Finding* Cholymay 9).

In his essay, "Forever FOB: The Cultural Production of ESL in a High School." Steven Talmy has also remarked upon this lack of educational resources for both student and teacher support within the Chuukese classroom. Talmy writes that funding for schooling in Chuuk is among the lowest within the region (at about \$421 per student) (156). With such limited funding

⁸ This work has been encouraged through writing like Cholymay's dissertation, which offers a detailed, educational framework for encouraging indigenous teachers to create curriculum and develop teaching practices in students' first languages for use back in the Micronesian regions. Furthermore, as was evidenced at the 2008 *Micronesian Voices in Hawai'i* conference, educators like Joanna Jacob, Mary Milne, and Richard Salvador along with PREL (Pacific Resources for Education and Learning) are working to develop mother tongue teaching practices and resources for Micronesian migrant students at the primary education level in Hawai'i.

and a lack of native-language teaching approaches and native language texts and resources within the reading and writing classroom, the educational system within states like Chuuk has served to produce a population of students that is not encouraged to form a meaningful connection to writing and literature (Cholymay). Writing is made into an isolated form, then, rather than a tool for reciprocity and familial knowledge-building. This approach to education is not dissimilar to those that have been practiced in other parts of the Pacific, as Konai Helu-Thaman, Haunani Kay Trask, and Albert Wendt write about the ways in which colonial educational systems work to disconnect indigenous writers from their own sense of empowerment and community engagement in Samoa and Hawai‘i. As Thaman has argued in her essay “Of Daffodils and Heilala: Understanding Cultural Context in Pacific Literature” the educational system within her home region of Tonga has traditionally exhibited a complete lack of understanding regarding the “cultural context of Pacific writing and Pacific writers” (Thaman 42). Additionally, when this educational and cultural disconnect is coupled with geographic distancing, as Francis Hezel asserts, an emphasis upon curriculum that is largely “irrelevant” to students, is then made to undermine family-based indigenous learning values all the more by its being coupled with geographic “relocation” (25, 17).

The multiple layers of cultural dislocation that are enacted within the education systems in Micronesia are augmented when students choose to attend college. Currently, the College of Micronesia (COM) is the major tertiary institution serving the region, with campuses on the central islands of Chuuk, Yap, Pohnpei, and Kosrae (the states making up the Federated States of Micronesia). The College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) currently serves residents of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). COM and CMI also move students away from the outer islands, as the main campuses are located on the central, industrial centers of each island nation.

This geographic movement may not be all that different from the experience many students in the American educational system may experience. Nonetheless, it takes on a much weightier significance for students from Micronesia because for many indigenous students from the region values of learning and *ethos* and voice in the classroom are intimately connected to family and land. Thus, with geographic distancing can come a sense of loss and disconnect in the college environment that may not be experienced in the same way by American college students (even though they too may experience homesickness to varying degrees).

After college the entrance into the job market for many students often entails further movement away from home states. According to Francis Hezel, in his recent report *Micronesians on the Move*, job security within the Micronesian region during the 1980s—with the signing of the Compact of Free Association between the U.S. and the FSM and the end of the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI)—was relatively stable. Hezel writes that, “the extensions of US federal program funds to the area and the sizable increase in government positions as the former Trust Territory was organized into separate political entities offered nearly enough new jobs to provide for the returning college students” (Hezel 6). However, today this job security within the Micronesian region is no longer a reality. By 2003, a significant drop in U.S. federal funding to the FSM had occurred as the funding provisions of the original Compact of Free Association that had been signed by the U.S. and the FSM states ran out (Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Yap). In 2003, an updated Compact agreement with lower funding allowances and much more limited infrastructure funding requirements called “Compact II” was ratified and established as a 20-year agreement (“The President’s Report” 21). The original Compact had promised certain federal funds for job creation and support within the FSM. However, with the end of the original Compact and the ratification of Compact II federal funding for the job market

was cut and stricter funding requirements were imposed. With decreased funds and several accompanying cutbacks in the government sector, the FSM saw no significant increase in the number of jobs by 1995, and since that time employment has been on the steady decline (Hezel, *Micronesians on the Move* 16). Thus, residents of the various states of Micronesia are being forced to seek employment after college even farther away from their own families – in areas across the Pacific like Guam and O‘ahu, on the West coast of the continental U.S., and in places as far removed as Arkansas and Oklahoma.

With migrant trends currently on the rise, students in Micronesia are increasingly being pushed to think of their college educations on a global scale, rather than a local one. At a seminar in 1999 sponsored by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, an organization that works to foster connections between Japan and other international powers, Elizabeth D. Rechebe of the Northern Mariana islands specifically emphasized globalization as the key to future educational success in Micronesia. Rechebe remarks that,

Donor countries such as Japan, the US, Australia, etc., have been very generous in supporting many social and economic projects in the islands. In the area of education, perhaps a comprehensive review of all the bodies that have potential in increasing the education capabilities in the islands should be undertaken in order for these [sic] assistance to be more effective. The objective of this initiative would be to reassess the purposes and strengths of these bodies and how they may support quality educational practices in the region using new paradigms and technology to respond to global trends, and to prepare for unanticipated events that may result from these trends. (Rechebe “Micronesia and Education”)

This emphasis upon education in terms of “global trends” defined by external donor country “bodies” (not actual human bodies and families) widens even further the gap between education and personal and familial investment and engagement. That is, encouraging Micronesian teachers and students to view tertiary education simply as a utilitarian tool for global economic advancement can work to move indigenous students to view their education primarily in terms of an international “body” rather than the actual physical bodies and people within their own home states and communities.

TERTIARY EDUCATION PREPARATION IN O‘AHU

As individuals from the various states of Micronesia increasingly move across the Pacific, they and their children enter into new systems of education. However, these new systems, rather than offering more promise, often add to the educational limitations and denigrations imposed upon Micronesian students. Currently, Hawai‘i is the second most popular destination for migrants from Micronesia (following Guam with 22,000) (Delano). The 2012 report *Micronesians on the Move* asserts that approximately 450 individuals move from Micronesia to Hawai‘i every year, and those numbers are rising (Hezel and Levin 29). In 2012, 7,948 migrants from Micronesia had taken up residence in the island regions of Hawai‘i and it is now estimated that approximately 10-12,000 Micronesian individuals reside within Hawai‘i (Hezel and Levin 28). Furthermore, in 2012, there were approximately 2,268 Micronesian students attending elementary and high school in Hawai‘i (Hezel and Levin 22)⁹. The median age of migrants is 26.9, and many migrants come to Hawai‘i with younger elementary-school-age children (Hezel and Levin 28). Only about 18% of members of the FSM community in Hawai‘i (including children) are currently U.S. citizens (Hezel and Levin 18). Unfortunately,

⁹ It is not clear how many of these students are actually U.S. citizens (having been born in the U.S.). Currently, there are no resources available with an accurate estimation of how many Micronesian migrants with U.S. citizenship currently reside and attend school in Hawai‘i. Although, with increased migration and higher birth rates it can be estimated that citizenship numbers are on the rise, as well.

with the high cost of living, and the restrictions currently placed on low-income housing, many of these migrants are placed in situations with crowded housing, instability, and in extreme cases situations of houselessness, like the ones described at the beginning of this dissertation.

Micronesian migrants currently make up 15% “of all those served by shelters in the state” (Hezel, *Micronesians on the Move* 31). Furthermore, in order to assist in household survival, many children start working at the earliest legal age, 15, as 35% of all Micronesians 15 and over work for cash (Hezel, *Micronesians on the Move* 30).

In addition to the very real material struggles of pursuing education in Hawai‘i — from a lack of resources to houselessness to balancing wage earning with school hours and homework— many students must also face an increasingly heightened disconnect from their sense of place within the educational system, itself. According to a PREL briefing paper released by Hilda Heine, 1,671 FSM students in Hawai‘i (13% of the state’s total ESL population) were classified as ESL learners in 2002 (1). Additionally, “challenges that the children from Micronesia face include poor English language abilities, lack of familiarity with school system expectations, and a mismatch between their culture and the school’s culture” (Heine 5). At the center of these observations is an emphasis upon characteristics that are a direct result of geographic and cultural displacement—language and cultural differences primarily.

Sadly though, rather than working to bridge previous student expectations and cultural literacies with new educational expectations and values, many schools in O‘ahu isolate students instead, whether in the classroom itself or through separation into some form of special education, specifically in reference to writing and language arts classes (Kaneshiro 28). As one junior high student interviewed in the 2008 study ““Risk and Protective Factors of Micronesian Youth in Hawai‘i: An Exploratory Study” remarks: “when [teachers] ask you a question, you

have to answer it, you cannot say you do not know” and yet when answers are given the teachers will often “say it’s third grade English” (Okamoto 5). As this student indicates, students are forced to answer questions, and yet through their very participation they are made to feel isolated and belittled in front of their classmates—their English and learning are marked as insufficient. Thus, as this statement indicates, within the many junior high and high school language arts classrooms in O‘ahu, Micronesian students are pushed to learn through a rhetoric of not belonging and a learning model based upon deficiencies rather than cultural strengths. And as Katherine Paul’s 2003 thesis entitled “Is There a Problem Here? The History of Micronesian Immigration and Its Affect on the Experience of Micronesian Children in Hawai‘i’s Schools” indicates even when limited public schools in O‘ahu do offer language support and resources for Micronesian students, these programs are often limited in scope (due to lack of funding), operate outside of the classroom environment itself, and often fail to integrate parents and the larger Micronesian community into the language learning process (53).

This rhetoric and its underlying values simply moves students farther away from their sense of place and self, and even further away from cultural values practiced in many regions of Micronesia that view sharing knowledge and writing as a collective and constructive act. In a report submitted to the Hawai‘i Public Housing Authority, Katherine Ratliffe, an Associate Professor in Educational Psychology at the University of Hawai‘i, interviewed several Micronesian students about the ways they value and approach education. As Wally, an indigenous migrant from Yap relates, “There’s not a lot [of support here], whereas, if they were back home... There is support. I can go over to that house and somebody might know this in that house. I will be comfortable to go to that house because I grew up, I know that family” (“Family Responsibilities” www.hpha.hawaii.gov). This displacement from an environment in which

learning is a shared and collective activity tends to separate students from a sense of identity in the classroom, especially as writers who can feel comfortable and powerful in their own approach to the writing and learning process.

In addition to this administrative and institutional disempowerment, many migrant students also feel pressure from their school peers to separate themselves from their specific cultural and ethnic heritage and identity in order to merely survive in the educational environment. A 2008 study that appeared in the *Journal of Social Science Welfare* interviewed nine focus groups composed of forty-one Micronesian students in O‘ahu. Interviewees specifically responded to questions regarding racial pressures and ecological factors experienced in school. Here is an excerpt of some of their responses in relation to questions about peer treatment in the school setting in O‘ahu:

D.M.: Okay, so what are some things that people say?

CF: They say “microscope.”

CF: Or they go, “Microsoft.”

CF: Yeah, you know how irritating that is...

MF: They look down on us.

D.R.: How do they do that?

MF: Say I see something and I pronounce it wrong and they still tease Micronesians for it. Whatever.

MF: Or by the way we dress.

MF: I can be so “Micro.”

MM: Yeah, and when we try to talk to each other people just come around and [say] “Hey, speak English. Speak properly.” (Okamoto 10)

As this excerpt indicates, one of the primary ways that peers at school mock students from Micronesia is related to a distortion and disruption of place-based identity. Micronesia is not acknowledged as a rich geographical space of specific islands, peoples, and languages but rather is associated with American products and objects (microscopes and Microsoft) and a sense of smallness or unimportance (the term “micro”). What this distortion of the name “Micronesia” does is pressure Micronesian students to feel devalued for their connection to the regions they call home. A connection to specific place and identity is not a ready form of cultural and social capital in the O‘ahu school environment, and, therefore, many students feel that they cannot be successful students and writers unless they become something distinctly separate from their specific cultural backgrounds.

This type of cultural separation in school is something that has taken a specific form in relation to the many Micronesian students in O‘ahu schools, but it exists in multiple forms across the United States, as well. Writers like Gloria Anzaldúa have written about the ways in which children from indigenous Mexican backgrounds have also had to endure the racist bullying of classmates (and even teachers) within educational classrooms across the continental U.S. Recounting one particularly traumatizing classroom encounter, Anzaldúa writes: “I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess – that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler...[the teacher said] ‘If you want to be American, speak American. If you don’t like it, go back to Mexico where you belong’” (75). As Anzaldúa points out, racist stereotypes and degradations can serve to force students (specifically those of indigenous and minority backgrounds) to try and separate education from linguistic and cultural identity. Thus, even in speaking to one another and forming a sense of Micronesian community on their school campuses students can feel pressured (similar to Anzaldúa’s example) to speak and communicate

in a very specific language form and within a particular set of values (Americanized English) rather than in the ways that they feel most empowered and connected.

PROMOTING A POSITIVE MOVEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF BEGINNING COLLEGE COMPOSITION

As they face the very real pressures of geographical, institutional, and cultural displacement students from Micronesia advancing toward tertiary education could feel quite daunted. However, the point of illustrating these pressures in the preceding sections is not to present a lost or hopeless cause. The point is, rather, to illustrate where educational gaps do indeed exist in order to then propose where educators at the college level can better address those specific gaps. As a teacher of composition at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, the specific solutions that I am primarily interested in and will focus on in the rest of this chapter start within the beginning college composition classroom and extend outward from there. Furthermore, the solutions that I present here are not intended to be a fix-all, but rather to be a resource guide of suggestions offered by composition scholars, Micronesian students, and administrators—a resource that currently does not exist in the context of tertiary education for Micronesian students. This resource can work to foster a powerful educational *movement*, one in which college writing educators work to encourage students from Micronesia to connect writing and speaking with a sense of place; to see composition as an act of movement, not away from one's sense of identity and place, but rather from and within it.

A brief history of critical pedagogy and composition

In order to contextualize the pedagogical practices presented in the rest of this chapter, it is first essential to locate where they exist in relation to the major schools of critical pedagogy and composition scholarship. The proposals that I present primarily draw from the school of

New Rhetoric or Epistemic Rhetoric. This approach is one of four that James Berlin defines in his essay “Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories.” According to Berlin there are four major schools of composition pedagogy: Classicists, Current-Traditionalists, Expressionists, and New Rhetoricians (257). For this chapter’s purposes I will just focus on Berlin’s final school of composition pedagogy (New Rhetoric/Epistemic Rhetoric) here.

The New Rhetoric or social constructionism school reflects an attunement to the role of individual writers in the composition process and a rejection and resistance to the dominant Current-traditional models that had preceded it. According to Catherine Hobbs, a central tenet of New Rhetoric is that “language is constitutive rather than simply reflective of material and social realities. This means that the writer, the audience, the larger community, and the subject addressed are all at least partly constructed by their verbal formations” (275). Thus, composing is a meaning-making process, and teaching writing entails that close attention is paid to the ways that writer, audience, community, and subject addressed function in the creation of meaning and knowledge. Ultimately, this New Rhetoric or social constructionism view of writing and meaning as socially constructed is one that the pedagogical approaches of this chapter most closely align with.

This view of knowledge and meaning as constructed through the learning and writing process is also one that originally derives from writings in critical pedagogy by scholars outside of composition and rhetoric. John Dewey and his early 20th century works, including “My Pedagogic Creed,” *The Child and the Curriculum*, and *Democracy and Education*, are viewed as foundational to the emergence of critical pedagogy. In his works, Dewey argued that pedagogy does not and should not exist outside of the needs of the individual student and that learning which takes place in the classroom should work toward the creation of more empowered citizens

and participants in the U.S. democratic public sphere. Paulo Freire, another founding father of the critical pedagogy movement, also writes extensively about how the creation of student-citizens in the classroom should be the ultimate goal of teaching. Thus, in his foundational work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (published in 1968), Freire rejects a model of learning that he terms the “banking system.” In this approach to teaching, the teacher’s role is valued most as he or she is responsible for imparting pre-packaged knowledge to students who must then imitate and repeat it at best. In contrast, Freire asserts that effective teachers are those that give up an authoritarian and domesticating role to instead become “involved in their students’ curiosity and in the paths and streams it takes them through” (*Teachers as Cultural Workers* Freire 32). Moving students to the center of the classroom and the learning process ultimately allows them to question ideas and forms of meaning-making (various texts and forms) for themselves.

This questioning is key because it allows students to discover for themselves the ways in which the communities around them are constructed through language and the ways in which they can resist these constructions through their own meaning-making (writing) practices. As critical pedagogy scholar Joe Kincheloe writes concerning the political focus of critical pedagogy scholarship:

Do we want socially regulated workers with the proper attitudes for their respective rung on the workplace ladder? Or do we want empowered, learned, highly skilled democratic *citizens* who have the confidence and the savvy to improve their own lives and to make their communities more vibrant places in which to live, work, and play? If we are unable to articulate this transformative, just, and egalitarian critical pedagogical vision, then the job of schooling will continue to involve taming, controlling, and/or rescuing the least empowered of our students. Such students do not need to be tamed,

controlled, and/or rescued; they need to be respected, viewed as experts in their interest areas, and inspired with the impassioned spirit to use education to do good things in the world. (*emphasis added* 8)

Thus, critical pedagogy advocates for an approach to teaching in which students are positioned to become more critical thinkers, writers, and, ultimately, for Dewey, Freire, and Kincheloe, participants in political and social activism and engagement.

The New Rhetoric or social constructionist school of composition instruction builds upon this critical pedagogy framework of learning and composing as a means of social and political empowerment. Composition and rhetoric scholars like Ira Shor, David Bartholomae, Kenneth Bruffee, Richard Young, Ellen Cushman, and Patricia Bizzell have all written extensively about the ways in which the writing classroom functions as a site for political critique—critique as generated through collaboration among students, through the interactions between students and teachers in office hours and classroom responses, and through the specific teaching practices and assignments that teachers can implement within the classroom. In the very pedagogical models that I present later in this chapter, I draw heavily upon the works of Ellen Cushman and sociolinguist Mary Louise Pratt in talking specifically about the ways in which pedagogical practices that pay close attention to the interactions between individual writers, classmates, and community members can work to empower students within the writing classroom.

I also draw readily from more recent work by composition and rhetoric scholars who have written about the limitations of some of the earlier arguments of critical pedagogy and composition scholarship—specifically in terms of looking at indigenous rhetoric and citizenship within the classroom. For example, I draw upon work from scholar Lisa King who critiques earlier work by scholars like Mary Louise Pratt and John Trimbur concerning the role of

collaboration and conversations about difference within the composition classroom. According to King, earlier writings about contention and struggle as a means of political resistance and meaning-making in the writing classroom tended to overlook the ways in which struggle still often privileges the role of dominant discourse in classroom interactions (King 215). Thus, King proposes a pedagogical model that encourages political and social empowerment by encouraging students to read indigenous texts alongside non-indigenous ones in order to highlight multiple forms of rhetorical sovereignty and alliance within the classroom rather than focusing on struggle centered around only dominant definitions of “difference” and “power” and “collectivity.” King’s model serves as an indigenous re-framing of the scholarship that precedes it.

In a similar vein as King’s line of critique and re-vision, works by Amy Wan, Jodi Byrd, and Morris Young have also called into question the way that previous critical pedagogical approaches have positioned the significance of “citizenship” within the writing classroom. As Amy Wan argues in her essay, “In the Name of Citizenship: The Writing Classroom and the Promise of Citizenship,”

Scholarship in the field of composition and rhetoric often promotes the idea that successful writing instruction plays a key role in the preparation of good citizens, situating the classroom as a space that can reinvigorate democratic and participatory citizenship... with no negatively charged opposite, citizenship becomes completely and unquestionably acceptable. (28,30)

This lack of critique has ultimately resulted in a lack of interrogation regarding the political implications of the term citizenship and the weighty assumptions it has come to carry in the New Rhetoric or social epistemic classroom. For example, as Wan points out, citizenship is often

linked with “good writing” and hard work within the composition classroom. Thereby, an underlying assumption about citizenship becomes the idea that to achieve it one only needs to desire it, work hard to achieve it, and write well enough. Unfortunately, though this approach “has dangerous implications [for writing teachers] when we affably state citizenship’s importance in our writing goals but don’t acknowledge that it has different kinds of meanings that correspond to ideas about work, productivity, status, and access to resources, in addition to one’s ability to participate” (36). For migrant students, like those from Micronesia, U.S. citizenship is not readily attainable (nor is it in some cases even desired due to the long history of U.S. exploitation across the Micronesian states). Therefore, a writing classroom whose pedagogical framework implies that student writing is only “good” when it is linked with political citizenship and that citizenship is accessible simply through effort and writing refinement is severely limiting. Wan proposes then that critical pedagogy and future pedagogical models question and revise the use of the term citizenship in promoting the political dimension of writing instruction in the composition classroom:

We [writing teachers] should acknowledge the limitations of what citizenship can do for students...And we should create a space where our own citizen-making through the teaching of literacy is a more deliberate activity, one that enlivens the concept of citizenship by connecting classroom practices to other instances of citizenship production. (Wan 46)

Ultimately, contemporary writing like Wan’s advocates for an approach to critical pedagogy and composition that calls into question its limitations while also advocating for changes that align with its overarching goal to effect empowerment through writing. In these new re-visions, dominant ideologies of citizenship and indigenous identity (as they operate in the writing

classroom) are critically examined. Furthermore, as these works argue, it is not enough to simply try to empower all students in the same ways through one framework of composition pedagogy. Instead, new pedagogical practices must be continually formulated in order to better assess and address the diverse writing practices and needs of indigenous and non-indigenous, citizen and migrant students alike.

A critical composition pedagogy for moving forward

Employing much of the critical scholarship just outlined, the final section of this chapter presents a critical pedagogical framework for supporting the writing goals and needs of indigenous Micronesian students *and* their non-indigenous classmates in the composition classroom. In constructing this new framework, students from the Micronesian regions have indicated that it is essential to emphasize community literacies and pre-existing knowledge bases in the beginning writing classroom. Jennifer, a student from Chuuk, now attending college at Chaminade University in O‘ahu, indicates in a personal interview conducted in April 2014 that composition is an act that involves multiple speakers and writers sharing (at least in part) their own distinct ancestral knowledge with others (Jennifer). In this response, Jennifer highlights that composing is an act that is intricately bound with what Margarita Cholymay (as mentioned earlier in this chapter) defines as a learning about and among family members—it is a process of *tumuneoch* or “caring for the home” (83). Thus, within this indigenous framework, composition can be understood as an act involving multiple speakers and writers sharing community values and knowledge rather than merely interacting individually with pieces of paper.

Furthermore, as Jennifer highlights, literacy in relation to her Chuukese community is not solely defined in written terms, but in terms of the written and oral. In defining composition as a shared process of multiple generic forms meant to deepen cultural understanding and knowledge,

Jennifer is specifically drawing upon a previous knowledge base rooted in her indigenous understanding of what good writing is and should be. It is this knowledge base that Sandra Kaneshiro urges educators to actively acknowledge and build upon when encouraging and empowering Micronesian students in the classroom (22).

A pedagogical model that builds from these insights would, thus, approach the classroom as a site for multiple forms of active expression and dialogue. In her 2015 conference presentation for the ASAO Symposium, Mary Spencer, a psychologist and educator who has done extensive work in Chuuk, writes about this pedagogical approach as an “Intent Community Participation” model in which students work one-on-one with the instructor or in groups with each other in order to learn (21). This type of learning model that builds off of community engagement can be utilized to move students toward a greater understanding of diverse viewpoints rather than trying to make all students agree with each other, or with one dominant set of cultural standards. In composition and rhetoric studies, this type of learning model has often been theorized in terms of Mary Louise Pratt’s foundational concept of “contact zones,” which she describes as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths” (Pratt 76). Even current indigenous writing instructors like Daniel Cole in his essay “Writing Removal and Resistance: Native American Rhetoric in the Composition Classroom,” express an affinity for Pratt’s contact zone model. According to Cole, Pratt’s model is useful because it makes space for students to “increase their ideological self-awareness...[and] to broaden their intellectual experience by allowing them to examine the ways in which these various perceptions and conceptions correspond and conflict with each other” (Cole 124).

Nonetheless, whereas Cole and others might find Pratt's model useful, it has met with quite a bit of critique in recent years due to the fact that it tends to gloss over the ways in which contention and struggle within the classroom are still translated in terms of the dominant discourse. As scholar Lisa King writes in her essay "Rhetorical Sovereignty and Rhetorical Alliance in the Writing Classroom: Using American Indian Texts," Pratt's contact zone fails to serve as a useful model for adequately valuing indigenous and non-indigenous writers and speakers equally in the classroom because the "contact zone cannot quite describe the ways in which Native peoples and communities enact rhetorical sovereignty as fully present in themselves, even as they enact rhetorical and literacy-based alliances with other communities" (King 216). Thus, King argues that a more fitting contemporary melding of theory and practice in the writing classroom necessitates a two-fold approach to pedagogy: a teaching of rhetorical sovereignty *and* rhetorical alliance (ideas adopted from scholar Malea Powell).

According to King, beginning composition instructors need to foster a proper valuation of rhetorical sovereignty, or valuing indigenous writing on its own terms, in their approach to teaching rhetoric and writing in the classroom. One way in which space for properly valuing the rhetorical sovereignty of all students can be made within the writing classroom is through the integration of more varied models of composing. An example might be an assignment that allows students to draft a piece of writing by talking and walking and writing with a partner or set of partners while moving throughout the classroom (Hecker 3). This type of activity values bodily movement, speech, and writing as integral parts of the composition process. Not only can these forms of composing prove valuable for non-indigenous students with multiple learning and writing approaches, but they are also essential to building *ethos* and constructing public discourse for many indigenous students from Micronesia (as the indigenous students from Chuuk

and Palau mentioned in the previous chapter). Thus, more varied writing approaches that incorporate multiple forms of composition can, ultimately, move indigenous and non-indigenous students alike to experiment with working through and sharing their writing on their own terms (as diverse as those may be).

In addition to fostering rhetorical sovereignty in the classroom, King also emphasizes the critical role of building “rhetorical alliances,” as well. Students should not only be moved to value their own writing in terms of the unique rhetorical strategies and forms it employs but also to value how they can employ those unique strategies and forms alongside others (both inside and outside of the classroom). As King puts it, rhetorical alliance “means that everyone acknowledges the rhetorical contributions that every community makes and what the stakes are for the speakers and listeners involved” (King 220). One way to foster an appreciation for multiple forms of rhetoric and the real power and stakes of those forms is to create a classroom learning environment in which students are actively encouraged to write about and with their own communities and to share those writings with others.

In my own writing classroom, I have students start the semester by writing a paper about the communities in which they live. The primary audience for this paper is the other classmates. Ultimately, the purpose of the paper is to encourage students to see and value multiple forms of community and to confront the challenges of writing to a diverse audience about specific communities and their particular issues. In their papers, students identify either a positive or detrimental aspect of their community in detail. Students have written about a wide variety of communities and topics ranging from their love of home gardens in their neighborhoods to the need for more recycling cans outside of their on-campus dorms. After detailing a specific issue in relation to the community of their choice, students must then propose a solution that entails

encouraging others (i.e. their own classmates) to get more involved in solving their community issue. Often this moves students to confront the challenges of writing about a specific community they love and an issue they are passionate about for an audience that often does not share their community values and lives entirely outside of their community space. My own assignment in large part borrows from Scott Richard Lyons's pedagogical proposals at the end of his essay on "Rhetorical Sovereignty." At the end of his essay, Lyons argues that students should be encouraged to read indigenous texts (even those students produce themselves) in conversation with rather than separate from the writings of other groups. As he proposes: indigenous texts ought to read "alongside the histories, rhetorics, and struggles of African-American and other 'racial' or ethnic groups, women, sexual minorities, the disabled, and still others, locating history and writing struggle in the powerful context of American rhetorical struggle" (Lyons 465). Ultimately, my own writing assignment works to foster rhetorical alliances within the classroom as students are encouraged to value diverse forms of rhetoric and to wrestle together with important questions regarding how diverse rhetorical forms are implicated in writing about very real communities and community issues (i.e. a collective rhetorical struggle).

Assignments like the one just described also simultaneously work to value rhetorical sovereignty in the writing classroom, as well, by allowing students to define for themselves what they consider valuable communities and topics to write about. Thus, assignments like mine work to value student perspectives like Zara's, a university student from Palau. As she indicated, students from Micronesia (like herself) start to lose interest in writing when they are moved away from writing about their own communities and helping their own regions back home (Zara). Writing, then, becomes another means of displacement and disconnect rather than a means of contributing to community development and personal civic engagement in the writing

process. Composition and rhetoric scholar Ellen Cushman writes that for inner-city students living in New York it was essential to connect writing in the classroom with issues and writing forms and practices relevant to their daily lives—employment and housing forms, welfare documents, and bills, for example (Cushman “Introduction”). It was only when placing writing within this larger community writing context that educators could better understand both the tools that students employ in their writing as well as the struggles that take place when trying to use those tools — sometimes they work and sometimes they don’t depending upon the audience.

Cushman’s work is useful to the discussion about rhetorical sovereignty and Zara’s call for more community-oriented writing because it points out the importance but also some of the critical complexities of implementing a pedagogy of writing in relation to community development for Micronesian college students. The tools that Micronesian students use to communicate in relation to community development in their home regions may not be as readily received or understood within the O‘ahu or continental U.S. classroom. A fear of producing writing that is then lost in translation is often a reason that students from Micronesia may not write about where they are from. As Jennifer expressed later in our personal interview, a fear of being misunderstood by her family and by her teachers (for being judged as inadequate or incapable or wrong) often pushes her to maintain silence in the classroom and to keep her deepest and most critical thoughts in relation to her identity and sense of community to herself, only to be recorded in private journals (Jennifer).

In order to combat this very real fear, teachers must work to actively acknowledge the role not only tools but struggles play in writing for community development in relation to Micronesia. Within the writing classroom, teachers can assign writing reflections throughout different stages of drafting a paper that focus on making students more aware of not only the

writing tools they are using to inform and convince their audience about community issues and changes within their regions, but also the struggles that occur when trying to use those tools to convince an audience who is unfamiliar with them. Furthermore, writing instructors can also encourage students to view their home communities not just in terms of their specific islands, but also in terms of the migrant communities that now exist throughout O‘ahu, the Pacific, and the United States. Thus, students can work to connect specific place-based values and community development concerns with multiple discourse communities and spaces.

Nonetheless, even with plentiful opportunities within the classroom to write about their own communities and community development, students from Micronesia may still struggle to connect their writing with real community action—especially since these students are migrants and have been pushed away from their home regions for much of their educational careers. Thus, an additional level of support is needed in the beginning writing classroom. Students from these regions need to see that their writing has power in terms of their actual communities back home and among the communities of Micronesian migrants across the Pacific. One way to foster these connections is for writing instructors to provide resources and opportunities for students from Micronesia to talk to and learn from other students and community leaders from their own regions. There are a few ways in particular to do this. Particularly, I will suggest here a few of the ways that are specific to where I live and work (O‘ahu), although the suggestions are broad enough that they can be readily applied to institutions across the Pacific and continental U.S., as well.

Students from Micronesia writing in O‘ahu can connect their writing to a sense of purpose and tangible community engagement through composition resources outside of the classroom that work to connect students with writing mentors and role models. For example, at

the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo the Pacific Islander Student Center employs mentors and tutors from indigenous Pacific islander backgrounds to help students from those regions feel empowered and connected on campus (Raaitor Personal Interview). The director of the Center, Vid Raaitor, is from Chuuk and is familiar with the educational gaps mentioned earlier in this paper, and is working carefully with the Center to fill them through mentorships and extensions of the Micronesian model of community learning (Raaitor).

Applying what is taking place at the Center to other campuses across the Pacific, including O‘ahu, instructors and administrators can work more closely with their own departmental writing centers to implement more regionally and culturally specific writing resources and tutors within these spaces. Current writing center pedagogy is particularly attuned to the growing population of international and migrant students who are seeking writing support outside of the classroom setting (Hall 5). This should come as no surprise, just considering the increase in the migrant population from Micronesia in the last decade. According to a recent article in the *Writing Center Newsletter*, writing centers that employ a diverse range of international writing tutors serve as valuable spaces of “mediation” as mentors serve as “cultural informants” (Balester 9)¹⁰. It is through this more culturally specific and diverse writing center space that migrant students are provided with a safe space where they can negotiate connections among where they are writing from, who they are writing to, and how to most effectively move between the two (Balester 9). Thus, as Micronesian writing mentors serve as guides in navigating specific cultural and compositional issues, an extension of the indigenous community family network is created in the writing center in order to provide a learning support across island spaces — very much like the extended family network that Francis Hezel calls a “resource to

¹⁰ The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Writing Center employs several international tutors as it works to employ the sort of tutoring model that Balester highlights here.

turn to when need arises” (28). In this learning environment, students from Micronesia are encouraged to develop renewed confidence in writing about, for, and *within* a family community structure that he or she has previously been removed from throughout the education process.

This increased confidence in writing for one’s specific community is refined even further as students receive support from an even larger body of students from Micronesia, as well.

Students who have moved from Micronesia to O‘ahu and other regions have to battle with a sense of disconnect and disembodiment that is often reinforced in their writing classes (as was discussed earlier in this paper). Therefore, one of the most important ways for students from Micronesia to feel that their college level writing has agency is to put it into conversation with the writings of other students from Micronesia (and those from around the Pacific in similar situations), thus, fostering an active and real community engagement within the act of sharing itself. Right now this type of support takes place on a cross-institutional level as Chaminade University and the Pacific Islander Student Center at Hilo have worked to host conferences that bring together student leaders and speakers from Micronesia and around the Pacific who have migrated to Hawai‘i. Furthermore, Craig Santos Perez and the Center for Pacific Island Studies (CPIS) at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa have actively worked to create public events that bring together Pacific writers talking about their work and topics like education and literature.¹¹ In my own work, writing my dissertation project, I have also worked across writing departments, at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and Chaminade University to connect students and start conversations across writing programs. Students from Micronesia can be connected to other students from these rich regions through the hosting of cross-institutional writing events—poetry slams, conferences, open mic readings—that bring together multiple writing departments and

¹¹ Craig Santos Perez helps organize the Oceania Writing Series through the English Department featuring writers from around the Pacific (including the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, Guam, and Hawai‘i). Furthermore, CPIS has recently organized their annual conference bringing community leaders from Micronesia (like Joakim Peter, Kathy Jetnil-Kijner, and Innocenta Sound Kikku) together with other indigenous Pacific activists and writers to discuss current political and literary topics together in a public two-day event.

resources. Furthermore, through the use of technology, students can also be connected with students currently attending college back in Micronesia, as well. For example, students from Chaminade are currently able to connect with and learn from students attending the satellite campus of the Community College of the Carolina Islands through the use of technologies like Blackboard online, email, and Skype.

CONCLUSION

Fostering these sorts of cross-departmental, cross-institutional, and cross-regional networks of connection and sharing provides students from the Micronesian regions a space within tertiary education, in particular the composition classroom, to see the very real power of their own community literacies and writings. Furthermore, these networks also provide a means of taking writing outside of the classroom, allowing students who have often been told to separate place and identity from the writing process, to see and enact the mobility of writing about specific places—to connect with other migrant students, to educate and encourage future community leaders, and to foster community change and action.

Ultimately, it is the goal of this chapter to foster this sort of community change and action as well. A change is needed, an educational *movement* is necessary, to reverse past trends that have been set in motion in tertiary education for students from the regions of Micronesia. Through pedagogy within the writing classroom that fosters composition embedded in speaking, writing, and sharing about specific places and values, students from these regions can build off of what they know (both about place and about composing) and become more critical about how to more effectively communicate what they know to diverse audiences across spaces. Furthermore, through cross-institutional and departmental networks of writing support for students from Micronesia, students can work across the multiple layers of distance that they

encounter in tertiary education (geographical, cultural, etc.), to create a writing community that works to once again connect writing with their own communities (both at home and abroad) and the power to effect positive community change.

What I have found in my time spent sitting and sharing with students attending Chaminade University and the children who currently reside in Kaka‘ako is that there are powerful voices emerging from the Micronesian regions that are being silenced within the writing classroom. Writing instructors and administrators and writing center facilitators, we either continue patterns that are maintaining silence or they can start a different *movement*: one that creates a college writing environment that encourages students from Micronesia to speak with confidence and power and that offers them multiple spaces in which to be clearly heard.

CONCLUSION

Looking Back and Moving Forward: Future Visions for the Micronesian Regions

In her recent 2014 presentation at the UN Summit on Climate Change, Marshallese poet Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner introduced a poem on climate change entitled, “Dear Matafele Peinam,” with a brief re-telling of a famous story from her region. In this story, several brothers are preparing to set sail within a sailing competition. However, before they embark upon their ocean voyage their mother asks to accompany them. All the brothers except one deny their mother passage. Only one brother agrees to take his mother with him, and in so doing he discovers that his mother has brought the very first sail with her. This brother ultimately wins the ocean race, and as Jetnil-Kijiner remarks, his story is retold through generations in order to teach of the importance of honoring one’s mother (biological and oceanic) while also embracing the “challenges life brings” (Jetnil-Kijiner).

I bring this story up here (and as an integral thread throughout this chapter) because as this dissertation project comes to a close it is essential to look back while also moving forward. As Jetnil-Kijiner’s story illustrates, moving forward within Micronesia involves both looking forward and looking back continually. Thus, future “progress” is not configured as an individualistic act of leaving the past and one’s community behind (a Western configuration) but rather an act that takes the past and one’s community right into the future.

This framework of Micronesian future “progress” is one that this entire dissertation has attempted to model. In the very first chapter, I argue that a Micronesian counter-narrative of resistance to U.S. exploitation and dominant rhetoric is not only a vision for the future but a reality with a long history rooted in Micronesian political writing, like the texts of John Mangefel. Furthermore, as I illustrate in chapters two and three, this genealogy of Micronesian

writers “determining their own communicative needs and desires” (*i.e.* practicing *rhetorical sovereignty*) can be traced from its historical roots in Micronesia, itself, right into the present as writers and students moving from Micronesia across the Pacific are producing forms of rhetoric and writing that are empowering and community-building (Lyons 450). Moving into chapter four, I began to ask how this rich rhetorical history and its discursive forms could be woven into educational practice so that it becomes the very framework for teaching Micronesian writers about rhetoric and composition in the future. Chapter four attempted to answer this question through the presentation of a very practical pedagogical framework: a teaching model that began to look to the future while also looking to the past and the present. And now this looking forward continues here, in this conclusion chapter.

In this conclusion, I present a final call for specific changes in rhetoric present at the institutional, university level. These changes are urged in order to set a course for the future whereby students from Micronesia will be taught that the rhetoric of their past was powerful, the rhetoric of their present is vibrant, and the rhetoric of their future is full of promise. Ultimately, in order to determine an effective course of action for institutional reform, I have interviewed teachers of writing who are currently working closely with Micronesian students taking college English courses taught from O‘ahu. Some of these teachers are indigenous to Micronesia and some are not. What all of their responses share is a specific emphasis upon how a deeper understanding of Micronesian values about rhetoric and writing is needed in order to resist rhetoric that works to limit future educational change for both the Micronesian regions and for Micronesian migrants moving across the Pacific. According to the responses outlined in this conclusion, rhetorical change and educational reform will ultimately entail the following two

approaches: the creation of undergraduate bridge courses that directly address diverse rhetorical constructions and evaluations of “educational progress” within the Western academy and the integration of Micronesian literature within university publication lists, anthologies, and course syllabi.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The gap between Western institutional values of future “progress” and indigenous values of education has recently been addressed in several dissertation projects looking to re-frame Micronesian education according to indigenous values of place¹². For example, as Chuukese educational scholar, Margarita Cholymay has pointed out in her dissertation, *Way Finding: Envisioning a Culturally Responsive Educational System for Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia*, for locations like Chuuk in Micronesia a future educational system must be reconfigured according to indigenous perspectives and understandings. She specifically cites the concept of *Fairo*, or the development of character and reciprocity through education in contrast to Western “progress” and its educational counterpoint (Cholymay 128). Thus, as Cholymay points out, properly understanding and constructing the future (in her case an educational system in Chuuk) will require a more critical understanding and application of indigenous values of learning.

Nonetheless, although work like Cholymay’s and others is vital for its contributions to the individual regions of Micronesia it stops short of addressing how academic rhetoric about learning, *ethos*, and Micronesian writing production has influenced practice in relation to indigenous ways of knowing. These former studies have been primarily concerned with general

¹² Other recent dissertation projects include “Socio-cultural elements that influence education leadership practices in the Republic of Palau” by Michelle Warn of San Diego State University and “Disassembling School in Micronesia: Genealogy, Subjectivity, Possibility” by David Kupferman of the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa.

education at the primary level, therefore leaving the specifics of indigenous rhetoric, university education, and academic reform to further studies. In this chapter, I write within this particular gap in the current scholarship.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

The teachers interviewed for this conclusion all currently teach writing courses within O‘ahu. Some of these instructors are indigenous to Micronesia, while others are not. However, what they all share is an experience either teaching Micronesian literature or working extensively with a Micronesian college student population in writing and the Humanities. The way that I met the interviewees was through channels of academic networking, as my first interviewee, Chamorro scholar Craig Santos-Perez, is a faculty member in Creative writing and Pacific Literature at the college where I teach and study. Additionally, my second teacher interview took place with Koreen Nakahodo who is a fellow graduate student in English at my university. Through Koreen I was also introduced to Chuukese scholar Margarita Cholomay and Humanities Dean Dr. David Coleman, her fellow instructors at Chaminade University. Each of these interview subjects were specifically selected because of their connections to Micronesia (either as indigenous individuals or as teachers with extensive knowledge working with students from the region). These individuals also teach writing or indigenous Micronesian literature.

After selecting interview subjects and composing questions, I approached the task of setting up the interviews themselves. Some of my interviewees had met with me before—Craig Santos-Perez and Koreen Nakahodo—as we had collaborated in class and outside of class on various aspects of my project. My other interviewees and I exchanged emails continuously before finally meeting in person to conduct our interviews.

My prior interactions with each interviewee were intimately tied to the performances and responses produced within the face-to-face interviews with each teacher. For example, Koreen Nakahodo and I, fellow teachers and prior classmates, met in my office and chatted freely and comfortably about our lives, our studies, and our classes before, after, and in-between interview questions and responses. The performance within this interview was very much that of research partners and colleagues. In a similar vein, my interview with Craig Santos-Perez, a chair on my dissertation committee and a fellow teacher, was also more informal and familiar (as we work together already). We met in the Creative Writing workshop room around a well-worn seminar table, and as we worked through my research questions he would sometimes ask me questions in return in order to move me to think more deeply about some aspect of my project.

From these first initial interviews, I moved into two interviews that were much less familiar. Before interviewing David Coleman, Dean of the Humanities at Chaminade University and the satellite campus of the Community College of the Carolina Islands, I had only met him once before and most of my communication prior to my interview with him was through an intermediary (a secretary). Thus, in my interview the format was much more formal, as I explained my project briefly and then proceeded to ask questions. The interview performance did not include a great deal of back-and-forth conversation; however, Dr. Coleman was extremely forthcoming about sharing the perspectives that accompany his role as both a teacher and an administrator in relation to working with students from Micronesia.

In contrast to Dr. Coleman's openness apart from conversation (formality and convention seemed to produce greater comfort in the interview), my interview with Dr. Margarita Cholymay, a Chuukese educational scholar and teacher, was quite the opposite. Meeting me in a local fast-food establishment down the street from her house, Dr. Cholymay immediately set the

terms of our interview as less formal and conventional. However, I did not clearly read this initial performance adequately, and I proceeded in our interview as I had in Dr. Coleman's only explaining my project briefly before asking questions. During the initial question and response session, Dr. Cholymay's answers were shorter and felt a bit restrained and questioning. I wondered why this was, but then it became clear once the questions ended and Dr. Cholymay began to ask me where I was from, what my project was about, why I cared about my project, and what I intended to do with it. I realized then that I had gone about this interview without first telling my story and introducing the links that networked me to the Micronesian community and to my work there. Until this initial story-telling took place (my *ethos* had been established in relation to specific members of the Micronesian community and their shared goals), I could not fully enter into a deeper level of conversation and knowledge-sharing. However, once I began sharing my story and my place in relation to the Micronesian community in O'ahu, conversation became much less limited and some of the more insightful values and perspectives were shared.

Ultimately, from Dr. Cholymay's interview to Koreen's, the variety of performances and interview dynamics was wide. This variety is particularly valuable to keep in mind here because it provides the necessary framework for more fully understanding the performative politics behind the diversity of responses provided within this chapter — some more formal while others more conversational and collegial. Furthermore, this variety is also key for another reason, as well. The fact that the rhetorical practices and performances for talking about writing and learning vary so much—especially from Western administrators working with Micronesian students to indigenous Micronesian instructors—points to the way that these rhetorical practices require more direct attention at the university level as a whole. There needs to be a more intentional conversation about how to create space within the Western university for ways of

addressing and valuing Micronesian place-based approaches to learning and writing among teachers and administrators particularly. The following sections of this chapter are devoted to outlining the specific terms of this conversation and the spaces it could create.

REFORM PROPOSALS

Re-writing the rhetoric of educational “progress” & academic discourse

When venturing off to new lands and new seas and new peoples, the young brother did not seek to achieve new heights of progress and advancement on his own. Rather, he wraps his vessel in the cords of motherhood — the links that tie him to his ancestors on land as well as the ties that bind him to his oceanic roots. Taking his community with him, the young man achieves victory not by his own skill and navigational abilities but by the new technology, the sail that his intimate link with his community provides. Thus, as the story goes to show, progress is defined in terms of embracing the “challenges life brings” not by riding solo but by riding the waves with one’s community fully on board (Jetnil-Kijiner).

This emphasis upon community progress rather than individual advancement is one that was continually brought up in my personal interviews with teachers working with Micronesian students in O‘ahu. For example, David Coleman, Dean of the Humanities and Fine Arts at Chaminade University and overseer of its satellite campus located on Chuuk in Micronesia, expressed that working with Micronesian students effectively requires a shift in the way that progress and education are currently defined (in a Western framework). According to Dr. Coleman, educators within a Western university setting like Chaminade are often promoting an educational model to their students that says “you as an individual should progress” (Coleman). This model is one that is not just present in university marketing materials and website messages, but also as composition and rhetoric scholars have pointed out, it is one most clearly seen in the

rhetoric around academic discourse. In her essay “Beyond Anti-foundationalism to Rhetorical Authority: Problems Defining ‘Cultural Literacy’” Patricia Bizzell addresses the ways in which the academy has traditionally represented academic discourse: as a student’s innate ability to “establish a credible academic persona through the method of his or her argument” (662). Students who could not reproduce the correct academic forms of writing and research and convince others through what they had to say (through their individual scholarly personas) would simply not succeed and progress in college (Bizzell 660). In fact, as rhetorician Rick Evans indicates, literacy (specifically writing within an academic context) has often been rhetorically constructed within the academy as a “basic skill” without which “we cannot progress, as a culture, as a society, or even as thinking *individuals*” (93 emphasis added). Now, although Evans and Bizzell are ultimately critiquing these representations of academic discourse, this does not elide the fact that the type of rhetoric that they highlight is still very much at work in the academy.

As David Coleman points out, this rhetoric concerning standards of Western academic discourse and individual “progress,” ultimately, has some very real negative effects upon students from Micronesia. For one, the rhetoric is often read as distancing and damaging because it fractures connections to one’s family and the community: “they [one’s specific family unit and community] penalize that sort of activity. In the sense that if you separate yourself... you are going to feel pulled in, as if you really shouldn’t stand out” (Coleman). Thus, as Dr. Coleman points out, rhetoric that situates learning and writing in terms of individual expression and progress serves to put the student at odds with the model of collective learning encouraged within their own families and communities.

Furthermore, rhetoric concerning what academic discourse “ought” to look like—i.e. academic forms of writing produced individually through the voice of a scholarly “persona”—has also had the effect of justifying institutional practices that work to silence Micronesian forms of scholarship. For example, as Koreen Nakahodo an English teacher at Chaminade University indicates, many of her colleagues in the English department often worked to discourage long, formal emails from their Micronesian students (Nakahodo). The discouragement over this form of academic discourse (between student and teacher) resulted because of the following: “what our teachers as a whole found in terms of how our students communicate to us (because it’s all email) is the first paragraph would always praise God, always. If they emailed you it would always be at least 3 paragraphs even if it was for a simple question. The first paragraph would always praise God. The second paragraph would praise the professor, or Chaminade and then the professor. And then the third paragraph might get to the question” (Nakahodo). Teachers became frustrated with this form because it was not assertive and direct. This form of writing did not clearly establish an individual scholarly “persona” and authority.

Nonetheless, *ethos* for the Micronesian student is not established by asserting one’s own voice and ideas out-right. Rather it consists of exhibiting the formal conventions of establishing authority in a manner reminiscent of verbal social interactions — one must explain and acknowledge one’s relationship to specific members of the community or clan in order to establish an authority to speak and to make a request or call to action (Hezel, *Making Sense* 19). Thus, *ethos* does not consist of simply asserting one’s own experiences and credentials, but rather intricately weaving a community web of past forms, present relationships, and future calls for action. Sadly though, as this *ethos*-building is often hindered through Western rhetoric and underlying expectations about academic discourse (as at Chaminade) communications between

students and teachers can grow sparse if not stop altogether, and student learning and writing can suffer as a result.

Although the rhetoric of academic discourse and individual progress can have detrimental effects upon Micronesian students, it does not have to continue to make such a negative impact. As Patricia Bizzell proposes in her essay “Arguing About Literacy” one way to resist the dominant, foundationalist approach to academic discourse is to begin a conversation among administrators, writing programs, and teachers that challenges the dominant rhetoric of a “monolithic power of academic literacy” (1). Bizzell summarizes this type of conversation when she asks how much cultural content “should be supplied by the teacher from the academic store and how much should come from students’ knowledge of the treasures of other, non-academic cultural literacies” (“Anit-foundationalism” 662). I agree with Bizzell that these types of conversations are ultimately the first step to be taken when talking about how to write a counter-narrative to the narrative of individualistic academic “progress” and “academic discourse” that is currently limiting the learning and writing of Micronesian students.

As a result of what could potentially result from the types of institutional conversations and dialogues that Bizzell highlights, I present here a concrete example. At Chaminade University, administrators and teachers have already started having these conversations, and as a result have opened a new space to explore possibilities for bridging Micronesian rhetorical approaches and some of the standards and expectations of Western academic discourse. This new space has taken the form of a series of one-unit undergraduate courses in the Humanities built around collective storytelling. This series of courses was started for Micronesian students studying in Chuuk to give them a space to talk about and value their own cultural approaches to education and to share stories about the ways those values interact or diverge from Western

educational values and rhetoric (including the rhetorics of “educational progress” and “academic discourse”).

One of the courses, taught by Chuukese scholar and teacher, Dr. Margarita Cholymay, actively walks students through critical discussions about the differences between a Western educational model and its expectations and rhetoric concerning individual learning and the cultural expectations for community learning upheld in Chuuk. Rather than encouraging students to simply leave their place-based values behind them, Dr. Cholymay tells stories about her own experiences as a Chuukese scholar studying within a Western educational system: “Before I connect to Western education, I build from their own growing up. But I always use mine. Like, let’s say college life. College life, if that was the topic, so I use my story. I write my own story. I wrote my own story and post it up for them to read. And then asked them whether they can see their own journey?” (Cholymay). Using her own stories rather than Western stories of educational advancement, Cholymay hopes to encourage students to see their own academic journeys and forms of academic discourse through the lens of specific indigenous ways of knowing.

Through the exchange of stories, Cholymay thus works to encourage students to learn and share collectively and to view indigenous values as a means of “helping them survive in college” rather than viewing them as a hindrance to individual “progress” (Cholymay). In this way, an individualized focus on academic success is transformed under the lens of indigenous values, and “educational progress” is re-defined as an act that Craig Santos-Perez describes in our interview as *inafamaolek*. This Chamorran concept ultimately constructs individual *ethos*, learning, and scholarship around “reciprocity” and “co-belonging” (Santos-Perez). Thus, in actively conversing about and creating spaces of “reciprocity” and partnership for defining and

re-defining what scholarship can mean for Micronesian students, Chaminade university's undergraduate bridge courses serve as an example of institutional reforms that can ultimately re-write the terms of Western educational "progress" and "academic discourse" in indigenous terms.

Re-defining how Micronesian literature and writing is taught and evaluated

Taking his mother on board his sailing vessel, the young man built ethos as he made a name for himself, his family, and his community simultaneously. Furthermore, his actions taught future generations the essential lesson of "honoring your mother" (Jetnil-Kijiner). The mother in the moral of this story is two-fold. First and foremost, it is the familial mother, the matrilineal mother who is tied to the land and through whom one traces ancestry and connection to one's homeland. But, then, as Jetnil-Kijiner mentions later in her poem "Dear Matafele Peinam" the term mother also comes to refer to the ocean. For the ocean is one's connection to a larger home: a home constructed of navigational currents that link indigenous peoples across space to a shared inheritance, a shared lineage. The young man in Jetnil-Kijiner's story, comes to represent the necessity of seeing a future that involves honoring both one's home in a specific place and one's home in the Pacific, as well.

I bring up this story again here because it points to a specific relationship between the Micronesian regions and the larger Pacific. In this relationship, ancestral "mother" or connection to a specific place is interpreted both in terms of individual home regions and in terms of a shared indigenous connection to the ocean. This concept translates into the fields of writing and rhetoric in that in order to properly value and understand literature from the Micronesian regions it must be actively read and taught regionally as well as *regionally* (in terms of the larger body

of Pacific literature). However, as Koreen Nakahodo indicated during our interview, rhetoric about Micronesian literature has tended to marginalize the literature. Nakahodo points out that certain rhetoric among Pacific scholars has implied that Micronesia does not produce writing, but is rather an oral culture (Nakahodo). Nakahodo is not alone in her critique of this rhetoric. In the critical introduction to his bibliography, *Contemporary Micronesian Literature: A Preliminary Bibliography*, Mark Skinner resists Pacific scholar Ron Crocombe's assertion that "very little writing by islanders has come out of...the American territories" (Skinner 2). As Skinner's work indicates, Crocombe's rhetoric completely elides the fact that the regions of Micronesia are writing and have been writing for quite some time.

Unfortunately though, rhetoric like Crocombe's has tremendous power and it has served for decades to justify practices within literary publishing and academic teaching that leave writing from the Micronesian regions out of anthologies and off of Pacific Literature course syllabi. For example, in foundational Pacific literature collections like *Nuanua* and *Inside Out* little to no work from Micronesian authors from Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Yap, Palau, and the Marshall islands is represented. Furthermore, on many Pacific literature course syllabi from around the Hawaiian islands—from university level courses to the community colleges—Micronesian authors are also remarkably absent.¹³ This absence of indigenous Micronesian literature also defines the very college located within Micronesia itself. Within the College of Micronesia library catalogue reports written by government officials and U.S. anthropologists abound, but there are only two references to Micronesian literary sources to be found: John Walsh's *Using Micronesian Literature in the teaching of developmental English* (a

¹³ Texts from Micronesia are not completely missing in Pacific Literature courses, as Craig Santos-Perez, Alice Te Punga Somerville, Koreen Nakahodo, and Margarita Cholmay all teach selective poems, essays, and narratives written by Micronesian authors. However, my research has found that as a whole, the courses in Pacific Literature taught in Hawai'i primarily feature Polynesian and Melanesian literature.

problematic text in many ways) and Mark Skinner's *Contemporary Micronesian Literature: A Preliminary Bibliography*¹⁴.

This absence would seem to suggest that Micronesian individuals are not often writing, but that is certainly not the case. In spite of an educational system that works to disconnect writing from personal expression and empowerment (as writing is taught primarily in English with Western texts and concepts), the indigenous people of Micronesia are continually writing about their communities. Creative writing from the region is rich as can be seen in Mark Skinner's bibliography of approximately 800 literary works from around the region (Skinner 1). In his bibliography, Skinner lists an extensive array of works including short stories, poems, songs, plays, novels, educational materials, and anthologies. Further works from the regions are the poems that make up Kimberly Kay Au's work *Analysis of Meaning, Content, and Style: Poetry from the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau*, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner's poems, Emelihter Kihleng's book of poem *My Urohs*, and poems collected in the recent anthology *Making Waves: Trans-Pacific Writing*.¹⁵

Furthermore, looking at the rich collection of online work present on websites like *The Fourth Branch* (as mentioned in chapter two) one can also find an endless array of texts ranging from poems, to narratives, to letters, to interviews and short essays, to music and chants. This multiple array of texts includes works written in English and works written in the languages of the various regions, themselves. Furthermore, just recently a new online initiative called Pacific Students Media begun by the Pacific Islander Student Center at UH Hilo has started to employ Youtube and other web spaces as a digital archive for collecting and distributing written and oral stories from Micronesian authors. Through this online space, the Center's director Vid Raaitor

¹⁴ This text is "problematic" in that it frames Micronesian literature primarily in terms of its "usefulness" for teaching developmental English. Thus, it is merely a tool to master the foundations of English rather than being a powerful body of work in and of itself.

¹⁵ Many thanks to Koreen Nakahodo for bringing several of these resources to my attention.

hopes to create an archive of texts (short stories in particular) to celebrate writing from across the Pacific and ultimately offer “local teachers” a resource “to use in their classes to help educate our youth on the positive things that we [Micronesian individuals] are doing in the Hawaii community” (Raaitor “Re: Emergency Humanitarian Event to help the Micronesians”). From these online sources, then, one can see that the writing is present, and it is on-going, as the websites just mentioned are constantly being updated with new work. However, the seeming absence of this writing within traditional publishing venues and teaching arenas remains a stark reality.

What is needed to remedy this rupture, according to Koreen Nakahodo and Margarita Cholymay, is a radical shift in the way that Micronesian literature is rhetorically constructed as a part of a larger body of Pacific literature. Currently, the rhetoric asserting that Micronesia is predominantly a non-writing culture works to de-value the work that is coming out of that region as somewhat less “developed.” Nakahodo indicates that this valuation, therefore, results in a lack of reviews and critical attention for works of Micronesian writing like the 2011 anthology *Making Waves: Trans-Pacific Writing*. As Nakahodo tells me in our personal interview, “Nobody came forth to review it. And I thought that was so odd because one of the ways things get known and circulated is through reviews, people start teaching out of it” (Nakahodo). As Nakahodo laments, the rhetoric that constructs the Micronesian islands as non-writing regions and cultures has worked to powerfully silence the critical response to and teaching of the actual writing from those regions.

In order to change the current situation and write back to the current rhetoric, the teachers I interviewed proposed two very specific institutional actions. First, what is needed, according to Margarita Cholymay, is a shift in how works from Micronesia are supported (through rhetoric

and practice) within academic publishing arenas. When talking about the publication of written work in and about Chuuk, Cholymay states that,

Many outsiders, they come and they study and they write. But not so much even us, about Chuukese. But we can, we can...you know, I used to use as resources books that were published and written by students in the 1980s. But it was because the teacher was from Hawai'i or was Japanese he had that interest and then put into the students...And then he continued helping them, editing good writings, and then published them and put them into 2 or 3 different series. And I used those materials. Then I left home for 10 years, and I hope they still have them somewhere or can still publish. But they were written by students in the 1980s, good students write them in high school, not private school, public high school. So I'm not sure that I get to your question, but teaching of reading and writing, especially writing and making an interest in our children. It's just a matter of how we give effort and keep supporting them. (Cholymay)

Cholymay's response initially points to a lack of writing about the regions themselves. Little to no writing is being done about the Micronesian regions within the field of Pacific studies in general and this needs to be addressed. This gap in writing about the regions is coupled with a gap in Regional support for writing from the regions, as well. While the regions are not being valued in terms of study, they are also not being valued in terms of literary production. What Cholymay proposes as a case study to address the gaps in scholarship and literary support in relation to Micronesia is the example of a series of literary resources produced in Chuuk in the 1980s. This example is key because it indicates the powerful potential of indigenous Micronesian writing. As Cholymay expresses, the texts written by indigenous high school students can be

used to move countless other indigenous writers from the regions to become “interested in writing” their own literature and future resources (Cholymay).

Furthermore, these texts are not only significant for the individual regions themselves, but also for the larger collective Pacific, as well. In order to encourage the creation and valuation of more Micronesian indigenous literature, Cholymay involves a larger collective “we.” More texts are produced and distributed when outside support from around the Pacific (including from Hawai‘i as Cholymay specifically mentions) encourages and supports this production. In this configuration, literature is not only a means of honoring the specific motherlands, the islands and places of the region, but also a means of honoring “mother” ocean and the networks of relationship that exist between the indigenous people of Micronesia and the rest of the Pacific—it is the larger “we” that must “support” future generations of Micronesian writers (Cholymay).

In conjunction with this larger institutional publishing support for Micronesian writing, Koreen Nakahodo also proposes that more Pacific literature and writing classes, in O‘ahu and across the Pacific, need to make Micronesian literature an integral part of their course reading lists. In making this proposal, Nakahodo is echoing other Pacific literary scholars, like Konai Helu Thaman in her essay “Of Daffodils and Heilala: Understanding Cultural Context in Pacific Literature” and ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui, in her essay “‘Ike ‘Āina: Native Hawaiian Culturally Based Indigenous Literacy.” In these works, both authors have also proposed that language and literature courses in the Pacific need to teach specific forms of indigenous writing, Hawaiian and Tongan specifically. Integrating texts from Micronesia into Pacific literature and writing courses is necessary Nakahodo insists in order to increase the valuation of the forms of rhetoric produced within these texts (by teachers and students alike) (Nakahodo). As Georganne Nordstrom, Jeffrey Carroll, and Brandy Nālani McDougall argue in the introduction to their Pacific rhetoric

anthology, *Huihui*, producing work (within the university setting) that is “negotiating and examining both Indigenous and colonial standards of aesthetic and rhetorical judgment” is crucial to “contributing to the intellectual genealogies of the Pacific” (5). In order to ensure that Micronesian rhetoric is celebrated as a contributing branch within a larger Pacific intellectual and literary body of work, Micronesian texts and their “standards of aesthetic and rhetorical judgment” must be examined and evaluated within scholarship (5). A major component of this examination and evaluation ultimately involves assigning Micronesian texts in the classroom in order to encourage students and faculty alike to engage more frequently with these texts and to link their rhetorical practices and contributions to the larger body of literary texts within the Pacific (the “intellectual genealogies” of the Pacific).

LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD

Standing side by side in the face of a brisk trade wind, the young man and his mother navigate a course away from their home in the Marshall islands. Venturing out into the ocean was not a new experience, but this journey would be different in that it would set the future course for their entire island region. This was an ocean race that would determine life, direction, and hope for their people for years to come. Both the young man and his mother knew that to venture on this journey would require both the strength of their island roots to keep them upright through fierce storms and the strength of their knowledge of indigenous ocean routes to keep them moving onward. This would be a journey of looking back and moving forward.

Like the journey of the young man and his mother in this story, this dissertation project works to chart a route forward for indigenous Micronesian students now venturing across the Pacific and writing in college classrooms across the Region. This journey started within the individual regions themselves to understand how place-based values shape indigenous rhetoric.

Then, it moved outward across the Pacific to O‘ahu to investigate how place-based values translate within a context of movement, adapting to the waves of change and the politics of exploitation that meet them across the Pacific. In order to continue to move through these waves, this project has identified how students and finally teachers construct pedagogy for more effective teaching of rhetoric and writing for Micronesian college students across the Pacific. As these student and teacher responses make clear, to write a future for the Micronesian regions moving forward it is vital to take back the rhetoric and the terms in which this future is written: to re-write the rhetoric around writing and writing production according to indigenous ways of knowing and learning, reciprocity, and connection to a larger Pacific body of literature. Ultimately, changing the terms requires looking back to specific places and values while also linking those place-based values to their larger context within the mother ocean of the indigenous Pacific. It is a journey of looking back *and* moving forward.

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APPENDIX A

Transcript of Mark's Interview

M: And Go

A: Awesome! It is May 17. I am interviewing Mark. Um, and then question #1 (reads question: Where are you and your family from?)

M: Ok, this is going to require some writing

A: Ok

M: I was born in the island of Saipan, um, I was born in Saipan and lived there for two years, and then we moved to suburban Pennsylvania, specifically Pottstown, um it's a very small town, of about five miles long.

A: Uh huh

M: Um, we lived there for about 10 years. Um, granted, my father's from there, but my mother is from Palau, it's another Pacific island. Um, so I basically attended all my elementary years there in Pennsylvania, and then in 2007 we moved to Palau, and I finished up 8th grade there. (long pause) Um, so that would be where me and my family are from. I attended high school on another island called Chuuk, which is also in Micronesia.

A: Ok awesome!

M: Yeah

A: And was that because like the larger high schools were located in Chuuk vs. Palau, or...?

M: There was more opportunity for it so it was a Catholic boarding school, um and it's pretty well known throughout Micronesia, and a lot of my aunties and my relatives they wanted me to attend there, so I was very go with the flow, I still am but, I ended up there, I ended up going there, and I graduated in 2012.

A: Ok cool...and then you came?

M: And then I came here, yeah.

A: Awesome. So you came here in 2012?

M: Yes

A: Awesome, um is it just you here or did you move with your family?

M: I came by myself. Um, a lot of people ask me where home is. Home is wherever my mom is.

A: Hmm

M: So my mom right now is in Pennsylvania. Um, I did move here by myself. I ended up staying with relatives, and now I have an apartment with some friends. Um, so yeah.

A: Cool. Um ok, so and you kind of touched on this in the last response, but um could you briefly describe your home town or your homeland for anyone who has never been to it or is unfamiliar with it?

M: Oh ok, I'll start off with Pottstown. Pottstown is a very small town, about um, it's five miles long, apparently, I want to say there's probably about 2000 people there max. Um, it's very small, you know you have the urban side or what they would call the ghetto and they have the upscale. I was middle class so I was right in the middle. Um, attended public school, everyone knew everyone. Um, pretty typical suburban town. Um, as for Palau, everyone knew me because of my family, because of my mom. Um, I didn't know many people, but I got to know them. I had a lot of family there. So it's very communal, communal, everyone is working to build each other up, um, in terms of community. Island life, it's very hot, so, stuff like that. I went to Catholic school there so...there's some discipline there, yeah, so (nodding head)

A: Would you say that Chuuk and Palau were very different places to live in or similar?

M: Um, culturally yes, because there are different cultural practices and different commonalities, um, geographically no, they are both very hot and they have the same climate and everything. School-wise, obviously it was 8th grade and then high school, but they had the same values that they wanted to instill in their students, so, yeah (nodding head)

A: What would you say was there like a culture shock when you went from Palau to Chuuck, was there any cultural practice you found really different?

M: Um, not so much cultural practice, more so lifestyle. Um, power was very shoddy, um, so that was really hard for me to transition into. So I was very lucky that I was able to go from Pennsylvania to Palau and then Chuuk because it would've been worse if I went straight to Chuuk.

A: Hm mm...so just like the resources available?

M: Yes the resources available definitely.

A: Ok cool

M: Yeah

A: Ok, let's see (reading question: "How would you describe the connection between where you are from or your upbringing and how you write or what you want to write about?")

M: Um, I read about this and I was thinking about this for a while. Um, and someone had just asked me this, I guess what kind of brain I have? Personally, I feel that the way you write or the way you function depends on the kind of brain you have, whether you are le-ri, right-brained or left-brained? And that's another study, but personally, um, I'm stronger in English, and I think it's, I want to say it's because of public school, but I'm just not, it's harder for me to apply myself to math and science and things like that. Um on the other hand, what I realized from being in Palau and being in Chuuk, the Western most sides of Micronesia they're better at

English, while the Eastern most sides are better at Math. I'm not sure why, um, maybe there is another study on it that would help more, but a lot of my friends they're very eloquent, um they're from the West side, as opposed to those from the East side, they're more critical on thinking, so in terms of numbers, they're on top of it, um I know some people they're accountants and they're studying things with numbers. I know somebody whose studying to be, um, engineering...they're studying engineering. So that's what they're doing. Um, personally yeah I feel that because of where I'm from, my writing is stronger. Um, I enjoy creative writing or freelance writing because it's easier for me to express myself. Also, Palau is a very, you know, collective place, um, we all work towards one goal together, and I think it's easier for me to write because it's able, I'm more able to express myself clearly though writing as opposed to verbal or something like that. I've also been told that the way I write is the same way that I speak. So, I'm not sure why? Maybe it's just that's how I'm comfortable. Um, it's not, I haven't been told that it's a bad thing, there are some things that I could work on, but then it also helps me in my verbal skills as well.

A: Ok cool

M: Yeah, I know that was a lot, sorry.

A: No, that's good. Um, ok, another question is how did you learn about writing in elementary school and we could even refine that and say, you know, in Palau in Chuuk how did you learn about writing and was that different than the emphasis on writing in Potts Town that you experienced?

M: Hmmmm, I hope that it affects my answer, but growing up whenever I would come home from school, I would have to do my homework first. So my mom, that was priority, you don't go anywhere, don't do anything, unless you do your homework. Um, I think obviously, well in

Pennsylvania you start with grammar, um you know spelling and whatnot, and then you work into sentences.

A: Right

M: About 4th grade-5th grade, that's when you start doing essays and reports. So that's how I started. Um, that's basically how I started. And, it's just something I felt more comfortable at doing. Um, should I have needed help, I got help. Teachers corrected my papers, and I think it's because of the way it was structured with the grammar and then the spelling and then reports, obviously, it was easier for me to start realizing the stakes and, you know, correcting other people if they needed help. Which caused, when I went to Palau, a lot of people looked to me for you know grammar and whatnot. Um, which also turned into high school people looked to me as well. So, I feel like it's a lot of practice, um, you know realizing what's happening what's going on, and what they're writing about. It helps my mind a lot to understand what's going on.

A: So it's almost like building a piece of writing?

M: Exactly, so it builds up.

A: Cool. Um, let's see, are there things that you learned about writing in elementary school that you are still applying in your college classes and are those things working well or not?

M: I mentioned earlier that I'm a creative writer and I like writing freelance. I hate doing drafts. Um, if anything I like diagraming things, like VEN diagrams and whatnot for comparison essays. But, for the life of me it is so hard for me to write a draft. Um it's hard for me to discipline myself to sit down and get that draft done.

A: Uh huh

M: Um, so I know that's something they try to instill in school. I haven't always followed it. I think also, I like writing, but too much writing shuts my brain down. So, it gets to the point

where I'm going to get the point across and I'm not going to read through it again. But, in turn, I also really dislike peer editing because I feel like my paper is up for judgment. Granted, most of it's probably constructive criticism, but sometimes I feel like it's at risk for personal judgment. I don't know. I think that's a psychological thing. But, um, I think that's something that I've always been um drilled to do, to draft, and draft, first draft, second draft, third draft, then final draft, but um unless it depends on my grade I won't do it.

A: Hm mm

M: But that's just a personal thing, um, I'm pretty sure that's it. I really enjoyed gr- uh diagramming things, so VEN diagrams, the web diagrams, things like that. Um, so are things that I enjoyed. But, yeah...

A: So maybe that emphasis on, sort of, like too much process, and you have to draft, draft, draft, and not maybe a variety in how to do that is kind of like in college that could be...

M: Yeah and I also feel like if, if I end up drafting, I'm going to end up cutting out a lot of ideas that I probably felt very strongly about. And also, maybe someone else, I know, I understand that peer editing is supposed to help you, but I also feel like it can be, you know, it can cut away from what my creativity is going to be, hindering me from what I want to get across.

A: Ok cool

M: Sometimes you hit. Sometimes you miss.

A: Yeah. Ok, um, what topics would you like to or want to write about in comparison to what you are told to write about in classes?

M: This is really interesting. So, um, like I said, I am very interested in different cultures, um, so I really enjoy writing about cultures, observing cultures. Um, I enjoy narrating as well. So, I do that a lot. Um, right now I'm taking an intercultural communications class, so I'm writing about

um how Samoans, Samoan-Americans are adjusting while being here at Chaminade. Um, I just got out of that class, that's why it's stuck in my head. Um, so I enjoyed writing it, but then I had to sit down with my teacher and we had to talk about my ideas because I had so much to write. I had about a 5 page paper and this was a draft. It's supposed to be an 8 page paper. It was single-spaced. It's supposed to be double-spaced. I wrote a lot. Um, so she had to sit me down and talk about my ideas, and I hated it because I just have so many things I want to say and it's hard for me to cut things down. Um, but I really enjoy anything that can allow me to write creatively. Um, so it's really any topic, unless I have to talk about processes, writing a paper for math, I had to do that once, and it didn't make sense. Um, but, yeah, anything that allows me to write creatively and get my points across without having to cut them down...I know, that's really bad, now I'm realizing now that's a really bad habit, but that that's the best way for my to get my ideas across.

A: Do you feel like there's been room in a lot of your classes at Chaminade for writing creatively or is there kind of a push toward a different form of writing?

M: I mean, there are different kinds of English classes. That's obviously where you would write most of your papers. Um, it's...each class has a different um formation right? So, I wrote the paper I just wrote for my draft, the teacher mentioned this is a great paper for another class for a final paper, but she was asking for specific things, for a specific outline that apparently I didn't follow. But, um, it's not like I haven't taken to many creative writing classes, and I know there's opportunities to, um it's just a time constraint because I'm also someone who likes to be involved. So right now, I'm taking, for my English class types of literature so it's a lot of reading. But, we do have like an Olama group. Olama is basically the group where you can go to express yourself through creative writing and what not, slam poetry what have you. So there are

those opportunities. There are creative writing classes. Um, but I do appreciate the classes more when I don't have constriction and don't have limits to writing.

A: Like the prompts?

M: Yeah, like the prompts. Like, um, on tests I really like when um you know when we have a prompt to write about and we don't really have an outline of what we have to follow. In high school when I had to follow introduction, three body paragraphs, and conclusion, I hated it because there's so many points I can cover.

A: Right

M: It's just, it's very, there's so many things I want to get across and it's hard for me to limit myself.

A: Yeah. That makes sense.

M: Nodding

A: Cool. And have you participated in the Olama group before or sort of like the out of class sort of activities to kind of get your creative writing out there or to express it more?

M: I haven't, and part of that I mentioned that it's because of time, but also because sometimes I can be very closed off and some things that I write about are very personal so I have to build up to it for me to be able to open up about those things. So, yeah, I do journal sometimes, I write notes on my phone all the time.

A: Oh cool

M: Um, one of my friends whose a musician and he likes to write songs so I'll be there with him and I'll just bounce off ideas and that's a really good way for me to get those things out too. Um so, I think it's just leisurely time I'll be able to do it. I haven't been able to take part in Olama, and I do want to um cus it seems like a great opportunity, but...

A: Were there a lot of opportunities like in Palau and Chuuk for creative writing in your classes or was...?

M: In Palau, not so much, um for other reasons I'm not sure. But in high school there were, there was a journalism group that I was a part of. Um, it's just that we didn't have that many things going on on campus for us to pursue that. In addition to that, we had the opportunity to write scripts for drama club. So, it's something that you can express yourself in. Um, I helped someone write a play about, it was a love story, but it basically played out about this one girl's love life. I was able to help her write that. So things like that, yeah.

A: And other opportunities to maybe help others write creatively too and maybe that makes you feel a little more comfortable if you're doing it together?

M: Yeah, and in addition to that um for some reason I was seen as the best editor in my class. So, a lot of people would come to me and they would ask me to talk to them about their paper and write to them about their paper. I realize also now I'm just realizing that when I correct a paper I'll write exactly what I think they should improve on, exactly what I think of their ideas. Um, because it's just, I have a lot of ideas and I want to get them out, hopefully it's helpful to them.

A: So very thorough in comments on other people's writing?

M: Yeah

A: That's awesome. I feel that writing collectively is something you really believe in, so if you're going to help someone you really want to do it?

M: Yeah

A: Ok, last question: if you were teaching a college-level writing class what would you do? So in other words, are there any specific activities you would use or explanations about writing that you would give to help students with their writing?

M: Um, I think it's because I know that drafting is a great idea um I don't feel like it's the best avenue to reaching the points. So, what I would definitely do is go over VEN diagrams and web diagrams to get their creative juices flowing. Um because in all honesty if I were writing a college-level, if I was doing for a college-level writing course for students it would be a creative writing class, something that they can express themselves, a safe place for them to express themselves. And if I did want to see a paper on what their writing about then that's when I would get the creative juices flowing. Also, you asked me if there are any opportunities in Palau and Chuuk about creative writing?

A: Uh huh

M: Um, I had some teachers who allowed us to do free-writes about 10-15 minutes in class. Um, you can just write about whatever, get it out, and it was in a journal, and only the teacher would read the journal. And if you didn't want her to read it you would just fold up the page.

A: Yeah

M: And she would respect that. So, I would definitely do that because that allows a lot of students to get a lot of things off their chests. And I think it's also because of that movie *Freedom Writers* that's something that really opens up a lot of people. It helps a lot of stuff for them.

A: And it's not one of those things where you have to read it aloud in class necessarily, but you can still express yourself.

M: Hm mm yeah, um there were opportunities that I had to free-write and the teacher would reply. And I feel like that's a great way because somethings are really easy to write about but it's not so easy to talk about. You know what I mean? So, that's definitely something. It's a lot of interaction. Um sometimes it's affirmation. Sometimes it's opening up my mind to different

things that I didn't realize. Because sometimes I'll just take my pen and I'll just write. Um, and I'll write throughout class. So, it's able to, you're able to get things off your chest. That's what I would definitely do.

A: I like that idea of writing throughout the class, and incorporating it more, where your free-write doesn't end necessarily in that 10-15 minutes but if the students wanted to be able to creatively express themselves throughout the class period through writing, that's really cool.

M: Yeah

A: Ok

M: Also, in high school, sorry, I'm remembering a lot of stuff. Um, in high school you know at the beginning of the year, teachers ask for essays about what you did during the summer? I loved those essays! Because there was no structure you could just write about whatever, and it's something I really appreciated.

A: That's cool. So no structure, no prompt really?

M: Yeah, it's a lot of freedom.

A: Did you feel like a lot of students liked that and embraced that form or was it kind of like some struggled with it some really liked it?

M: I think some people struggled with it because sometimes they don't know what to write about because they don't want to open up. So, what our teacher did she ended up doing activities that allowed us to trust her because she was a new teacher. So that was something that was important. Especially if I would do the free-write exercise that's something that's very important, just as they did in *Freedom Writers*. Maybe that's where she got the idea from? But yeah.

A: What would you say...could you describe a specific activity she used to build trust? I think that's really cool.

M: Uh shoot, I can't remember like specific activities but I know she'd always say, "You know what, whatever you guys write that's up to your guys. I'm not gonna, I'm not, on my word, on my honor, I'm not going to penalize you, I'm not going to give you any demerits, not going to report you unless I feel like it's hazardous to yourself or others than I have to speak up, but this journal is for you to talk about whatever you want to talk about." And I think it was really interesting because in other schools they have a guidance counselor, and you feel like sometimes there's a stigma against going to the guidance counselor, because it's like you have problems. But through these journals you're able to express without being judged without feeling like you're going to be judged or graded. If anything we just got graded because we were doing it. So a lot of people, we got into it because we felt ok, we felt comfortable with it, knowing that ok, what we're going to tell her is between her and I. So yeah...

A: Awesome. Well that is all I have for today.

M: Great. Well I hoped that helped!

APPENDIX B

Transcript of Zara's Interview

NOTE: Before the interview began, Zara was careful to ask me what the interview was actually for and what I was intending to do with it (its purpose). She also wanted to keep a written copy of the questions throughout the interview. She often referred to these written questions during the course of the interview, often reading and re-reading them before providing answers.

A: Ok. So it is uh, April 25th, and this is Zara who is conducting an interview today, um let's see, I have another copy of the questions. Ok, so first question, that I have is, where are you and your family from?

Z: Um, we're from Palau. Yes, in the Micronesian region.

A: So is there just one island within Palau or are there outer islands as well?

Z: Um yeah, there are two outer islands in Palau.

A: Ok, and then when did you and your family first come to Oahu?

Z: Um, I came in 2007 for high school and my mom and my dad still live back home but all my siblings are here.

A: Oh wow, ok. How many siblings do you have?

Z: I have three.

A: Three. Awesome. Ok, could you briefly describe your hometown or your homeland for anyone who has never been to it or is unfamiliar with it?

Z: Um, it's basically...well, it doesn't have like a lot of buildings like Hawai'i has. Um, it's a really beautiful island, yeah. And um, what else? It's just like here, like it has a lot of trees, and we have a lot of rock islands. Um...sorry I can't think of anything.

A: Would you say that like the cultural values or how you grew up is similar to here or different in some ways?

Z: It's different. Back home we really value our culture, and uh, I'm sorry I'm not used to interviews.

A: That's ok!

Z: Wait like how do we value our culture?

A: Yeah, or how do you live everyday life, in comparison to here, which like you said is like a city, so it's pretty rushed in general, you're kind of like 'there are a lot of things to do, a lot of places to go'

Z: Hmm mmm. Well back home, what I do is I stay home back home cuz there's not much to do except for like just go cruising around the island. That's basically it. We don't have like movie theatres, stuff like that, or the malls and stuff. So we cannot go out or go watch movies and stuff so I basically stay home or we go to the rock islands or we have a lot of barbeques. Yeah.

A: Do you have a large extended family there or no?

Z: Everybody is basically related to each other back home. Yeah. It's a really small island so everybody knows each other and is related to each other. Yeah.

A: Very cool. Um, ok, are there any connections between where you are from and your upbringing and how you write or even what you choose or want to write about? And then can you describe those connections?

Z: Um, like when I'm given an assignment to write about anything I always to choose to write about Palau or the culture, traditions cuz I know a lot about it, and I love my country. So, yeah, I choose to write about those. Um [reading written questions]. I don't think that where I'm from has that much to do with *how* I write though.

A: Would you say that in a lot of your writing classes there are opportunities to write about what you want to write about or is it more limiting sometimes?

Z: Um no, it's very limited. So I can't just write about anything cuz the professors usually give us something to write about. Yeah, like they give us the topic. So I don't get that much freedom to write about anything I want. Yeah.

A: Do you...?

Z: Which is kinda hard though.

A: Yeah. Yeah. Would you say that a lot of writing then it it's about Palau, about your family, and about things you've experienced, you have to do outside of the classroom, or do you feel like there is enough opportunity within school that you can find ways to write about what you want to write about?

Z: I can write in school, yeah [nods head]. Cuz I know a lot. I don't have to think too much when I write about Palau and my family and stuff. So I don't have to think that much. So I can do. I can do it in school rather than outside. I guess I can write MORE when I am outside of school.

A: Would you say that you do write outside of school, like creatively, or in other formats?

Z: Not much. Not that much. Yeah.

A: Ok. Let's see, what did you learn about writing in elementary school?

Z: Um, just how to constructure it, I guess. And, just the basics, like um how many sentences should be in a paragraph, just stuff like that. I don't really remember.

A: So a lot of structure and format and this is what an essay is and stuff like that?

Z: Yeah. Yeah.

A: Would you say that those things that you learned in elementary school you still apply them to how you write in college or...?

Z: Yeah. But um, I didn't learn that much about English when I was in elementary school. I went to elementary school back home. We didn't really focus on the English part and writing. So, [clears throat] I learned a lot in high school though. Like how to write and format your paper stuff like that. So I guess I use what I learned at high school to how I write now. Yeah.

A: Interesting. So elementary school maybe focused less on writing and the English part, but when you went to high school you got into writing a little bit more?

Z: Yeah. We didn't write that much when we were in elementary school. We just...in English we only learned about like what's the noun, what's the subject, stuff like that, not much about writing

A: Parts of speech?

Z: Yeah

A: Yeah, um ok, would you say that the things you learned in high school work pretty well now that you're in college or would you say some of those things you've kind of left behind and now you've moved on to other styles of writing or formats of writing?

Z: It's pretty much the same. Like how I wrote in high school, is the same as how I write now. Yeah um [reading written questions]. I guess they are the same cuz I'm doing good.

A: Ok, let's see, what topics would you like to or want to write about in comparison to what you are told to write about, like you were mentioning prompts earlier.

Z: Um, I would like to write more about you know stuff that I know of, like, yeah, like where I'm from and my culture, cuz I can write a lot when I'm talking about those kinds of things. Like I know a lot about it, so. So, I like to write more about those. When I'm writing more about something that I'm not interested in it takes a long time and I'm just not into it so I don't do a good job when I'm doing it, yeah.

A: Now, um, did you take a beginning writing class here at Chaminade when you first came or did they have different sorts of requirements?

Z: Um, I took expository writing. That was the first English class I took here at Chaminade, yeah.

A: Would you say that there were a lot of opportunities to write about what you wanted to were there prompts, like sort of “write this”?

Z: Um, for that class I had a lot of opportunities to write about what I do and what I want. So, that was a good class. I liked it. There was a lot of free-writing and you can talk about whatever you want. So, I liked it.

A: What’s your major now?

Z: Business

A: Business. Ok. So is that why maybe sometimes the classes aren’t so free to write about other things?

Z: Yeah.

A: Ok. Cool. Um, let’s see, so, if you were teaching a college level writing class what would you do? In other words, are there any specific activities you would use or explanations about writing that you would give to help students with their writing?

Z: [reading written question] Hmmm, if I were teaching...I would. If I was teaching, I would give the students a lot more freedom to write about what they want cuz um if we do that then they tend to write more and they’ll understand it more, so, yeah, so that’s what I would do.

A: Ok. Do you feel like there um like there are forms of writing that are more...are better suited for that? So, like you can write essays about what you choose to write about, but in class

activities sort of like...you know, what in class activities have really helped you to start expressing what you would want to?

Z: Um [whispers to self..."what kind of activities?"]. Um, like when you, ok so, when we, in one of my English classes I took we would read a poem, or we would watch something, and then our professor just told us to like free-write. So, I, I express myself more I guess when I'm just free-writing, like saying whatever I want. So, I like that activity when we watch something or talk about something and then we just write, and write.

A: That's cool.

Z: Yeah.

A: Yeah. It's not so much like the structure part but more like expressing yourself.

Z: Hmm mmm.

A: Ok. Cool. Have you been in classes where there have been activities where you were...at least writing activities...that you found were not helpful that were kind of things where you were like "that didn't work for me" or "I didn't really like that" as far as writing goes?

Z: I don't think so. Yeah no. I don't think so. Like most of my English classes like the activities we do actually do help me, yeah, to express myself more and better work on format and stuff like that. Yeah I don't think there's much "bad" stuff.

A: Ok. That's great then. Yay! Yay, for good English classes! Ok so that's the last question I have, so you can press the "stop" button.

NOTE: a brief conversation carried on after the interview was over...

Z: Have you interviewed a lot of people?

A: No, this is actually only my second interview ever.

Z: Oh really.

A: Yeah.

We laugh a little bit together, and I thank her for being such a greater interviewee.

APPENDIX C

Transcript of Jennifer's Interview

A: So, it is April 25th, 2014, and I am interviewing Jennifer. Um, the first question is where are you and your family from?

J: K, I'm from Chuuk, an island, part of Federated States of Micronesia. Is that what you mean?

A: Hmm mm.

J: K

A: And are you from central Chuuk or an outer island of Chuuk?

J: I'm from the capital, Chuuk.

A: Ok. When did and your family, if your family is here, first come to Oahu?

J: This is my first time.

A: Your first time?

J: So, I came on January 1st.

A: Wow, ok welcome!

J: My family, is back at home [motioning backward with head]

A: Ok. Do you have any family here at all or?

J: Yeah. I live with my auntie.

A: Ok. Could you briefly describe your hometown or your homeland for anyone who has never been to it or is unfamiliar with it?

J: Ok. My hometown...it's like...cuz it's a developing island or state and it's still, it's not very, it doesn't look good, but for me it's like comfortable place for me, cuz of the weather, like it's hot.

And yeah, it's, the roads are like bad. The places, most of the houses there are not good. Stores, there are like several stores, like this place [motioning out the window and then nods head].

A: What are the things that you love the most about where you're from?

J: I love the ocean cuz I love swimming. I just love the ocean, yeah. And, I love my home [nods head].

A: And do you have a lot of family in Chuuk?

J: Yeah, a lot, including my immediate family. But, I have lots of relatives. Yeah [nods head]

A: Would you say most people know each other because it's a smaller island?

J: Yeah, yeah. It's like that. If you asked someone...if you asked me if I know someone from there or if I don't know that particular person but you just say like a last name then I'll, I'll "K, I've heard of that" or "I've seen people" and I know them.

A: Can you describe just a typical day on Chuuk like what it's like for someone whose never been?

J: [Tilts head] Sorry can you be specific?

A: Like when you kind of wake up in the morning then how you go about the day could you describe you know how most people kind of live everyday?

J: Oh ok. K like. It's just like here. Like, wake up, go school, work...to go to work, and then come back, do chores, and...but to me, I have a lot to do, like to babysit my baby brother, cuz I have one, and with chores too, and assignments, homework [nods head]. Yeah.

A: Awesome. Um let's see, do you think that there are connections between where you are from in Chuuk and how you write or what you like to write about? So um, do you like to write about Chuuk and life there? Do you find that that's what you sort of prefer to write about? Um, and could talk about that a little bit?

J: I love to do that. I would love to express how proud I am being from that place. Yeah, so I would love to say the good things about Chuuk. I could also, I would also include the bad things about it so people can read about it and know what to do if they're, if they happen to go there to that place, yeah.

A: Great. Um, can you tell me or do you remember what you learned about writing in elementary school and high school?

J: I...in general, writing [makes a circular motion with hands]?

A: Hmm mmm

J: K. Well I started writing, in elementary I started learning how to write paragraphs, and in high school that's when I started like with outlines and with essays. Yeah, and it gets longer, the essays, yeah?

A: Hmm mmm. Did you have a lot of experience with creative writing in high school or was it more just essays and research papers?

J: Yeah, I had this class, it's it's yeah, creative writing. So, I got an "A" in that class cuz I really love it. Maybe it's cuz of my teacher? He was good at teaching it. So yeah, Yeah, I had that class. And I was more into it. Like we write poems, draw, and yeah.

A: Oh very cool.

J: Then, we present, like what we draw and then we present what the picture means, yeah.

A: Ok great. Are there things that you learned in elementary school or high school that you are still using now in your college classes that kind of help you to write better or would you say the things you learned in elementary school and high school aren't so useful anymore now that you're in college?

J: No they're useful. I'm using those skills now. The way I see it is if they didn't learn those [pointing] than how am I going to be here and yeah. That's why they're useful to me. And I reflect back, and what did I learn, k, now I'm going to do this, cuz this is what I learned back then.

A: Ok, let's see, what topics would you like to or want to write about um in comparison to sometimes what you're told to write about? Like sometimes you'll get a prompt that says "you have to write this" um but what would you prefer to write about if you had the choice?

J: K. Like anything?

A: Hmm mmm.

J: K, well, I would prefer to write mostly to focus my writings on my island, yeah like the impact of learning about those islands, and then especially if I were to, given an opportunity to write about my life that's what I would do. That's what I would love to write about.

A: Do you feel like um in a lot of classes you have the chance to write about those things or not so much?

J: [Shaking head] No.

A: Not so much? But you'd love to?

J: Yeah I'd like to.

A: Do you feel like a lot of students that you know or even teachers that you know don't know a lot about Chuuk? Or do most seem to know a little bit?

J: [Shakes head] Cuz I'm a quiet person, yeah I don't think they know much about me. I kept a journal but that's where I share that. I don't, I'm not those kind who talk a lot. Yeah, I do talk, but I don't express what's within me to anyone just my friends, yeah.

A: Would you say in Chuuk that that's pretty common that expressing yourself takes some time and you kind of have to take time to do that?

J: To some people. To those who are shy, like me, quiet. Yeah. I would say that cuz in my family, sorry, I need to say it out so you understand, in my family, cuz I have like two sisters, they're smart, like they know things, yeah in a fast pace, but I do know things, but it's like I'm just an average student, k? But yeah, just cuz they kinda underestimate me, my parents, that's what makes me scared yeah to like express my feelings. I don't know. I just feel weird. But then they saw me graduate high school, elementary, then high school, and then college, a two year. Then, now they let me come out here.

A: Are you the youngest of your sisters?

J: No, I'm the second.

A: I'm the second in my family too. Ok, so this is the last question, so if you were teaching a writing class at college, you know, college-level, um what activities do you think you would use to help other students express themselves or feel more comfortable?

J: K. Um well, I would say I would have them talk more instead of writing. Cuz that's when all, the whole class will know what everyone is thinking, yeah? So, that's like, I would have most of the activities with some talking, like, interacting with one another.

A: So everyone will share their ideas aloud and then they can respond.

J: Yeah [nods head].

A: Very good. Ok, awesome! Well, thank you for being part of the interview.

NOTE: I turn off the recorder at this point, but we continue talking for another 10 minutes about what I teach at UH, and the courses and scholarships offered in Pacific Literature and Pacific

studies at my university. Jennifer is very interested in learning more about the literature of her own region.

APPENDIX D

Transcript of David Coleman's Interview

Interview with Dr. David Coleman: 9/30/2014

Me: So first question: where are you from originally and what is your connection to Micronesia?

DC: Originally I'm from California. I was a military brat so I was all over. But basically, have been in Hawaii since '66. Graduated from St. Louis. Graduated from UH. Um, let me see my connection to Micronesia now is specifically through the program we run down in Chuuk.

Which, as Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts, it's an Associate of Arts Program to begin with and it came under my area so basically I kind of direct or oversee the process of our programs there. Now, we just introduced a 4 year Bachelor of Science and Edu and I work with the Edu Dean on that particular program with that still kind of umbrella overreach.

Me: So the program there for the Humanities is still more like an AA program?

DC: AA. It is designed to give them...basically covers all of our general edu give them a really broad liberal arts edu as it implies and it's also peppered with the areas of science and environmental issues and health issues because those are the issues that they face as a society so we try to give them a little extra work in those areas to try and build them up – even at the AA level.

Me: Ok. How long have you been teaching in Micronesia or with Micronesian students?

DC: Um, well I generally did the CUH 100, and now my assistant has taught the classes in the last year. Uh, but uh, so it's has been 2010 when I started working with them. Um, since then so about 5 years. This is our 5th year.

Me: Ok. So how does your connection to Micronesia affect how you teach (if it does) and how have values of place in Micronesia affected teaching approaches?

DC: Well, it's, the Micronesian cultures, people, the multiple cultures in Micronesia, particularly the Chuuk culture which is where we're at, um it is easier I think for the students to learn in kind of group contexts. So, one of the difficulties of running a distance edu program was to figure out how to do that, um, because again it is a relatively highly individual kind of methodology in general. And sort of almost simply between the student and the teacher. Now, all Chaminade online courses encourage threaded discussions and group online activities but again in general those were mediated over the virtual space. And we knew, if you believe the research, students, even very good students, entering into online programs if you could get 50% to finish that would be considered really a pretty good average overall. Um, in general it's a much lower figure. So these students, all have some English acquisition difficulties, they have some math difficulties. I guess that's more universal, but even within their schooling there's some...voids we are trying to work through and to try and get them up to the college level. So, we restructured. The methodology we use, we actually schedule them into classes. So say they have my CUH 100 then I have 3 sections of that and it will be a Mon at 8:00 let's say, and they'll meet until 9:50, and they will have...during that time they're in a lab at CCPI and, which is the college there, and they will be working on that, particular class. So that means, if I want to, I could go on at approximately 12 noon, and I could do synchronous kind of work with them if the class needed it. Do synchronous chat rooms and those kind of things if you wanted to do that. Now even more so than that, that's still kind of the virtual. What we then did, is we hired professional tutors there. In most cases, the tutors have some kind of background in the area. Uh, after the first year we were also able to hire peer tutors, which actually was the key because the students by culture,

for them to directly ask the teacher questions is difficult and in some sense almost considered disrespectful and so on. I mean I'm not sure the underlying idea there but in many cases they find it difficult to ask what perhaps the Western student might say "of course I'm going to ask that question." But they would just kind of be relatively silent. But, with a peer tutor they can ask questions, and then the peer tutors work with the online teachers in terms of trying to facilitate well "here, this is what the students are asking" and what can we do then working with the online teacher, what do we do to try and get them to answer their questions. So, you're constantly trying to build in the students the ability to ask directly to the teacher, but it's now mediated through this peer tutoring situation which has tended to be very successful. The finish rates, well the grad rates, are running much higher than we might have expected. So we're around 63-64%. Retention rates going into the 2nd year of the program are in the high 60s-70s, so it's not too bad. Considering we're dealing with the audience, the students themselves, that we're targeting are again, a lot of them, all of them are still acquiring English at the college level. So when you teach such a course, you can take advantage of this peer tutoring this group situation, and actually assign group activities much as you would, then have the peer tutors evaluate what's going on. You could even film it, and send it back to the teacher if that is an essential part... Communications does that. So our effort was try to respect that kind of cultural reality and then use it as a strength, develop it as a strength in relation to the online which was a little unusual. Beyond that, you know, a lot of your work is, you know even though we're not English teachers per se, all of our teachers are asked to be a little bit concerned with the use of English, try to set the bar relatively high so that they continue to practice and write. Like most students, they'll probably give you the minimum the first time, if they think you'll accept it, and if you do that's what you'll get. So, we try to encourage the teachers really, they don't necessarily correct

all grammar errors and all that, but they often will point them out and say look you need to work on this part or ask your English teacher. So, a lot of our work is to try to help them through short writing exercises. One of the things we try to do is to try to get them to read, you know a short reading, and then summarize. Read, summarize. Read, summarize. So, again you're trying to develop in them skills so that they can then apply those to their larger research projects... This is a cohort program, so that's one of the things, trying to get them to identify with each other. There's about 60 some odd, 62-63 students in each cohort. And the object is to build a class or cohort identity. They really do look out for each other, and try to help each other to succeed. The very first semester though is what we call a bridge semester. That's why our program takes... it really is 6 semesters now for the AA program. The first full semester really is dealing with what we would call now Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic – the basic courses to get them up to the level, the college level, ability. Some of them are already there, a few, and pretty well off, and then there is group where we see significant problems, in terms of English acquisition and so on. So we do those on ground. Those are the on-ground courses that we do in the AA program. So we have 2 professors down there who do the English and Math in this bridge. And, we just think that works probably a lot better, and they can be present. If you look at the total amount of time they spend in class, it's about double what you would do here. Because again the goal is to keep them kind of focused, to keep them together as a group, keep them working. And in general... and then we use an ASSET test, it's a written version that attempts to show "yes, readiness for college level work." And that's one of the big assessment tools we use, both for placement and to track them through the bridge to see if their ready to move on. And then they'll move into a regular set of courses in the second semester. These courses can count in terms of credits toward their degrees, but primarily they are preparation and development courses. But

using that full semester has really made a huge difference, and you can see the development in their writing and their ability to read and so on. So again, that's part of a process of nurturing a community among them so that they really get used to each other. Now we do lose some. Some were at the lower edges of the admittance scale and we're generally successful with that group but sometimes family and other things intervene. So, we will lose some students in that transition into the 2nd semester. But in general, again, we think that's working in terms of being able to move them into regular studies. It really has been pretty spectacular. You know, in terms of where they started if you read their opening essays and you read their essays at the end of the semester, they are actually progressing. Now, they will continue, particularly in that 2nd semester, teachers that are teaching there, so we have one on-ground course continuing in English and Math, there are the 2 math courses on-ground. And then we have Religion and Communications, and those are all online. And so they're...they have these 3 other courses that are now heavily online. So again, they are in the computer lab, and there are specific times to use those tutors and so on, but they really are pushing. We try to get those teachers again to pay a bit more attention to writing and keep giving them practice on short things. We began to introduce in the 2nd or 3rd year, we began to identify these cultural issues that on a certain sense stood in the way, and so we developed four classes that we hope are going to be helpful. The first one really is on the relationship between if you will Western higher edu and their understandings of edu. So it really tries to do this kind of "this is the paradigm you're getting into" and "these are the expectations of the paradigm." How do those compare to the Chuukese model, the Micronesian model, which they are used to? So that they can develop a sense of what do the teachers really want? And that is taught by one of our Chuukese professors. She just got her doctorate over at UH. Long-time teacher in comp, so she deals with that kind of, and a lot of that's her own experience, trying to

forge a way between these two kind of visions. And then, the second course it really is indigenous themes, so there we try to draw out from the writing that's been done on particularly Chuuk, but across Micronesia, you know, what are the indigenous values and themes, you know, that are current, and being written about and talked about, and played out within their economies, within their political realities, and so on? Again, a series of articles have been chosen, basically from the Micronesian Seminar, so they'll read, not too long articles, but they are fairly sophisticated reads and you know, and again the same teacher takes them through that whole area with these indigenous themes. And the third course is a cross-cultural communication, and they do a communication course which covers some of that, but this third one credit course is specific to how do you conduct communication across and between cultures? How can you make your own culture available to this host culture, which you are a part of now? Then we do one on Catholic Social teachings...a lot of what they are doing is connected with the church and their church communities so we wanted to give them a chance to...again, it's reading short presentations, and it's kind of "churchese" language which is a whole problem by itself. But to draw them into that kind of thinking, which is actually part of, very naturally part of their cultural view in terms of family and island and state. Those are all...family is first, island is second, and the state is third. FSM is kind of an abstraction, but nonetheless they are part of the nation, so how do they begin to see that? So, how do they as religious persons understand the Catholic traditions and why we are interested in social justice issues and so on. We hope that will be helpful....For most of the students though to come off to leave the island for school, is very difficult to contemplate. For those that do, in the past, they would come on to almost any campus. The Micronesian students are eligible for the Pell grant, but they are not eligible for any of the subsidized student loans or that sort of thing. So if their family doesn't have the resources

enough, they can use the Pell grant, but even at a relatively inexpensive private place like Chaminade, they'll end up with debt, and by the end of it they really will not be able to return home, because there will not be a job there for them to pay off the student loans. So that was another reason why we were concerned to do this program, for the students.

Me: Does the college currently offer, is it mostly composition courses, or is there a creative writing class that students can take?

DC: We haven't done a creative writing at this point. Just because of the amount of courses that they have to take. I mean they do a literature course which is part of the gen eds. They write, if you will, "creatively." I mean the philosophy courses, the history course, all require writing. But, it's mainly academic writing. We really haven't done...BS may offer us more of an opportunity although it's kind of crammed with all of the education courses. Right now we haven't done too much with creative work.

Me: And the literature courses are they the general survey courses, like British and American lit?

DC: These are the general genre courses. We do the genres of literature. So we get a chance to look at (Cheryl Edlson is the primary teacher)...so they get a chance to look at all the genres. That's our most basic survey course, general survey course, which tries to get examples from all the different genres. Although, I don't know if they do a novel with them because it's just too much. But again, we try to break it out, to do the practice with writing just continue to work with different forms of writing and reading so that they get used to it. And to finally encourage them, you know the creative writing is, you know, a question, and I think the teachers are on occasion, especially in the English area, saying "write about yourself" so they do encourage some creative writing to try to develop their voices. But again, it's more "here, let's get your voice out there"

on an issue or on an area so, but, the skills level have to be developed to get to that, so a lot of the work is still in development....

Me: So this next question is about sort of cultural values and rhetoric and writing, so how do you see cultural values of people in Chuuk for example effecting their rhetoric and writing?

DC: That would be a hard one for me to answer. You know, I don't deal with the question from that perspective. When you look at the students, say a rhetorical style like argumentation, you clearly would see, the student would have to be coached in that because again from a cultural point of view that isn't necessarily the way you conduct a conversation or try to move forward.

There's a little bit in the culture, you know, what we are looking for most often is "you as an individual should progress" and they penalize that sort of activity. In the sense that if you separate yourself... you are going to feel pulled in, as if you really shouldn't stand out. Now, this just tends that when you deal with a class as a class they tend to be quiet. You know I find this in almost every class I have taught here in Hawaii. It's kind of a shared thing, but you've got to work to help them express themselves. But I just try, myself, to help them work through it by focusing them on "look, if you are a gifted student, if you have the capacity, well no, it's not so you can separate yourself from everybody else, but so you can now help everybody else. How can you become part of the solution for the community rather than just for yourself?" And, to get them to try and understand, you know, I think we've been pretty successful doing that as students have developed a sort of servant-leadership if you will, you know that focuses them on how can bring along everybody else? So there's that concern probably more so than perhaps what you'd find in an everyday Western class. You know, that's the interesting thing, when you talk with them, their values are really centered around these kind of groups, focusing on the family (almost a Confucian model). But it really is a group sense: "So what I do, has such an impact on my

family, so I always consider them.” And that’s always a plus and a minus as you can imagine. Especially, for, a majority of our students who are female, and in some ways getting the higher education is pushing the boundaries of the culture in terms of the traditional role of women. Although Chuukese society is a matrilineal society, so there’s a strong role within the family for the mother, grandmother. They own the land. Everything is through them. So it’s very interesting. But, that tends to be kind of within the family, you know the focus. And then, the men are supposed to go out and do the public stuff, kind of traditionally. So here, we’re kind of pushing these new boundaries. I think that has an impact because they have never been expected to speak publically and so on...to get them to do that. You know, Communications works really hard at that. I think English does as well, in terms of expressing themselves through written work.

Me: What role do you think writing and literature from Micronesia and Micronesian students can play in the construction of a more positive future reality for migrants and individuals from those regions?

DC: Well, I know, that Koreen’s interest is to get them to the level where they can use writing as an instrument for their own education. And we may see that more with the BS program because one of the efforts now...I mean we quite purposefully chose to do history of the Pacific Islands and Pacific Island Literature (these are 400 level courses). They really are trying to help them focus and see their own traditions and certainly the lit course will have that as one of its goals. Understand what’s been written, and actually there’s been little for Chuukese literature. So how to help them develop you know as part of this teacher edu the importance of developing their own voice. I think what that will lead us toward is during the summer you know as we get a sort

of pool of graduates and teachers who are interested you know...we are going to do 4 professional development activities that are intensive, week-long intensive experiences with the teachers, and they kind of choose their topics, but somewhere in there I'm certain this is going to be one of the areas, and if they don't suggest it, we will. In terms of, how do you help your students begin to use, and it can be Chuukese and it can be English, what is most useful for them to develop their voice? I mean some of the work that still has to be done is the codification of the language because the language itself is not actually written. I guess you would call it a codified language. There are several different ways to write it. That's why even if you are trying to learn it: "How come this one is written like this? Well, it just depends on what part of the lagoon you are from." So, you know, as we get more Chuukese to graduate in these areas of rhetoric, language, linguistics, and so on, as we kind of move them toward UH programs and online programs when we have them...you know, I think that's, how do we get people to get into these programs with the idea that what they can do is create potential foundation for the expansion of their own voice and ideas. I think that's an important goal as we begin to look at it. You know one of the things, we've tried to be sensitive to...so here we are obviously a Western paradigm and model is it an imposition, is it just "we don't care what you are interested in, you just got to do it our way and we don't care!" I don't think that's what we've done. I think that what we have at all levels tried to do is

"there are these expectations and we've got to fulfill them but how do we do that in a way that begins to nurture and draw forth different ways to do this? Are there more effective ways? So even, how do you do an online course with Chuukese students? So we made a decision early on...it was kind of nice Father Hezel who has done a lot of the writing you know about the Chuukese, you know he visited us, he was at UH and then he visited us. We took him through

what we were doing, and he kind of smiled, and his comment, actually it was the provost who was with us at the meeting, and she just looked at him and said, “See they’ve read your work!” Because he makes this point, you really do have to create new pedagogies you know that can work with indigenous peoples, and take advantage of what can sometimes be seen as “Oh, this is a hurdle we’ve got to get over” – you know this idea that the individual who can’t excel won’t excel because they’re being held back. Well, you know well what is that relationship? Why are they wanting to say that? It’s not because they want nobody to succeed, it’s that if you succeed and leave, you break the relationships that make possible the identity of the community. And much of Western society has tended to support that idea. So how can we work toward those Western expectations but do so in a way that rebirths them within the culture and gives them a more positive reinforcement of cultural values. And, we should be truthful, that to take a Western education does in fact change them. They will forever be different in the way they look at their own culture and the way they look at themselves. The key is how do you help them to develop the schools and tools to overcome some of the alienation that happens because of the form of the edu that they take? How do you use that to help them build and become more reflective persons within their own society? And those are hard questions, but I think that each of the faculty has asked these in different ways and is aware of the problem. How do we work with the students and work with the cultures rather than trying to “overcome” it?

APPENDIX E

Transcript of Koreen Nakahodo's Interview

Interview with Koreen Nakahodo: 10/2/2014

[NOTE: This interview took place in my office at UHM]

Me: Ok, question number 1: where are you from originally and what is your connection to Micronesia?

Koreen: Ok, so I'm originally from Hawai'i, um born and raised, and I did all of my schooling here. My connection to Micronesia is mostly through my students, and so a good number of the students at Chaminade are from Chuuk mostly, some from Pohnpei and Yap and from the Marshalls and from Guam. And those are my day students on ground, and then I teach online at CCPI, the Caroline College and Pastoral Institute, which is in Chuuk.

Me: How long have you been teaching in Micronesia or with Micronesian students.

Koreen: So, on ground, at Chaminade the Micronesian students there are blended with the rest of the population. But, I've been teaching at Chaminade since 1998. I think I've been teaching Pacific Literature there since 2001. And a lot of the Micronesian students or from Micronesia do sign up for that course. I've started teaching at CCPI since 2008. And all the students there are Micronesian. Now, interestingly enough, now most of them are Chuukese, sometimes we get someone from Pohnpei or Yap, but we did have 2 students who graduated from Hawai'i schools and who went to CCPI for their college (and Dr. Coleman would know who they are). I found that unusual though.

Me: Yeah, that's interesting. How does your connection to Micronesia affect how you teach so how have values of place in Micronesia affected your teaching approaches?

Koreen: So day undergraduates, on-ground, I don't know if its affected that much, to be honest. I think for my CCPI students, I shifted the focus of the readings from...so I shifted the focus of readings. We all had a regular textbook and I can't remember the textbook now, it was on contemporary issues. And, we all used that same textbook. And then, they were research-based texts, but more popular culture. And so, I didn't use that text, I found another text called *Writing Places* that I used my first year, and it was about people writing about the places they were from, now of course nobody from the Pacific was in that book. And then I scrapped that book completely, although I still do reference one article there. And now most of my readings come from the Micronesian Seminar. This is for CCPI. So, a lot of my readings will come from the Micronesian Seminar because it's focused on things and areas that they're familiar with. So it's not like trying to imagine what's going in NY or Long Island, and applying that to Chuuk. Although, I do try to make it relevant in a lecture. So the essay that I assign, that I use to assign, for the most part was called "Where I'm Writing From" it was by Derrick Owens I believe (and I can send it to you). Well, he goes through the history of Runkonkoma and the problems of being like a bedroom community. So people live there but work in the city and then just come back. And he talked about the issues for the young people and the elderly who are left behind because there are no facilities or resources for them. I did try to make the connection when they read it to Chuuk and migration, but it's a harder thing to do. It's kind of a forced fit. So, after that, and well there were other essays about Fargo, North Dakota that could apply but you would have to kind of make it work, and they wouldn't really get it. So, for example, someone from here might read the Fargo essay because in the essay somebody's like "You're from where?" because of the movie, and I think you could show a Kathy Jetnil poem, "Lessons from Hawai'i" I think it's called, and have people here say "yeah, I can relate to that." They are assuming certain things

based on where I'm from, based on what they know. But there in Micronesia or in Chuuk at CCPI for people who have not left it just didn't work. So you can make some connections, but it doesn't work. It just made so much more sense to use the Micronesian Seminar, which I would never use for my day undergraduates. So with a mixed population I wouldn't have a whole course themed on Chuuk and all its aspects. I don't know if that answers your question?

Me: Yes. That's great. Let's see...how does your connection to Micronesia affect how you view rhetoric and writing. So how do values of place affect views of rhetoric, views of writing and what writing is about?

Koreen: Um, wow that's a good question...Let me think. So just to back up a couple steps.

Chaminade has English 101 which is really just the rhetorical methods, introduction to composition, and then we have English 102 which is a research writing class. And that research writing class has to produce, across the board, a 2,500 word or about 10 page, 10 source essay.

That's the requirement. And some people will say you have to do 10 full pages, other people will say you have to hit 2,500 words with the works cited, some people say without, but it's around there. So, the class I teach in Chuuk is the 102, that's the research writing class. So, that course is really a Western type of research. It's very Western-oriented. It's across the board for CCPI and for our day undergraduates. And, it was important to Dr. Coleman that somebody full-time taught so that there would be no question of consistency. So in that sense that course is very Western in nature. Now, on the other hand, what our teachers as a whole found in terms of how our students communicate to use (because it's all email) is the first paragraph would always praise God, always. If they emailed you it would always be at least 3 paragraphs even if it was for a simple question. The first paragraph would always praise God. The second paragraph would praise the professor, or Chaminade and then the professor. And then the third paragraph

might get to the question. So, that experience helped me understand how they communicate in ways that are more formal I think and drawn from oratory and tradition than we do. And we've had to create classes where we are re-training them on how to ask questions through emails for their other professors. But by and large that's the method. So one of the things I did with Dr. Coleman, and I'm really grateful because he is really willing to green-light things, is we created a series of what is called Humanities Courses, and the goal was really to try and acculturate the students to Western ways of writing and thinking and communicating. And so the first course was called Western Academic Education. And I did the first run, and Margarita Cholymay is doing the second run, the second time. Now, the way it gets to your question is, I've never been to Chuuk so my way of studying for this was to look at *My Freshman Year* by Kathy Smalls...She's had experience in the Pacific in Tongan Villages. And she goes back to school to see what the school is like, and for her that is a foreign culture. She's an anthropologist so she's coming at it from an anthropological point of view. Then, I also read Father Hezel's *Making Sense of Micronesia*. So I drew from the 2 books. So, I'm saying let's look at Chaminade, clearly it's a foreign institution to you, but let's look at how her experience can help you think about what's different and then how Father Hezel's experience can help you think about what's different. Margarita does it completely differently which is wonderful. She tells stories about her experience, leaving, being one of the first to leave Chuuk and go to university on the mainland. And she tells stories about her experiences in order to get them to see the point she's trying to make. So her thing is all through stories. My things were all through lecture. The idea was that Margarita would take over the class eventually. I really felt the class needed to be taught by someone who was Chuukese. But in terms of thinking about rhetoric, getting back to your question, or thinking about composition, I saw how composition and the ways they learned came

through story in practical ways, and for us maybe less practical but traditional and more drawn from oratory. It would be really unusual for them to ask me a question and say “Hey. I didn’t understand this!” It would be praising God first, and then Chaminade and CCPI, and it would kind of go through the list. Praise Father Rosendo the director. Praise Dr. Coleman. And then praise me as the teacher. And then get to the question, not in a very direct way. So, it was frustrating for a lot of teachers, which is why we tried to create that program. But it was also for me, as a writing teacher, I could see why writing a research paper in a Western paper where you’re doing topic sentence and evidence would be very unusual because there is a relational aspect to what they are doing. And very much like what Margarita is doing. She is like here’s my experience, now learn from my experience, as opposed to here’s a lecture, here’s how you need to behave, here’s a lecture here’s how you need to write an email. These are very very different. I oversee that arch of courses, and I can pop in on her lectures and that’s how I noticed the difference. I don’t know if that answers your question?

Me: That’s really cool. What are your views on the rhetoric produced here in relation to Micronesia, so specifically rhetoric that’s being produced about the region in this particular location?

Koreen: So you mean like public rhetoric? So, several years ago, I don’t know when, Charles Djou came out and wrote a newspaper article or an interview (you would probably know it better than I would) on how the Micronesians are considered illegal aliens and how they are taxing our healthcare system. So, I think that rhetoric, and I don’t know if Wayne Tanaka addressed that in his op-ed, is so racist and damaging because (and this is where Dr. Coleman can help you) if you go to Chuuk they don’t have good medical care, they have to Guam or come here. So two of our teaching assistants...one of them had a spouse who was pregnant, and they went to Guam to give

birth to the baby. And the other, who sadly eventually lost the baby, came here for medical care because the medical care there is not good at all. One of the things...when another Dean, Dean of Biology and Natural Sciences went there she was just appalled at the lack of health care there. And so, they have to come here or to Guam, and they are not illegal, they are by the Compact of Free Association able to come here. But I think that kind of rhetoric is damaging, and I think it's reflected in Kathy's poem. That they are somehow less than or they shouldn't be here. And I think that rhetoric about that population is really horrible, and I've heard even, even some people who are pro-sovereignty really frowning on that group of people as taxing the resources, which I find odd. I think that there are so many other groups that are here that are also taxing resources, and groups that just come here for vacation. But that's not the rhetoric I hear. So I hear really racist rhetoric against that group. I think. I could be wrong.

Me: As a teacher, how do you think you and your students can change or resist that rhetoric?

Koreen: Ahhhh, that's a great question. How can we resist that rhetoric? So I think one way to do it...and actually I'm going to back to the previous question is that ok? You know another thing is that Vilsoni Hereniko came out with an essay...where he said that Father Hezel said that the Micronesians...there were responses...they were written responses to this body of thought. And he gave examples, in this area this person responded...and then he said in other areas of the Pacific writing was not as prominent and so the Micronesians sang or danced. But that's not true though. So, if you read Father Hezel's original essay, right, in his essay...well I shouldn't say it's not true, it was true but it was misleading. It made it look like the Micronesians weren't writing, or that the people of Chuuk or Yap or Kosrae. So Father Hezel was compiling a church history, and he wanted each group to put together their own history. They chose to put together a non-written history, and dance the history or sing the history. But that doesn't mean that they also

weren't writing. So when he talks about in that essay that's been reproduced in *Inside Out* and its been circulated, it makes it look like they weren't writing creatively, and I don't think that's true. I think that's decontextualized. Even in academics that's what happens. I think what needs to happen in response to that, in response to the racism against Micronesians, is there really does need to be more integration of the FSM and Guam, whether it be the spoken word or printed books into classes that focus on the Pacific. And I kind of think that a lot of the Pacific lit classes here (I don't know if I want you to quote me on this) focus on Samoa, Aotearoa and Fiji. And there's a huge body of literature coming out of Papua New Guinea. And there's stuff in Micronesia that hasn't been anthologized. You've probably looked at Mark Skinner's work right? So there's Mark Skinner, there's Kimberly Kay Au. And the beauty of Kimberly Kay Au is that in her appendix she printed a lot of those. And so I draw from those, and I give them to my students to read so that they can say I read Albert Wendt and I read Theo from Yap (and I'm not sure I'm pronouncing his name correctly, or I've read say Patricia Grace, but I've also read oh I can't remember her name, but I'll send it to you, this other person from Palau, because otherwise the American Pacific with the exception of Guam right now, tends to not be represented at all. So I think if you look at *Nuanua*, it's not there, and he wrote it in 1980. Now, in all fairness to Albert Wendt, some of the things that Mark Skinner found almost all of them were in the newspapers. So he was pulling from the newspapers, so unless you went to the newspaper...the other thing that I think I talked about, or that I talk about to my students, is that a lot of the writing that is being produced centers around the universities. That's why we look at Fiji, and Vanessa Griffin, who's mentioned so prominently in...Subramani. You know she's mentioned so prominently in Subramani and then she falls off the map, but she's gone on to other things. But it's sad, but she was there at the time Albert Wendt was there, and she's writing

and he's writing, and they're publishing through the university venues. Well there's nothing in Micronesia, right? The College of Micronesia and have you looked at their catalogue? Because I looked at their catalogue fairly well, and even Xavier when we're thinking of putting together our classes...

Koreen requests that I turn off the recorder for a bit as she does not want to be recorded for what she tells me next...information related to Chaminade's relationship with the CofM and executive decisions related to course content and creation.

Interview Continued...

Koreen: So I didn't see in their course catalogue a strong focus on Pacific or Micronesian literature...did you, when you looked through their catalogue?

Me: I don't think so.

Koreen: Or creative writing. And if you go to the Micronesian Seminar site I was trying to look for things um that would possible give us a clue. And I cross-listed it with um UH. I didn't go to the Microfilms though. But, they had stuff like "How to Cook Dog" and Something "Couch." So I thought, "Oh cool!" And then I emailed them and I said, "Can I get a copy of this? Because I thought, "Well this could a literary book" so I sent my money, they made a CD copy, I think her name was Alida, really nice, but it was English 101 essays. It was literally how to cook dog. It wasn't a short story. Yeah. So it was literally how to cook dog, and all these essays on how to cook dog. Which you know had to be like...it's very very...some of my colleagues still do it, where they do a how-to book and they compile it, and they turn it into a publication of freshmen writings, and that's what it had to be. I mean I don't know who the teacher was I forgot...so I looked, and I didn't see a lot of creative work. I do think the way to do it is to teach you know Kathy to combat that is to teach as much as you can, get those creative writing courses at the

universities or the community colleges and those are tough, tough fights. I'm going to be honest because what they really want are jobs. I mean they want practical jobs and they want to learn how to write well. They want to get jobs, and I don't know if a whole lot of them want to do creative writing, to be honest. So, every time I try to bring it up they say, "Well maybe you can do like a writing group or something." And that's great too. And I'm not the one who would teach the course. I'm not qualified to teach a creative writing course. But I bring it up because I'm like, "You know the other ways we can get them writing is to have them do creative writing because they probably have a lot to say." And it never goes very far. Every couple of years I'll bring it up again, but it never goes very far. So, I think the literature is a way to do it. But it's funny because I mentioned "Making Waves: Trans-Pacific Writing" it came out in the University of Hilo, and I read it for Alice's class as part of my paper. And I emailed her, and it was odd because not one person reviewed it. And I thought for sure it must have had a review. So I had the librarians looking, and finally I said, "Ok, I'll just write an embarrassing email to say I can't find any reviews. And she wrote back and said it was never reviewed. Nobody came forth to review it. And I thought that was so odd because one of the ways things get known and circulated is through reviews, people start teaching out of it. I've taught...I'll send you the poem, I've taught a couple of poems from there. Not all of them are great. But some of them are very useful. And there's one poem on migration that's very simple. And I taught it at the end of this semester, and we just go through the Pacific, and we ended up I think in Yap. And, by that time, my students were over migration cause we read the poem and they were like "That's about migration." So there was no deep discussion. "Oh it's really deep, yeah, to know about migration, but we know about it already. You know you have to move around a lot, we're done." So, ok then. So, and then I think there are a lot of really great graduates that probably just go on

to work and send money home. And so they're not really thinking about combating that image. So, on one hand it's teaching the literature, making sure the literature is represented... And that's another thing I did in my paper for Alice's class. I looked at the syllabi, what I could pull up. I asked Craig for his syllabi. I asked Alice for her syllabi. I went online and I pulled syllabi from Carolina Sinavaiana. There are some other people whose names I can't remember now. And even in Pacific Lit courses here where we do have a large percentage of people from Guam, well Craig had a lot from Guam, and he had Emilihter, but other than that there was nothing in way of anything else. And I know Mark Skinner's, now Mark Skinner came out in 1990 though, and even back then he did his project because he said Ron Crocombe had said, "Well they're not writing over there." And he was like, "Well this is my response." And there needs to be more responses. But not responses... I tried to find out about Kimberley Kay Au, I could not find out if she is from Palau or not. She had a strong Palau focus in her project. Mark Skinner was a Peace Corps volunteer, that I know. I tried to get in touch with him, but I couldn't, or at least not before the paper was due. I think there need to be more of those responses that are then published. Because if I wasn't looking actively for Mark Skinner's work or Kimberley Kay Au's work I would not have found it. And then incorporate it into syllabi. And once they are incorporated then more things can happen.

Me: So I think you answered this last question anyway: What role do you think writing and literature from Micronesia and Micronesian students can play in the construction of a more positive future reality for migrants and individuals from those regions? And I think you kind of answered that question by saying, "if you are teaching this literature and it's becoming part of conversation, in syllabi and in the department, right? Then, it's not just this outlier in the Pacific anymore, an us or them sort of thing, but all of the Pacific includes Micronesia."

Koreen: I know. Drives me nuts! Can I say, your work is so important. It is so important what you're doing because otherwise I think it's just one of those things that people overlook. Now, you know everybody is going to have their different bias, so Alice is Maori, and she taught, a lot of her syllabi being taught in Aotearoa is going to have that focus, right? Ku'ualoha's focus is going to be here, Pele and I guess Craig Santos-Perez would be Guam. But you know, my students from Guam many of them are from Saipan. Some of them who TA for me said until they worked with me their impressions of Micronesia...one of my students said flat-out, she's from Saipan, that, she said, "The Micronesians in Saipan, the Chuukese in Saipan, fill up our jails." And another girl from Guam said in Guam "The Micronesians live off our welfare system and are the ones causing the trouble." So it would be interesting.

[NOTE: I thank Koreen and turn off the recorder at this point. We continue chatting about the graduate program at UHM and about our teaching loads for the next term.]

APPENDIX F

Transcript of Margarita Cholymay's Interview

Interview with Margarita Cholymay: 11/3/2014

MC: Is this a good setting? (We are in the Burger King on Beretania; sitting in the far corner; a family with two young kids is sitting in the booth behind us, and soft music plays in the background).

Me: Oh yeah, this is good. Um, ok. Let's see. So where are you from originally and what is your connection to Micronesia?

MC: Oh, I'm from Losap, a small island in Mic...in the Mortlocks, off Chuuk, Micronesia. I was born into a full-blooded Chuukese parents. My mom and my dad was from this island. So I grew up a citizen off Chuuk, Micronesia.

Me: How far was your island from central Chuuk?

MC: Aw, maybe you will learn something about Chuuk geography. We tend to go by...we can go by islands or by regions. And Chuuk is about 200 islands all inhabited and uninhabited. There are 40-41 principalities spread out into 5 political regions. So I'm from one region called Moluccas, but I'm married to someone from the Northern Marianas, which is from where the center Weno...Weno is the center of Chuuk, capital. And that's where, uh, the stores, the hospital, main road, you know, where it's located. And you're asking about location, distance? I'm not good in square miles, but I'm good in often I've heard people say maybe sixty to seventy miles away, out from the I'm not sure if it's from the center or beyond the reef. One of the closest islands among the outer islands. When we talk about the outer islands, I'm talking about islands beyond the reef that you cannot see within the reefs. When we take bigger boat, it take one night, and maybe one day before we arrive the island. This is a rough, rough water. So sixty

to seventy miles. If we take a speedboat, say maybe 40 horsepower, smaller boat, good weather it can be 5-6 hours. But, if it's not good weather, it's uh, can be even 8 to 10 hours. Right. But it's outside where you cannot see. (Stops and nods her head slowly).

Me: Oh wow.

MC: Hmm hmm

Me: Ok, um, let's see, how long have you been teaching in Micronesia or with students from Micronesia?

MC: I started working as a teacher since 1977. I came back from college in 1977 and started teaching in elementary. But then, I have experience elementary, secondary, and working in the central office (college-level). I transferred to the College of Micronesia in 1994 and been teaching since 2008. So more than 30 years.

Me: Awesome. How long have you been working with Chaminade?

MC: Maybe 3 semesters?

Me: Great. So you've been doing work with classes here and then also with the satellite campus in Chuuk?

MC: Yes

Me: Great. Ok, let's see, how does your connection to Micronesia affect how you teach? So how have values of where you are from affected your teaching approaches and what you teach?

MC: Um, I teach, when I started teaching was in elementary. And you know the focus is like, they encourage as much that we teach Language Arts, but in English. So, we had, I started out using something like oral English method. Oral English, where a lot of speaking, a lot of modeling, so the children can, as much as they can, hear the language. It can be simple

vocabulary, acting it out, and using it in modeling, I mean, acting it out and say it. The question you're asking is about my teaching of a thing to the children?

Me: Hmm Hmm

MC: Mmmm, ok I'm trying to think of uh...As a Chuukese Micronesian, when I talk, when I started teaching, as much as possible I taught, I taught the students using my own experience, my own learning experience, because I learned through the system. And when I look back I saw so much that I went through, that many times I did not learn better. So it's like I understand what happened. So when I start teaching I use my own examples in making sure I change something little, little bit. Uh, like, I cannot really think of examples. But, you know, when we first started learning English it was mostly grammar, writing, symbols...very isolated. Uh, but when I started teaching, I changed that because I know that learning just grammar it was not really helping me able to speak the language. And be able to...but it helps. You know, learning grammar helped me because I could see how we write, making sure grammar. But, when you speak...

Me: No, it's not the same.

MC: And another way that I believed that helped my students from Chuuk is because I understand them. I understand their background. I understand their culture. Then I taught, the way I taught, even though I taught the English language, I used, like you know the importance of prior knowledge? Background experience? That's too much important, that I bring into the setting where we talk about something that is familiar and then I introduce something new. It's very related because I base on their experience, their prior knowledge, and their background experience. But, I was not taught that way! You know like, I grew up, and teachers would give us vocabulary so isolated, and had us go home, and have us look up in the dictionary. And I would go home and copy everything from the dictionary and bring it. But it didn't make sense.

Many times I even memorized definitions. But, you know, the way I teach maybe taking out from dictionary, but I will also help them. You look at the dictionary outline maybe three, four definitions. But according to the context of what we're learning, it is this because of this. So those something that I feel my teaching because I understand the children's background, the culture, and I easily associate with their background experience. But it doesn't mean that if only you from a certain culture you can be able to teach. But it's something for people like you, you are going to teach Chuukese, it is very important that you always activate prior knowledge. You know we all understand this. Because if you also learn something from them then you know what you are going to connect your teaching to something that you understand. So this family or that.

Me: Yeah. And then Koreen was telling me about a class that you're teaching now where it's a humanities class that just started. It's like a one unit class where you are kind of bridging for students who are coming into a Western university and kind of the difference between educational values, between Chuukese educational values, Western educational values, trying to talk through those differences. Could you explain that class a little bit?

MC: Before I explain that question, I like to start with one course that I teach last semester that I like a lot, indigenous knowledge. It's indigenous knowledge, but it's also part of humanities. So, I picked out certain values, uh, that I like them to focus on. It's part of culture. It can be any culture. But, then I focus on each of the different values, and then see how they can connect to their own lives. And see how they can use it, in helping them survive in college, in any foreign, you know, outside in school especially. So that's something that I started out. I use, I try to gather readings that is familiar to them, but also related to the theme or the values. But this semester that class is about understanding Western concept of education. So before I connect to

Western education, I build from their own growing up. But I always use mine. Like uh (I cannot read but I could have look at my lessons). Uh, like um, let's say college life. College life, if that was the topic, so I use my story. I write my own story. I wrote my own story and post it up for them to read. And then asked them whether they can see their own journey? Preparing to come to school. And it's so very important because they see their own, they see my own, and then they look at how they are actually in college at this time. But, I just used the word college but I started from...I wished I know this topic so that I can look at my, the different, like...journey, life journey, or even it dorm life. These are other examples. I share my own examples of what it means by living in dorms away from families. Then, some of them when they share their stories, some of them have never had that experience of dormitories. Then, they connect it. But, seeing also my own stories, then they compare. And now, I'm talking about college life, I'm looking at, because I'm connecting to writing, I'm talking about plagiarizing. So, it's a good class, that help preparing them, becoming aware of expectations in life, expectations in college away from home, how to expect in the classroom, you know, using of Internet. All of those. And then, before I came into those different topics related to college I started out from leaving home, coming to college, or even I started from elementary, secondary, my first time leaving home to college, and the actual life in college in dormitories. And now I'm relating to the classrooms. But it's interesting because I have different levels of students. Some students are very fast in connecting, but some have no idea this life journeys from home, traveling on plane, some of them have not even traveled on plane. Some of them, this is the first time that they use computer or even use Ecollege, you know, online, these are some of the topics that I covered this semester, yeah.

Me: Wow. Do you notice that you have a lot of different, that's diverse, every time you've taught it so you have those different levels, like you are talking about?

MC: And you know I'm dealing with students from different...now there are students from Chuuk different high school backgrounds. I come from the system, and I can easily tell students who come from public high schools, students who come from private high schools, students who came from Pohnpei, students who came from Palau, and this is also something that you can tell about the different systems in different states or different countries in Micronesia. Chuuk is a different region, with private and public schools, and for us in Chuuk or any outsiders who would come experiencing the different students and where they come from also contributes to how well you do in school. And I think it's the same thing everywhere. You can tell what kind of students. It maybe depends on their environment where they come from, what school levels, what background of parents, even socioeconomic level.

Me: Do you find that among the different regions, there are those different high schools and different groups, do you find that there is still more, in Micronesia, this emphasis on community in the classroom and kind of learning together vs like being an individual, independent student which is kind of a Western approach, where you leave home and you do things on your own?

MC: I think for now our lives in Micronesia is still very dependent on community, doing things together, which also contributes positively. Yet people who are also trying to work on their own they also do well in that they can try on their own. They don't just wait. They don't just wait because they go out on their own and try their best. And yet, our way of doing things together kind of depending on others. I feel it's either way it's good, but like now we are even in Hawai'i in America, we see the importance of working hard you know like, but yet we still have the importance of community, doing things together, but so we see it both ways. We help each other,

but yet we also encourage work as hard as you can. You know, if others cannot but you keep going, and yet you will always need help from others, support yeah.

Me: I think the two go together and sometimes they are split up, in U.S. schools anyway, where you have to do well, just do good on your own, right? We don't have as much connection to family or other students in the classroom. That's sad. You know I try to help my students see that they are each other's helper, that's what they are there for, I'm not just the one person who can help, you know?

MC: Yeah

Me: Um, ok, so how does your connection to Micronesia affect the way you teach writing, or the way that you see students approaching writing, what they like writing about, things like that?

MC: I immediately see two things as I listen to the question. First thing is, as I said, I teach my students based on my own background and my own way of learning. I finish elementary, high school, I went to college, I think I even finished college without knowing how to write. Part of it is because we were not taught. Our teachers, even though they finished high school in our system, our teachers did not even know how to write. Our way of learning English writing is grammar, what a noun is, what adjective, and we just identify and identify but we did not learn the writing process. So, when I finished college I don't know how I survived. I think I just did my best, but I really didn't know how to structure a best writing paper. So when I started teaching I used all my best knowledge by important to narrow topic, important to identify topic, narrow it in a way that you can really focus on something attainable. And thesis statement, introduction, supporting details, main idea, I heard these terms when I was growing up but I never clicked because we learn it in English, and plus our teachers didn't really...so even now with my students at Chuuk, CCPI, I noticed that they are also suffering. They are just giving

points without really organizing it in a way that is really a good piece of writing. I tried to answer your question based on that, my own experience. But now I talk about the importance of making an outline because it helps if you know what you are going to put in paragraph one then you focus in developing the points for support. Then you have good transitions. You know those terms I never learned before. I want you to restate the question because I forgot the other part of the answer that I wanted to add...

Me: Oh, what do you think that students like to write about...

MC: Now I remember...aside from me teaching them based on my weaknesses, I often suggest topics that are familiar or maybe have them brainstorm on what they feel is important. If they suggested some topics then I give them time to share in discussion and come up with good topics. So, in terms of what to write about like topics, themes, or it's something that they can easily relate to. So that's another thing I share too, something that they can relate, that is part of their experience. They may do research by asking or interviewing others, but it is already something that they have some understanding about. But eventually I would give something that is for the first time. It will help them learn more by doing research and interviewing they can learn something new.

Me: Ok, very cool. Um, let's see what are your views on the writing that is produced in relation to Micronesian migrants especially here in Oahu? There's a lot of writing that happens, newspapers, all that sort of thing.

MC: If it's something good then it's ok. But if it's not good based on prejudice than I do not think it's right. But in terms of writing you know freedom of press, it's ok. I'm not really sure what the question is relating to but I have read some things about Micronesia that are good, but I have also read some things about Micronesia that are not good. That's when I feel it's not good.

Me: But I feel it was more common a little while ago for it to be not good, but maybe more now there's more writing about the good things coming out, which I think is really important. Yeah I think you're right. As a teacher how do you think you and your students can work to maybe change the not so good writing, the not so good writing that's happening, that's coming out?

MC: You know I am very, even though I am teaching college, I really envision to start my own school. I don't know, I cannot say something about the future, but I always envision starting out my school encouraging reading and writing. But you know drawing, that's the beginning of writing. I watch my three-year old grandson, every time he sits down he just cover the page and there's a story. When they are at that that age they can easily, that's the beginning of writing, that's reading. And, I'm hoping that parents can start that at home, a good beginning in that interest in writing and then teaching from first grade and they can continue that. I know we would develop many, many, many good writers, and their interest in writing, and writing, and writing. Creative writing, writing reports, writing books, yeah. I started out very interested in literature, writing, reading. We just don't have writings because we do not develop that in our students, you know? And it's only, we don't have much even writing about us, only from outsiders. Many outsiders, they come and they study and they write. But not so much even us, about Chuukese. But we can, we can, if only we are encouraged by our schools. But you know, I used to use as resources books that were published and written by students in the 1980s. But it was because the teacher was from Hawai'i or was Japanese he had that interest and then put into the students. But the students are all good writers. And then he continued helping them, editing good writings, and then published them and put them into 2 or 3 different series. And I used those materials. Then I left home for 10 years, and I hope they still have them somewhere or if can still publish. But they were written by students in the 1980s, good students write them in

high school, not private school, public high school. So I'm not sure that I get to your question, but teaching of reading and writing, especially writing and making an interest of children. It's just a matter of how we give effort and keep supporting them. I watch my grandchildren now they are so good writing, writing, writing. One 3 years old, one 7 years old, they can write already.

Me: That's awesome! Would you ever teach a literature of Micronesia course? I think that would be so cool!

MC: It would be.

Me: Yeah, Koreen was telling me she has resources and she wants to do it but just doesn't know if she'll get to do it. It's kind of like, you have to push, and push, and push. And actually, make it [clear] that there is a literature to teach, and like you were saying there are resources. They might be hard to find, but they are there.

Then if you had that class, you could encourage students to take that class and to write more, and then you would have more stuff to teach the next semester!

MC: I am trying to work how to collect what students have written for the last 3 semesters I have taught. When I was at CofM, I put together pamphlets and pamphlets of student work. It's just a matter of how it was kept...maybe it's already thrown away. But I taught there for the last 14 years, and it's so good, students write good. We can see if we can print them out, and edit them, and put together good readings for younger students.

Me: So cool! Well that's my last question. That's all I had on there so...I had one more but you already answered it because you talked about the future and how you see the future for students.

MC: Oh you know I forgot something to say. The issue, one reason why I see why our students don't write, is because we never teach them to write in our language, a language that they speak

that they understand fully. If only they write it out, and that same skill concept then they do it in English. They will learn the English language better after they understand the Chuukese language.

Me: Right!

MC: You know, we never taught our students how to write in our language. This is how I remember growing up, go to school we learn our alphabet, Chuukese alphabet. Then we switch into English alphabet and given English books to read.

Me: So you never read Chuukese?

MC: We never read Chuukese. We never write Chuukese. That's a gap, something went wrong. See I came into my school, and they said write 5 page of something. How can I write something like that? I never did it in Chuukese, and they ask us in English. We did not have the vocabulary. I remember. I remember.

Me: Why do you think that was?

MC: You know, this idea of teaching English and given materials in English, never had things in Chuukese. And they never thought it's good to read and write Chuukese because Chuukese then English. No they said we came to school to learn English, read and write in English. Speak in English. I grew up and nobody ever talked about it, I became a teacher, I became a specialist, and saw that's part of our negligence in not doing something we believe in.

Me: And that makes it so much harder to feel like you have a writing voice too if you never were given the chance to express it in how you think, right? Because if you think in Chuukese, you are Chuukese and then you are told that you cannot read and write that way...

MC: You know, one time when I started teaching expository writing, I start out in Chuukese.

Then they see it, and "oh, so that's how it is!" "Oh that's what an essay is!" And then when they

transfer it in English, it's just the words they are trying to find terms, but they already get the idea of how to develop the paper. They understand what topic sentence, what main idea, what thesis statement, how to, you know, they got that. I remember the students learned much faster.

Me: Oh wow! That's cool! (31:55). That would be interesting to teach as part of that course too, where you're bridging these indigenous values, but there's this indigenous value of language too, right, and who you are is part of your language. My brain is all...thinking all these ideas now.

MC: So you're a student at UH working on your dissertation, what's your topic?

Me: So my topic is looking rhetoric and composition. I teach writing so that's kind of my focus. And also, I'll tell you a little bit about how project the started first, and then I'll tell you about the project. So originally I was writing something very different. I was looking at novels and other things. But my husband and I moved out here, and we started, once a week as part of our church we go out to Kaka'ako, and more than once a week now. But we started spending time out there...

MC: You know I work in legal aide. I outreach in Kaka'ako.

Me: So many families out there...

MC: I outreach Next Step Shelter on Thursdays.

Me: Oh ok. Do you know my friend Julie goes on Thursdays I don't know if you've met her?

MC: But sometimes I go to the small room where somebody teach these kids. I just watch and I say, "it's very good." But you know my heart breaks. I don't know what these parents do with these children. You know, people come to Hawai'i because we, we believe that that's better school. But then we, I don't know how much we value the school here. You know, like students don't go to school. So much assistance available...People stay behind after school to help, but students just leave. That's what I see. So I watch these parents and these children work with

somebody who comes, and then I look at them and I wish and hope these little ones make use of something that's available. What church?

Me: One Love which is located right, 5 minutes from the Kaka'ako park. So there's the Kaka'ako Beach Park where Next Step is, and then 5 minutes down like Coral St, my church is like a warehouse a little warehouse building back there. So we started doing an outreach in the park, and it's just for the people who live in the park. They generally aren't in the shelters. But more and more there are huge families out there.

MC: With the tents, yeah.

Me: Uh huh. There's no support system whatsoever. I mean it's like. And I can see the struggle of actually getting your children to go to school when you are constantly moving and your stuff is taken away because...

MC: And they lost their documents, passport...

Me: Yes, exactly.

MC: Because police come and just strip that place and the people run for their lives.

Me: Yes. And the children generally speak English, but their parents don't. So it's the barrier of language and just trying to survive. And if you have a family of 5 it's even harder. And so I started noticing all that, and I didn't know what else to do when I saw that there was no educational support, there's no bridge, right? If a student doesn't come to school, they just drop out. They're gone. And so, and I was hearing all these young, young kids define themselves as "homeless," as, when they're at school they were not allowed to be Chuukese or Micronesian because that was a terrible thing to be because people would just treat you awfully, so they just decided to be something else, but then they lost their identity, right? They didn't have anything anymore. So I was like I have to do something. And the only thing I know how to do is write,

and I'm not a very good writer, and I don't know what I'm doing, but I can do that. And that's where my dissertation project came out of. Because I want to provide a resource for other teachers who are teaching writing in the college classroom but also even younger than that, to see that there is a literature from the region, it's a really beautiful literature. To see that there are a lot of values about teaching that need to be brought into the classroom to better meet the needs of students from those regions, and just to get the word out there about those things so that teachers can start doing better, and that is it. I'm trying to learn Chuukese from the kids out there, I don't know very much. And there are different versions, so I'm trying to learn the different versions. But I don't know. I doing it for them because I feel like it's something I can do. It's not much, but it's something. If I can make it a little bit better for them as they go into high school and hopefully into college right, then that's what I want my dissertation to do.

MC: You know Jo Jo Peters

Me: Yes

MC: I work with him at the shelter. But he hasn't been able to go for the last few weeks. He's very busy, very busy. He's also been sick for the last 3...

Me: I've been trying to make it to one of the COFACAN meetings...

MC: He's been very busy and so we haven't had any of those meetings.

Me: I've noticed that, so not for a little while? But, I was trying to work with Aiko, she's been trying to work a little bit with Jo Jo.

MC: Who?

Me: Aiko. She goes to UH. She's been trying to coordinate different events to get Micronesian literature into Pacific lit courses things like that.

MC: Is she American?

Me: Yes. I think she's from here. But she teaches Pacific literature. And she's been trying to work with him and I'm trying to coordinate with both of them to meet with more people from the community to get more perspectives because I'm coming as someone who doesn't have a background, so...

MC: What mainland you're from?

Me: California

MC: What made you come to Hawai'i?

Me: I came because UH was like: please come and you can teach and do grad school. At first, I didn't want to do grad school either. I just wanted to teach.

MC: So, you teach writing?

Me: Yes. So I teach composition for now which is English 100 the freshmen course. So I have students from everywhere. I have a student I think from Palau in my class, and then students from other areas of the Pacific. But mostly English 100, and then in the summer I'll be teaching Pacific literature, so hopefully get to teach more Micronesian literature in that course, which is my goal. So, we'll see.

MC: Oh that's good yeah. I, this is only November but I'm so involved in my classes and in the community and work, and my college in Pohnpei, CofM, offered me to go teach, but I could not. They wanted me to go by October 1st. I can't. That's why it is so much to rush. And oh, I have my family here, and it is hard to just get up and leave. We have lots of Micronesians here. For Chuukese I know it's a big problem. Especially, when parents are on the street and in the shelters. Sometimes I just feel so tired when I think a lot about it. But we have tried to help. People like me and Jo Jo and many others. You've heard of Josie? She's also a Chuukese who just got a Masters in social work. So Jo Jo also knows her. I don't really know where she works,

but she goes to St. Elizabeth, with Jo Jo and outreach on Tuesday and Thursday. But I'm not really sure exactly where she works.

Me: And you mentioned you work at KPT?

MC: My job is Hawai'i Immigrant Assistance. They're under Legal Aide. My office is downtown. I work in the office in the morning. In the afternoon, I do outreach. So I have space at KPT, and I go to outreach in the afternoon, Monday, Tuesday, Friday. And sometimes in the evening, like Thursday evening, sometimes I go Kaka'ako or Lighthouse in Waipahu because there are many homeless there. You have not heard about Jim Skaugee?

Me: No.

MC: He's a retired professor at UH. Just retired this year, and now he's just in one of the rooms at KPT. He's a very close friend of mine. He supported me through my studies. He was a professor in special ed and technology. And now he brought all of his computers and all of his equipment into this room at KPT, and children come KPT, and they go crazy. But they are developing some good things on the computer: reading, writing. And last week, oh you just missed something, we had two weeks ago at KPT, a cultural festival. It was a really good turnout, many of our people, Micronesians, and from Asia, Vietnam, Laos, Laotians. Something like that you can come if you like to.

Me: Cool. I know some of the families in Kaka'ako, I don't know exactly how it works, but some of the relatives will adopt one of the kids. So say there's an aunt, and she will adopt two kids, and I think it's because they can be dependent and stay with her there at KPT. So the kids, what they'll do, is they'll go back and forth. So they'll stay with the aunt during the week and then on the weekends they can be with their parents in the park, which is a really hard way to live as a kid. But I know a couple of families have done that, which is really hard because right

now, I know one family where the parents are going back to their island in Chuuk and the two older kids were adopted by the aunt so they're staying here, so it's really hard, but...

MC: You know we use the word "adopted" but it's very, very different from the concept, the American concept of adoption. It's I can let's say, you are my sister and you have two kids, and I can just help you, help you in raising one of your children, and we use the word adopt, but it's not really adopt because the child still knows who the parent is but they are now living with me. But now we come to Hawai'i it's an issue because you must have guardian, you must have proper paper for adoption, like child custody. It is so much easier with that [Chuukese practice of adoption] because the issue of housing and crowdedness is...like myself and my husband have a place and my relatives they have a place they can all come. It just makes my head tired because it's such a big issue now. So I go to the park and parents are out there and children are just not well cared for. We can also imagine about their education because if they live at Kaka'ako, but before they lived in Waipahu so their school is in Waipahu so every morning they go, that's very hard. That's why they miss class. I'm sorry.

Me: Yeah no, my husband and I have been praying about it for a long time, and what we'd love to do is open a form of housing that is much more like community housing, where you can do things like stay with aunts and uncles and it's not this huge thing it rips families apart, because you all live together anyway. So that allows families to stay together, it allows them to take care of the house as it runs, so just that way. Because I feel that in the shelter, Next Step, it's still a shelter, it's at least there, but you've seen it it's cubicles, and everybody is separate. It's not the best place, you know? It doesn't feel like community. But, that's what we would like to do. I have no idea how it would happen or how we would start that but...

MC: Back home, we have a meeting hall because we are a community of people. In every extended family, in every clan, there must be a meeting area, a meeting place. So 50-100 people can come, and put their mats, and sleep you know to accommodate family. And you know, if they prepare food people come out and just share. So that's just something that we miss, but talking about your "home" something like that then they share responsibilities, share cleaning, and then there's more of one community. But I see at Next Step, it's just one, so they don't know you, you don't know them, you just do your own thing even if you live in that area. Oh, so we pray for your vision.

Me: That would be wonderful! Someday. And I know we have talked to our pastor too about other ideas, like I know some churches do this, where they open the church as a shelter and people come in during the weeknights and whatever.

MC: You know where my office is, it is on Kukui St. It's at the same building as Family Promise is. And I see families, they come in the day and then in the evening they transport them to churches where they sleep during the night. And what's the name of your church again?

Me: One Love.

MC: Wow, One Love. Now I heard of New Hope, and now it's One Love, wow.

Me: Yeah, our pastor's name is Waxer.

MC: Waxer?

Me: Yes, Pastor Waxer.

MC: Did you come here and join or did you belong to something like this before you came here?

Me: Before I came here I was part of another church in California but I had no idea about One Love, I had never heard of it before. But then I came here and someone told me about it and so I went, and they first day I went it felt like family. Everybody just loves everyone else and takes

care of each other, and so I decided to stay. And so I've been going there for 4 years I think now. And my husband and I have been going and spending time in Kaka'ako for probably 3 ½ years now.

MC: So what days do you go?

Me: We go on Saturdays at 4, every Saturday at 4. We usually bring a home-cooked meal, enough for everybody, and we usually talk and eat, and see what people need. Our church will try to put together bags of supplies, so diapers and things that the families need. So we can provide that stuff too. And then Sunday mornings the kids just like to come to church so my husband and I just go with our car and take them to Sunday school. They really love Sunday school because it's a safe place where they feel happy and they feel loved. Like school, they have to go to school, but I'm not so sure they necessarily feel loved or cared for at school, but Sunday school is different. It's not like you have to do homework. You can just go and your teachers love you and so I think that's why they love to go. And you know they are learning about Jesus and the things that are taught there. But you know usually we have like 6-7 kids who will go to church on a Sunday morning, so we do that too. And then we also come throughout the week as people need things or call or whatever.

MC: I was born Protestant. In Chuuk this was introduced into our islands, Protestant and Catholic. But then I met my husband and he's a Catholic, so I joined him and now I'm Catholic. So I go to St. Andrews on Middle Street, and I also help teaching Sunday school with the Chuukese families, the Chuukese children.

Me: I have heard that there is a Chuukese church. Is that true?

MC: So many Chuukese small groups that they gather in the parks if they are fortunate they can share a space with other churches. But my Catholic community we have our own Catholic group.

We gather the first Sunday and third Sunday at different churches. Like yesterday, we were at Mass at St. John in Kalihi. Third Sunday we gather at Salt Lake. But other than that, we gather at any church that is close by. So much going on.

Me: Yeah.

MC: Ok. So I'm so thankful that you have the interest and even though it's in writing, that you see the interest in something about Chuukese or Micronesia, I thank Koreen for giving you my information.

Me: Oh thank you, and I know you are very busy. Um so what I might do, if you would like is when I finish writing up the chapter in which I will include some of what you have said, I will send you the draft because I would love to hear what you would say. I want to make sure that it's right.

MC: When are you hoping to finish?

Me: I would like to finish in the Spring. But I don't know. I'm trying really hard to get it done by Spring, but I don't know.

MC: Aw, I was there.

Me: It's hard to keep pushing while I'm teaching.

MC: How about Koreen when does she finish?

Me: I don't know. She was talking to me about area exams because I think that will be her next step after coursework. I didn't like those very much. Those were my least favorite. I did not like those at all. So I just told her to take her time. I think it's important to be ready.

MC: It's busy. But I like busy life. I don't know how people can just not do enough. I run here, I run there, I do this, I do that, yeah. I get up. Sorry, I'm telling my story. I get up 6-6:30. My mom is with me so I care for her. And then I run, I take the bus, and then I come back. Sometimes I

have meetings in the afternoon so I come home at 9 or 10. Do my work, you know, with Chaminade online until 1-2. Then, I go to sleep and the same. But I still enjoy it.

Me: You should enjoy what you do. I feel like that's important.

MC: Yes, because we care for our children. Do you have any children?

Me: Not yet. My husband and I have been married one year and one month now. So we're waiting a little while, probably until I'm done with my dissertation. It would be very crazy to bring a child into all of that. So I think after I finish it will be a good time.

MC: I have four children and now 5 grandchildren. My oldest is 37 and my youngest is 21.

Me: How old are your grandkids?

MC: My grandkids are 7, 4, 2, 1, and 4 months.

Me: Aw, 4 months is so tiny! That's exciting.

MC: I'm so happy that I have my grandchildren. It's a different feeling.

Me: Are they all here?

MC: Yeah

Me: That's really fun. It's fun to watch them grow, but they grow really fast.

MC: So do you work on campus?

Me: I do. I'm there pretty much every day, but I teach MWF.

MC: Like for a job or are you a grad assistant?

Me: I used to be a grad assistant, but now I'm a lecturer. So I'm there for a job now, and working my way until I finish the program.

MC: Then you can find another job.

Me: Yeah. I have trying to find another one. I think I would really love to work at a community college. I don't know, there's a lot that takes place at the big university that I'm not a big fan of

so I want to work somewhere that I can actually focus on my students and make sure they are doing well.

MC: I just saw some good positions. I just printed out the application for a position I like at HCC.

Me: Yeah. I mean they take good care of the their teachers, and they focus more on their students...I tend to focus a lot on my students because they are people who are going to go out and do great things, and I want them to feel like they can.

MC: I hope I provided you enough.

Me: Yes! You did. Thank you so much. Oh, I was going to let you sign this: the IRB form.

MC: Yes. I went through this.

APPENDIX G

Transcript of Craig Santos Perez's Interview

Interview with Craig Santos Perez: 11/3/2014

[NOTE: This interview took place in a large classroom around a round wooden table at UH. The first 5 minutes were spent in conversation and finding sitting arrangements as Craig Santos Perez had brought his young daughter (less than a year old) along for the interview. After the initial conversation time, I turned on the recorder and the interview began.]

Me: Ok. Um, so let's see. The first question is where are you from originally and your connection to Micronesia.

CSP: Ok. Well, I'm from Guáhan also known as Guam. My village is Mongmong. That's M-O-N-G-M-O-N-G one word. My connection to Micronesia: Well, I grew up on Guam for the first 15 years of my life. And then my family decided to migrate like many families in Micronesia.

My family chose California, the Bay Area, which is actually where my mom spent a good part of her younger life. Her family was also kind of a migrant family too. So her dad was in the military, and they lived on bases throughout the U.S. and eventually settled in California. Until she met my dad, and they got married and moved back to Guam. Anyways, so then spent a bunch of years in California, and mainly through activism and my scholarship I got involved with different Chamorro and Micronesian social justice groups, demilitarization groups, literary groups.

Me: Very cool.

CSP: Yeah.

Me: Ok, let's see how long have you been teaching in Micronesia or with Micronesian students (if you have)?

CSP: Hmmmm. Well, a lot of my teaching doesn't necessarily focus on Micronesian students. I teach in the English department, teaching creative writing. So, I have the occasional like student from Micronesia, which is always nice. I have proposed a literature of Micronesia class, which I don't know if I will ever get to teach but maybe someday. Besides that, most of my work with Micronesian students has been with the Micronesian student clubs, mainly the Chamorro club and also some of my work with the Center for Pacific Island Studies.

Me: Great. So how does your connection to Micronesia affect how you teach? So how do values of place in Micronesia affect your teaching approaches?

CSP: Hmmmm, great question. Well definitely for me, one of the most important Chamorro cultural values is known as inafamaolek, which is spelled: i-n-a-f-a-m-a-o-l-e-k. And basically what this means, and this a common indigenous value, indigenous Pacific value, is that kind of everything is connected. All the people, nature, and beings are connected so that we should practice the kind of reciprocity and mutual care and kind of life with a sense of co-belonging, you know. So, in my classes I try to teach with that ethic in mind. Thinking about the classroom as this kind of shared space where we all kind of rely on each other to make it a good learning space. So, there are expectations of reciprocity both so that students will engage and I will also support the students as they need it. Beyond that, I teach, whether it's creative writing or Pacific literature, I always try to have a Micronesia component so that it becomes part of the curriculum and so that students are aware of it – not only what Micronesia is and its histories, cultures, and peoples but also that they get a sense of why Micronesians are here in Hawai'i and who we are.

Me: Hm-mm. Awesome. How does your connection to Micronesia affect your views of rhetoric and writing? So how do you think place affects rhetoric and views of rhetoric and writing?

CSP: That's a good question too. Well, I think also (and this is in line with other Pacific cultures), but coming from an oral culture and an oral tradition kind of the spoken-ness of language is very important, the emphasis on orality and "talk story" are important rhetorical devices. Different kinds of customary story-telling modes or genres are also important in terms of like chanting or other kinds of circular story-telling or collaborative story-telling. So on Guam there's an oral tradition where poets will kind of respond to each other back and forth. And so, in my teaching I try to encourage that by having students talk to each other a lot to collaborate on different oral projects, and then we often have discussion circles where we can kind of go back and forth as well. And then, just emphasizing the importance of orality in addition to them gaining proficiency in terms of written grammar and written structures.

Me: Ok. Um let's see. So what are your views on the rhetoric produced in relation to Micronesian here in O'ahu, both positive and negative if you've seen it?

CSP: Could you repeat that question?

Me: Um, your views on the rhetoric produced in relation to Micronesia or Micronesian migrants here in O'ahu?

CSP: Well, I think a lot of the early rhetoric was trying to understand these new populations and a lot of them were negative, sometimes racist, very stereotypical. I think there has been a shift in the rhetoric because there have been a lot of both Micronesian activists, media activists, especially, poets who are changing the conversation along with non-Micronesian allies, who are creating a more positive portrait. So now the rhetoric is that Micronesians are contributing to the society, they pay taxes, they have their own unique precious and beautiful cultures, and you

know they are here not because they are trying to take advantage of the system or federal funding, but they are here because there is a long history of U.S. colonialism in our homelands that really created push factors in terms of our migrations. And of course a lot of that has to do with economic, education, health opportunities. You know at least in the Chamorro case one of our major migrant streams is because of the military. We get stationed in Hawai‘i or in other places. Now, being a Chamorro, Micronesians in Hawai‘i is also very interesting because we are often referred to as “invisible Micronesians” because we are not really part of either the early discourse or the current discourse. You know, even though Chamorro is the second largest Micronesian group in Hawai‘i, pretty much nobody really knows about us, or who we are and why we’re here – which in some ways is good because there is so much negativity around Micronesians that we don’t want it necessarily coming to us. But just from a scholarly perspective it’s very interesting to be a Chamorro and to look at the discourse around Micronesians and to not really be a part of that.

[Baby cries softly and CSP gently sways her and speaks to her to calm her down]

Me: Um, as a teacher how do you think you and your students can change or resist this rhetoric?

CSP: Well, one assignment I have my students do in Pacific literature is to Google Micronesians in Hawai‘i and to pull a couple articles they found interesting. And then they present on it in class. So, you know just by Googling you find the whole range of rhetorical history. And then from there we read some poetry by different Micronesian poets like Kathy Jetnil-Kijner, Emilihter Kihleng, and others to give kind of that different perspective, yeah. And so for my, what I want my students to do is not necessarily to all of a sudden to create these positive...and even sometimes the positive stereotypes can not really be helpful, because they’re not always true just as negative stereotypes are not always true. So, my goal as a teacher is really for them to

have more complex conceptions of a people, Micronesian people in particular. To be like, there are all kinds of complex histories and cultures, and people that have different opinions, and as scholars and as students to be open to those complexities.

Me: So like a critical awareness?.

CSP: Yeah. They don't have to choose a side. It's not that Micronesians are good or bad, and you have to choose. It's like we're people, and you have to understand our complexities.

Me: Right

CSP: And through that you can make choices about how you will perceive them or how you will treat them. So that's the goal. Of course as activists it's a bit different but...

Me: Hm mm. And this is a bit off-topic not necessarily in my questions but just thinking about pedagogy in the classroom and also sort of incorporation of literature and things like that, do you think across the board there are those resources talking about what Micronesians coming into the classroom, what would be beneficial for them? Like what literature should be represented and so increasing that body of literature and pedagogical practices...do you think those resources are present or still in the process of being created?

CSP: I think probably both. And, so your instinct toward spoken word [drawing upon an earlier conversation we had about this genre] is a good one. There are a lot of great Vimeo videos that really capture the sense of orality, which is powerful. What you see less of and what you can find in the archive is a lot of written literature, as well, and of course there is also some written literature right now. And I think that is also good accompany that because it shows that Micronesians, we can talk and speechify and testify, but we can also write. And, so some of the archival materials, outside of literature, some of the great political speeches that have been written...there are a lot of interesting articles in *The Micronesian* which is this older magazine

that was published and circulated. There are a lot of websites now dedicated to Micronesian issues and so that's another archive. And then there are quite a few, or at least a growing number of scholarly articles, that you could find in *The Contemporary Pacific* and this other journal called *The Micronesian Educator* out of the University of Guam, which is a good one. So that's what's there, and I think we are going to see more as there are more scholars (like yourself) looking at Micronesian issues and writing about them. So there's like cool stuff there but there's more stuff to come.

Me: Hm mm. Um, so let's see, what role do you think writing from Micronesia and Micronesian students can play in the construction of a more positive future reality for migrants from those regions?

CSP: I think definitely literature creates a sense of empathy in people. And so, oftentimes, people don't have a chance to maybe engage in other cultures or maybe talk to people from other cultures, so literature can be one way that they can get to know another people through the voice of a poet or a novelist or something. Music is of course another literary form, and another way to get to know people, and I think seeing the world through another person's eyes, which is what literature is, right, it is an expression of your life and experiences... I think it helps people understand more and through that understanding they can see through stereotypes a little bit better. Of course, literature is not going to solve all the problems. You know, but it creates that sort of empathetic opening. But then it really becomes up to activists and social justice workers and policy makers and everybody else in society, educators or course, to then take that a step further. I think literature can give us that vision into another culture.

Me: Awesome. Well, that's all I have.

