

Towards Transnational Native American Literary Studies

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**Abstract:** In her article "Towards Transnational Native American Literary Studies" Hsinya Huang discusses how Native American literature can be adapted, translated, articulated, and interpreted in a transnational/trans-Pacific context using emerging Native American scholarship in Taiwan as a point of departure. Through collaboration across institutional lines, exploration of the community production of local knowledge and our obligation and desire to participate meaningfully as intellectuals in the international initiatives in Native Studies, can we conceive of an expansive indigenous region across the Pacific? How can indigeneity be both rooted in and routed through particular places and articulated? Through envisioning an expanding network of indigenous coalition, Huang's objective is to formulate notions of a transnational indigeneity, which in turn feed back into local Native traditions.

**Hsinya HUANG**

### **Towards Transnational Native American Literary Studies**

In this article I address issues of place, mobility, and politics that have emerged in transnational American studies and I analyze parallels between works by Margo Tamez, a Lipan Apache writer of the Mexico-U.S. border and those of Taiwanese Tao writer Syman Rapongan. Using emerging Native American scholarship in Taiwan as my point of departure, I ask how Native American texts can be adapted, translated, articulated, and interpreted in a transnational, trans-Pacific context. The recent emergence of a network of Taiwanese scholars and Aboriginal activists involved in Lipan Apache land claims is partly what prompts this inquiry into the historical predicaments that unite Taiwanese Aborigines and Native Americans. I seek here to inquire what can be learned from studying Native American and Taiwanese Indigenous texts side by side. Through collaboration across institutional lines, exploration of the community production of knowledge, and our obligation and desire to participate meaningfully in Native studies, we conceive of an expansive region across the Pacific in which "indigeneity" is both rooted in and routed through particular places. Contextualizing contemporary Native American literature across national boundaries can de-center both "America" and the United States, in this case vis-à-vis Asia. To think of "indigeneity" as "articulated," as James Clifford suggests, is to "recognize the diversity of cultures and histories that currently make claims under this banner" (472). By envisioning an expanding network of an Indigenous coalition, I attempt to formulate positive notions of transnational indigeneity, which in turn feed back into local native traditions.

In an email on 14 November 2007 poet Margo Tamez called upon her friends to publicize the situation in El Calaboz Rancheria, where Lipan Apache communities that held land titles faced worsening conditions: "I wish I was writing under better circumstances, but I must be fast and direct. My mother and elders of El Calaboz, since July have been the targets of numerous threats and harassments by the Border Patrol, Army Corps of Engineers, NSA, and the U.S. related to the proposed building of a fence on their levee. Since July, they have been the targets of numerous telephone calls, unexpected and uninvited visits on their lands, informing them that they will have to relinquish parts of their land grant holdings to the border fence buildup. The NSA demands that elders give up their lands to build the levee, and further, that they travel a distance of 3 miles, to go through checkpoints, to walk, recreate, and to farm and herd goats and cattle, on their own lands." Here, I take up Tamez's desperate and provocative communication of these controversial border issues, examining the formation of indigenous identity/ies within shifting geographical, political, and cultural frameworks. To comprehend the issue Tamez raised in her email, we need to trace the history of Native American land loss across the Mexico-U.S. border. One of the most paradigmatically challenging shifts occurred when European forces began the takeover of Native American lands upon "discovery" in 1492, including the home bases of border Indigenes. The second shift began with the takeover of the American Southwest by the U.S. after its war with Mexico in 1848 — an appropriation that transformed Indigenous land into part of the U.S. Southwest, and a Mexican into an American, although not necessarily into a U.S. citizen with full legal rights. In addition, Tamez's tribal communities, the Lipan and Jumano Apache, have been split on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border since 1752, when the Spanish forged the *camino militar* (military road) along the Rio Grande to protect their Northern boundaries against French, British, and US-American invasion. This road later became the International Boundary line between the U.S. and Mexico and today is policed by agents of the U.S. Border Patrol.

The proposed fencing for the Texas-Mexico border is a product of continuing U.S. hegemony, an attempt to stop the flow of illegal migrant workers, drugs, and terrorists. It is, however, built on a false premise. The truth is that Texas is the only southern state with a natural international boundary — the Rio Grande. From this river, farmers irrigate and ranchers water their herds; in it, children and kayakers play and people are baptized. It is, in effect, a river of life. For Tamez and her people, the motive to cross over the border is work. A barrier designed to prevent work, and the return of the indigenes back home, is one that is designed to fail. The border Indigenes will go under, over or around it, as they currently do with fences that exist elsewhere in the U.S.

This is the circumstance in which Tamez was raised. In a recent interview, she tells fellow poet Lisa Alvarado that she became aware of her people's history as a very young child:

[My parents and relatives still] can tell of the violence, the killings, the lynchings, the shootings, and the forced containment of indigenous people, of many tribes and customs, into barrios, pueblos, colonias, ejidos ... When a plantation state abolishes "Indian-ness," it drives indigenous people underground. I'm talking of an authoritarian and militarized political machinery at work here, that my people, in few numbers, survived. I am proud that I came from rebellious indigenous people on both sides of my family, and that we are still on the International Boundary, fighting both nation-states, U.S. and Mexico, who both have used, abused, exploited, and abandoned us as the indigenous people of this hyper-militarized part of the North American continent. (Tamez qtd. in Alvarado 3)

By locating her poetry within this history of violence and dispersal of indigenous agrarian people, Tamez aligns her writing with that of Leslie Marmon Silko and Gloria Anzaldúa, who also take up the cause of their transnational indigenous communities. However, Tamez's Lipan and Jumano forebears have never been recognized by the U.S. as a sovereign Indian nation. Hunted on both sides of the border, they have entered the flow of workers toiling in the agricultural fields of South Texas and Northern Mexico.

In her book *Naked Writing* Tamez explores the effects of the militarization of the border: After serving for many years as a nurse at the Veteran's Affairs Hospital in San Antonio, Tamez's mother returns to Calaboz, the home where her Lipan ancestors once resided and what is now Texas and Tamaulipas. While jogging along the river on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande, she is perceived as *la migra* (the derogatory term used by agents of the U.S. Border Patrol who stop migrants from slipping into the U.S.): "They think she runs away from them, / that she is an illegal, / trespassing from Mexico" (*Naked Writing* 61). She stops, turns around, and in loud Spanish (although she speaks perfect English), challenges the validity and legality of the border. The question she poses are powerful: "how exactly do they know / if she came from here, or there ... I am an indigenous woman, / born in El Calaboz, you understand?" (61). In writing about this event, as Joni Adamson points out, Tamez illustrates how the militarization of the region creates a place where so-called "Natives" clash with "illegal aliens." Her mother's proud statement challenges the categorization of the Tamaulipas Lipan-Apache as "aliens," and her words raise questions about what it means to be "Native," "Indigenous," or "Indian." If the U.S. government does not recognize the Lipan and Jumano as sovereign Indian nations, how can they be "Native"? Or even "Indian"? When Tamez's mother claims her indigeneity, she invokes the history of the Lipan people, who once moved freely throughout the region. She challenges the most evident manifestation of the nation state — the border — and the way the Border Patrol supports and maintains multinational *maquiladora* factories, the extraction of wealth from migrant workers, and the militarization of the region. She takes a stand against the ways the border negatively impacts the daily lives of indigenous people.

Tamez is aware that the migrant workers "across the road" include the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Among them are not only O'odham, Yaqui, and Navajo who live in Arizona, but Mayans from central Mexico and Guatemala, O'odham and Mayo from just across the border, Yaqui from the Western coastlines of Mexico, and Jumano and Lipan Apache from central Mexico, to name just a few. As such, her poems make visible the presence of indigenous peoples beyond the borders and beyond the tribes that are treaty-recognized within the United States. As a former field worker exposed to herbicides, Tamez has been active in the Environmental Justice movement, working with indigenous women in the borderlands to call attention to the links between toxins in the water, air, and food that lead to miscarriage and birth defects, and toxic ideologies that lead to social injustice. Tamez herself contracted toxin-related illnesses and suffered multiple miscarriages: she is a mother who has buried "her miscarried young / Who never had a chance against DDT and poisoned wells" (*Raven Eye* 68). In her autobiographical narrative, "Grave of Babies," Tamez writes that she has "a graveyard of fetuses with names painted carefully in glittering colors on old plywood and some manzanita" (*The Daughter* 139), while in "Last Message to My Father," she confesses: "I could never tell you about the deaths of my children. The disaster of agriculture in the desert. The contamination in our flesh. The wretchedness of burying their curled bodies" (142). In a poem titled "Addiction to the Dead," she writes, "The invasive spray seeping / Follows me and flows in my blood through decades" (*The Daughter* 29). Tamez's poetry links her own toxin-induced miscarriages with those of other women in the borderlands, pointing out that the damage inflicted by herbicides comes back to haunt us all at the level of women's reproduction. In another poem, she makes the issue of environmental toxicity even more explicit: a Lipan/Jumano mother migrates to an agricultural community where "Factory-farmed cows / Rot and antibiotics and growth hormones, / Seeping into the ground flowing underground northerly / Up through the aquifer's / Veins into the wells through everyone's bodies" (*The Daughter* 56). Tamez

years for justice, survival, and a place that she can call her "home." In her book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), Gloria Anzaldúa writes that living on the border is like "living in a state of psychic unrest," where "a cactus needle [is] embedded in the flesh" (97). This "psychic unrest" results from the structural intersection or interlocking of race, gender, sexual, and class oppressions, historically related forms of the domination of not only bodies but also nature and lands — oppressions that erupt and converge in the environmental and social ills of the borderlands.

With the whole of the Americas as their ancestral homeland, Native Americans' indigeneity transcends the U.S. border to embrace the entire western hemisphere as locus of their cultures and traditions. I emphasize "the Americas" *aquí*, to explore the concept of place as homeland. While *aquí* relates directly to a trans-hemispheric vision, the U.S. incorporates a geographical space that is constantly bumping up against and expanding into Latin America and the Pacific Rim. Recently, the trans-hemispheric vision has been expanded to stress a planetary turn, which requires alternative geographies and histories that go beyond the U.S. and "America," the continent. In her introduction to *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature*, Wai Chee Dimock has put forth that the field of American studies is "fluid and amorphous, shaped and reshaped by emerging forces, by 'intricate interdependencies' between 'the near and afar, the local and the distant'" (3). This planetary venture is not unlike Shelley Fisher Fishkin's call for an American studies that takes "the transnational at its center," and which would require that we see both "the inside and outside, domestic and foreign, national and international, as interpenetrating" (21). What roles, Fishkin asks, "might comparative, collaborative, border-crossing research play in this reconfigured field" (22)? By the same token, Jonathan Arac confesses that he writes "as an Americanist who has always hoped to think as a comparatist" (20). The comparative paradigm of American studies suggests a road that runs in two directions: a north-south or south-north movement and a contesting east-west directionality. Two axes conflate to delineate a large-scale geography in which "the *prenational* emerg[es], along with the post-national" (Dimock 7). As Dimock argues, it is crucial to go beyond an arbitrarily restricted national archive to encompass an "alternative geography — a span of five continents, no less — a world atlas of which the national map is inextricably a part" (Dimock 8). This geographical spread must, in turn, be complemented by a long history, "cradled by the history of the world" (Dimock 8).

The transnational turn dissolves the field's "autonomized chronology, meshing it with a continuum still evolving, and stretching as indefinitely into the past as it does into the future" (Dimock 7). Yet, for Dimock and for Lawrence Buell, it is important to think of environmental belonging and citizenship in planetary terms. What Buell calls "eco-globalism" involves a whole-earth way of "thinking and feeling" about the environment (227). Buell explains that today's American studies have gone through a planetary turn, which revolves around "ecoglobalist affect": "By 'ecoglobalist affect' I mean, in broadest terms, an emotional laden preoccupation with a finite, near-at-hand physical environment defined, at least in part, by an imagined inextricable lineage of some sort between that specific site and a context of planetary reach. Ecoglobalist affect entails a widening of the customary aperture of vision as unsettling as it is epiphanic in a positive sense, and a perception of raised stakes as to the significance of whatever is transpiring locally in the here and now that tends to bring with it either a fatalistic sense of the inexorable or a daunting sense of responsibility as the price of prophetic vision" (232). To deterritorialize and reterritorialize the fields of American studies (understood as "American" referring to the continent) in general and Native American literature in particular, Dimock and Buell both privilege a planetary reach with a widening circle of associations between the near and the far, the inside and the outside, the human and the non-human, and so on. We must try even harder to balance the depth of our own specializations against a wider span of knowledge, as Curtin suggests (9).

This is, nevertheless, a research project of staggering proportions. To make it practical and manageable, we need to ensure we are asking the important questions and seeking answers within a framework of relevant issues. Here I propose a poetics of relevance as an intensifier of meaning, a platform on which to draw cross-cultural comparison among diverse indigenous literatures, and a trigger of passion for transnational Native American studies in Taiwan. By "relevance," I refer to a negotiation between text and field site, and a (re)view of field site conditions made relevant through planetary interconnectedness. From this standpoint, we can think against and beyond "nation," and think environmentally. We are furthermore not only thinking but feeling, forging a commitment that goes deeper than our professional endeavors. A poetics of relevance gath-

ers relevant sets of issues crucial to indigenous groups from different nations to formulate positive notions of transnational indigeneity, which in turn feed back into local native traditions: the affect of displaced and dispossessed indigenous groups; native responses to environmental devastation and toxic or nuclear dumping; indigenous ways of protecting local and planetary ecology. These concerns are already planetary. This blurring of boundaries requires that we view indigenous literatures, which can be mutually enriched and illuminating, as a continuum. In Taiwan the link stretches back to the ancient, pre-national continuum of (non-white) Aboriginals that crossed the land bridge from Asia to the Americas. Although this "Bering Strait theory" has been criticized in recent years (e.g., Deloria 67-91), there is no denying the contemporary link between Native Americans and Asians through their mutual victimization by forces of political-environmental destruction. In Silko's novel, *Ceremony*, Indigenous victimization strikes Tayo, the protagonist, as a sort of apocalyptic revelation. The mine on the Cebolleta land grant, which "began to flood with water from subterranean springs" early in the spring of 1943 (243), was the largest open-pit uranium mine in North America. Linking the Cebolleta land grant and its uranium mine with Cochiti Pueblo, where uranium bombs were created, and Alamogordo, New Mexico, where the bombs were tested, Silko reveals that Native American lands lie within a "space of death" (Holland 70), from which Native Americans can find no escape. It is this apocalyptic vision that connects Tayo's fragmentary memory of his days in the jungle of the Philippines with those in his homelands, where "the last bony cattle wandering the dry canyons had died in choking summer dust storms" (Silko 244). He arrives at last at a point of "convergence," where the fates of "all living things" and "the Earth" have been laid (246). While the atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused one of the greatest casualties in human history, Laguna people and lands continue to suffer from the drastic drought resulting from the U.S. government's uranium mining. As he locates the mine, bomb factory, and atomic test sites on the reservations, Tayo envisions his connection with other lands and people across the Pacific Ocean. The mining destroys lives across time and distance, connecting people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki with tribal indigenes in the Americas, virtually enclosing human beings in "a cycle of death" (246) from which no escape is possible. It is painful for Tayo to experience the feel of the near-at-hand, and the sense of its connection to the remote. And yet this sets the ground for relevance and sympathy, and Tayo's epiphanic vision bespeaks an interconnectedness across the Pacific.

The situation of Native Americans as ethnic minorities must be viewed and reviewed in a planetary context. In Dimock's words, Homi K. Bhabha's "partial community" of the global/planetary life is "rendered partial by its off-center relation to the national government, and by its far-reaching and locally mediated kinship with other distant minority groups" (11). In such circumstances, the minority, always a partially denationalized political subject, emerges as a "partial and incipient" social force that seeks to recognize itself and represent its freedom through identification with the other's difference — its claims, interests, and conditions of life (Bhabha, "Statement" 342). This form of minoritarian identification converts the liminal condition of the minority — again, always partly denationalized — into a new kind of strength based on the solidarity of the partial collectivity, rather than sovereign mastery. As Dimock puts it, "This is a subset of humanity that cannot be integrated into a sovereign whole, a subset always partly external to any nation-based set" (11). To look at the Americas from the outside engenders a critical distance. As such, the referential framework derived from Taiwanese indigenous traditions and communal projects nurtures a trans-national vision, which works not only to challenge nationalist enclosure but to evade the limits of Anglo-globalism. De-centering the U.S. requires going beyond the continent; this is possible when Native American and Asian indigenous literatures are placed into dialogue, in the hope of forging an alliance among indigenous tribes in a planetary context.

In Taiwan scholars across five institutes who specialize in Native American literature took the initiative to organize joint research projects funded by the National Science Council in Taiwan. The goal was to sort out problems, pull things together, and put them in perspective in the field of trans-indigenous studies. The research team, of which I am a member, hopes to formulate a language for working between text and performance, archive and field site, literature and ethnography, and to engage in personal and professional commitments. The team continues to grow and currently involves academics from no fewer than ten universities in Taiwan. We meet on a monthly basis and have established a listserv (NAL-Taiwan) as an open forum of communication where we articulate and respond to matters Indigenous. Thus, when Tamez forwarded me her desperate call for help, entitled "Emergency in el Calaboz, Lipan Apache Land Title Holders!!!" the message was

widely circulated on the NAL-Taiwan listserv. It called for immediate attention to the crisis and Tamez received outpourings of support from a world-wide network that included William Hipwell of Victoria University in Wellington, who wrote a letter of concern to the Secretary of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, decrying the systematic harassment and intimidation of elders and other residents of El Calaboz by members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Security Agency, and the Border Patrol. Ovide Mercredi, the Chief of the Mispawistik (Grand Rapids) Cree Nation in Manitoba and the National Spokesperson for Treaties 1 to 11 in Canada, added to this circle of correspondence his voice: "Margo Tamez outlines the issues facing her mother and elders from El Calaboz. I am fighting against a proposed National Park in our Cree Traditional territory so can appreciate their opposition to unwarranted and unwanted boundaries. Land encroachment never ends even in clear instances of land being set aside under Treaty for exclusive Indigenous use and ownership" (NAL-Taiwan Mailing List, 16 December 2007). And all this was in addition to local responses in Taiwan, from members of the Native American literature research team as well as ecologists, indigenous authors, and grassroots activists. Our transnational network engendered a collective response of outrage and dissent against acts of empire and tyranny toward indigenous people. It complemented Tamez's efforts to construct a national working group comprising civil rights attorneys, law professors, historians, sociologists, ethno-demographers, grassroots groups and, of course, the affected people themselves. Through this open forum, the problems and issues raised by Tamez in her poetry and narrative become all the more relevant, as they are not only "routed" through the NAL-Taiwan listserv to make their text an explicit performance, but "rooted" in Taiwanese indigenous circumstances that enable the translatability of Native American texts. The shared suffering experienced under national hegemony frames and shapes a "partial community," "rendered partial by its off-center relation to the national government, and by its far-reaching and locally mediated kinship with other distant minority groups" (Dimock 11).

In his autobiographical narrative "Surviving History: The Past, Present, and Future of the Aborigines," Sun Ta-chuan, a Puyuma writer and intellectual, describes the period of his birth in the early 1950s as a time when the national government promulgated "The Outline Plan for Improving Administrative Construction in Mountainous Areas," which officially proposed "cultivating the mountains into flat land" and he laments that his "childhood passed in the shadow of this national objective. In a way, my childhood was spent in the vanishing history and memory of tribal traditions" (112). He witnessed his tribal elders shedding tears at an annual ceremony: "There was no familiar singing and dancing, no solemn ceremony, no speaking in the language of anymore ... At that moment, I realized why the elders wept" (114). This sorrow for the loss of tribal memory and rich culture is not exclusive to the Puyuma people. Similar damage has been done to the Tao of Orchid Island, who struggle against cultural amnesia as well as political tyranny. This is the background against which one of the best known contemporary Taiwanese Indigenous authors, Syman Rapongan, writes. The trans-Pacific or transnational links between Tamez and Rapongan are not obvious at the first glance — one land-based and situated along the territorial borders of the U.S. and Mexico, the other oceanic and Pacific-based in Taiwan. And yet, the rooted (land-based) and routed (oceanic, trans-Pacific) dialectics, informed by their respective poetics, bespeak planetary feelings and experiences. The Tao lament over rapacious ocean resources exploitation is not unlike the Lipan-Apache mourning of the loss of traditional lands. Rapongan's work lays claim to the "oceanic body" as much as Tamez's poetics is mobilized by indigenous sovereignty and land rights. Rapongan aims to preserve the beauty and evolutionary potential of the Pacific Ocean as much as Tamez hopes to regain indigenous rights to the lands of the Americas. Indeed, Rapongan's "body" politics is very much connected to an "oceanic" body, a counter-conversion from land to sea that is the mode of his peoples' belonging, through their "sea-loving genes": "My great-great-grand father and all my forebears lived in this small island. The moment they were born, they fell in the love with the sea, entertaining themselves by watching, worshiping, and adoring the sea. The sea-loving genes are already contained in my body, passed down from generation to generation. I love the sea fervently, almost to the degree of mania" (*Black Wings* 80). Rapongan's depiction of an intimacy with that long-ago moment when his beloved ancestors were present is reminiscent of N. Scott Momaday's signature trope, "memory in the blood". This "blood memory" blurs distinctions between identity (blood) and narrative (memory), linking the tribal body with the individual body and empowering the individual to become an agent of change. In Rapongan's formulation, the indigenous body has the capacity to represent the hidden past and repressed memory; he invokes

the body as a site of vibrant connection and tribal knowledge. A sense of ancestral immediacy and intimacy, made manifest as memory in the body, permeates Rapongan's narrative, while the rich culture of the ocean implicitly deterritorializes arbitrary and hegemonic national boundaries. Following the route of flying fish, Rapongan questions the idea of Taiwan-ness and the nation's territorial sovereignty, configuring lines of mobility and escape: "The dense schools of flying fish dye patches of the wide and vast ocean black. Each school consists of three or four hundred fish, swimming about fifty or sixty meters apart. They stretch unbroken for one nautical mile and they look like a mighty military force going into battle. They follow the ancient course of the Black Current, gradually heading toward the sea north of Batan in the Philippines" (*Black Wings* 5); "What does the "world atlas" mean? A chain of islands in Oceania. The islanders share common ideals, savoring a freedom on the sea. On their own sea and the sea of other neighboring islands, they are in quest of the unspoken and unspeakable passion toward the ocean or maybe in quest of the words passed down from their ancestors" (*Black Wings* 164).

The "black wings" of the flying fish return every year, stimulating the islanders' will to survive and maintaining their fighting spirit. The fish carry memories of Tao ancestors, who migrated from island to island in Oceania. These islands form their own "partial community," rendered by locally mediated kinship. As diverse as "the dense schools of flying fish," island inhabitants cross over and pass through unnatural political confines, following the natural rhythm of the Black Current. They recognize no borders. This act of border-crossing characterizes Rapongan's tribal indigenes as it does the indigenous who live on the Mexico-U.S. border. Rapongan, like Tamez and Anzaldúa, deterritorializes hegemonic mapping; in his case, this is accomplished by following the movement of the Black Current which continually reshapes the migratory route of his ancestors as well as that of flying fish. In going from one point to another — "in a constant state of transition," to use Anzaldúa's phrase (25) — those who "cross over, pass over, or go through confines" reset the borders as lines of dispersal, escape, and resistance. As they trespass over borders, they also transgress, in that they challenge the rigidity and normality of border constraints. Bound together by history, memory, land, and spirit, Asian and American Indigenes exert their power of resistance, deterritorializing national borders into lines of mobility and escape. Both Tamez and Rapongan challenge the adequacy of a nation-based paradigm. Rapongan's vocabulary is, however, oceanic and his metaphor, insular. His view of the ocean represents a distinct indigeneity, as separated from Taiwan-ness as it is from mainland Chinese. Through his narratives, Rapongan puts forth a powerful "ethnoscape" of resistance, a transnational, planetary oceanic alliance. The vision of trans-hemispheric protests against the policing of the Mexico-U.S. International Boundary in Native American writing can be broadened to encompass larger collectivities; here I have argued that one way to do this is through dialogue with Tao indigenes. We should imagine ourselves, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak claims when she points toward the future of humanity, as "planetary rather than continental" (72). Spivak is asking "Who are we?" — a question of crucial importance as we embark on this transnational project. On what plain can we be imagined as a collectivity? At the end of her book *Death of a Discipline*, Spivak locates planetarity in the materiality of the earth, calling forth the re-formation of collectivities that do not require the nation-state as base. Tamez, as an environmental activist, never fails to recognize the significance of the earth: "I see a possible earth. / One that we love. / Where we are liable / for the damages / freighted on her" (*Naked* 43). Here, Tamez conflates the earth with the body; in doing so, she condemns the parallel exploitation of the land and the oppressions endured by Native Americans: "My body / The yolks of my body / Stories we must tell to undo / What has been done" (*Raven* 13). Several decades before Tamez Michel de Certeau had written of the convergence of the earth with the Native body, putting forth Native American experience as a model for discourse on the Other. The Native "tortured body" and "another body, the *altered* earth," according to de Certeau, represents "a beginning, a rebirth of the will to construct a political association" (227; emphases in the original).

At this moment in history, we are witnessing the awakening of Indigenism, a worldwide convergence of Native peoples from all geographic, ethnic, social, and cultural contexts. With the best of hopes, we envision that Native American studies in Taiwan can weave a vibrant, dynamic collectivity among indigenous peoples across the Pacific, or even across the planet. This alliance will displace the national perspective in favor of a regional force on the Pacific Rim that will constitute a shared and sharing community. Native American border writers who are dealing with the hegemony of the nation-state provide us with a model. In turn, our collective study feeds strength, commitment, and support back to them. Tamez was thankful for what she called "the outpouring of



solidarity and generosity in relation to the current struggles of the descendents of Hleh pai nde' people (Lipan Apache) and Euskara people (Basque pioneers) in the South Texas area who are threatened by the U.S. Department of National Security" (Tamez and Huang, personal correspondence). Through the NAL-Taiwan listserv, the desperate messages from the Mexico-U.S. border were circulated, compelling tribal leaders, scholars, and activists in Taiwan, Australia, and Canada to a collective response of outrage and dissent against acts of empire and tyranny. The indigenous message from the border is not only a demand for the recovery of a lost home, or even the respect and recognition of cultural, social, and political differences. The very act of communication through a transnational electronic network, as well as through narrative and poetry, is an ethical practice, which is "complete not in opening to the spectacle of, or the recognition of the other, but in becoming a responsibility for him/her" (Bhabha, "Global Minoritarian Culture" 191). The responsibility of the indigenous subject lies in creating a world-open forum of communication, where indigenous issues can be articulated, configured, and responded to. This forum represents an ongoing translation of aims and interests, through which the indigenous subject emerges to communicate his or her messages across communities of the dispossessed and displaced. It is a project in process and progress, from which we anticipate indigenous solidarity and affiliation.

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