

Coalition Building against Anti-Asian Racism: Interweaving Stories of Transnational Asian/American Feminist Survivance

Eunjeong Lee, Soyeon Lee, and Minjung Kang

Eunjeong Lee is an assistant professor of Rhetoric and Composition and Applied Linguistics at University of Houston. Her research centers on multilingual meaning making practices of language-minoritized students and communities and equitable writing education. Her work has appeared in *Composition Forum*, *Written Communication*, *World Englishes*, and edited collections such as *Crossing Divides: Exploring Translingual Writing Pedagogies and Programs and Translinguistics*.

Soyeon Lee is an assistant professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies at the University of Texas at El Paso. Her research interests include transnational writing studies and community-based approaches to technical writing. Her research has appeared in *Composition Forum*, *Reflections*, *Journal of Rhetoric*, *Professional Communication*, and *Globalization*, and *Technical Communication Quarterly* as well as an edited collection, *Self+Culture+Writing: Autoethnography for/as Writing Studies*.

Minjung Kang is a doctoral candidate in the Writing, Rhetoric, and Cultures Department at Michigan State University. Her research looks into transnational and multilingual writing instructors' identity and pedagogy with the focus on translingual approach to writing and literacy education.

Abstract: What does the labor of coalition building look like and consist of for transnational Asian/American women scholars' work/life? What imposes, sustains, or stalls this labor? Adopting the notion of "affective connectivity" (Rhee), the authors grapple with these questions in their autoethnography (Chang; Jackson and Grutsch McKinney), "listing . . . certain key events, themes, memes, traumas, and metaphors" (Monberg et al.) to historicize the interweaving of these issues in Asian/American narratives. The authors' stories illuminate their affective labor against colonial and anti-Asian barriers, presenting affective connectivity as shaping transnational Asian/American feminist ways of knowing and doing activism despite institutional policies, temporal-bureaucratic constraints, and racial and linguistic injustice. The authors conclude by discussing the significance of interweaving stories of affective connectivity and coalition building, as well as tensions and limitations in transnational Asian/American feminist survivance.

Keywords: transnational, anti-Asian violence, affective connectivity, survivance, stories

Acknowledgement: We thank all the people who helped us interweave these stories. We are very grateful to Dr. Sara P. Alvarez, Dr. Ligia Mihut, Dr. Amy J. Wan, the rest of the 2023 CCCC Transnational Composition Standing Group who sponsored our presentation of the preliminary discussion of this article, and all the audiences who attended our panel session in person and virtually and shared their feedback with us. We also thank the special issue editors who helped us connect our stories to other feminist coalitional and collective work. Finally, we thank and remember Dr. K. Hyoejin Yoon, who fought

against injustices as an Asian American rhetoric scholar prior to us. We, as transnational women of color, hope to inherit and continue working with what she has taught us.

Introduction

This article discusses transnational Asian/American¹ women writing scholar-activists' coalition building against anti-Asian violence. The increasing violence against Asian/American communities in the United States and beyond in recent years has spurred coalition building efforts to amplify Asian communities' voices that denounce colonial, white supremacist ideologies. We reflect on our own coalition building and struggles, to theorize our labor of building community, solidarity, and (dis)connectivity against colonial and anti-Asian violence as "a set of historical conditions involving . . . our bodies" (Tang) that we inherited as transnational Asian/American women writing scholar-activists in the United States. As Black feminists have long argued, coalition building is crucial in Black and other oppressed communities' liberation (Browdy et al; the Combahee River Collective; Jones). Calling for community-based collective knowing, working, and acting against oppressions, the Combahee River Collective has demonstrated and emphasized centering love and intersectional struggles for Black women, while remaining in solidarity with other oppressed communities for their liberation. Such work demands acknowledging how people, things, and ideologies are interrelated (Jones), and "center[ing] the voices of feminists of color who are doing the work to ensure our futures" (Pough and Jones). Uptaking Pough and Jones's calls, we share our coalitional work for futures where our multilingual and BIPOC communities can thrive (Cooper; Ore et al.).

Our work that centers our own lived experiences and coalitional work as Asian/American women is not new, as shown by other Asian/American students' and women's intersectional organizing and activism (Dziuba; Hong; Monberg; Tang). Extending this strand of work, we ask: What does our labor of coalition building look like and consist of in our transnational Asian/American women scholars' work/life? What imposes, sustains, or stalls this labor? We answer these questions through autoethnography (Chang; Jackson and Grutsch McKinney) to historicize our work against colonial and anti-Asian violence in community, classroom, and other transnational spaces. As many Indigenous scholars have argued, advancing the world against colonial violence necessitates different relations, imaginations, and stances (King et al.; Riley-Mukavetz; Smith). Examining our "anticolonial stances . . . [of] being in relation with each other but for survivance" (Patel 8), we adopt Rhee Jeong-eun's notion of "affective connectivity" (17). Then, we discuss how we cultivated a space to write and interweave stories of our lived experiences across different contexts to make visible affective connectivity, or what we call (*ullim*, resonance in Korean), within and outside our stories. We conclude by discussing tensions and reflections in building coalitional work.

1 We use "Asian/American" to reflect our fluid and complex sense of identity and tensions surrounding the two dominant identity options, "Asian" and "American," as represented with the slash (Monberg and Young; Palumbo-Liu).

Affective Connectivity for Coalition Building

Our discussion and praxis of coalition building and survivance² is guided by Rhee's notion of affective connectivity. Rhee theorizes affective connectivity as decolonial³ feminist methodology in its emphasis on:

- 1) affective work,
- 2) particularity,
- 3) non-linear knowledge-making, and
- 4) connectivity from her own past mother and other mothers (thereby "m/others") (17-26).

Working through the "haunting" (Gordon) memories of/about her late mother, Rhee forwards a way of knowing from "rememory" (Morrison)—remembering and recollecting what has been forgotten and learned anew. Challenging the Western notion of a bounded "self," disconnected from "others" and their memories, Rhee poses, "Who we are and become is the work of rememory, a different way of being/knowing/doing that recollects our ghostly connections, relations, and connectivity across geographies, culture, time, and language" (20). This way, the notion of affective connectivity views a self always in connection to others and their onto-temporal-epistemologies.

Affective connectivity then requires affective work. As noted earlier, Black feminists have emphasized the interconnectedness and interrelatedness in coalition building. In her discussion of coalitional learning for justice, Natasha Jones notes the importance of being "attuned to issues of power, privilege, and positionality while actively pursuing options for addressing and redressing inequities and oppressions" (519). Rhee similarly encourages us to trace our own haunting memories, connect them to others, and understand our relation to these hauntings: "To be haunted is to notice us linked" (24). This "haunted engagement" (21) also means to "notice what we are trained not to notice" (3) in the Western academy, attending to invisible ghosts that offer ullim yet do not "exist" for others, and therefore, must be proven otherwise, for their veritable reality.

As a Korean American woman, migrant, daughter, and scholar, Rhee emphasizes the con-

2 Survivance is not a notion we inherited, nor do we use the term survivance, thinking that using the notion makes our coalition building a decolonial project. As will be discussed later, we honor this notion's lineage from Indigenous people and their approaches to their identity and resistance to colonial representation while acknowledging our transnational settler positionalities. We embrace tensions that are entailed and hope to conscientiously engage with this feeling to extend coalition building outwards.

3 Rhee and we came from South Korea, which was under the direct impact of the United States' expansionism and imperialism. Our critical stance against US colonial violence in Korea has impacts on our coalitional work against colonial violence within the US. As explained further later, however, we recognize that this connection does not necessarily entail or contribute to decolonization, as Itchuaqiyag and Breeanne importantly remind us.

nectivity of particulars (21). She notes how the Western notion of the individual “self” frames her and her mother’s being, knowing, and doing as “too particular to be in as academic knowledge” (48). Against the wall of knowledge that delegitimizes the particulars, she stays “neither Korean nor American, neither feminist nor not feminist, [but] something in between,” and “transgresses the wall” (47) through writing her mother’s memory of “unresolved regret and mourning for ... intergenerational trauma” (or han, “a collective feeling of grief that Koreans ... have inherited ... as a result of a long history of injustice”) (35).

Affective connectivity requires a relational recursive memory work that defies the linear and disconnected view of time and space. As Rhee draws on Morrison’s work, rememory is an act of remembering and forgetting simultaneously, actively remembering and re-collecting haunting memories. For transnational migrants, this work of cyclical “back and forth” recalls multiple bodies across multiple temporalities and spaces. Rhee asks:

When you start to rememory not just your mother’s story but your m/others’ stories so that they become your mothers, what kind of a different being or connection can you become? Whose rememory have you bumped into in the place where it happened? Why and which rememories do matter? Then, what kind of different transnational and decolonial feminist accounts can we tell: “as an account of oneself with and through others, connecting my experience with the experience of others” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 30). (20-21)

Rememory works to connect feminist bodies to m/others’ bodies, histories, and colonial violence. As discussed later, our coalition building and survivance too was shaped by different people across multiple borders that we have crossed knowingly and unknowingly and that caught us in between. Accordingly, how we understand our own feminist inheritance across separated yet co-existing worlds in our transnational lives orients us to our coalition building and survivance differently. This way, our coalition work looks both inward and outward, to the past and future, as we learn from Black, Indigenous, and other Women of Color scholars.

If affective connectivity works through haunting and rememory, how does this remembering contribute to coalition building or survivance? Rhee argues, “feminist telling other feminist stories is a way to chart both the possibility and evidence of decolonial feminists’ intergenerational and transnational knowledge project” (21). As a scholar working and living on the stolen land, we pose that solidarity building between/as transnational Asian/American scholars must recognize and attend to Indigenous rhetorics and their strategies named survivance. Remembering “other mothers” bodies, we return to the notion of survivance to understand intergenerational histories of other feminists, and work to avoid fetishizing difference.

Tensions and “Headaches” in Transnational Feminist Survivance

The notion of survivance has importantly guided us to inquire and envision our activist coalition building. Coined by Gerald Vizenor, survivance refers to “an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories” (Vizenor vii). Viewed as a way of “reimagining the possibilities for existence and ironic identity within Native communities” and “a scholarly relationship to writings by Indian peoples” (Powell 401), survivance illuminates Indigenous communities’ knowledge and rhetorical practice of “survival and resistance together” against the “marginalizing, colonial narratives and policies” (King et al. 7). As transnational settlers, thinking of our coalition building in connection to survivance engendered tensions. While transnationality denotes ways of practicing varied affiliations beyond one nation-state, it can recenter whiteness, flattening different positionalities of those displaced, enslaved, and genocided (Fujiwara and Roshanravan 6; Kimoto 145). As privileged migrants who came to this land by choice, we are complicit in the colonial violence that occupied Indigenous land, enmeshed in the “cacophony” (Byrd xvii) resulting from the United States settler colonialism and imperialism with incommensurable interests and differences (Tuck and Yang).

We use our privileged transnational positionality to take up Patel’s (2016) call for “acts of a collective countering of coloniality” (9). In doing so, we find Rhee’s dwelling in the cacophony between her and her mother as a productive way to attend to the tensions or “headaches” (Rankine 61, qtd. in Rhee 26). Rhee asks:

Yet, what my mother did not know was that the place she wanted her daughter to settle in ... is a wake of slavery, genocide, and its afterlives, which are still unfolding. How did she not hear about herstories of this land? History is full of stories of the American Dream, democracy, equality, progress, freedom, and hope: that quintessential American story—my parents/I sacrificed everything to come to this country to give us/children an opportunity. Yet, how do you notice only an opportunity, not how the (white America’s) opportunity depends on “looting and violence” (Coates, 2015, p. 6), including the destructive condition and structure of your/parents’ sacrifice? (26)

Her questioning shows a possibility of working with “haunting” memories as not only feminist work but also decolonial feminist work (11). While we do not claim affective connectivity always leads to decoloniality, it alerts us to examine how we recognize and connect to the “haunting” in the very site where the “headaches” begin. In other words, transnational feminist survivance for “countering of coloniality” can emerge through affective connectivity practices. As our narratives demonstrate, this inward and outward coalitional work entails “headaches,” instability, and unsettled bodies.

Activism Contexts and Methods

In sharing our survivance stories, we adopt autoethnography (Chang; Jackson and Grutsch McKinney) to resist self/culture, Black/White, and academy/community binaries and “[list] . . . certain key events, themes, memes, traumas, and metaphors” (Monberg et al.). Rather than starting with a particular “theory” or “framework,” our stories started from (jjokgeul)—the kind of short, descriptive, reflective, messy freewriting—to center our lived experiences of transnational survivance. Once we wrote our individual narratives, we took time to read and annotate on each other’s work following our senses of ullim, that is, our resonance or affective reaction to each other’s (trans)linguaging and labor practices. We repeated this process twice more, which drove us to develop our jjokgeuls in different ways that we had not expected. This way, our writing was not a static representation of our lived experiences but a dialogic reflection on and (re)connection to our own and each other’s experience. We presented our preliminary stories at the 2023 CCCC, and we continued to reflect on tensions, limitations, and possibilities in our stories for this article.

Stories

In illustrating our labor of survivance for coalition building, we pay attention to how this labor shapes our praxis as a writing scholar-educator-activist, and what sustains or stalls this labor. Our coalition building has recursively affirmed our own survivance strategies, while expanding our ways of being, knowing, doing, feeling, and teaching language and writing.

Eunjeong: Remembering and Centering Racialized Multilingual Communities’ Embodied Translinguaging for Answerability

“[H]ow do I write we’re moving to the next door?” My mom texted me like usual during my doctoral exam. She was immensely proud of moving to a slightly bigger restaurant after being gentrified out of a booming town in Texas a while ago. “Starting [blank], [the restaurant] is moving to a bigger facility to better serve you!!” “You need to put the date in ‘Starting [blank]’ so people know when you move.” I was proud of my White Mainstream English that I learned at a Predominantly White Institution. My fancy English was supposed to make my first-generation immigrant parents sound just a bit more “professional.”

A few days later, I asked her about the sign. I couldn’t help but laugh at the picture with the exact phrase, “starting [blank].” She said, “I was going to change it, but then people actually came in and asked ‘when?’ . . . So I decided to keep. . . It’s much better. If I smile at them, see their faces, and tell them, they would be more likely to come.”

Running the restaurant heavily relies on my family’s affective labor and translinguaging

(García and Li). “People here like it when you keep talking to them and asking how they’re doing at their table.” Later, I learned that this very first lesson my mom taught me here in the US is called small talk. Her small talk doesn’t feel “small” though. Translanguaging across a “broken” English, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish, my mom checks on customers, hugs, or bows, tries to remember the last conversation they had, and trains and jokes with her employees.

My mother’s embodied translanguaging of centering connectivity and emerging meaning, not the “correctness,” became more challenging, in the backdrop of resurging anti-Asian racism for the last few years. Their (noonchi)—rhetorical sensitivity to and embodied reading of the context, including people’s relations—was at peak, even in their own restaurant, especially around police officers with their then-mixed status and ongoing police brutality. Looking at many Asian women who were murdered because of white supremacist anti-Asian racism, my mother and I remembered our border-crossing that we buried deep down—the times when we had to prove our “goodness” because we were seen conniving and unfaithful at the Customs and Immigration for my mother, and at my F-1 visa, green card, and later citizenship interviews. My mother told me to smile more “just in case.” We faked smiles behind our masks, also knowing this was futile in white temporality—the history that we contribute so much but does not care about us.

My family’s translanguaging makes me pause: How does our scholarship honor and account for their embodied translanguaging and affective labor—the way they trust their noonchi to stay away from any “trouble,” all the “failed” attempts at learning “English,” yet still successful conversations and relationship building with their employees, who are often undocumented and multilingual, and other community members? And how do I remember my family’s translanguaging and remain “answerable” (Patel) to my BIPOC students and communities? The dominating English-only, monoglossic ideologies and colonial structure of educational spaces and beyond view racialized multilingual students and communities’ language and literacies, monolithically anything but for “success,” “career,” or “better” future, also conceived monolithically (Baker-Bell)—so much so that my mom’s language, knowledge, or success won’t count. Yet, my students I worked with over the years in Queens and Houston, majority of whom are transnational, racialized, and multilingual, already use their language and literacies to sustain themselves, their families, and their communities. While colleges boast a certificate in translation for taking classes on literary criticism and translation theory, my students’ translation in their Parents-Teacher Conferences, doctor’s appointments, or other everyday translation goes unnoticed. And the institutions and society tell us that our language belongs to the past, not future (Flores et al.), and tells us not to be “stuck in the past . . . [and] move on” (Cooper).

So I center their embodied languaging and history, including ones that have been left behind, forgotten, and invisibilized in my class. We discuss unrecognized yet crucial language labor, make the connections between and across our wor(l)ds, and center the relations, as humans responsible for each other’s time and space. We reflect on our language and positionalities and

talk about how our writing is shaped by not only what we know because of our experience but also what we didn't have to experience or know, and the distance between the two. Instead of teaching how to "fill the gap" in their research, my students and I think about from whose perspective it is the gap, who gets served and how, and what kind of future the knowledge serves. And at times, some of us awkwardly step aside and decenter ourselves to see how much Black and Indigenous ways of knowing and doing language are erased and policed in our institutional space that sits in a historically and predominantly Black neighborhood. In my pursuit of affective connectivity with them and their communities, I recognize how claiming "we" and "us" in building coalition and solidarity may "inadvertently participate in . . . epistemic injustice" (Tang), erasing the intersectional difference I should not forget.

And I struggle at times. I hesitate when students view me through gendered Asian/American affect such as how I'm a "truly caring", "motherly," "cheerleader" (Yoon). I disconnect from a white feminist student who calls racialized and gendered women's language and literacies "trivial." My mind conjures up m/others' not-quite-trivial translanguaging again.

Whose haunting memories do I remember? Who do I dis/connect to/from? How do I remember better? I want to remember and connect better not because I want "closure" and move on, but because I want to learn to live *with* their haunting memories engraved onto my body to remain answerable. Being answerable as a transnational feminist means then being conscientious of how I stand, with whom, toward what kind of interconnected future (Hsu), even when the colonial logic wants me to erase myself from any temporality, telling me I don't know or haven't been on this land long enough to know. Against this barrier, I am learning and working to be in coalition, while remembering and de/centering my communities' embodied labor, albeit ephemeral and "trivial."

Soyeon: Linguistic Inheritance: Resisting Language Immunization as a Transnational Mother of Color

I was busy with daily morning routines at home. My 8-year-old second child asked me, "Mom, am I taking the A test today?" "Not really." I was surprised that my child knew the full name of the test. "My friend B takes the test today. He speaks Chinese a lot, and I speak Korean a lot too. But why don't I take the A test today?" he asked. I felt ambivalent, first relief, thinking that I don't have to open my manila folder for my second child. The A test manila folder. I printed all the documents and email communication relevant to the A test of my first child and archived them into this manila folder along with another manila folder that contains all the immunization records of him. At the same time, I felt a surge of rage again. I was thinking of B, who will be in a separate classroom and answer questions in reading, speaking, listening, and writing for several hours as my first child did.

As a transnational mother of color, I remember my labor against literacy education systems operating through bureaucratic apparatuses while trying to be informed of how my then 8-year-old first child could exit his English as a Second Language (ESL) program some years ago. To navigate the ESL curriculum⁴ and its final “exit” process, I had to email my child’s school more than eleven times between September 2019 and May 2021 (approximately for twenty-one months) in addition to multiple in-person visits and one-hour-long phone conversations with teachers and administrators more than three times. I emailed my child’s teacher first, and the teacher transferred my inquiry to an ESL coordinator, and then the ESL coordinator transferred my inquiry to her colleague, and that colleague transferred my inquiry to the school district’s multilingual curriculum office, and finally I was able to reach one of the staff members of the office. Mostly, teachers and administrators said that they needed to ask someone else to know more about policies. I was also told that schools do not use ESL as an administrative term any longer, and instead they started using “multilingual.”

In my email, I asked for information: What is your policy? How do ESL students exit the program? Were they tested for “exit” already? If not, when are they scheduled to be tested? What are the criteria for “exit”? I did not receive answers in writing. Through an accidental personal conversation with a staff member at school, I came to know that to exit the program, ESL students need to surpass the mark of their previous year in each of the listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency tests. If they got the grade “high” in the previous academic year, they need to get an “advanced high” grade in each test next year. The year after the next year, they will need to get an “advanced-advanced high” grade in each test. The bureaucratic and neoliberal systems that control literacy do not say the time of the decision, yet constantly burden individuals to exceed oneself. This neoliberal temporality consumes my energy and leads me to the moment of distress or what Tamika L. Carey calls “rhetorical impatience,” which refers to Black women rhetors’ performative temporal strategies of self-care for equity and justice (273) against a “system of *temporal hegemony*” (270).

The staff member of the multilingual curriculum office of the school district to whom my inquiry was transferred seemed to be also Korean-English bilingual. In the middle of the phone conversation, they switched from English to Korean and said that they could explain the A test processes in Korean. I instantly refused. After the call ended, I thought about my refusal. Why did I refuse their suggestion for “language alternation” (Zentella 80) or a translingual moment? It was maybe because I wanted to resist a sense of the potential paternalistic whiteness or the presumed ownership of English I felt from the moment when they started “providing” Korean. After the conversation ended, I was directed to the test-relevant web page operated by one of the state education agencies. Additionally, I came to know that ESL students should be “monitored” for two years after “exit” to ensure whether they reached the “appropriate” level of English proficiency.

4 My focus is not on ESL programs in K-12 contexts and their curricular efforts. Here, I discuss how the sociomaterial infrastructures of ESL programs are entangled with my racialized feeling as an immigrant parent of color.

Literacy and bureaucracy sustain each other (Vieira 150) and impose hygienic ideologies on particular bodies. Registering and enriching my and my children's translingual practices as part of a "translingual historiography" (Kimball 33) or claiming what Kimball calls "translingual inheritance" is my activism against this reality. In the school district's mandatory registration system, I marked down that my family used Korean as a home language when I became a parent of public education⁵. It was my activism to make my translingual practice and inheritance known across contexts and register them in educational systems for both of my children. I study, teach, and do translingual practice. Then, why would I conceal that my family uses Korean at home? I recognized how this question works as a proxy to register what Prendergast called "a distinguishing trait" in which "literacy and race became interchangeable" (6). My family's literacy was registered as seemingly neutral information. But I feel that this registration operates not only as a bureaucratic apparatus but also a racial apparatus that disenfranchises "undesirable" people (Prendergast 2) who need to be tested, monitored, and controlled. As a transnational mother of color, I resist language immunization by registering my and my children's translingual inheritance under the label of "home language" although this system does not afford representations that can capture our daily translingual practices, which cannot be represented simply either as Korean or English. This registration action entailed affective labor but returned me to other mothers who also dwelled on questions similar to the home language question I answered or who did not have a chance to be informed of what this type of question would entail. This registration action also opened up points of affective connectivity where I feel other mothers and children who were more severely and physically punished by their ways of literacy (Pritchard 60) and whose languages and "rhetorical sovereignty" (King 26) were taken away and violated.

Minjung: This Cruel Game is Called "Not Korean Enough" or "Too Korean" in White

Space

In Tom Hong Do's painful and visceral memoria on his passed father, he reminds us how language and body are interconnected, and translanguaging is always "embodied and responsive" to the material conditions like "time, place, race, class, or gender" (451). Sharing how his father's body was marked in medical reports, Do notes:

Despite the fact that his own report identifies the physical and neurological damages ba sustained, the physician hedges his statements and suspects that ba has a "possible language barrier" that makes him unintelligible. ... [T]he physician specifically identifies ba as an "Asian male (possibly Cambodian)." This indexical marker of race is immediately followed by his supposed "language barrier." ... [T]his conclusion is perceptual rather than factual and speaks to how the white listening subject is either unable or unwilling to

⁵ Both of my children were tested in their "English proficiency" after I enrolled them in public education systems. My first child was identified as an "English Learner" (EL), while my second child was not identified as an EL.

interpret the linguistic production of racialized translingual bodies as intelligible. (457)

Do teaches us that it is not just language but embodied languaging with extralinguistic features that indexes how a racialized body is interpreted, defined, evaluated, and legitimized—especially Asian bodies as sites of “language barrier” and unintelligibility. Of course, I didn’t know any of this when I started to teach college writing in my second year after moving to the United States from Seoul. I thought as long as I master English and sound “American,” I will fit in and survive at school and teaching.

Behind this thinking was my Korean upbringing. Practicing standard English in Korea is a big deal. You need it for getting into a good college and a good job—and generally for looking smart. I remember receiving compliments on how good my pronunciation was, just like Americans that we heard over and over again in audio tapes from English listening tests; just like how I practiced in front of TV arching my tongue to make /r/ sound. There was a sense of pride to represent a “good” English speaker as that meant sophisticated, independent, liberal, and feminist. But when I was applying for master’s programs in the United States, I was no longer a “good” speaker. I remember asking my advisor, a white male professor, for a recommendation letter to get a teaching assistantship. “*You are going to teach American college kids English?*,” he asked. I knew it wasn’t really a question by his tone. Unlike his doubt, I did receive the teaching assistantship with the acceptance letter.

Every new teacher struggles. Learning to teach requires time, training, and experience. But at that time, a bigger problem seemed to be my transnational and translingual background that is “unusual” for a college English professor. To my colleagues and students, I tried my best to pass as one of them. The mask I was wearing got heavier each day. I started to call umma less and less. When I visited my parents in Seoul during breaks, I was afraid of “losing my sense of English” for using Korean. At the end of the semester, my course evaluation read:

Be more assertive. This is not high school.

She’s so awkward.

I can’t understand her when she explains activities.

Even after realizing that “passing” couldn’t excuse me from being racialized as an Asian woman, it didn’t quite give me the peace about my identity. Only recently, my partner and I started to hang out with more Koreans in our neighborhood in Michigan. I always had very few Korean friends in the United States, and I would notice myself avoiding them even if I had a chance to make acquaintances. A few months ago, I was in a local bakery. The savory pastries they had

reminded me of Paris Baguette or other big bakery chains in Korea. The bakery was busy. All the customers lined up were white. The cashier was a white person. When it was just my turn to order, an East Asian man who looked very Korean came out of the kitchen to help with taking orders. Maybe he is the owner? Maybe that's why those pastries looked so familiar? Thoughts were flowing, and it took me a second to finally hear him saying "What would you like?" in English. I froze for a second till I finally said my order. I was so ready to speak in this white space as a white proxy, but then the sudden presence of a familiar but unfamiliar face and body flustered me.

The next day, I told the bakery incident to my Korean friend, and she said she had similar experiences. She was in a yoga class where everyone was white but her and one Asian woman. When the instructor asked the class to find a partner, she noticed that both of them were trying not to make eye contact with each other. We laughed in unison and wondered why. Then she said, "I think I know why" and showed me a screenshot of Gloria Anzaldúa's words on her laptop:

Chicana feminists often skirt around each other with suspicion and hesitation. For the longest time I couldn't figure it out. Then it dawned on me. To be close to another Chicana is like looking into the mirror. We are afraid of what we'll see there. Pena. Shame. Low estimation of self. In childhood we are told that our language is wrong. Repeated attacks on our native tongue diminish our sense of self. (38-39)

To face another Asian or Korean is like to face yourself. They are mirrors. Looking at them means you are looking into your pains, your doubts, your shame, your family, and yourself. You are a traitor, a poser, a not-Korean. That is some scary thing to do in everyday life. And the stakes are higher when you are in a white space. It's you and another you and a bunch of white folks. Your survival instincts tell you not to look into the mirror, so you avoid each other. Then you go and talk to that bunch of white folks with a smile and your perfectly arched tongue. These experiences haunted me for contradicting what I was reading at graduate school. Anti-racism. Linguistic Justice. Why can't I be brave enough to "be myself" and face the mirror against white supremacy instead of policing myself? Even on the best days surrounded by "well-meaning" people, I am upset because a coworker brought up her newly-found enthusiasm in K-dramas that I have never shown any interest in. Then I am also upset when I feel invisible because no one knows anything about Korea and treats me as another abstract Asian. After carefully listening to me at the breakfast table, my partner asked me, "So which one do you want? Do you want people to engage with you about Korea or not?" Well, can't it be both?

Interweaving Stories, Affective Connectivity, and Activisms

Our stories show that affective connectivity guided our coalition building against anti-Asian racism, yet with different struggles and issues. Practicing affective relational practice was to

de-isolate ourselves as colonial subjects to “let your oppression peek at mine” (West xiii), and vice versa. This way, affective connectivity can push forward coalition building for transnational feminist survivance. Below, we discuss how our *ullim* points converge and diverge, hence “interweaved,” across our stories and offer implications as to how these survivance stories can expand across contexts.

Affective Connectivity as Affective Labor

These stories commonly unravel our affective translingual labor against anti-Asian barriers, entangled with our and other politicized and racialized Asian/American bodies and surrounding sociomaterial and ideological conditions. Eunjeong’s activism is shaped by her then-mixed-status family’s embodied translanguaging and rhetorical sensitivity, conditioned in the colonial and white supremacist ideologies and materialities. As a first-generation immigrant mother scholar, Soyeon’s rhetorical activism is channeled through her embodied literacy labor against the bureaucratic colonial temporality. Minjung labors against a deficit perspective on her teacher subjectivity, illuminating the uneasiness and complexity behind working with the haunting memories; she policed her teacher identity as a Korean migrant “to perform and show people that [she is] just as good as [her] colleagues.” Our stories then reinforce how our activism is underwritten by affective connectivity, mediated by our embodied affective labor against the colonial onto-epistemologies.

Affective Connectivity as Remembering within Particularities

Our agentic labor takes place in particular times and spaces of our languaging. Eunjeong and her mother’s embodied translanguaging in community spaces differs from Soyeon’s affective languaging in the education system. These stories also diverge from Minjung’s languaging and teaching subjectivity. Here, we do not intend to make a representational transnational Asian/American story. Rather, as affective connectivity affords, we see ourselves and our stories remaining particular and incommensurable. Indeed, throughout our reflections on our stories, we have found how our ways of being, knowing, and doing language as Asian/American are sometimes at odds with our knowledge and work as a scholar-educator-activist. While sharing our stories, Minjung noted, “I was you. You were me. I will be you. You will be me.” These reflections affirmed that our embodied ways of being, knowing, feeling, and doing language are the very apparatus to work against anti-Asian violence, showing that our onto-epistemologies are interwoven with each other’s stories in connection to other settler histories and temporalities. As Rhee argues, “In the process of explicitly recognizing our collective and collaborative work/life, we may be able to share knowledge/memory that heals and empowers us” (55). This is the potential of interweaving stories of our survivance labor that we look toward.

Affective Connectivity as Building Connections with “Other Mothers”

While sharing our stories made us notice both particular and collective haunting memories, it also pushed us to recognize what we (do not) know about BIPOC communities' memories and survivance. Practicing affective connectivity then asks us to humbly see who else has crossed the borders and how we are here the way we are because they were here before us—Eunjeong's mother, other Asian women who lost their lives to the white supremacist violence, and the Indigenous and Black communities around her campus, Soyeon herself as a mother and other mothers at her child's school, and our Korean and BIPOC immigrant-generation friends, students, and communities, as Minjung's story highlights. We sit tight and try to fathom the impalpable pain and particular stories as we look to (im)migrant women who have come before us, and dispossessed and displaced Indigenous, enslaved Black, and other marginalized communities. We recognize that a responsible rhetorical practice for our answerable affective connectivity is then both centering and decentering our voice, story, and herstories, as we connect to and learn from our BIPOC communities' survivance stories.

Remembering for Feminist Inheritance: Embracing Transnational Feminist Tensions

Our desire of transnational coalition began from our own positionalities, rooted in our desire to dismantle the colonial categories of language and identities and to claim particular yet relational Korean migrant women scholars' onto-epistemologies. Yet, our affective connectivity enabled us to look to what Mohanty imagined as international coalitions of Third World women with the “everyday, fluid, fundamentally historical and dynamic nature of the lives” (6) away from the Western deficit frames of their ways of being, living, and knowing.

As we look outward, we grapple with the tension around how affective connectivity can be “accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity” as a decolonial feminist methodology (Tuck and Yang 35). Affective connectivity offers a heuristic for “other” ways of knowing, yet it does not always directly contribute to the “rematriation of land or knowledges of the traditional Indigenous stewards of this land” (Itchuaqiyaq and Matheson 301). In fact, our resettlement “can . . . actually further settler colonialism” through “an entangled triad structure of settler-native-slave” (Tuck and Yang 1). Therefore, non-Natives must acknowledge this complicity in uptaking the notion of survivance. Joining this effort, we embrace the tension and humbly recognize the limit of our affective connectivity and relationality, and the necessity to work with the haunting responsibly (Riley-Mukavetz 560).

Despite and perhaps especially because of the tensions, we cannot work against barriers alone as such work necessitates learning and linking different haunting memories remaining hidden and enmeshed in our varied positionalities. Interweaving our stories affirms our activist time/

space-making against anti-Asian linguistic and racial injustice, temporal and bureaucratic strategies that sustain colonial power, and white supremacist language ideologies. We carry our feminist inheritance and continue learning from m/others' different memories, languaging, tensions, and experiences while noticing our relations to them and their survivance.

Works Cited

Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke UP, 2017.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books, 1987.

Baker-Bell, April. *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*. Routledge, 2020.

Browdy, Ronisha, et al. "From Cohort to Family: Coalitional Stories of Love and Survivance." *Composition Studies*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2021, pp. 14–30, <https://compositionstudiesjournal.files.wordpress.com/2021/10/browdy-milu-del-hierro-gonzales.pdf>.

Byrd, Jodi A. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. U of Minnesota P, 2011.

Carey, Tamika L. "Necessary Adjustments: Black Women's Rhetorical Impatience." *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2020, pp. 269–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350198.2020.1764745>

Chang, Heewon. *Autoethnography as Method*. Routledge, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315433370>.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel and Grau, 2015.

The Combahee River Collective. "The Combahee River Collective Statement." *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*, edited by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. Haymarket Books, 2017, pp. 15–28.

Cooper, Brittney. "The Racial Politics of Time." *TED Women*, 2016, https://www.ted.com/talks/brittney_cooper_the_racial_politics_of_time/.

Do, Tom Hong. "Knowing with Our Bodies: An Embodied and Racialized Approach to Translingualism." *College English*, vol. 84, no. 5, 2022, pp. 447–66. *ProQuest*, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/scholarly-journals/knowing-with-our-bodies-embodied-racialized/docview/2704307540/se-2>.

Dziuba, Allison. "'We Want to Be Intersectional': Asian American College Students' Extracurricular Rhetorical Education." *Race, Feminism, and Rhetoric*, special issue of *Peitho*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2021, <https://cfshrc.org/article/we-want-to-be-intersectional-asian-american-college-students-extracurricular-rhetorical-education/>.

García, Ofelia, and Li Wei. *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism, and Education*. Palgrave Pivot, 2014.

Gordon, Avery F. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. 2nd ed., U of Minnesota P, 2008.

Flores, Nelson, et al. "Raciolinguistic Chronotopes and the Education of Latinx Students: Resistance and Anxiety in a Bilingual School." *Language & Communication*, vol. 62, 2018, pp. 15–25. *ScienceDirect*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.06.002>.

Fujiwara, Lynn, and Shireen Roshanravan. "Introduction." *Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Politics*, edited by Lynn Fujiwara and Shireen Roshanravan. U of Washington P, 2018, pp. 3–24.

Hong, Grace. "Intersectionality and Incommensurability: Third World Feminism and Asian Decolonization." *Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Politics*, edited by Lynn Fujiwara and Shireen Roshanravan. U of Washington P, 2018, pp. 27–42.

Hsu, Jo. "Reflection as Relationality: Rhetorical Alliances and Teaching Alternative Rhetorics." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 70, no. 2, 2018, pp. 142–68. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26772558>.

Itchuaqiyaq, Cana Uluak, and Breeanne Matheson. "Decolonial Dinners: Ethical Considerations of 'Decolonial' Metaphors in TPC." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2021, pp. 298–310. *EBSCOhost*, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/10.1080/10572252.2021.1930180>.

Jackson, Rebecca, and Jackie Grutsch McKinney. "Critical Introduction." *Self+Culture+Writing: Autoethnography for/as Writing Studies*, edited by Rebecca Jackson and Jackie Grutsch McKinney. Utah State UP, 2021. pp. 3–27.

- Jones, Natasha. "Coalitional Learning in the Contact Zones: Inclusion and Narrative Inquiry in Technical Communication and Composition Studies." *College English*, vol. 82, no. 5, 2020, pp. 515–26. ProQuest, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/scholarly-journals/coalitional-learning-contact-zones-inclusion/docview/2424656716/se-2>.
- Kimball, Elizabeth. *Translingual Inheritance: Language Diversity in Early National Philadelphia*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2021.
- Kimoto, Tamsin. "Becoming Restive: Orientations in Asian American Feminist theory and Praxis." *Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Politics*, edited by Lynn Fujiwara and Shireen Roshanravan. U of Washington P, 2018, pp. 138–54.
- King, Lisa. "Sovereignty, Rhetorical Sovereignty, and Representation: Keywords for Teaching Indigenous Texts." *Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story Teaching American Indian Rhetorics*, edited by Lisa King, Rose Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson. Utah State UP, 2014, pp. 17–34.
- King, Lisa, et al. "Introduction—Careful with the Stories We Tell: Naming Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story." *Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story Teaching American Indian Rhetorics*, edited by Lisa King, Rose Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson. Utah State UP, 2014, pp. 3–16.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *The Third Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, Indiana UP. 1991, pp. 51-80.
- Monberg, Terese Guinsatao. "Listening for Legacies; or, How I Began to Hear Dorothy Laigo Cordova, the Pinay behind the Podium Known as FANHS." *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*, edited by Luming Mao and Morris Young, UP of Colorado, 2008, pp. 83–105.
- Monberg, Terese Guinsatao, et al. "Asian/American Movements Through the Pandemic and Through the Discipline Before, During, and After COVID-19." *Reflection*, vol. 21, no. 1. 2022, <https://reflectionsjournal.net/2022/02/editors-introduction-finding-humanity-and-community-in-pandemic-scholarship-2/>.
- Monberg, Terese Guinsatao, and Morris Young. "Beyond Representation: Spatial, Temporal and Embodied Trans/Formations of Asian/Asian American Rhetoric." *Asian/American Rhetorical Trans/formations*, special issue of *enculturation*, no. 27, 2018, https://www.enculturation.net/beyond_representation.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. 1987. Vintage, 2004.

Ore, Ersula, et al., editors. "Symposium: Diversity is Not Justice: Working toward Radical Transformation and Racial Equity in the Discipline." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 72, no. 4, 2021, pp. 601–20. ProQuest, <http://search.proquest.com.ez-proxy.lib.uh.edu/scholarly-journals/symposium-diversity-is-not-justice-working-toward/docview/2585491413/se-2>.

Palumbo-Liu, David. *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. Stanford UP, 1999.

Patel, Leigh. *Decolonial Educational Research: From Ownership to Answerability*. Routledge, 2016.

Pough, Gwendolyn, and Stephanie Jones. "On Race, Feminism, and Rhetoric: An Introductory/Manifesto Flow..." *Race, Feminism, and Rhetoric*, special issue of *Peitho*, vol. 23, no. 4., 2021, <https://cfshrc.org/article/on-race-feminism-and-rhetoric-an-introductory-manifesto-to-flow/>.

Powell, Malea. "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians Use Writing." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 53, no. 3, 2002, pp. 396–434. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1512132>.

Prendergast, Catherine. *Literacy and Racial Justice: The Politics of Learning after Brown v. Board of Education*. Southern Illinois UP, 2003.

Pritchard, Eric Darnell. *Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy*. Southern Illinois UP, 2016.

Rankine, Claudia. *Citizen: An American Lyric*. Graywolf Press, 2014.

Rhee, Jeong-eun. *Decolonial Feminist Research: Haunting, Rememory, and Mothers*. Routledge, 2021.

Riley-Mukavetz, Andrea. "Developing a Relational Scholarly Practice: Snakes, Dreams, and Grandmothers." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 71, no. 4, 2020, pp. 545–65. ProQuest, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/scholarly-journals/developing-relational-scholarly-practice-snakes/docview/2422031100/se-2>.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 2nd ed., Zed Books, 2012.

Tang, Jasmine Kar. "Asians Are at the Writing Center." *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2022, <http://www.praxisuwc.com/191-kar-tang>.

Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1–40, <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630/15554>.

Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. Bison Books, 1999.

Vieira, Kate. *American by Paper*. U of Minnesota P, 2016.

West, Cheryl L. "I Ain't the Right Kind of Feminist." *The Third Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, Indiana UP, 1991, pp. xii–xiii.

Yoon, K. Hyoejin. "Learning Asian American Affect." *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*, edited by Luming Mao and Morris Young, UP of Colorado, 2008, pp. 293–322.

Zentella, Ana Celia. *Growing up Bilingual: Puerto Rican Children in New York*. Blackwell, 1997.

